Tequesta 2023

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On the cover: With a strong hand in the development of Fairchild Tropical Gardens, north Miami's Greynolds Park and Coral Gables' Matheson Hammock Park, the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) contributed mightily to Dade County's expanding parks inventory. Completed at the outset of the 1940s, Matheson Hammock Park was one of the agency's most ambitious efforts with its atoll pool, beaches, marina, gardens and built environment.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) building project at Matheson Hammock Park, July 10, 1938. Miami News Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-13139.

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Editor's Essay

Like its predecessors, this, the eighty-third issue of *Tequesta, The Journal of HistoryMiami Museum* offers readers a wide variety of articles on the rich history of greater Miami and even the area beyond it. **Gary R. Mormino, PhD**, who has reigned for more than four decades as one of the state's preeminent historians, and is a past contributor to *Tequesta*, offers readers, with "Florida on the Brink," a fascinating look at the Sunshine State as it was emerging from the Great Depression, but now facing the specter of a world war that ultimately engulfed it and the rest of the nation.

Mormino's study examines the variegated cultures of a state with less than two million residents, a place still in the thrall of its Deep South roots. His rich account includes fascinating insights into Miami, which, by then, was experiencing rapid growth and change, and other parts of South Florida. Mormino is especially insightful in his examination of the New Deal's impact on Florida through its building and regulatory programs. He writes that "(Franklin) Roosevelt's New Deal touched small towns and big cities, city halls and county courthouses," and – I would add – many more elements of life in the Sunshine State.

Mormino is the Frank E. Duckwall Professor of History Emeritus at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. His earlier contributions to *Tequesta* have included a study of Miami during World War II, and the remarkable growth and transformational changes in South Florida and elsewhere in the state in more recent decades. He has been

the recipient of numerous awards for his books and other writings.

Nick J. Sciullo, PhD, JD, associate professor of communications, Texas A&M University, Kingsville, examines in "Black Caesar: Public Memory, Elusive History, and the Strange Afterlife of Black Piracy" a story that has captivated history lovers in and around our area for decades. Was Black Caesar simply a mythological figure, or are portions of his story based on facts? More to the point, was Black Caesar a onetime African tribal leader? Was he a fugitive slave? Did he sail with Blackbeard? Did he bury treasure in an unknown site in south Biscayne Bay? The questions keep coming as speculation continues to grow. What role has he played in the history of Miami, driving the narrative in a direction that makes our slice of the subtropics even more unique than it already is?

Sciullo concludes his fetching study by positing that "What historians, residents, and tourists are left with," when grappling with the story of Black Caesar, "is a bare historical record and vibrant story that withstands historical inquiry." He enjoys examining historical topics whose subjects are murky, their documentation scanty. In the 2022 issue of *Tequesta*, for instance, he contributed an insightful article on the Saltwater Railroad and its Southeast Florida terminus, which represented the penultimate step for enslaved persons in quest of freedom via Key Biscayne and, ultimately, the Bahamas in the early 1800s as Florida was transitioning from Spanish to American ownership.

With “Freedom Awaits by Sea: Exploring the Saltwater Railroad of Key Biscayne to the Bahamas,” **Sara Feinman**, a social science teacher with a master of arts in history from Florida Atlantic University, takes Sciullo’s study of the Saltwater Railroad to its ultimate destination: freedom in the Bahamas. This chain of islands at the time was part of Great Britain’s vast colonial empire, and its population was comprised overwhelmingly of enslaved people. Emancipation finally came in 1834. Notwithstanding that fact, fugitive slaves who made it as far as these islands before Emancipation were usually able to live freely, especially on remote Andros Island.

Today, many of the descendants of those who fled bondage in the United States continue to live on Andros Island, especially in the even more remote community of Red Bays on its northwest coast. Feinman’s article is one of the first to explore this, the final stop of the Railroad.

Casey Piket, who last contributed an article on Miami’s legendary Tobacco Road, an iconic bar, restaurant, and music hall of yesteryear, is back with another nostalgic study: that of the city’s beloved Orange Bowl Stadium in its first twenty years as a sports venue. Piket is a talented, prolific avocational historian with scores of columns, blogs, podcasts, documentaries, a book, and other written history accounts of Miami, to which his forebears arrived in 1899, three years after its birth as a municipality.

Entitled “The Orange Bowl Stadium: The First Two Decades, 1937-1957,” Piket writes of the fabled stadium’s

predecessors, as well as the forces that led to its development and the major events within it that accorded it – at least in the minds of many Miamians – legendary status, while helping to position it as the state's premier sports venue, the home of college and professional football teams, host of a lone baseball game starring the legendary Satchel Paige, five Super Bowls, innumerable national championship games, New Year's Day and night lights-out halftime shows, naturalization ceremonies involving tens of thousands of new citizens, and a music venue rivaling the most famous anywhere, as it hosted the likes of Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, and the Rolling Stones, among others.

In Piket's view, "Miami's Orange Bowl stadium was the most revered sports venue in the city of Miami for more than 70 years." The fancy sports facilities of today in Miami-Dade and Broward counties are its successors, but each of them still has many years and decades ahead of them before they can claim a place next to the Orange Bowl in the rich sports lore of southeastern Florida. After reading this highly informative study, I eagerly await Piket's second article bringing the beloved stadium to its largely lamented ending in 2008 to make way for the Miami Marlins loanDepot Park.

Sofia Cordova Barsimantov shares with our readers her "Miami Story," first posted on HistoryMiami's social media channels in 2017. She and her husband, Benjamin, first visited Miami and Miami Beach on their honeymoon in 1959. How could they know that just four years later Miami would become their permanent home after fleeing

the Marxist dictatorship of Fidel Castro and Cuba for the freedoms and opportunities held out by the United States?

Barsimantov and her family eventually settled in the quiet, postwar enclave of Coral Gate, a neighborhood near the eastern edge of Coral Gables built with military veterans in mind. Strapped for money as newly arrived immigrants, they enjoyed the simple pleasures of the greater Miami of yesteryear with their growing family. They fished off a Rickenbacker Causeway bridge, visited Crandon Park Zoo, and splurged, for special occasions, on barbecue beef and chicken dinners at Shorty's on U.S. 1. Later, they moved farther west in the county, which is where she was living at the time she penned "My Miami Story" in 2017.

Hats off to the talented, hard-working staff of HistoryMiami, whose contributions ensured the completion of this issue of *Tequesta*. Personnel representing virtually every department, from administration through collections, was involved in a critical way in preparing this issue for our readers. Thank you!

Our exhibitions continue to attract large numbers of visitors. In 2023, these exhibitions, whether created by HistoryMiami or on loan from another institution, included, in the former category, an examination through artifacts, music, images, and other materials the rich life and achievements of Miami's beloved Cuban American singer and entertainer, Willie Chirino; another showcased the celebrated *Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns & Mermaids*, on loan from New York's American Museum of Nat-

ural History. Both brought many visitors to the museum. "Mythic Miami," featuring stories of Caribbean mermaids and Florida's own skunk ape, a curiosity to denizens and visitors to the Sunshine State, represents HistoryMiami's contribution to "Mythic Creatures."

We look forward to welcoming you to the museum, joining you on a history tour or at a new exhibition, and seeing you at our next CultureFest 305, a much-anticipated annual folklife festival celebrating the uniqueness of Miami. *Miami New Times* named HistoryMiami "Best Museum 2022." We humbly accept and strive to continue to live up to that recognition, as we broaden and elevate our offerings.

Paul S. George, PhD

Editor, *Tequesta, The Journal of HistoryMiami Museum*

"Florida: The State With the Prettiest Name"

– Elizabeth Bishop, "Florida"[1]

Gary R. Mormino, PhD

As the last grains of Myakka fine sand – the official state soil – trickled from the 1939 hourglass, Floridians celebrated both a new year and decade with customary abandon. Americans needed a cathartic release. Historians have aptly labeled the 1930s as "the long decade" and "the lean years." If the first half had been dominated by social discontent and economic depression, the years 1936-1939 set off trip wires engulfing Europe and Asia in hellish wars. Floridians scanning the end-of-the-decade editions of the *Daytona Beach Evening News, the Gadsden County Times*, and *Apopka Chief* read details about strange places with ominous meaning – Suomussalmi and Guernica, Addis Ababa and Nanking – and encountered ominous new words: quisling, blitzkrieg, fifth column, and appeasement.

Floridians loved to escape reality, and Hollywood provided a dream factory. The year 1939, exemplified by *The Wizard of Oz*, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, *Young Mr. Lincoln*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, represented cinema's finest hour. An astonishing eighty million Americans sought relief and release at movie theaters each week. "A feast of light and shadow" awaited them. During intermissions, "March of Time" newsreels depicted gallant Finns defending their homeland against invading Russians in the Winter War,

revealed a new German edict requiring Jews over age ten to wear white armbands bearing a Star of David, and Japanese troops ruthlessly conquering vast swaths of China.[2]

Residents flocked to the December 1939 premieres of the film adaptations of Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. In a case of art imitating life, film introduced audiences to fourteenth-century France and Civil War Georgia. The *Hunchback of Notre Dame* may have been filmed at a massive ranch in the San Fernando Valley, but its prologue reminded audiences that although the film's setting was the late Middle Ages, the message was focused upon the hurly burly of 1939: "France, ravaged by a hundred years of war, at last found peace. The people felt free to hope again, the dream of progress, but superstition and prejudice often stood in the way, seeking to crush the adventurous spirit of man." In the case of *Gone with the Wind*, art reinforced burnished dogma that the war had been a noble cause, a "Lost Cause."

Star-Studded New Era

"Outside," a Tampa reporter working the New Year's Eve 1939 shift described "screeching whistles, the bang of bursting fireworks, the rattle and clang of innumerable noise-makers . . . welcomed the arrival of a new year and a new decade." No record exists as to how three locals celebrated New Years' Eve 1940; only one had become a celebrity.

The city's dog catcher was as mysterious as he was coarse, an illegal Dutch immigrant who reinvented himself as a carny: Colonel Tom Parker. He was officially the director of Tampa's

Humane Society, and he occasionally booked country and western acts, then called "hillbilly" music. While Parker patrolled city alleys for stray dogs, William Franklin Graham Jr. searched for stray souls. The North Carolina-born Graham was enrolled at the Florida Bible Institute in Temple Terrace. He sharpened his skills by preaching sermons for hoboes and drifters at the Franklin Street Gospel Mission in downtown Tampa. Thelma McQueen, the daughter of a stevedore and a domestic servant, was living in California in 1939. She preferred her nickname, "Butterfly," and became a global star by virtue of her role as Prissy in *Gone with the Wind*. The film's world premiere was held at Loew's Grand Theatre in Atlanta on December 15, 1939, but McQueen and Hattie McDaniel, the film's Black stars, were advised not to attend because of segregation.[3]

St. Augustine was home to several future luminaries, none more famous than Ray Charles Robinson. In 1937, the young boy left his family in Greenville, Florida, to enroll in the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind in St. Augustine. He learned to read and write music in Braille. Expelled for misbehavior following his mother's death – he enjoyed playing in jook joints in the Lincolnville neighborhood – Robinson, who later dropped his surname, moved to Jacksonville where he began performing with bands at the Ritz Theater, called "The Harlem of the South."[4]

Buddy Ebsen moved to Palm Beach County at age ten in 1918. His family soon moved to Orlando, where he leaned to dance at a studio owned by his father. He enrolled at the University of Florida and Rollins College with aspirations of

becoming a doctor, until the state's cratering economy dashed those dreams. But Ebsen's talents as a song-and-dance man brought him to Hollywood. He was originally cast as the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*, later swapping the role for that of the Tinman. Alas, a near-death experience – the result of aluminum dust – resulted in a what-might-have-been role of a lifetime. He instead became a star in a medium few could identify in 1939: television, a strange device found in a few science laboratories.[5]

Nancy Kulp was a first-year student at Florida State College for Women in 1939. She majored in journalism and wrote for the *Miami Beach Tropics* after graduation. Kulp also attended the University of Miami. She captured the turmoil of Miami during the war years, and also wrote profiles of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Errol Flynn, and a forty-year-old enlistee for officer candidate school in Miami Beach: Clark Gable. Kulp's talents landed her in Hollywood, where she earned roles in *Shane*, *Sabrina*, and *The Parent Trap*.

Ironically, Kulp and Ebsen, both former naval officers, met at a most unlikely place: the popular 1960s television series *The Beverly Hillbillies*, where Kulp secured her most famous role when she was cast as the prim and smart secretary in the hit show. Ebsen, the show's headlining star, was a fist-clinching conservative, while Kulp embraced liberalism.[6]

Merian Caldwell Cooper also connects the dots between Florida, Hollywood, and the 1930s. A native of Jacksonville born in 1903, he was enthralled as a young boy by the silent

movie industry that claimed Jacksonville as one of the industry's early centers. His life resembled a film character in a quest for adventure and fame. He was an aviator during the Great War and then helped organize and fly in the Kosciuszko Squadron in the post-war Polish Air Force battling Bolshevik air squadrons. Returning to America, he became a filmmaker and worked in Persia and Siam. In 1933, Cooper succeeded David O. Selznick as vice president in charge of production at the famed RKO Studios. His most spectacular adventure – literally and figuratively – was his steadfast labors to produce one of cinema's great films, *King Kong* (1933). He urged the extraordinary émigré musician and composer Max Steiner to create one of the most memorable musical scores in history for the film.[7]

Striking Contrasts & Uneven Progress

Not quite two million people lived in Florida in 1940. They lived in Baghdad, Sumatra, and Sinai; Two Egg and Lulu, Yeehaw Junction and Fort Lonesome. Some lived on the shores of the Ten Thousand Islands and the Saint Marys River, the Big Bend, and the Little Manatee River, while oystermen plied the waters of Sopchoppy and Apalachicola, Cedar Key and Crystal River. Others sought comfort in Ozona, Healing Waters, and Frostproof; Panacea, Bonita Springs, and Arcadia. They frolicked along Longboat Key, Seagrove, and Cayo Costa; Golden Beach, Ponte Vedra Beach, and Vero Beach. They lived in Old Town and New Hope, near the Devil's Mill Hopper and Paradise Bay. Locals caught bass on Lakes Tohopekaliga, Panasoffkee, and Thonotosassa, floating on canoes along the Rivers Withlacoochee, the Ichetucknee, and the Ocklawaha.

Collier County takes pride in its colorful place names: Corkscrew March, Twelve Mile Prairie, Lard Can Slough, Gator Hook Stand, and Sadie Cypress. Fruit hogs tended groves at Orange Park, Lemon City, and Citra. Grove became town in Vero Beach, Temple Terrace, and Howey in the Hills. Aging sons and daughters paid respects to the Confederate monuments in Leesburg, Brooksville, and Dixie County. Children of Billy Yank laid wreaths at Grand Army of the Republic halls in St. Cloud, St. Petersburg, and Lynn Haven, a ritual unthinkable in other Southern states. Perhaps the most intriguing place in 1940 Florida was Miami's ex-slaves club in Liberty City.[8]

Florida's natural features are stunning and widespread: almost a thousand miles of coastline, 10,000 miles of rivers and streams, 7,000 lakes and springs, and 4,510 islands. If Napoleon insisted that Italy was too long to be a country, surely Florida seems too long to be a state. In 1938, the Overseas Highway between Miami and Key West opened. To appreciate its breadth, if a motorist began his journey in Key West traversing the Keys highways and bridges speeding northward and stopping at Pensacola, it was the equivalent distance had the driver departed Pensacola for Chicago![9]

By 1930, three Florida cities had crested a demographic threshold: Jacksonville (129,549), Miami (110,637), and Tampa (101,161). But the state's most famous attraction was 825 miles of beach, of which astonishingly little had been developed. Along Florida's northwest and southwest coasts, one could walk miles and not encounter another human. An occasional beach cottage marked settlement. Future sites

famous for their prized beaches – Destin, Naples, Flagler Beach, Jupiter, and Boca Raton – boasted populations in 1930 respectively of 166, 390, 198, 176, and 447 residents.[10]

If state leaders had been asked in 1920 to list Florida's great challenges, a top answer would have been "water – too much of it!" But following decades of scandalous waste, development, and disregard for such a precious resource, a committee of informed leaders focused on the area's natural resources in 1937 warned that diminishing supplies of underground freshwater posed a threat. Their findings were ignored.[11]

In 1940, Florida was a vast state with a small population. In size, its 58,560 square miles was the second-largest state east of the Mississippi; in population, its 1,897,414 residents ranked last in the South, trailing even Arkansas, West Virginia, and South Carolina. North Carolina's and Texas's population doubled and trebled that of Florida's census count. Striking contrasts defined Florida and Floridians. In 1940, the smallest county was Glades County, and its population was 2,745, a decline of 17 inhabitants since the 1930 census.

Like a giant lumbering toward some distant mark, Florida's progress was uneven, its strides fitful and destination unclear. The state's perception alternated between a dreamy republic, an American Mediterranean with extraordinary land, seascapes and California-like possibilities, with that of a hell on earth, a paradise forfeited to avaricious phosphate corporations and clear-cut timber companies, a giant tourist trap filled with honky-tonk jook joints, alligator farms, and shady land salesmen. Critics could not even agree about

Florida's vaunted climate: the summers made it too harsh for year-round living, while the winters were too mellow for the Protestant American Work Ethic.

Such was one of many discordant notes in the rhythms of everyday life in 1940. A new decade dawned and a buoyant Florida shed few tears for the terrible thirties. Yet it was a state heavily cast in sunshine and shadows. Everywhere one found extremes. In Palm Beach, some of the wealthiest families in the world lived along and shopped Worth Avenue. Just miles away, one encountered scenes at Belle Glade and Bean City closer to Reconstruction-era Florida than the 1940s. Florida resembled a Caravaggio painting hanging in the John Ringling mansion on Sarasota Bay, a chiaroscuro of intense shades of light and darkness.

In the Stranglehold of the Old South

If a criterion for the elusive term "Southern" was the presence of a large proportion of residents born in the South, Florida checked all the boxes. The Florida State Census of 1935 listed fully two-thirds of its residents as being born in Florida, Alabama, or Georgia. Consider that Park Trammell, Frank Clark, Sidney J. Catts, and Claude Pepper – four remarkable Florida politicians – were all born in Alabama.[12] Vestiges of the Old South in this New South state appeared everywhere. Jacksonville's Confederate Park marked the site of a Civil War encampment of 14,000 troops. Scarcely a Doric-columned courthouse lacked a statue honoring Johnny Reb. But the roll call was shrinking; in 1940 Florida still mailed monthly pension checks of forty dollars to a handful of veterans and nearly a thousand widows. Legislators honored the Lost

Cause: State holidays included January 19, Robert E. Lee's birthday, and April 26, Confederate Memorial Day. Church pews constructed of yellow pine or cypress and fashioned by African slaves still stood in Tallahassee, Madison, and Monticello.[13]

Civil War veterans also enjoyed Florida's salubrious climate. The headline of the 1938 *St. Petersburg Times* read, "'Wouldn't Have Missed it for Anything.' Vet, 107, Says on Return from Gettysburg." Cities celebrated, even sanctified its home-town veterans of Gettysburg. But what distinguished 107-year-old Charles W. Eldridge was his service record: He fought for the Union Army and served as commander of the local GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) post. Billy Yank and Johnny Reb lived side by side in St. Petersburg. In April 1940, the local paper reported, "Spirit of the Confederacy was intensified yesterday when a large group of people, observing Southern Memorial Day, gathered around the monument in Greenwood cemetery to honor the 'sleeping boys in gray' in a program arranged by the Dixie chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy . . ."

Hundreds of public schools were named after Confederate heroes: Gainesville's Sidney Lanier Center, Miami's Robert E. Lee Junior High, six schools in Duval County, Stonewall Jackson Middle School in Orange County, Francis Hendry in Gendry County, and the counties of Bradford, Hendry, Lee, and Pasco.[14] Schools named for African Americans were rare but cherished and few survived. Orlando Colored School,

opened in 1882, was named for a beloved Black principal and Orlando's first African American city councilman. Booker T. Washington, Black Miami's first high school, opened in 1927.[15]

For residents of Leon County, Confederate Memorial Day paid homage to the heroes of Natural Bridge, celebrating that spring day in 1865 when "the Cradle and Grave" brigade saved Florida's capital from destruction. LeRoy Collins reminisced how as a boy, he was captivated by a wizened veteran of that battle who wore his venerable uniform to the celebration. The man took a stick and circled it, chanting, "This is where I stood. This is where I stood." Another Tallahassean alive in 1940 who remembered the Battle of Natural Bridge was Susan Bradford Eppes. Born in 1846 at Pine Hill at the old Bradford plantation and a granddaughter of Florida's last territorial governor, she married a grandson of Thomas Jefferson. After reaching age seventy, she wrote three books lamenting the passing of the Old South. She died in Tallahassee in July 1942.[16]

Lives Shaped by Landscape

African American residents held few illusions. Florida's culture and politics mirrored the Deep South: a legacy of slavery, secession, military defeat and surrender, Reconstruction, Bourbon restoration, and one-party politics; a state of Jim Crow traditions, a white primary, and a frightening level of interracial violence and lynching. The 1935 state census underscored this special relationship with the South: three-fourths of the state's residents were born in Florida or the South. Not a single classroom in Florida was integrated in 1940. When Florida legislators posed for a group portrait

in 1939, it was a sea of masculine, white faces. Not a single Hispanic, Black, Republican, or woman answered the roll call. It was not always so. In 1940, John Proctor, the last surviving African American veteran of the 1873 Florida Legislature, celebrated his 95th birthday. Born to freedom in 1844, his father sold him to bondage because of debts. Proctor served in the Florida Legislature from 1873 to 1875 and 1879 to 1881. He reached the age of 100.[17]

Jacksonville's African American population stood on the shoulders of giants: James Weldon Johnson, Dr. Alexander Darnes, T. Thomas Fortune, A. Philip Randolph, and Rosmond Johnson. Yet most Florida African Americans did not live in urban settings; rather, in 1930 fewer than half of the state's Black residents (44 percent) resided in rural areas, a world described so poignantly and eloquently by Zora Neale Hurston in *Mules and Men* (1935) and *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942).[18]

The Great Migration did not end following the Armistice in 1918. Between 1914 and the 1950s, millions of African Americans left farms and cities for opportunity in Northern cities. Large numbers of African Americans left Florida between 1915 and 1920, but the movement of Black people and poor whites continued. Fully 28 of Florida's 67 counties registered an absolute loss in African American residents in 1940, with only three Florida counties maintaining African American-majority status: Gadsden, Jefferson, and Leon. Another dozen counties barely scratched a positive increase in the decade leading up to that year. Waves of poor Black and white residents went north and south. Significant numbers

of African Americans – and poor whites – fled farms in Georgia and Alabama for opportunities in Florida. The family of novelist Harry Crews fled Bacon County, Georgia, for a poor white neighborhood in Jacksonville, Florida, called Springfield.

One should note that 1.4 million African Americans were undercounted in the 1940 U.S. Census.[19] However, in significant ways since the 1920s, America's southernmost Southern state had been overshadowed by frenetic growth. Many statistical variables suggest that Florida had seceded from the South. Historically, the South was characterized by a large African American population, a paucity of immigrants, high birth rates, lots of children, and a large proportion of rural residents. Florida failed this Southern admission test in 1940. But other variables, such as racial violence and adherence to the Democratic Party, tied Florida to the New South. Aptly, the Federal Writers' study is titled, "Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State" (1939). In that classic guide, writers observed that "Politically and socially, Florida has its own North and South," adding "its northern area is strictly southern and its southern area definitely northern." To clarify or confuse the debate, sociologist John Shelton Reed divined, "Florida is not unique in the United States. It's just unique in the South."[20]

What did hold special meaning to Southerners was land and climate. Heat, humidity, an abundance of fresh water, and a long growing season forged a distinctive identity and attachment to the land. While it is true that all states possess unique subregions, no other Southern state reflects

Florida's environmental diversity, the result of extraordinary longitudinal boundaries. Peninsular and panhandle Florida encompass 8,436 miles of tidal shoreline. Tallahassee, the state capital, lies 20 miles from the Georgia border and 500 miles from Miami. Key West, the most important island of an intricate archipelago off the Straits of Florida, lies just 90 miles from Cuba but about 800 miles from Pensacola. The peninsula's flying foot juts into the Caribbean, isolating the peninsula from the American Southeast.

The sheer geographical and environmental breadth shaped distinctive economies and ways of life. In 1940, Floridians lived on and off the land, sharing an intimacy with a climate that could be oppressively humid, bone-chillingly cold, and tropically wet, demanding adaptability and ingenuity. The 1940 U.S. Census included Henry Marshall, a resident of Loxahatchee Groves whose occupation was "hunter of frog legs." Other occupations included muleskinners, fish peddlers singing Bahamian chants, soda jerks, and "granny midwives."[21]

Shotgun Houses & Florida Rooms

Architecturally, generations of carpenters and masons erected dog-trot cabins, bungalows, Mediterranean revivals, and art deco creations to shelter residents from the elements, adding their distinctive signatures in wood and stucco, tile and brick. The ubiquitous wooden-framed, shotgun-style house surely housed more Southerners than any other.

Imported from the Caribbean and West Indies, where African slaves introduced it, the shotgun home perfectly

complemented supply and demand: a demand for cheap, quick housing, a plentitude of yellow pine, a scarcity of skilled workers, and blueprints carried from generation to generation in carpenters' heads. Cypress shingles, tin sheets, and tar paper finished the roof. If the homeowner was lucky, legendary Dade County pine girded the impregnable floors. The shotgun-style house obeyed the most elementary law of tropical physics: hot air rises, and water may. Built off the ground with a small porch, the shotgun easily expanded into a dog-trot cabin with accompanying breezeway and detached kitchen. The segregated Black neighborhoods of the West Grove in Miami's Coconut Grove and Colored Town were studded with such dwellings.

Subtle distinctions, not dramatic contrasts, characterized Florida's climate. Modern travelers often complain of the monotony of the terrain and climate, but in fact, subtle changes mattered greatly to people living close to the land. Floridians organized their lives around these changes. "When the crepe myrtle is in bloom" reminded Sanford's "Red" Barber, "it's time for Florida watermelons." Author Elizabeth S. Morgan was a young woman living in Havana, Florida, in the 1930s. Years later, she reflected upon her youthful life. "Back then, time was measured by the seasons. Weather, that culprit or creator of crops and adventure, was at the center of intimacy among hunters and fishermen, mostly farmers by occupation . . . They speculated about it, prayed about it, feared it, and held it sacred. Events were recalled by the kind of day it had been."[22]

One could curse the summer heat or luxuriate in its possibilities. For refreshment, Floridians celebrated summer in a myriad of ways. Individuals and families sought the cooling benefits of natural springs abundantly endowing north and south-central Florida. Only Silver Springs had been "commercialized"; remarkably, there was only a modest fee and little development of the major springs. Mermaids had not yet appeared at Weeki Wachee, which existed as an untapped, undeveloped and largely undiscovered natural water wonderland in Hernando County (population 5,441 in 1940). Newspapers welcomed summer's rainy season with headlines such as "Air-Conditioned Rains Expected." To combat the Northern press and the impression that Florida's summers were insufferably hot, the *Sarasota News* went on the offensive, proclaiming, "Records prove that while temperatures soar over the Nation, it's comfortable here. Beat the heat! Stay in Air-Conditioned Sarasota where it's C-O-O-L." Five-Points' merchants sold metal frames holding license plates trumpeting, "Sarasota, FLA. Air-Conditioned City."[23]

City residents sought sanctuary from the summer blazes by coaxing splinters of ice from a familiar and welcome source. The ice man – he with the tongs and heavy apron – was as indispensable as he was appreciated. Along main streets bustling with traffic on Friday and Saturday nights, drugstores with soda fountains and ice cream parlors served as oases. Across granite and wooden counters customers cooled off with a double dip of vanilla or strawberry ice cream; in Ybor City and Key West, patrons sampled *helados* and *batidos* made from sapodilla and guava, mammey and mango. Druggists

concocted local phosphate favorites. The 1940 U.S. Census listed William Fagan, age 22, living on Parker Road in West Palm Beach. He informed the census taker that he dispensed sodas to support his eleven-member family.[24]

No city appreciated a bottle of cold Coca-Cola more than Quincy. A lost war and falling agricultural prices had walloped the once prosperous community in western Florida known for tobacco and cotton. A legendary Quincy resident, banker, and son of Scottish immigrants, Pat Munroe, was a keen observer of public life. The most popular soft drink in Gadsden County was Coca-Cola. As a banker, he appreciated a bargain, and Coca-Cola stock was quite inexpensive in the 1930s, prompting him to urge bank customers to purchase the soda company's stocks. So many locals gobbled up the favored stock that this city of 3,888 in 1940 prided in its reputation as the richest town per capita in the U.S. When Munroe died, he left $1 million to each of his 18 children![25]

Summer heat dampened the collars of pastors and sinners on Sundays. Rev. Marshall Woodson, the pastor of St. Petersburg's First Presbyterian Church, broke with tradition by urging men to leave their seersucker suits and white linen coats at home in August 1937. Heat and humidity were the least of the concerns of parishioners whose pastors bedeviled serpents through the dark arts of snake charming. George K. End owned a rattlesnake canning establishment near Arcadia.[26] Summer rains also reintroduced the menacing and ubiquitous mosquito.

Along Florida's bountiful wetlands and marshes – then called swamps – the black salt marsh mosquito (*Aedes taeniorhynchus*) bred by the billions, acquiring such vicious reputations that large sections of the state abutting these marshes had barely been developed. The land and marshes surrounding Cape Canaveral were considered uninhabitable, as were many barrier islands during the summer months. Freshwater mosquitos also aggravated generations of Floridians. Residents defended themselves by wearing long-sleeved shirts in the summer and dumping tons of petroleum and pesticides on top of creeks and bayous. In 1927, Florida organized mosquito-control districts to combat the menace, but most Floridians simply tolerated the nuisance.[27]

The screened-in porch became very popular in the twentieth century, allowing families to catch an afternoon breeze and find solace during muggy nights. Sometimes called a "Florida Room," the shaded space provided relief, a place to read the afternoon newspaper or share cold drinks. Bungalows built in the early decades of the century sometimes featured a porte cochère, a roofed structure extending from the home, a garage without walls, a perfect sleeping room in warm weather. Technology had measurably eased the lives of some Southerners – at least city dwellers – coping with summer heat.

Electricity & Air Conditioning

Beginning in the 1920s, air conditioning cooled patrons in Florida's most prestigious movie theaters and department stores. In 1936, a *Tampa Morning Tribune* headline announced that a home on Baltic Circle on Davis Islands

became the city's "first air-conditioned home." The home with its novelty cost $7,500. Affordable window units awaited the technology and affluence of the 1950s and '60s. Electric ceiling fans along with portable fans generated breezes. The installation of air conditioning in the 1930s often lured journalists to document moments, such as "Cafeteria Now Air-Conditioned," a 1938 story about the Tramor Cafeteria, "the first . . . in St. Petersburg to be completely air conditioned," while offering its customers "interior weather comforts."

In 1935, the Atlantic Coast Line installed air conditioning in "all trains between New York and Florida and Chicago and Florida." Many of the top movie theaters in Florida offered air-conditioned comfort, or as one newspaper reported, "Local Theater Manufactures Own Weather." Historian Raymond Arsenault described the consequences as "the end of the long hot summer." If progress made humans happy, what about animals? A 1937 headline announced, "Poultry Farms Go Modern; Hens Get Air Conditioning." Chicken farmers in Brooksville determined that cool chickens were happier, more prolific egg-producing chickens.[28]

The popularity of radio threatened movie theaters, but the introduction of "talkies" and sound in the late 1920s ushered in a golden age of American cinema. Grandparents and young lovers, newlyweds and divorcées flocked to the silver screens. Movies have always been a cultural flashpoint in American history. Towns across the state debated in the 1930s whether it was proper to show films on Sunday. By 1935, every town

in Florida but one concurred that there was nothing improper about a Sunday matinee. Only LaBelle, a town of 500 people in 1935, resisted.[29]

Among the firmament of downtown Miami movie palaces, the Olympia Theatre, a product of the real estate boom of the mid-1920s, stood apart from the others because of its beautiful, distinctive interior featuring rolling clouds, twinkling stars and other unique adornments.

Olympia Theater exterior, June 12, 1936. Claude Carson Matlack, photographer. Claude Matlack Photograph Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, Matlack 394-10-2.

The 1920s and ’30s witnessed a luxurious arms race to erect the most opulent movie palaces. By the early 1930s, many of the structures had to adapt to an expensive but necessary new technology: sound. These theaters, some with phantasmagorical names, included the stunning Olympia Theatre in downtown Miami, the Capitol Theatre on North Miami Avenue in the same quarter, La Plaza in St. Petersburg, the Saenger Theatre in Pensacola, the Monticello Opera House, the Polk Theatre in Lakeland, the Athens in DeLand, the Sunrise Theatre in Fort Pierce, the Arcade in Fort Myers, the Arcadia Opera House, and the Dixie Theatre of Apalachicola.

Orlando’s Roxy Theatre radiated art deco themes designed by Alexander Pantages and seated one thousand patrons. The Imperial Theatre in Jacksonville lived up to its name, a neo-Georgian-style film palace that could accommodate almost one thousand patrons. Along Jacksonville’s “Great White Way” stood six movie theaters. The *Jacksonville Journal* described the Spanish eclectic-style Florida Theatre as “a thing of beauty, a palace of dreams.” Winter Garden may only have been a city of 3,060 in 1940, but the surrounding grove and farming locales flocked to the Garden Theatre and the Old Gem Theatre. The decade of the 1930s also gave birth to the drive-in theater in Florida.[30]

African American customers also flocked to the movies, even if restricted to the balcony or Blacks-only theaters. Two of Florida’s most famous Black movie palaces were in Coconut Grove: Harlem and the Ace Theatre. West Indian Black individuals patronized the Ace Theatre on Grand Avenue. The

Lyric Theatre was a popular attraction in Miami's Overtown neighborhood. At Quincy's Roxy Theatre, African Americans were permitted in the balcony. In Tampa, the Palace and Central theaters catered to Black-only audiences. In the 1930s and '40s, these structures were not merely confined to movies; rather, the buildings were also used for school graduations, talent shows, and proms.[31]

Pre-dating all other movie theaters in Depression-era Miami was the Lyric Theater in what was then known as "Colored Town," today's Overtown, which opened in 1913 or 1915, depending on the source. In the era following World War II, the theater experienced hard times, new uses and even lengthy periods of vacancy before its splendid restoration brought back its "magic" at the beginning of the new century.

Lyric Theater, circa 1990. Miami Urban Development Program. HistoryMiami Museum, 1996-350-55.

If the dedication of Henry Flagler's Royal Palm Hotel in 1897 announced the rise of Miami, its demolition in 1930 symbolized a new era of skyscrapers and art deco hotels. Miami's glistening Biscayne Boulevard hosted South Florida's first skyline, which included the Watson, Everglades, McAllister, Alcazar, and Columbus hotels; they attracted European dowagers, American robber barons, self-made millionaires, and indulgent middle-class Midwesterners. Perhaps no building in 1930s Florida radiated such a blend of power and awe as the Mediterranean-styled Freedom Tower, the northernmost element of the above-mentioned skyline, built in 1925 as the Miami News tower.[32]

In Tampa, Miami, and Jacksonville, department stores such as Maas Brothers, Burdines, Furchgott's, and Cohen Brothers showcased the latest fashions in air-conditioned comfort. Modern department stores, like Ivey's in Orlando, drew customers from the hinterlands. Cast-iron and steel beams allowed merchants to display merchandise behind huge plate glass panels. Window shopping became a favorite weeknight form of entertainment.[33]

In the summer of 1940, Floridians gathered on their front porches to relax, escape the heat, and socialize with strolling neighbors. Sociologists would later call the era "a front-porch society." It was a face-to-face community where neighbors knew neighbors. "Twilight was the time for sitting on porches," wrote Hurston, drawing upon her memories of Eatonville: "It was the time to bear things and talk." Novelist William Faulkner imagined grandfathers who had fought at Gettysburg and Shiloh holding their grandsons on their knees

and telling stories of dash and gallantry. Former enslaved persons hoisted their grandchildren on front porches, reminding them of the cruelty of slavery and preciousness of freedom.

In the 1930s, a portion of Biscayne Boulevard just north of downtown represented a retail and entertainment "rival" to the latter with such stores as Sears Roebuck & Co., Burdine Boulevard Shops and the ornate Mayfair Theatre, seen here.

Mayfair Theatre, 1937. South Florida Photograph Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1975-039-16

By the 1930s, most urban residents enjoyed the comforts of electricity, but rural residents were not as fortunate. Spearheaded by a young congressman from Texas who remembered the hardships his mother faced on the farm, Lyndon B. Johnson helped pass the Rural Electrification Act in 1935, a partnership between the federal government and

nonprofit cooperatives, made possible the electrification of isolated farms. On the eve of the act, 55,000 Florida farms lacked electricity.[34]

What literary characteristics make a novel "Southern"? What is the litmus test of a Southern novel? Professor Jerry Leath Mills insists the answer is simply: "The mule must die!" The mule must die! In *Sartoris*, Faulkner writes, "Some Homer of the cotton fields should sing the saga of the mule and his place in the South." Alas, few symbols of the rural South were vanishing faster than the mule. Once a fixture on most Florida farms, by 1930, the U.S. Census Bureau counted only 41,000 mules in Florida. The mule population of Mississippi approached 400,000. In what was possibly the last front page story featuring those pack animals, the article was as revealing as it was unusual. The setting: Millard Davidson, superintendent of the Florida Boy's Industrial School in Marianna, appeared before the Florida State Cabinet. Davidson informed the committee, "One of our mules died." That simple sentence touched off what certainly was the last such discussion at such an august gathering. Governor Fred "Old Suwannee" Cone boasted, "I've plowed many a day." The state treasurer, comptroller, and commissioner of agriculture all testified as to their first-hand knowledge of Equus mulus.[35]

If mules were becoming more rare, so was Florida's vanishing wildlife. In modern Florida, Isaiah's prophecies came true: Wet was made dry, hot became cool, and the crooked made straight. If a single word was associated with the environment, the word was "inexhaustible." Unlike California, where pioneers and developers had to move mountains, the

Sunshine State was as flat as environmental regulations were nonexistent. A handful of Cassandras and Jeremiahs pleaded but few listened. A 1930 *Miami Herald* editorial, "Stop the Slaughter," addressed the appalling decline in the region's birdlife. The *Herald*, however, pointed the finger at young boys with guns and feral cats, not development and progress.[36]

Revolutionaries & Transients

Before Franklin Delano Roosevelt, there was no safety net for the poor, no social security for the aged, no guarantee of banking deposits or rights to organize a union, and no federal relief for farmers. Critics on the Right branded Roosevelt a starry-eyed socialist, while the Left never forgave him for preserving capitalism. America in the 1930s was poised on a hinge of history, precariously balanced between the fulcrum of fascist dictatorships and social revolutionaries.

Remarkably, none of this would have occurred were it not for an errant gunshot. Elected in November 1932, president-elect Roosevelt arrived in Miami in February 1933 to embark upon a Caribbean vacation. His inauguration would be the last such held in March. He promised to make a brief appearance at Miami's Bayfront Park on February 15. A crowd of 20,000 awaited the nation's next chief executive. The jovial Roosevelt began his remarks, "I am not a stranger here because for a good many years I used to come down here." Standing nearby was Anton Cermak, a friend and popular mayor of Chicago. Among the packed throng was a troubled Italian immigrant: Giuseppe Zangara had arrived in America in 1923 following his unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Italy's King Victor Emmanuelle.

Zangara was an anarchist who believed in the doctrine of "propaganda by deed." Convinced that Roosevelt's death would incite a revolution, Zangara already owned a hammerless .32 caliber, five-shot revolver – a Tuesday night special – which, along with the bullets, cost $8. He spotted Roosevelt amongst the crowd, stepped atop a chair, and fired five shots. One bullet struck Cermak, who later died, while another victim was shot between the eyes but survived.[37] On March 20, 1933, only 33 days after the infamous rampage, Zangara was electrocuted at the Raiford State Prison. Had he succeeded, Roosevelt's successor would have been the conservative Texas Democrat, John Nance "Cactus Jack" Garner.

Roosevelt's greatest quality was character. When asked to evaluate the young candidate, an old family friend, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, said famously, "Second-class intellect; first-class temperament." Character is destiny.[38] Roosevelt was an extraordinary figure, a chameleon playing many roles in his 63 years as dutiful son, Harvard graduate, unfaithful husband, New York State legislator, vice presidential candidate on the losing 1920 Democratic national ticket, governor of the Empire State, and the only American elected four times as president. He was the man in the arena. Stricken by polio in 1921, he overcame his disability. He was a paradox, an elitist who served King George VI and Queen Elizabeth hot dogs at his palatial family estate in Hyde Park, New York.

Roosevelt, Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Francisco Franco, Benito Mussolini, and Joseph

Stalin dominated the 1930s and war years. Elected in 1932, Roosevelt served as chief executive until his death in 1945. He and Hitler both came to power and died a few weeks apart. Washington's footprint upon the lives of ordinary Floridians was minimal and unobtrusive before the 1930s. Roosevelt's New Deal fed children, boosted prices paid to farmers, encouraged workers to join unions, provided security for the elderly, and made possible Florida state parks. Military installations also began to spread across the panhandle and peninsula.[39]

The 1930s was one of the most animated and activated decades in history. Spain was torn apart by a civil war while Italy and Germany veered to Fascist dictatorships. In America, Louisiana Governor Huey Long, Father Charles E. Coughlin, and Charles Lindbergh threatened the status quo. The late historian Alan Brinkley argued that the moorings of tradition were being ripped apart by the rise of chain stores and new relationships. "It was not just the loss of services . . ." Brinkley contended, "It was the disappearance, as well, of a form of interaction . . . grocers who 'advertised' by giving children a bag of candy."[40]

Revolutionaries stalked the land while homeless men wandered the countryside. Not since Coxey's Army of the unemployed had America been in such a disequilibrium. Ridiculed as "hoboes," "road hikers," and "vagrants," Florida branded the transients a menace. "The highway became their home," wrote John Steinbeck, "and movement their form of transportation." In Dade County, police escorted unwelcome visitors to the Broward County line in so-called "Hobo

expresses" (police trucks). The city of St. Petersburg erected billboards warning migrants to keep moving. "WARNING," the sign read, "DO NOT COME HERE SEEKING WORK." A kinder, gentler attitude was displayed in Jacksonville. The New Deal created and bankrolled Camp Foster, described in 1933 as a colony of a thousand penniless men. "Its members are men from all strata of society," observed the *Jacksonville Journal*, "from the pedestrian to the professor."[41]

Observers noted large numbers of tar-paper shacks between Orlando and the Everglades, as necessitous men and women squatted on private lands, picking oranges and tomatoes in season. In Highlands County, observed historian Jack Kirby, "families survived in jerry-built shacks, raising and selling a few vegetables in towns nearby, hauling firewood in rusted cars with wooden seats and no tops, and hunting and fishing."[42]

An iron law holds that during hard times, Americans see Florida as a refuge. The sheer numbers of transients and transplants became a political lightning rod. In 1936, Florida Governor David Sholtz wrote Roosevelt a letter. "For many years Florida has been the destination of hundreds and lately thousands of indigent persons from other states . . . Others have come to Florida in the hope of securing seasonal work and have become stranded . . . Some are carriers of dangerous diseases, and some are a menace to public safety." Aubrey Williams, the deputy administrator for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), answered swiftly and sternly: "No."

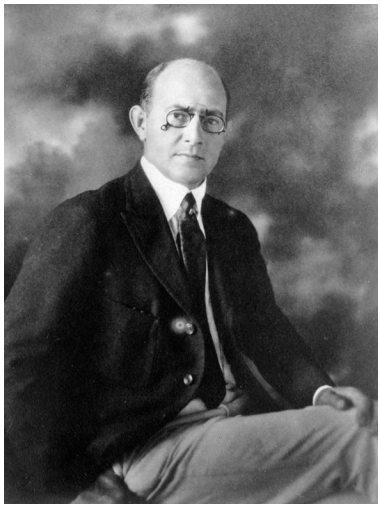
He continued, "It would be both unwise and impractical for the Federal government to establish special measures for non-residents."[43]

Impact of the New Deal

Roosevelt's New Deal touched small towns and big cities, city halls and county courthouses. In 1936, the WPA erected a state fish hatchery at Wewahitchka, certainly one of the most remote places in Florida, 24 miles north of Port St. Joe. Wewahitchka is famous for its tupelo honey, harvested in the Apalachicola Forest. Citrus County, located along the central Gulf Coast, had been whiplashed by the Great Depression, isolated and impoverished. But the list of New Deal projects underscored the need for action: new schools built in Lecanto and Inverness, a new community center for Crystal River, the dredging of the Withlacoochee River, and bridge and road construction. In DeFuniak Springs, the Chautauqua's Hall of Brotherhood hosted sewing classes for local women under the aegis of the WPA.[44]

The economic wreckage leveled hundreds of Florida banks and corporations. Pummeled by the real estate crash in 1926, Florida was devastated by the Wall Street crash three years later. Agriculture lay in ruins, victim of underconsumption and overproduction, the Mediterranean fruit fly and the cattle tick. Bad dreams and dashed dreams occurred in North Dakota and New York, not in sunshine states. The mood in Florida, once a beacon of optimism, was bleak. In the cities, steel skeletons, once a symbol of prosperity, now rusted.

The fortunes of John Ringling, Carl Fisher, George Merrick, and thousands of transplants were dashed on the rocks of speculation and bankruptcy.



Carl Fisher

Carl Fisher, circa 1925. South Florida Photograph Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1963-015-98.

Roosevelt relied upon close aides to provide unfiltered facts. He also trusted an extraordinary journalist, Lorena Hickok, who a writer described as "best remembered today for her intimate, not-quite-definable-friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt." Joanna Scutts argues that Hickok and Roosevelt "both bore the scars of long fights to make their voices heard in rooms dominated by men." Hickok toured the country and in carefully typed letters, described the bleak conditions. In late January 1934, a letter arrived from Florida, dateline Miami. "I am sorry to report, Sir, that Florida seems to be

something of a mess." She added, "The Governor has a bad reputation around the state, and it's getting worse . . . It seems to be worse in Tampa, which, I'm told could teach New York City something about political control."[45]

Put simply, the New Deal ameliorated the worst excesses of the Great Depression, and offered hope to many who had lost all faith in the American way. In astonishing numbers, Americans participated in a series of innovative programs designed to restore confidence and create jobs, all the while instilling a sense of pride and humanitarianism. Roosevelt was the happy warrior playing high-stake poker because he represented, in Mark Twain's words, "a Christian holding four aces." His New Deal coalition was arguably the most formidable coalition in American political history, and brought to the ballot box white ethnics (Italians, Irish, and Slavs), the South (whites and Blacks), Catholics, Jews, and labor.

In 1936, Roosevelt's political power crested, winning every state but Maine and Vermont. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) recruited young men between the ages of 17 and 23 to plant trees, build parks, and repair a bruised environment. Almost 50,000 Floridians were paid $30 a month, of which $25 went to their families. The nucleus of today's Florida state park system stands as a CCC legacy: Florida Caverns, Torreya, Fort Clinch, O'Leno, Hillsborough River, Highland Hammock, Matheson Hammock, Greynolds Park, and the Myakka River.[46]

With a strong hand in the development of Fairchild Tropical Gardens, north Miami's Greynolds Park and Coral Gables' Matheson Hammock Park, the New Deal's CCC contributed

The New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) contributed mightily to Dade County's expanding parks inventory. Completed at the outset of the 1940s, Matheson Hammock Park was one of the agency's most ambitious efforts with its atoll pool, beaches, marina, gardens and built environment.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) building project at Matheson Hammock Park, July 10, 1938. Miami News Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-13139.

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mightily to Dade County's expanding parks inventory. Completed at the outset of the 1940s, Matheson Hammock Park was one of the agency's most ambitious efforts with its atoll pool, beaches, marina, gardens and built environment.

But no New Deal program left a greater legacy than the WPA. Its origins are part desperation, part inspiration. Despite the massive infusion of federal funds, unemployment in 1935 remained dangerously high. More alarming, demagogues were on the march: Long, Coughlin, and Dr. Francis Townsend threatened FDR and American democracy. The election of 1936 loomed. With the bravado of a lion and the cunning of a fox, Roosevelt outflanked his opponents. On May 6, 1935, he established the WPA by executive order. He appointed Harry Hopkins, a former social worker imbued with ample amounts of idealism, nicotine, and cynicism, to head the Second New Deal's most ambitious program. Roosevelt envisioned the WPA to serve as the centerpiece of a massive $5 billion appropriation (then the largest single appropriation in American history), designed to employ as many workers on relief as cheaply as possible. "Give a man a dole," insisted Hopkins, "and you save his body but destroy his spirit."[47]

The WPA's legacy includes 651,000 miles of road and 78,000 bridges (notably the Overseas Highway connecting Miami and Key West). Its laundry list of initiatives – and the agency even constructed laundries! – is simply stunning: airports for Pensacola, Miami, Tampa, Marianna, and Melbourne; a boy scout camp in Bartow; a paved road for Sanibel; a storm shelter for Belle Glade; shuffleboard courts in Fort

Lauderdale's Stranahan Park; an armory in Lake City and Tampa; a new jail for Jefferson County; an athletic field in Monticello; a football stadium in Orlando; a tuberculosis sanitarium in Woodsmere; a student union building at the University of Florida; sewing rooms for the women of Arcadia; a new Leon County High School in Tallahassee; a mattress factory in Carrabelle; a women's dormitory at Rollins College; and hope for Key West.[48] The Public Works Administration (PWA), often confused with the WPA, built the 24,000-seat steel-and-concrete Orange Bowl, known initially as Roddey Burdine Stadium for Miami's late merchant prince.

Eleanor Roosevelt was also a familiar face in Florida. She served as a trusted confidante, reporting from distant and sensitive places that the president could not. Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin described her and Franklin as being in a "complex relationship." The first lady and president often lived separate lives, and she was especially fond of Golden Beach, a Dade County resort community that had a population of 36 in 1930. She wrote a newspaper column, "My Day," and in February 1940 the dateline was "Golden Beach, Florida." She was especially close to Mary McLeod Bethune, the founder and president of Bethune-Cookman College. "My dear, dear Mrs. Roosevelt," one letter from McLeod Bethune began. "It was so lovely of you to write me so tenderly and sincerely concerning my illness."[49]

Claude Pepper

No Florida politician was better known nor had traveled such an unusual path to power than Claude Pepper. Resilient and ambitious, a one-term state legislator now defeated, Pepper

left Perry in 1920 (population 2,744) for Tallahassee, where he lawyered and awaited the right moment to reenter politics. In 1930, Tallahassee's population of 10,700 was the smallest of any state capital except Carson City, Nevada. The "WPA Guide to Florida" noted that Saturday was market day and that it was not unusual to see wagons hauled by mules on oak-lined streets. Until the late 1930s, genteel Tallahassee continued to follow the Southern tradition of mourning. A journalist explained: "Dressed in his Sunday best, a negro employed in the family of the deceased would take the [funeral] notice to the homes of friends and acquaintances." Three political heavyweights called Tallahassee home: Pepper, LeRoy Collins, and Millard Fillmore Caldwell.[50]

In 1934, Pepper threw his hat into the political ring to oppose incumbent Park Trammell for the U.S. Senate. His qualifications included a law degree from Harvard and a single term as an undistinguished state legislator. But, he reminded audiences, "I am with Franklin D. Roosevelt and shall give him aggressive and helpful cooperation. The cornerstone of the New Deal is the welfare of the common man." His opponent had graduated from Cumberland Law School. Trammell also held the distinction of never having lost a local, county, or state election in his political career, a feat matched by a fellow Polk County legend and soon-to-be governor, Spessard Holland. For good reasons, Polk County's nickname was "Imperial Polk County."

Remarkably, the 1934 senatorial primary margin was razor thin; indeed, Pepper most likely received more votes than the incumbent who had served Florida in the U.S. Senate since

1917. Alas, the election was almost certainly stolen. Pepper lost the primary to Trammell by 4,000 votes – and lost the Latin wards in Ybor City and West Tampa by 5,000 votes! Urged to appeal the results, Pepper refused, concerned about party harmony. Instead, he returned to Tallahassee. In 1936, both U.S. senators from Florida, Duncan Fletcher and Trammell, died within thirty days of each other. The Democratic Party, in appreciation of Pepper's generous gesture, nominated the 36-year-old to run unopposed in a special election.[51]

As a ten-year-old boy in Camp Hill, Alabama, Pepper carved into a tree, "Claude Pepper, United States Senator." And if character is destiny, he wrapped his Washington career around two principles: domestic liberalism and hawkish internationalism. U.S. Senator Pepper joined the liberal faction of Congress embracing Roosevelt's New Deal, earning him space on a May 1938 *Time* magazine cover with the caption, "Roosevelt's Weathercock." But Floridians endorsed Pepper's populism because he brought home federal construction projects, farm subsidies, and old-age benefits. In 1938, he spoke to agricultural conventioneers in Miami, insisting, "If it's a good thing to give three out of five people a job, it's a good thing to give five out of five people a job."[52]

In 1940, Pepper reigned as Florida's senior U.S. senator. Dexterously, the now 40-year-old Tallahassee lawyer promoted New Deal social spending and military preparedness, working tirelessly to bring home military pork. His counterparts in the U.S. House of Representatives, Caldwell and his successor, Robert "The Coon" Sikes, proved exceptionally adept at securing military appropriations for

hardscrabble northwest Florida. Federal entitlements quickly shifted from economic programs to military spending, as Dr. New Deal became Dr. Prepares for War.[53] Pepper stood foursquare for military preparedness. In a series of notable speeches, he displayed his oratorical skills. In the summer of 1940, while the Battle of Britain raged, he intoned, "It is not written in the holy writ of Americanism that America should be a spectator at Armageddon."

When critics called Pepper's support of the Lend Lease plan a violation of international law, he retorted that if no action is taken to halt the Nazis, "there would be no international law." When Congress debated the National Service Act, America's first peacetime draft, the Mother of the U.S. of A. and the Congress of American Mothers denounced Pepper's support of the proposal. When the senator emerged victorious, standing on the Capitol steps, he viewed what *Time* described as "a coconut-headed effigy of him [hanging] from a tree in the Capitol Plaza." Hung on the effigy was a sign, "Claude 'Benedict Arnold' Pepper." Hundreds of angry letters flooded his office. Mary Sullivan of Newark, New Jersey, asked, "Are you an American?"[54]

Technological Influences

Since the turn of the century, electricity had brought about dramatic changes in people's everyday lives. In 1940, the electric city reached its zenith as the technology became cheaper and easily available. Most urban residents flicked a switch to light their homes and cook their meals. Electricity lighted dance pavilions, neon signs, radios, night baseball, and the streetcar. Most dramatically and visibly, electricity

helped restructure the city. The new technologies, along with new wealth, both democratized and segregated cities not merely by race but by class. The "better" classes had migrated to the more respectable "suburbs" and neighborhoods, a move largely made possible by electric streetcars. Each morning, Jacksonville's bankers, insurance executives, and merchants left Riverside to work downtown. In St. Petersburg, Coffeepot Bayou, Allendale, and the Jungle offered residents an urban refuge. Along Central Avenue and "the Scrub" in Tampa, in Miami's Colored Town, Tallahassee's Frenchtown, and in Jacksonville's "Dewdrop" area, African Americans lived in segregated neighborhoods constricted by economics, proscribed by custom, and comforted by solidarity.[55]

Electricity and the internal combustion engine also altered the urban landscape. Photographs document the urban clutter: telephone poles, hanging wires, streetcar tracks, and streams of automobiles. Such clutter, however, made cities irresistible to growing streams of migrants. Just as the electric streetcar restructured the American city, the automobile refocused, realigned, and released American society. In 1930, six Florida cities still maintained electric trolley lines: Jacksonville, Miami, Miami Beach, Coral Gables, St. Petersburg, and Tampa. Few could realize it, but so powerful was the lure of the automobile, an instrument so fine-tuned to American individualism, that few Florida communities remained in the streetcar business by 1940. Miami's last streetcar, "dressed" in funeral garb, ran in 1940. None would survive 1948. Reinforcing the stratified nature of cities, the automobile lured rural folk to small towns and villagers to big cities, enticing them with the promise of a better – or at least a more

interesting – life. The automobile and school bus, tractor and truck, shortened distances, increased crop yields, made new markets accessible, and sped away the small farmer and desperate tenant.[56]

The automobile liberated inland towns and farms from the tyranny of isolation and made possible commuting. Historically, Florida's most important cities had begun as river and seaport towns. The coming of the railroad made it possible for Live Oak, Ocala, and Gainesville to prosper as hubs for local produce and trade. But the railroad only went where the tracks pointed. However, technology's wand did not alter the lives of every Floridian. As late as 1936, 54,300 farms in Florida had not been electrified. The New Deal electrified almost 11,000 farms.[57] The Ford Model T, Chevy roadster, and Airstream trailer changed the face and faces of Florida tourism. Since the 1920s large numbers of working-class and middle-class tourists invaded Florida. These "Tin Can Tourists" preferred Sebring, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, and Bradenton to the more pretentious and expensive destinations of Palm Beach or Miami Beach, seeking out municipally operated trailer parks and motor courts. The 1930s introduced the Wally Byam Airstream trailer and by the end of the decade more than 20,000 trailer parks dotted America. Travelers also benefited from cheap gasoline and price wars. In the summer of 1934, a gallon of gas cost 16 cents.[58]

Travelers additionally benefited from a flurry of road building between 1915 and 1940. The Tallahassee to Thomasville, Georgia, road, lined with a live oak canopy,

was incomparable. Tourists extolled the beauty of U.S. 1, the "Overseas Highway," as it twisted through the Indian River area. Highway 301 between Starke and Ocala, Highway 121 connecting Gainesville and Lake City, and Highway 27 across the Highlands Ridge offered visitors breathtaking vistas. In 1940, the speed limit was 45 mph on the highway and 25 in the city. The automobile conquered distances. Sparkling new 1934 Packard Twelves, Miller-Fords, and Cadillac LaSalles crisscrossed the Sunshine State. The New Deal's largesse paved thousands of miles of modern roads. The March 25, 1938, *Homestead Leader Enterprise* headline announced, "Overseas Road Open." Duval Street merchants and fishing boat captains in Key West cheered the news. The Labor Day Hurricane of 1935, one of America's most powerful storms, had laid waste to Flagler's "impossible railroad." U.S. 1 allowed motorists to reach Key West by automobile.[59]

Modern technology, folk art, and partisan politics collided in one of the most unlikely encounters and obscure places. The date was August 1939, and the place was the Aycock and Lindsey Turpentine Camp in Cross City, in Dixie County. The county was home to fewer than 7,000 residents. The cast of characters was as colorful as the futuristic-looking contraption at the center: a recording machine as long as a coffee table that could make records.

Members of the Federal Writers' Project honeycombed Florida's hinterland in search of vanishing Floridians – turpentiners, muleskinners, and jook artists. One such episode occurred in August 1939 when Stetson Kennedy, Robert Harrison Cook, and Hurston came to the Dixie

County turpentine camps to meet and record a "lifer," Cull Stacey. A Tar Heel by birth and profession, Stacey was a drifter with a talent for remembering the singsongs of work and play. Hurston packed a pistol, just in case. After singing "Kerosene Charley and the Chicken Roost," Stacey changed tune and struck a political chord. "Tell 'em [bureaucrats] we ain't getting our chops down here."[60] Hurston, Kennedy, and Cook were part of an extraordinary experiment in American history: the Florida Writers Project, a New Deal effort to put to work unemployed writers and teachers, but also to preserve and record regional folklife, what Hurston later described as "the boiled-down juice, or pot-likker, of human living."[61]

In this world soon to be terrified by new weapons technologies, the word "robot" was introduced. A 1939 *The Daily Democrat* (Tallahassee) headline read, "Baby Robot, Learning to Talk, Has Trouble Pronouncing 'L' But It Says 'Mississippi' Right." The Czech playwright and novelist Karl Capek introduced the Slavonic word "rabota" in a play, popularized in the 1927 silent German film *Metropolis*. In terrifying irony, the word meant "the servitude of forced labor."[62]

Tourism Blows Up

Since the 1920s, the Sunshine State had competed with California for title to the "American Mediterranean" or, as some promoters called it, "The Italy of America." Tourists from all sections could mix in campgrounds and roadsides. But the choice of automobile, hotel, and diner displayed class divisions. Increasingly, American workers earned the right and opportunity to a vacation, and Florida was a popular

choice. Joining the streams of automobiles and trailers headed to Florida, John Jakle observed, "Potentially, motoring was democratic."

Tourists motored to Florida in Ford Deluxe convertible sedans, Buick Dual Cowl Phaetons, Master Deluxe Chevrolet station wagons, and 1938 Dodge D-8s. Depending upon their resources and station (wagons), some travelers stayed at municipal trailer courts, while others found lodging at mom 'n' pop cabins and motels along popular highways. The upper classes preferred the luxuries of big city hotels to pursue a variety of pleasures. Working classes preferred games of baseball and horseshoes, while the middling and upper classes gravitated toward games for gentlemen and ladies, such as lawn bowling and shuffleboard. Indeed, St. Petersburg was home to the National Shuffleboard Association.[63]

The Great Depression initially walloped tourism. The number of guests at the ornate Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine had dwindled to ten percent of its capacity. Miami appealed to tourists with a new slogan: "Stay Through May." Tourism was becoming Florida's economic savior. "The whirl of tourist activity began every November and continued for six hectic months, coming to a crescendo in early spring," writes Arsenault. "There are no boll weevils in the tourist crop," proclaimed a state official in *Time*, adding, "Last week Florida was harvesting its biggest crop of tourists."[64]

Two of Florida's most iconic tourist attractions opened in the 1930s. Few businessmen matched the bravado of Dick Pope. Somehow, he raised $2,800 to purchase a 16-acre site

on Lake Eloise in Winter Haven. Whereas others had simply seen a waterlogged bog, Pope envisioned a future Venice. He drained the marshlands and carved out canals to connect the chain of lakes. With more optimism than cash, Cypress Gardens opened on January 2, 1936. First-day receipts amassed $34. Marineland, located south of St. Augustine at 9600 Oceanshore Boulevard, debuted in 1938, a result of an unusual partnership between Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney (the commodore's grandson) and Ilya Tolstoy (the count's grandson). Originally called Marine Studios, the facility allowed Hollywood filmmakers to capture underwater footage. On opening day, almost thirty thousand tourists witnessed history: the opening of America's first oceanarium. Marineland and Cypress Gardens near Ocala illustrated the connection between nature and spectacle, presenting trained, leaping dolphins, Southern belles, and water skis.[65]

The Florida Boom quickened the development of Florida beaches and the barrier islands of St. Augustine. The Usina family were pioneers on the barrier island, hosting oyster roasts for guests of the local hotels. In 1926, August Heckscher and investors constructed the Grand Vilano Casino on Vilano Beach, a popular destination for tourists two miles from St. Augustine along the newly built Highway AIA. But in late August 1937, a violent storm weakened the casino, which washed away during future gales.[66]

Beyond the flashy lights and billboards promoting Cypress Gardens and Marineland, roadside stands sold fruit and vegetables, maintaining an invisible economy. In Riviera Beach, Conchs wove and sold straw hats and fish-scale

flowers. Along the back roads of Gadsden County, African American women fashioned and sold straw "grits fanners." Visitors mostly sampled the "real" Florida. They fished for largemouth bass on legendary Lake Apopka and hunted bear in the depths of Tate's Hell; shot turkeys in Vernon and took air boat rides into the Big Cypress; played golf at Temple Terrace and cast for bonefish in Florida Bay. They marveled at Bok Tower, Sunken Gardens, and "the Senator," a massive cypress tree in Longwood. While the state's most popular tourist attractions were Marineland and Silver Springs, the most popular destination was Miami. Almost two million tourists flocked there and to Miami Beach in 1940.[67]

One of Florida's most isolated places was also one of its most beloved locales. Barrier islands combined irresistible elements of exotic locations, saltwater breezes, romantic attire, and escape. Few of the state's barrier islands had yet been connected to the mainland, adding an additional element of exotic exclusivity. Sanibel and Captiva islands were remote Gulf outposts in Lee County, accessible only by ferry and boat. The islands radiated an intoxicating spell upon naturalists and fisherfolk, romantics and shellers. During winter of 1936-37, a sickly Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, a prize-winning cartoonist for the *Des Moines Register*, discovered the islands on a trip in a "new-fangled" house trailer. He described his newfound love: "There are no telephones, and the mail boat comes once a day when it runs and drops us the four-day old newspapers from New York and home. Who cares? This is no ordinary tourist resort." He added wistfully, "I hope no one else ever finds it – least of all the trailer multitude."

The timing was fortuitous. Darling was one of the advocates urging Roosevelt and fellow travelers to create a North American wildlife organization. At that moment, Captiva had a permanent population of 45. Darling purchased a large tract of land on Sanibel, returning often. In 1937, he spoke to a large gathering at Fisherman's Lodge, an event many believe sparked discussion of conservation. Soon thereafter the Florida Legislature established a "Game and Fish Refuge" on Sanibel and Captiva. In 1936, the islands attracted poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, not the first or last artist seeking rare solitude and transcendent nature. Alas, the Palm Lodge burned to the ground, consuming the poet's book manuscript. In the late 1930s, aviator Lindbergh and his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, escaped the hurly burly of celebrityhood by spending winters on little known Captiva Island. "I must remember to see with island eyes," she wrote. "The shells remind me they must be my island eyes."[68]

Only in Florida and Oklahoma could tourists encounter authentic Seminoles. The tribe faced extinction in the nineteenth century but had grown to an estimated 587 Seminoles residing in southern Florida in 1930. By the end of the decade, the pillars of the Seminole and Miccosukee economies rested on tourism and the federal government, which in 1936 established two large reservations at Big Cypress and Brighton. The Tamiami Trail brought caravans of motorists by tents and trailers selling baby alligators, Seminole quilts, and air boat rides. The opening of the Tamiami Trail (Tampa to Miami) in 1928 altered the ecological and economic dynamics of the Seminole world. Alligator wrestling may

have been an invented tradition, but the performance was an irresistible hook bringing in crowds expecting the saurian equivalent of a tight-rope act ending badly.[69]

Musa Isle and other native Indian villages, featuring alligator wrestling and mock marriages of young couples who lived at the attraction, were among Florida's most popular tourist offerings on the eve of World War II.

Wrestling alligators at Musa Isle, April 2, 1941. South Florida Photograph Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1983-104-13.

Tourists in the 1930s encountered and applauded a new statewide system of parks. The New Deal's WPA and the CCC, as noted, accentuated Florida's extraordinary natural bounties. By 1940, tourists in campers, trailers, and automobiles discovered six completed state parks: Myakka River, Hillsborough, Gold Head Branch, Torreya, Highlands Hammock, and Fort Clinch.[70]

Culinary Diaspora

Amid worldwide food shortages and famine, travelers speeding along Dixie Highway, the Tamiami Trail, or the Old Spanish Trail encountered an exotic palate of local foods and recipes. While it was true that railroads and highways brought Del Monte fruit cocktail from California, sides of beef from Chicago, and Coca-Cola from Atlanta, Floridians still clung to local food favorites. Few national "chains" had yet invaded. In Sopchoppy, a diner might sample red snapper and locally harvested oysters, grits ground at Molino, and sweet potato pie made with molasses made from Niceville sugarcane. In St. Augustine, restaurateurs recommended chicken pilau (pronounced "perloo"). Starke and Plant City competed for strawberry capital of the state, while Sanford and Sarasota vied for celery honors. Madison, Millville, and Monticello, but also Fort Meade and Frostproof, vied for pork barbecue honors. Whether practitioners of the art preferred a mustard-base sauce, a peppery vinegar coating, or a tangy tomato sauce sweetened with molasses, depended upon one's origins: South Carolina, North Carolina, or Georgia. Pecan and sweet potato pie were favorites in north Florida. In Marathon, a diner might try yellowtail or green turtle steak, conch fritters,

and Key lime pie. Sebring cooks concocted a popular dessert, wild orange pie. Many Miamians exhibited "Deep South" roots in their fondness for mullet.[71]

Some locales sat at the culinary crossroads. The town of Okeechobee, atop the lake of that name, had been settled by Southern cattlemen, yet its residents brought a fondness for pork and developed a taste for the local freshwater fish. Thus, the menu from a 1939 American Legion luncheon offended no one and pleased everyone: "BBQ pork and beef, Okeechobee swamp cabbage, Lake Okeechobee fish, frog legs and 'gator tail."[72]

On the Gulf Coast, popularized as the "Mangrove Coast" by Karl Bickel, a bewildering and changing landscape and culture challenged travelers. In Cedar Key, a city pounded by hurricanes and decline and shaped by its bays and bayous, a cook at the Island Hotel concocted an "invented tradition": a specialty salad composed of palmetto hearts, lime sherbet, and dates. Cedar Key oysters shared a more authentic past. South of Cedar Key on Highway 19, one approached Homosassa, where the enchanting wetlands and waters lured Winslow Homer forty years earlier. In 1940 baseball star Dazzy Vance ran a hunting lodge and restaurant, which served locally caught snapper and pompano. And in the fishing village of Cortez, located on Anna Maria Sound, heaping platters of mullet fried in lard was standard fare.[73]

In Tarpon Springs, Tampa, and Masaryktown, adventuresome diners enjoyed flavors of Greece, Spain, Cuba, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. In 1940, the sponge industry was so

profitable, few Greeks had capitalized on the tourist trade, but outsiders could always find restaurants serving grilled octopus with lemon juice, baklava, and strong syrupy coffee. The famous Greek salad served with a dollop of potato salad came later, another invented dish. In Ybor City, Tampa's famed immigrant community, Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians tenaciously held on to special dishes and adapted an Old-World cuisine to Florida.

For instance, *caldo gallego*, a hearty dish concocted from ham hock, chorizo, potatoes, beans, and collard greens, remained a staple in 1940, but in terms of the area's hot climate, this soup originating in the cold mountains of Galicia in Northern Spain seemed out of place. Still, Spanish sons and daughters adored the dish, so it remained. Immigrants lavished attention on the old classics – *mondongo* (tripe), *bacalao* (salted cod), and *pasta oglio e aglio* (pasta with oil and garlic) – and adapted or created "new" classics – Cuban bread, deviled crabs, and the Cuban sandwich. Ybor City's Columbia Restaurant was arguably the most famous dining establishment in 1940 Florida. Tourists gasped at the imported tiles and ornate architecture – which few of the Latin immigrants could relate to – and sampled dazzling dishes, such as snapper Alicante, created by chef Alfonso Pijuan. Locals and tourists "window shopped" cafés and restaurants assembling the famous Cuban sandwich. Thirty miles inland, Czech settlers had established the small community of Masaryktown, platting street names for Bohemian patriots. Many of the settlers operated chicken farms, and on Sundays the Masaryktown Hotel's entrées included chicken paprikash and chicken with dumplings.[74]

Along summer beaches stretching from Cedar Key to the Ten Thousand Islands, from Hobe Sound to Cape Canaveral, and throughout the Florida Keys, locals awaited the annual turtle migration. Many old-timers swore that turtle eggs ensured moistness in pancake batter. No Florida restaurant worth its Duncan Hines seal of approval printed a menu without the obligatory offerings of green turtle soup or green turtle steak.

During this era, grouper had the reputation of being a very ordinary fish, certainly no rival to pompano and red snapper. A 1940 seafood advertisement in the *Miami Herald* listed the price of pompano at 45 cents per pound, while "fresh caught grouper" went for 10 cents a pound, the same price as mullet. Florida's most isolated outposts, Everglades City, Chokoloskee, and the Ten Thousand Islands, were home to some of the greatest hunters and fisherfolk. None was better or at least more colorful than Loren "Totch" Brown. He supplied hotels, restaurants, and local kitchens with some of the finest seafood and game: pompano, stone crabs, and "Chokoloskee chicken," better known as ibis. And for the most discriminating diners, George M. End opened a rattlesnake cannery in Arcadia.[75]

Travelers and tourists encountered a delightful series of small towns as they paralleled the Gulf Stream along the old Dixie Highway, U.S. 1, passing Cocoa, Melbourne, Vero Beach, Stuart, and Delray Beach. Communities exuded small-town charm, each offering special attractions. Florida State Road A1A skirted the Atlantic Ocean as it ran from Fernandina Beach through Miami Beach. The populations of the cities in 1940 underscored their modest size: Stuart (2,438), Vero

Beach (3,050), Delray Beach (3,737), Deerfield (1,850), Hallandale (1,827), and Riviera (1,981). Tourist courts, eateries, and gasoline stations reconfigured the landscape, but had not overwhelmed the traveler with a sense of franchised sameness.

Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant, circa 1935. E.C. Kropp Co. South Florida Postcard Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1986-112-1.

On Miami Beach, Joe's Stone Crab was already a mainstay for tourists and residents who could afford to dine there. Nearly two decades earlier, Florida fisherman had introduced its namesake delicacy, perfecting the technique of fishing at night, and after trapping, twisting away the intimidating claw and throwing the stone crab back. Elsewhere, Jewish

delicatessens on Miami Beach had introduced lox, bagels, and knishes. All-kosher restaurants and hotels, such as the Crown, employed rabbis to inspect and approve food preparation.[76]

In 1940, tourists tackled the formidable feats of eating stone crabs, spiny lobster, and pompano papillote; some may even have encountered exotic delicacies such as pastrami, Key lime pie, and Spanish bean soup for the first time. But Florida's most interesting foods were consumed not in Miami Beach, but in the kitchens of Floridians who cooked with recipes passed down from ancestors and tested on stoves heated by buttonwood and oak, gas and electricity. In Polk County, where Hurston warned "people really lies!," resourceful cooks took advantage of the local bounty. Soft-shell turtle gained fame as a delicious entrée. "Almost any kind of game called for swamp cabbage," reminisced one cook, who added that Sandhill cranes were mighty good eating. Lard was used for everything from frying mullet to the essential ingredient for the perfect pie crust. In the remote area of the Ten Thousand Islands, Brown alternated residences between Everglades City and Chokoloskee Island, and when moonshining or illegally trapping, wandered between Chatham Bend and Possum Key. For Sunday dinners, he shot ibis or curlew, dignified as "Chokoloskee Chicken."[77]

The ultimate Florida cookbook was written by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. A cultured woman who had dined in Washington chop houses and Manhattan bistros, Rawlings adored Florida's authentic cuisine, the handed-down oral recipes using everything but the pig's squeal. A transplant, she grew to love and genuinely admire the vanishing "cracker"

of the north-central Florida scrub. Seduced by the land and people, she began writing down some of these unforgettable recipes with their now unobtainable, inadvisable, or illegal ingredients.

Her *Cross Creek Cookery* (1942) runs the culinary galaxy from donax (coquina) broth ("It takes about six quarts of Donax to make a quart of broth.") to turtle eggs ("A dozen turtle eggs, with plain bread and butter and a glass of ale, make all I ask of a light luncheon or supper."). She described St. Augustine's seafood market thusly: "The markets are piled with deep-sea fish, still alive when the fishermen empty their baskets into the great scales – pompano, the aristocrat of ocean fishes, Spanish mackerel, bluefish, mullet, red snapper, sea-trout, king mackerel, and whiting." Rawlings praised a rice-meat delicacy of northeast Florida, pilau, "pronounced 'pur-loo.'" She adds, "No Florida church supper, no large rural gathering, is without it." For Minorcan gopher stew, she instructs cooks in one of the English language's most elegant declarative sentences: "Wash the decapitated gopher. Cut the shell away from the meat. Scald the feet until the skin and claws can be removed. Discard entrails ... simmer ... when gopher is tender, turn the sauce into the gopher pot."[78]

Artists & Writers

Ironically, the suffering and disillusionment in the 1930s resulted in what was arguably the high-water mark in Florida art and culture. Hurston and Rawlings reached their literary zenith in the 1930s. Key West served as muses for Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams. The New Deal spawned and rewarded a generation of artists and writers, among

them Hurston, Kennedy, and the muralist George Snow Hill. In 1940, Hill was consumed with finishing a mural, "Long Staple Cotton Gin," for the post office in Madison. In 1938, he finished a mural for the Perry post office, titled "Cypress Logging."[79]

Critics praised Rawlings for her 1938 classic, *The Yearling*. Describing the poignant and heartbreaking story of the Baxter family and the relationship between Jody and his adopted fawn, the book provided a metaphor for 1930s Florida. The first work dealing with a Florida subject to win the Pulitzer Prize, *The Yearling* softened the image of the Florida "cracker," previously depicted as savage backwoodsman or slack-jawed trash.

Hurston, Florida's greatest writer, was engaged in the most productive decade of her remarkable life in the late 1930s and '40s. In an extraordinary burst of creativity, she wrote what became classics in American literature: *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (1934), *Mules and Men* (1935), and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). A trained anthropologist and gifted raconteur, Hurston drew her stories from the people she knew best – jook artists, muleskinners turpentine "lifers," and phosphate miners. She frequently packed a loaded pistol during her forays into the hinterland; wood riders and foremen were not accustomed to meeting Black folklorists toting recording machines. Along with Kennedy and Allen Lomax, she captured a vanishing Florida. "On disks that time can't destroy," reported the *Jacksonville Journal* in 1939, "a

sapphire needle scratches the songs of the longshoreman and waterfront workers which, because of mechanical equipment and the jook organ, are fast disappearing."[80]

The author Theodore Pratt introduced readers to Florida's jook joints, enraging local leaders while exposing jook joint manners and morals to readers in the staid *Saturday Evening Post*. "Along thirty miles of highway across the northwest comer of Palm Beach county," wrote Pratt, "there are more than 100 jooks . . . the Jeep, Silver Dollar, Lucky Boy, Vinegar Bend, Wildcat's Hole, Sky Doom . . ."[81]

Although a young man, Kennedy had already accomplished much. The Jacksonville native dropped out of the University of Florida to work for the Florida Writers' Project. He, along with Hurston, interviewed former slaves, Greek sponge divers, and Riviera Conchs, publishing many of these vignettes in the book *Palmetto Country*.

But no city matched St. Augustine's magnetic attraction to authors and artists, especially in the winter months. Painters Heinrich Pfeiffer, Reynolds Beal, Arthur Vidal Diehl, Albert Fuller Graves, Charles Webster Hawthorne, and Harry Hoffman brought their talents to the Ancient City in the 1930s. Upon winning the Pulitzer Prize in literature, Rawlings purchased a home at Crescent Beach but also had a room at the Castle Warden Hotel, her husband, Norton Baskins's, downtown establishment.[82]

Baseball & Football

Rawlings and Huston understood the frustration of Peter Finley Dunne's cartoon character, Mr. Dooley, who complained that historians seem only to be interested in what ancient Greece and Rome died of: "I want to know what they lived of!" Floridians may have liked gopher and ibis, but they lived and loved baseball and football. If the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, Floridians brought their love and lessons of sports to the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific.

Had the Florida Legislature proposed an official state sport in 1940, the speaker of the house would have called for a vote of affirmation acknowledging baseball's exalted status. Perhaps brought to Florida by Confederate soldiers imprisoned in the North, perhaps invented not in Cooperstown but on Biscayne Bay by Captain Abner Doubleday when he was stationed at Fort Dallas in 1855, on the southern edge of today's downtown Miami, baseball grew as fast as its fellow import, kudzu. The game cut across class lines and occasionally racial lines. Farmers and artisans, Cuban cigarmakers and Conch spongers, all played baseball; indeed, the game validated ethnicity, class, and race. Sunday afternoons seemed especially devoted to prayer and baseball.

Floridians flocked to cheer the Okeechobee Catfish, the Tampa Smokers, and the Pompano Bean Pickers. Even though the closest major league franchise was in the nation's capital, the era represented a golden era of baseball in Florida, as hundreds of teams competed in professional and

semiprofessional, college and factory leagues. The New Deal provided funds to construct a new football field at Monticello and a clay baseball diamond.[83]

Spring training in Sarasota, Fort Myers, and Lakeland, normally a time for optimism, reflected the Great Depression's gloomy mood. In 1933, commentators noted a flood of desperate young men "looking for work pitchin' and catchin'." Attendance plummeted dramatically, while major league salaries plunged 25 percent.[84]

Since the late nineteenth century, but especially since the 1920s, Major League Baseball had popularized the game by spending spring training in Florida. Towns became identified with the St. Louis Browns, Brooklyn Dodgers, and Boston Braves, squads that returned like swallows each spring to play in quaint wood-and-tin ballparks. Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics trained in Fort Myers, the Detroit Tigers bonded with Lakeland, and the New York Yankees and St. Louis Cardinals made their pilgrimage each spring to St. Petersburg. Major League teams also used Miami Field, which found itself in the shadow of the recently completed Orange Bowl, for spring training. Many players purchased homes and establishments in their adopted communities. Vance operated that fishing lodge in Homosassa; Dizzy Dean owned a gas station in Bradenton.

Wall Street may have crashed and state coffers were threadbare, but the decade of the 1930s witnessed a series of events and trends that electrified football in Florida and the South. Winning football teams became a source of pride for

a region derided in history books and popular culture. What better revenge than seizing a sport and beating the Yankees at their own game? The 1926 Rose Bowl game between the University of Washington and the University of Alabama signaled a turning point when the Crimson Tide crushed the Huskies. Ted Ownby lyricized, "In manhood, memory, and white men's sports in the recent American South, the only sport to rival stock racing in popularity is college football." Historian Andrew Doyle explained, "Like the New South movement itself, early southern college football was an amalgam of innovation and tradition."[85]

The University of Florida became a charter member of the 1932 Southeastern Conference. The South may have been poor, but the spectacle of football generated local, regional, and statewide pride. Winning coaches became icons; losing coaches suffered humiliation. Compared to football rivals in Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia – or even Kentucky – Florida enjoyed few sunlit seasons in the decades between 1900-1940. Regardless of schedule or record, football had no rival in late October and November. Radio amplified action on the gridiron. Floridians may have loved football, but Florida's collegiate teams were generally mediocre. The University of Florida Gators, the state's only public university squad, finished with a losing record during the 1930s. A Gators website summarizes, "Highlights from this were few."

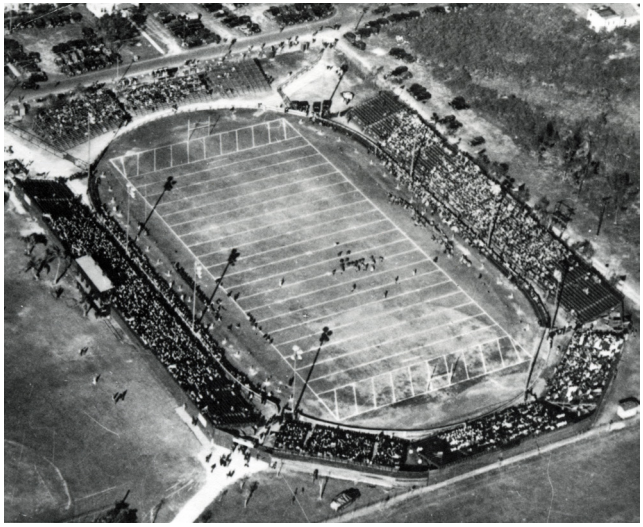
No Florida politician matched Louisiana's Long, who served as a self-appointed marching band director. Florida governors were no shrinking violets when it came to college football, either. Cone was born in Columbia County, the

"Hog & Hominy" Belt. He told the press that he was "badly disappointed" at the Gators' poor showing on the gridiron and was especially distraught over the team's losses to in-state rivals Stetson and the University of Miami. A 1929 Carnegie Report indicted payments to players under the table.[86]

University of Florida football was attracting a statewide following in the 1930s, but the greatest passion was reserved for the high school game. Fans not in the stadium dialed the radio to find college and high school games. Grudge matches between inter- and intra-city rivals took on great meaning. The Thanksgiving Day 1941 contest between Hillsborough and Plant high schools in Tampa drew 13,000 fans. Glenn Barrington, the starting fullback at Hillsborough, insisted the game "was the social event of the year." In early December 1941, Haines City battled St. James on the gridiron. *The Haines City Herald* announced that its starting lineup was "the greatest team Haines City has ever produced."

Miami Senior High School, whose athletic teams bore the nickname "Stingarees," was the dominant high school football team in the Magic City for decades, even playing powerhouse elevens from faraway places. On Christmas night 1939, for example, the Stingarees played a team from the immigrant city of Garfield, New Jersey, in what was then known as Roddey Burdine Stadium, for the mythical national championship of high school football. The Stingarees lost on a late Garfield High School score.

One would never have known from reading Florida's daily newspapers that African American high schools in Miami,



Named for Roddey Burdine, Miami's "merchant prince" and the head of Burdine's Department store, the eponymous stadium was renamed the Orange Bowl in 1949. By then, it was hosting the showpiece New Year's Day football game known as the Orange Bowl. The 1939 edition of the game saw Tennessee defeat Oklahoma 17-0.

Aerial view of the Orange Bowl, January 2, 1939. South Florida Photograph Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1981-099-103.

Fort Myers, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Ocala, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Jacksonville, and Pensacola also engaged in fierce rivalries while fielding legendary athletic teams. For decades, Miami high school football games outdrew the University of Miami Hurricanes.[87]

Baseball and football may have provided Floridians release from the drudgeries of work and heat, but another sport was

gaining in popularity and controversy in the 1930s: gambling! A journalist aptly summarized the issue: "Gambling has not always been legal in Florida, but it has always been here." Whereas many citizens were foursquare Baptists when it came to Sunday prayer, the state was wide open when it came to allowing sports of chance and ignoring laws against gambling and drinking. Both moonshining and gambling flourished.

Fiorello LaGuardia, mayor of New York City, famously said, "There are more prohibition lawbreakers in Florida than in my state." In 1931, the Florida Legislature voted to legalize pari-mutuel wagering. The Faustian bargain allowed the state to raise large amounts of taxes while ensuring that the proceeds were apportioned equally, meaning every county received the same amount, regardless of population. Florida may have been brimming with Southern Baptists, but the Legislature also legalized 12,000 slot machines between 1935 and 1937. Cone, as noted, a Primitive Baptist, slammed the door shut, signing the law banishing "one-armed bandits." But illegal gambling never surrendered and continued in counties such as Palm Beach, Dade, and Hillsborough. The famed Hialeah and Gulfstream race tracks attracted the Duke of Windsor, formerly British King Edward VIII.[88]

People & Population

A deeply stratified state emerges from the numbing statistics of the 1940 U.S. Census, permitting one to study both an aggregate and a microscopic examination of the state. Census takers counted 1,897,414 Floridians in 1940. Certainly, that number is undercounted: the poorest and most mobile agricultural workers, squatters, and immigrants often escaped

tabulation. But middle-class Northerners and Midwesterners who spent the high season in the Sunshine State were also off the books. Scattered and sparsely settled, Florida's 1,897,414 residents ranked twenty-seventh in population. One of forty-eight states, it comprised less than one percent of the U.S. population. To provide a dose of reality, Los Angeles County alone in 1940 boasted 800,000 more residents than the entire state of Florida. But the compass was dead set on growth. Throughout the depths of the Great Depression, Florida added residents. During the gloomy decade of the 1930s, the state's population increased by 29.2 percent.

Growth and hubris bear consequences. The decade of the 1930s hammered local banks and pricked the state's sunny bubble. Still, it added 429,203 persons. Compared to the rest of the South, the Sunshine State fostered confidence and optimism; only Florida and Louisiana gained population during the 1930s, and the Bayou State increased by only 6,000 new residents. The decade witnessed a hemorrhaging of migrants leaving the South.[89]

Florida functioned as America's South Star, a magnet attracting hundreds of thousands of displaced tenant farmers, frozen artisans, and wealthy businessmen to start afresh, follow the sun, or find a comfortable retirement home. Yet tens of thousands of African Americans departed during the Great War and the following decades. During the thirty years prior to 1940, Florida's white population grew by almost one million persons, whereas the state's African American population increased by only 200,000. In 1940, 27 percent

of state residents were Black, the lowest percentage in state history. As late as 1880, almost half of the residents were African American.[90]

The South's bleak and depressed agricultural conditions during the 1920s and '30s accelerated the Great (Black) Migration north, but cities such as Jacksonville, Tampa, and Miami also attracted thousands of displaced white and Black tenant farmers, preferring city life rather than a cruel rural economy. The hoary agrarian world was breaking apart, the result of falling cotton prices, eroded and tired lands, New Deal policies, and increased mechanization. Between 1930 and 1940, twelve counties in Florida decreased in population, all predominantly rural with a declining agricultural base. Seven counties were classified as one hundred percent rural, with no city over one thousand residents.[91]

If foreign accents identified new sounds, disproportionate numbers of residents in St. Petersburg, Palm Beach, and Miami displayed new profiles, notably shocks of white and grey hair. Florida was fast becoming a magnet for senior citizens. In 1930, Florida's median age (25.8) was slightly higher than the South but lower than the U.S. (26.5). By 1940, Florida's median age matched that of the country, and would quickly climb to become the oldest state in the nation.[92] No city in America mirrored St. Petersburg's relationship with America's senior citizens. The "Sunshine City" lured large numbers of elderly citizens for winter vacations and retirement living. The city's green benches served as a

symbolic welcome mat. By 1940, one in five city residents was sixty-five or older, an extraordinary demographic inflection point. The elderly were overwhelmingly white.[93]

The 1940 census reinforced what everyone knew but what every legislator and country grocer between Pensacola and Fernandina Beach, Madison and Perry, Live Oak and Gainesville, wished to forget: North Florida was being dwarfed by the growing numbers of urban residents living below an imaginary line drawn from Dixie County through Alachua, Putnam, and Flagler counties. In 1890, the residents of north Florida (including and above that line) constituted two of every three Floridians; fifty years later that proportion had been reduced to about one in three. South Florida, which in 1890 boasted about five percent of the state's residents, now claimed twenty-four percent.[94]

Cities and towns from Pensacola to Key West to Jacksonville made Florida the South's most urbanized state in 1940. Much had changed since 1880, when vast stretches of the peninsula were still largely the frontier, where only one in ten residents lived in a city and three-quarters of the state's population resided. By 1940, almost two out of three residents lived in a city, a rate significantly higher than the overall national average, and Jacksonville, Miami, and Tampa had topped the magical 100,000 plateau. Fully eight cities had grown larger than 25,000 residents.[95] Yet urban life was not always urbane. American society in general, and Florida especially, was deeply divided along class, racial, and ethnic lines. "These

divisions," observed Richard Polenberg, "largely transcending regional boundaries, shaped the most important aspects of the way people lived."[96]

In every city, visitors found open spaces just miles from downtowns, but also discovered slums inhabited by rural migrants seeking a better life for themselves or their children. Each city contained pockets of grinding poverty and wretched conditions, generally identified with nicknames such as "the Scrub," "Springfield," "Lincolnville," "Colored Town," "Brooklyn," and "French Town." The New Deal's Federal Emergency Relief Administration and PWA had helped some Florida cities install modem sewers and paved roads.[97]

Florida's smaller cities displayed a rich tapestry of economic and social diversity. Many communities had developed economic niches, specialties, and emblems which they proudly placed on their mastheads and products. Sanford crowned itself the "Celery Capital," a distinction disputed by Sarasota. Plant City and Starke both claimed the title of "Winter Strawberry Capital." Gladiolus corms flourished when first planted in 1935 in Iona in Fort Myers, while Umatilla harvested ornamental ferns.

Belle Glade and Dania tomatoes, Yamato pineapples, and Zellwood com boasted devotees, as did Hastings potatoes, Pearl City green beans, and Indian River citrus. Citrus labels advertising Frostproof oranges, Dunedin grapefruit, and Fort Myers lemons created an exotic aura. Jefferson County watermelons delighted picnickers in July and Apalachicola oysters earned high marks in months not ending in r.

Fernandina shrimp, Sanibel scallops, Okeechobee catfish, Mayport pogeys, Tarpon Springs sponges, and Barron River stone crabs had acquired national reputations.[98]

Foreign Accents

In 1930, almost sixty thousand immigrants or one in twenty-five Floridians was born outside the U.S. The percentage was high only when compared relatively to the state's South Atlantic neighbors (2.3 percent) but low compared to the U.S. average (11.6 percent). Canadians held the distinction of being the largest immigrant group in the state (8,260) while Belgians and Mexicans were the smallest cohorts (217 and 215, respectively). By 1940, Florida's population included 69,861 foreign-born people and included refugees from Europe.[99]

On the eve of Pearl Harbor, immigrants constituted almost four percent of the population. During the intense period of emigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, 1890-1920, Florida had received relatively few of the "new" immigrants, but the state was now attracting modest numbers of Italians, Jews, and Slavs. Some of these immigrants had sought asylum; others had migrated to Florida after original settlement in the North.

Immigrants tended to follow the crowds to more urbanized areas. For the same reasons that previous waves of immigrants ignored the panhandle in the nineteenth century – the region's lack of cities, a rural economy, a surplus of unskilled Black laborers, and nativist fulminations against Catholics and Jews – newly arrived immigrants poured into the Gold Coast and

Tampa Bay area. Residents in Happy Valley, New Harmony, or Cottondale rarely heard a foreign accent – unless it was someone from Chicago headed toward Miami.

Florida's immigrant past is complicated and must be understood in the context of the question: Compared to what? Since the 1880s, Florida received relatively high numbers of Europeans, outpacing all other Southern states (except Texas, with its huge Mexican population). Indeed, the state's 69,861 immigrants recorded by the 1940 census was greater than the combined foreign-born populations of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Large numbers of Italians, Spaniards, and Cubans had settled in Tampa, the state's leading immigrant magnet.[100]

A sense of perspective: Philadelphia boasted as many Jewish immigrants as all of Florida's foreign-born residents. The tiny state of New Hampshire had the same number of immigrants as Florida in 1940. Rhode Island, 1/60 the size of the Sunshine State and geographically equivalent to Taylor County, had twice as many foreign-born as Florida. But the state's future was lockset and irreversible, and immigrants increasingly moved toward the center of discussion.[101]

The year 1940 found immigrant communities at a crossroads, as older ethnic colonies were evolving. The 1930s had brought hard times to Key West. When Hemingway surveyed the Keys in the 1930s, he proclaimed to an old native that this was the Saint-Tropez for the poor. "Well," sighed the Conch, "You got the second part right." The vestiges of a once great

1940 Florida: Foreign-born Residents	
Canada	948
British Isles	10,949
Ireland	1,751
Norway	1,036
Sweden	2,549
Denmark	1,070
Germany	7,080
Austria	1,828
Greece	1,648
Hungary	1,444
Spain	3,248
Italy	5,138
Russia	5,524
Cuba	4,607
Total:	77,839

The Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Population, Vol. 2 Characteristics of the Population Table 4 "Race, by Nativity and Sex for the State" 1940" 14 "Foreign-Born White, 1910 to 1940," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1942), Tables 15, 33.

Cuban community – Gatoville – could still be appreciated, but mainly in its architecture and material culture: the San Carlos Club, the cigarmaker cottages, and the food. But in Florida, Tampa's immigrant-ethnic contours were unrivaled in the 1930s and '40s.[102]

Spaniards of Ybor City and West Tampa understood stirring causes and crushing defeat. A vicious civil war had erupted in Spain in July 1936. Floridians learned a new vocabulary of war: Fifth Column, Guernica, and International Brigade. The butcher's bill was costly: one million Spanish lives. The proxy war served as a dress rehearsal for World War II. Most Tampeños hailed from Asturias and Galicia, the bedrock of the Republican caus. The Soviet Union allied with the Spanish Republicans. Germany and Italy supported Nationalist Spain, headed by Generalissimo Francisco Franco. The Catholic Church, Franco, and the Nationalists were inseparable. In Ybor City, if a Spanish grocer's wife or a union carpenter attended Mass on Sunday, observers noted the name and repercussions – boycotts or worse – followed. Spaniards paraded, demonstrated, and raised thousands of dollars for the Republican cause, but their hopes were crushed. Dozens of residents enlisted in the effort. The Republicans vowed, "No Pasarán!" (They shall not pass), but the Nationalists seized Madrid and won the conflict.[103]

In Tampa's Ybor City and West Tampa, the year 1940 caught these enclaves at their zenith. The number of foreign-born Latins was declining, with relatively few newcomers. Thousands of second-generation Creoles spoke Spanish, Italian, and English, still frequenting the ornate mutual aid

societies. The decade of the 1930s wrought painful changes to Ybor City: the revered tradition of *la lectura* (reading aloud to cigarmakers) had been banished. The once vaunted cigar industry had been devastated by the Depression. Increasingly, women operated machines, displacing skilled *tabaqueros* in the factories. But Ybor City 1940 still radiated hope-and-dreams romance in a world drifting into madness: the promenade up and down La Séptima (Seventh Avenue, the enclave's business district), the *arroz con pollo* (chicken and yellow rice) of Las Novedades and Columbia (famed restaurants), the crowded coffee houses serving *café con leche*, the hushed whispers surrounding *bolita* (numbers game), and Sunday tea dances at El Centro Español (a mutual aid society). Almost 9,000 first-generation Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians still resided in Ybor City and West Tampa in 1940. No other cities in Florida boasted such a concentration of immigrants and offspring. Tampa was also the pipeline for Chinese aliens – some of them so-called "white slaves" – smuggled into the port in the 1930s.[104]

On the Anclote River sat the community of Tarpon Springs. Early in the twentieth century, Greeks from the Dodecanese Islands settled there, making it one of America's most renowned Greek communities. From the sponge docks to the colorful cottages to the cafés brewing strong coffee, a Greek culture pervaded. Tourists were flocking to the docks, while daily vessels explored the Gulf of Mexico for prized sponges. In a world without synthetic sponges, the real thing paid handsome dividends for crews. Clearly, the prize for the manliest job in 1940 Florida went to the Greeks who descended to the Gulf bottoms harvesting sponges in

pressurized suits. Charles Rawlings, Rawlings' first husband, wrote *Dance of the Bends*, a story for *The Saturday Evening Post* addressing deadly decompression sickness that attacks divers. But a 1939 headline in the *Tarpon Springs Leader* spelled disaster: "Strange Disease Wiping Out Sponge Beds of Bahamas." The blight soon arrived off the waters of Tarpon Springs.[105]

If a remote site in Pinellas County was an unlikely place to find several thousand Greeks, imagine discovering large numbers of Finns along the Gold Coast. Since the 1920s, Finns from Canada and the Mesabi Iron Range had been coming to Lake Worth and Boynton Beach to relax and thaw out during the winter. Florida is also not synonymous with Central Europeans, but in 1940, a few dozen Hungarians resided in Polk County. The colony began in 1925 when 90 Hungarians homesteaded property, christening Kossuthville with hopes of growing fruits and vegetables.[106]

Anti-Semitism in Miami Beach

In 1940, about 25,000 Jews resided in Florida. They encountered anti-Semitism in Miami during the 1920s and '30s. Most were transplants from New York. In Fort Lauderdale, most resorts displayed "Restricted Clientele" or "Gentiles Only" signs. But Miami Beach was becoming identified as Jewish. Miami neighborhoods, such as Shenandoah, attracted large numbers of Jewish families. Virulent anti-Semitism could be found everywhere from tourism to employment to politics. In 1938, Germany awarded industrialist Henry Ford the Grand Cross of the German Eagle, the highest honor to a non-German. Ford

was a notorious anti-Semite. That same year, *Time* magazine named Hitler "Man of the Year." The following year, the Soviet Union's Josef Stalin received the honor.[107]

In 1932, David Sholtz ran as Florida's Democratic candidate for governor. He encountered some ugly accusations because of his family's past. His parents were Russian immigrant Jews, but Sholtz identified himself as an Episcopalian. (Upon Sholtz's death in 1953, his wife cautioned reporters not to mention his Jewish heritage when writing his obituaries.) Sholtz's opponent, former Governor John Martin, tossed red meat to the crowd of four thousand at a campaign rally in Leesburg. "Sholtz, who sprang from a race which gave the world its Savior, Disraeli, Benjamin on Confederate history, two justices of the United States Supreme Court, and other notables is ashamed of the fact. It's no offense to be of Jewish origin, but it is despicable for a man to deny his own parents."[108]

The most notorious resident in Florida was Alfonso Capone, a refugee from Chicago and the law. Flush with bootlegging profits, he purchased a Mediterranean-style mansion constructed in 1922 on Palm Island in Miami Beach. Capone had arrived in a private railway car on the Dixie Limited in April 1930, having played high-stakes poker, surrounded by bodyguards. Naturally, "Public Enemy Number One" was greeted at the train station by his attorneys and whisked away in his bulletproof limousine to his fourteen-room mansion. Florida Governor Doyle Carlton, a fervent Baptist, ordered county sheriffs to arrest the gangster on sight.[109]

The typical immigrant entering Florida in 1940, however, was neither a Finnish sawyer nor a Greek sponge diver. Large numbers of Canadians and British also sought warmth and new lives in the Sunshine State. Unlike Italians and Cubans, who settled in ethnic colonies, Florida's newest arrivals tended to settle as individuals. No Canadian neighborhoods emerged, and while associations appeared, no residential concentration followed.

From its beginnings, Miami had attracted Caribbean and West Indian immigrants. By 1940, Miami's foreign-born population of 12,517 led the state. Curiously, the Magic City contained no classic immigrant colony. The city's largest ethnic groups, Canadians, Britons, Germans, and Cubans, all lived in scattered neighborhoods. Increasing numbers of Russian Jews, transplanted from New York, began clustering in old neighborhoods, such as Shenandoah. Miami was also becoming increasingly attractive to wealthy Latin Americans, especially Cubans, who saw South Florida as a future refuge. Large numbers of Cubans vacationed in South Florida during the "low season," the summer months.[110]

Miami Beach was being reinvented again. In 1925 it was notorious for its anti-Semitism; by 1940 it was stereotyped as a Jewish enclave. Fifty years earlier, several million Jews had escaped the savage pogroms of Poland and Russia, seeking asylum in the "Promised City": New York. Assiduously seeking their fortunes as tailors and peddlers, then as small shopkeepers and wholesalers, many fulfilled the American dream. By 1940, as many in this generation were entering their retirement years, they faced New York's grim winters, an

expensive housing market, and increasing numbers of newer and more threatening immigrants. The solution for many of them was a winter apartment or retirement home in the "Magic Cities" of South Florida.

In 1939, Missouri U.S. Senator Harry S. Truman visited Miami. "Dear Bess," he wrote to his wife, "Here water is most plentiful, and soil is all they need. It is flat as a pancake and the principal product seems to be hotels, filling stations, Hebrews, and cabins." Strikingly, Truman is regarded as one of the most sympathetic Americans to the cause of Jewry; indeed, his haberdashery business partner and WWI comrade in arms was Edward Jacobson. As president, Truman recognized the new state of Israel.[111]

The story of the Jewish diaspora from Eastern Europe to New York to Miami Beach is a stirring saga of hope and prayer, timing and luck. In the early 1930s, Jewish arrivals encountered blatant discrimination – hotels posted signs reading, "Exclusive Gentile Clientele," or signs on apartments and hotels proclaiming, "GENTILES ONLY!" Jews persisted and ultimately secured a foothold in Miami Beach. The collapse of the real estate market also helped. The niche of 1930 became a giant wedge by 1940. Between 1930 and 1940, Miami Beach recovered mightily from the bust of '26; the robust city grew 331 percent in the decade.[112]

Racial Dynamics

Too many Americans, proclaimed Roosevelt in in one of his most famous presidential speeches, were "ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure." He added the now famous phrase,

"Necessitous men are not free men." In the South, as the president and others knew too well, too many citizens were also ill-educated, ill-cared for, and underemployed, and, one might add, ill-housed. Florida was a rich state amid poverty. Large sections of the population remained mired in destitution.

The census profiled 134,374 adult, wage-earning Black men. Fully one-third still worked the land, although precious few owned the land they worked. Large numbers of Black workers continued to toil in naval stores, logging, or phosphate mines. The company town was fading by the 1930s but lingered in places such as Nichols and Brewster, Welcome and Lacoochee. Often located in remote areas of Florida, the companies operated commissaries and hired doctors to serve workers and families. The company town of Shamrock in Dixie County supported 2,600 persons, most of whom were Black. Bagdad, located in Santa Rosa County, was also a lumber company town comprised of 1,300 persons in 1930.[113]

Florida's racial dynamics would have confused Southerners who understood the conventional "color line." In the 1930s, the modern term, "African American," was a verbal time-warp. Southerners used the terms "colored," "negro" (Southern newspapers rarely capitalized the word), and the n-word (frequently used in contemporary newspapers). But Florida, more so than most Southern states, was home to Afro-Cubans, Black Haitians, and Bahamian Conchs of many hues. Conchs moved back and forth between South Florida, especially Miami and Key West. Riviera Beach's nickname was "Conch Town." Soon to be Florida's most famous Conch

was Sidney Poitier, who was born in Miami in 1927, and spent his early years in the Bahamas before returning to the Magic City in 1945. "White" Cubans in Ybor City chaffed when Tampans called them "Cuban n-----s." There, Afro-Cubans enjoyed residential and economic freedoms unimaginable in the Deep South. Photographs document Black people sitting next to white women rolling cigars. Such a setting was incomprehensible in most places in Florida and the South. But dark-skinned Floridians understood limits, culture, and propriety.[114]

Florida was also "home" to large numbers of migrant laborers, largely African Americans and Caribbeans who spent months each year harvesting oranges, watermelons, and other crops. This workforce was largely invisible to urban Floridians. Belle Glade and Pahokee, Immokalee and Ruskin, were synonymous with tomatoes in Belle Glade; custom demanded that "all negroes, except those employed with the town, be off the streets by 10:30 p.m."[115]

Appallingly few African Americans were found in the professional ranks in 1940. Census takers surveying the entire state enumerated 1 Black chemist, 2 veterinarians, 3 artists/art teachers, 7 authors/reporters, 9 lawyers, 24 pharmacists, 39 dentists, 45 professors, 85 physicians, and 979 clergymen. When compared to Florida's white professional ranks, the contrast is even more palpable. The 1940 census included 2,015 white engineers but no Black engineers, 365 white chemists but only a single Black chemist, and 2,652 white lawyers and 9 African American attorneys. No Southern state supported fewer public or private institutions of higher

education for Blacks as Florida. Harlem, Chicago, and Hollywood had lured away many talented Floridians – witness the trajectories of Johnson, Randolph, McQueen, Hurston, Bernard Lafayette, and Hudson "Tampa Red" Whitaker.

One might have expected a dynamic city like Miami to have attracted impressive numbers of Black professionals. Miami, with a 1940 population of 10,881 adult African American or Afro-Caribbean men, accounted for only 1 professor, 2 lawyers, 13 physicians, and 43 teachers, but 3,246 service workers and 4,300 laborers. Jacksonville, an older city with a large and established Black community, fared little better. In 1940, its African American adult workforce (men and women) topped 25,000, but comprised only 4 dentists, 6 lawyers, 6 professors, 18 physicians, 445 teachers, 4,423 service workers, 7,929 domestic workers, and 5,265 laborers.

Black women faced even more daunting occupational prospects. Of Florida's 85,464 Black women wage earners in the prewar years, two-thirds were employed as "domestics": maids, laundresses, and service workers. Large numbers (14 percent) continued to work in agriculture, picking, packing, and working the fields. Black women who hoped to escape the kitchen, laundry, or grove often aspired to become a beautician, nurse, or teacher. While many young white women had entered the relatively new field of secretarial and sales work, very few of their Black peers had found such employment in Florida cities. Gaping disparities in housing could be seen everywhere, crossing races and regions. Ownership of one's home, a central tenet in the American dream, was far from universal. White families owned half of

the homes they occupied; African Americans were half again as likely to own their home. The African American yeoman farmer presiding over his homestead, once a familiar sight, was vanishing. The census identified only 6,424 Black-owned farm dwellings, and the number was diminishing each year.

If African Americans were underrepresented in homeownership, they were overrepresented as tenants and renters. Black residents constituted about one-quarter of the population but comprised one-half of the tenants. The census, moreover, ignored or glossed over as many as sixty thousand African Americans who came to Florida in vast seasonal armies of workers to harvest crops. Migrant workers paid outrageous sums – $4 a week in Belle Glade – for a shack without conveniences. A federal investigator described Belle Glade's "negro quarter" as having "no regular streets, just a jumble of alleyways, hodge-podge streets and footpaths, two- and three-story buildings most of which are shed-like, barn-like, ramshackle." A historian describes Belle Glade as "like a mining town sitting on a mother lode. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston described her beloved Belle Glade differently. "All night now the jooks clanged and clamored," she wrote. "Pianos living three lifetimes in one. Blues made and used right on the spot. Dancing, fighting, singing, crying, laughing, winning and losing every hour. Work all day for money, fight all night for love."[116]

Developers in Miami, Palm Beach, Hollywood, Fort Lauderdale, Boca Raton, Sarasota, Tampa, and St. Petersburg had discovered a new mother lode – waterfront property and exclusive enclaves. Neighborhoods in Coral Gables and

Culbreath Isles, Frenchtown and Overtown, mirrored class and race. White families lived in almost 9,000 homes valued at $10,000 and more, while Black families resided in 67 such homes. In the Miami metropolitan area, the ratio was 2,759 to 15; in St. Petersburg, 678 to 4; in Jacksonville, 775 to 11.

In retrospect, it is not the sheer number of Mediterranean revivals or art deco mansi ons of the time that stands out. Rather, one is struck by the simplicity of homes, the lack of essential conveniences that defined modernity and poverty. Electricity had been available to most Florida residents for decades, but the modern source of power eluded large numbers of Floridians. Electricity had been installed in two-thirds of Florida homes, but fully 189,317 structures were still lighted by kerosene. Fully half of the Black tenants in Jacksonville continued to rely upon kerosene or candle. In St. Petersburg, an affluent and a modem-built city, two-thirds of the city's Black households depended upon kerosene for lighting.

The statistics verify a trail of tears amid numbers. Hundreds of thousands of Floridians still cooled their perishables by wagon-delivered ice; indeed, more Floridians relied on ice than electrical refrigeration. The New Deal's Rural Electrification Program had helped bring electricity to three times as many farm households than ten years earlier, but for large numbers of Floridians, a flush toilet was still a luxury. Almost 200,000 homes lacked running water. Such "privation" was not limited to piney woods Florida; rather, large sections of Miami and Tampa lacked such conveniences. Nearly 4,000 structures in Jacksonville lacked running water and another

7,000 lacked a flush toilet. Health officials expressed alarm over such conditions. Distressingly, the Depression decade of the 1930s had left Florida's housing stock in dire need of repair. Fully 20 percent of all homes in Florida fell under the census classification, "dwelling units needing major repairs." In Florida's major cities in 1930, infant mortality for white people was one-half that of Black people.[117]

Southern Politics

Health care mirrored the housing crisis and hit rural dwellers especially hard. A report indicated that 26 of 27 counties in the panhandle lacked adequate medical care. One county had no physician. Almost two-thirds of state dentists lived in six counties; ten counties had no dentists. The entire state mustered 39 Black dentists or one per 13,200 Black residents. Black physicians enjoyed a slightly more favorable ratio of doctors to patients: 1:6, 100.[118] African American physicians, teachers, and other professionals worked hard to create a Black middle-class refuge, to protect their own families but also promote both Booker T. Washington's notion of propertied responsibility and W.E.B. DuBois's dream of a "talented tenth." Supportive and nurturing, Black leaders rallied around their schools, and created a tier of voluntary associations to improve lives. In 1940, census takers counted a total of 176 Black women teachers, 30 nurses, 115 beauticians, and 6,300 domestics among the workforce. Black men in Miami's workforce included 43 teachers, 12 physicians, 2 lawyers, 1 professor, 1 reporter, 270 chauffeurs, 4,300 laborers, and 3,100 service workers.

Florida may have seemed like heaven to Yankee tourists, but it was hell for agricultural workers. Rural county sheriffs understood their principal duty was to maintain a compliant labor supply. Many white Floridians never realized that African Americans yearned and dreamed for the same goals: healthy children, a home of their own, and human decency. News about African Americans in the mainstream press tended to overemphasize criminal activities and underreport the social rhythms of life in the Bottoms and Southside, Durkeeville and Colored Town. In 1936, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported that A. H. Douglas, "an 87-year-old negro is the father of 37 children . . . and that the 38th is on the way."[119]

Baseball offered a handful of white and Black Floridians a pathway out of poverty. Baseball seemed more romantic and profitable than cigar factories. The grand hotels of Palm Beach and Miami often recruited talented African American baseball players to perform menial duties, such as pull rickshaws, called "Afro-mobiles." In the afternoon, the Black baseball teams entertained guests. John Jordan "Buck" O'Neil was born in Carrabelle in the panhandle in 1911. His family moved to Sarasota, where O'Neil worked in the celery fields before moving to Jacksonville, where he had the rare opportunity for an African American in Florida: attend and graduate from high school at Edward Waters College. In 1934, he joined the Miami Giants, a Black team. The owner demanded players dress up in clown costumes to amuse the guests. He had played semiprofessional baseball since the age of 12. He joined the legendary Kansas City Monarchs in 1938.[120]

About twenty Black newspapers operated in the state in 1940. Black-owned and -focused newspapers operated in the major cities: *The Pensacola Citizen* and *Pensacola Courier*, *Orlando Dixie* and *Orlando Sun*, *St. Petersburg Informer*, *Tampa Bulletin*, *St. Augustine Post*, *Fort Lauderdale Bulletin*, *The Miami Times*, *Miami Whip*, and *Jacksonville Tattler*. Only a handful of pre-1940 copies survive. Some of the large urban dailies published a "Negro News Page," which appeared only in papers destined for Black neighborhoods.[121]

Race relations in the decades before 1940 were paternalistic and cordial at best, barbaric and recoiling at worst. The brutalities at Ocoee and Rosewood stand out only in their magnitude. During this period, Florida, not Mississippi or Alabama – led the South in per capita lynching. Such extralegal violence occurred not only in Perry, Alachua, and Madison, but Tampa, St. Petersburg, Fort Lauderdale, and Fort Myers. By the 1930s, the rate of lynchings had dropped dramatically; indeed, a newspaper headline predicted, inaccurately in 1930, "Lynching To Be Lost Crime By 1940." Lynchings may have declined, but the Ku Klux Klan remained a force in the state. In 1937, hooded Klansmen raided La Paloma night club in Miami. The following year, 250 Klansmen broke up a Black baseball game in Clearwater. In 1939, the Klan drove through Miami's Colored Town in an effort to intimidate Black voters on the eve of a municipal election.[122]

White supremacy stood at the very center of Florida's political economy. In 1940, despite continued pleas, no African Americans served on a local police force in Florida, voted in the Democratic primary, or served on a jury. Florida's most

powerful legislators, later called "Pork-choppers," resisted reapportionment. This mentality, coupled with the Bourbon 1885 State Constitution, created a political system in which conservative north Florida thwarted the ambitions of fast-growing and more moderate-leaning South Florida. If anyone controlled raw, almost unchallenged power in 1940 Florida, it was county sheriffs in isolated outposts such as Crawfordville, Bronson, MacClenny, Cross City, Everglades City, Moore Haven, Okeechobee, and Bonifay.[123]

Two incidents, a decade apart, illustrate the inviolable rules of race and Southern politics. In 1929, 29-year-old Pepper sweltered with his fellow Florida state legislators inside the Old Capitol. At that time he was a freshman legislator from Perry in conservative Taylor County along the Big Bend. His future seemed limitless – he possessed a brilliant mind and was a graduate of Harvard Law School. But the neophyte legislator was about to be schooled. State House legislators assembled in an extraordinary session in what must have seemed a bizarre waste of time to youngblood Pepper.

The issue involved a remarkable woman, Lou Henry Hoover, the president's wife. She had betrayed Southern tradition, in the words of the condemnation, "entertaining Negroes in the White House." It seems that the first lady, in carrying out a traditional custom, invited the wives of congressmen for tea in the White House. However, in 1929, a Black man, Congressman Oscar De Priest, represented a Congressional district in Chicago. A gracious Mrs. Hoover invited his wife, Jessie De Priest, to the annual custom. In retaliation, the Florida Legislature voted to condemn such indiscretion.

One by one, Florida legislators railed at such impropriety and indecency. Pepper stepped forward to proclaim, "I am a Southerner and a Democrat like my ancestors before me." Yet he shocked his peers by questioning such a waste of time on an issue that was "out of place." Pepper's career as a Florida state legislator was short-lived. His Perry County constituents voted him out of office the next election. He had violated the most elementary principles of Southern politics: Never cross the color line. White supremacy was inviolable. Take care of your constituents.[124]

Pepper's record on race relations is complicated. He actively fought to abolish the poll tax, which was an unfair burden upon poor white and Black voters. In his private diary he wrote, "The Negro question is a difficult and tragic question." Race may have been tragic for African Americans, but it allowed Pepper to stay in office. Pepper confessed to a journalist in 1974 that he never felt comfortable taking such racist stands, but did so, he rationalized, "Because I thought that a senator from the South had to do it." When he delivered his only filibuster, he pleaded neither for public housing nor New Deal funding. Instead, he fulminated for six hours against a federal anti-lynching bill. "Whatever may be written into the Constitution," Pepper demagogued in January 1938, "Whatever may be placed upon the statute books of the Nation, however many soldiers may be stationed about the ballot boxes of the Southland, the colored race will not vote, because in doing so under the present circumstances they endanger the supremacy of a race to which God has committed the destiny of a continent, perhaps of a world."[125]

Education

If there was one issue uniting every African American leader, it was a belief that education made a difference. Here, too, race cut deeply into a separated and very unequal system. As late as the 1940s, the state of Florida supplied preciously little of the cost of local public education. Consequently, fantastic differences existed from county to county, or even within counties. Historically, counties bore responsibility for such costs, and even within counties, special taxing districts created internal disparities. A completely segregated system of public and higher education produced further injustices. At this moment in history, Black leaders and families were more interested in the quality of their segregated schools, not integration. The gap between the more affluent and impoverished counties is nowhere more glaring than Black and white schools. Dade County, regarded as the state's finest school system, paid white teachers an average salary of $1,687 and Black teachers $829. Such wages seemed handsome compared to Hamilton County, with corresponding salaries of $945 and $412. It was hardly alone. During the 1940-41 school term, white teachers earned less than $1,000 in twenty-three counties and Black teachers received less than $500 in twenty counties. Twenty-two counties even lacked a high school for Black students.[126]

Florida and California shared the title of dream states, but in the field of education, the latter embarrassed the former. California spent on average $3,500 per schoolroom, while Florida expended $1,200.[127] Florida's 1940-41 education budget itemized $353.30 for all the state's African American school libraries with $687.78 allocated for clerical assistants.

The state maintained 660 one-teacher schools, fully 476 of them attended by African Americans. The price paid was grievous. Literacy rates in 1940 ranged from 2 percent for white adults but 19 percent for Black Floridians.

As America entered the 1940s, the state of Florida faced an uncertain future in higher education. The legislature had authorized paltry sums for the state's three, four-year white public colleges, and far less to the handful of Black institutions. The University of Florida, Florida State College for Women, and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College maintained handsome campuses, but lacked sufficient financial support to rise to the ranks of highly regarded universities. Remarkably, no state campus existed below Gainesville; perhaps even more remarkably, Alachua County was dry. Fewer than 3,500 students enrolled at the University of Florida in the 1940-41 school year. "For nearly 10 years," editorialized the *Tampa Morning Tribune* in 1941, "the school has operated under a shackled budget." In the previous nine years, the Legislature's appropriations increased a total of two and one-half percent. Nor had the state invested in either a medical school or veterinary school. Among private institutions, Stetson and Rollins enjoyed respectable reputations, while Bethune-Cookman, Edward Waters, and the University of Tampa struggled to survive. No other Southern state claimed as few public and private institutions of higher education.[128]

Recreation Without Humiliation

A Harlem African American entrepreneur with the oddly perfect name of Victor Hugo Green found a diamond amid the pain of racial segregation. First published in 1936 and

made famous in a 2018 film, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* offered African Americans a safe travel guide during an era of segregation, identifying businesses (hotels, restaurants, beauty shops, nightclubs, golf courses, and state parks) that welcomed Black travelers. To put a blunter point upon the guide, it saved African Americans from confronting "No Colored Allowed" signs. The 1940 iteration of the book recommended two Lincolnville homes in St. Augustine. The guide recommended Brown's Restaurant in Sebring as a safe space. In St. Petersburg, the city's famous green benches were for whites only.[129]

"Recreation without humiliation" represented the aspirations and expectations of African Americans. In Florida, the beach signified freedom and release, but to African Americans, the hot sandy beaches and cool waters of the Atlantic and Gulf were typically for whites only. There was, however, one place that offered freedom without restraints, the hopes of middle-class African Americans, and the possibilities of self-determination: American Beach.

In the early 1930s, Abraham Lincoln Lewis was the wealthiest Black man in Florida. The owner of the Afro-American Insurance Company in Jacksonville, Lewis purchased a large tract of land on Amelia Island, in Nassau County. He erected some cabins and encouraged his workers to enjoy the refreshing breezes and pristine beachscape. By 1935, Lewis opened his waterfront community to a new generation of consumers: America's Black middle class. A nightclub followed, drawing Cab Calloway and Ray Charles, as well as Black celebrities such as Paul Robeson and Joe Louis.[130]

Miami's Overtown served as a popular magnet for Black entertainers on their way to perform in Cuba. The Zebra Room, Lyric Theatre, and Harlem Square Club drew large crowds. Jacksonville and Jacksonville's Black Cat Hall and the Waiters Club were also immensely popular.

Optimism, Pragmatism & Prelude

For all the injustices and misery, perhaps because of such conditions, a mood of optimism was palpable. Poverty abounded, but impoverishment is relative, and many Floridians must have regarded conditions – when compared to a life of sharecropping in Georgia or Sicily, or life under the thumb of ancient customs or a tsar – as hopeful and improving.

Statistics speak forcefully of Florida's economic upturn. In 1933, the Depression's leanest year, Floridians earned a total of $423 million in income. In 1941, Floridians' income soared to $1.05 billion. Correspondingly, per capita earnings, a somber $272 in 1933, spiraled to $475 in 1940. "The people of Florida now are eating high on the hog," proclaimed Cone. The surge in income left the rest of the South behind, but the prosperity was not spread evenly. No county in north Florida exceeded the state average. The new prosperity did not go unnoticed. On the first of December 1941, Bartow native and WWI hero Holland, at that time the newly elected governor, reminded Floridians, "We have no state income tax, no state inheritance tax . . ."

The chief cause for optimism in America was war abroad and a growing defense budget at home. Defense contractors, truck farmers, cotton brokers, lumber mills, fish camps, and hotels benefited from Europe's misfortunes.

Roosevelt deftly orchestrated a policy bolstering the U.S. military and assisting Great Britain, while avoiding conflict in the Pacific and preparing for war in Europe. The 1940 U.S. presidential race occurred amid a clash of titans in Europe and Asia. The president found ardent support for his foreign policy among Southern congressmen. A biographer aptly titled his study of the war years, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*. Like a lion, he demonstrated strength and boldness; like a fox, he understood Machiavelli's understanding that "the end justifies the means." In October 1940, the president promised American mothers, "Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign war."

But the lion must always be prepared for battle. In forging a coalition to pass the legislation, the president demonstrated deft political and social skills. He summoned Pepper to persuade his peers to take a daring step: Institute America's first peacetime draft. Florida's 39-year-old senior U.S. senator spoke forcefully for military preparedness and the imperative of peacetime conscription.[131]

The much-anticipated draft lottery was held on October 29, 1940. Minimum standards held that draftees must be at least 21 years old, 5-feet-tall, and weight 105 pounds. "All around town," reported the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, "draft lightning struck in its democratic way of showing no favorites."[132]

Facing the Specter of War

In Pepper's hometown, Tallahassee, students at Florida State College for Women considered the implications of the draft and war. When Eleanor Roosevelt spoke in February 1940 about American security, she attracted a record crowd at Westcott auditorium. The student newspaper, the *Florida Flambeau*, pondered campus weekends "minus young men and debates and dances and corsages."[133]

In the capital, faculty, students, and local women formed a Committee for the Defense of America, one of dozens around the state organized to support Britain. Activities took the form of speeches, discussions, and knitting circles called "Bundles for Britain." "Everybody up here is knitting," wrote a first-year student. Winter Park claimed Florida's first Bundles for Britain chapter. In St. Petersburg, women organized a musical program to benefit the cause. At its peak, the St. Petersburg chapter went through 300 pounds of yarn weekly. The St. Augustine chapter purchased $668 of wool in 1941.[134]

In November 1941 the Winter Park chapter invited Mrs. Edward R. Murrow to address students at Rollins College on the topic "Women at War." The war in Europe aroused great passion among the refugees and emigrants from the embattled countries. At L'Unione Italiana, Ybor City's Italian Club, veterans of labor battles spewed forth a torrent of anti-Fascist pamphlets and speeches. Down the street, Asturians and Gallegos who raised funds to support the vanquished republic in Spain promised to defeat Hitler in the next war. Greeks in Tarpon Springs, Finns in Lake Worth, and Jews

in Miami Beach raised funds for war refugees and anxiously read papers to trace the battle lines racing across their former homelands.[135]

Citizens in remote towns debated the war in Europe. In April 1941, Colonel Raymond Robins spoke at a Brooksville Kiwanis luncheon. Named after a swaggering South Carolinian who nearly clubbed a Massachusetts senator to death in the U.S. Senate in 1856, Brooksville served as the Hernando County seat. "Vast forces are moving in the life of mankind," Robins warned. He should know. Perhaps more than any other Floridian, Robins realized the savageness of modem war. Called by diplomat George F. Kennan as "a man so colorful that I shrink from attempting to introduce him," Robins acquired the title colonel during WWI, when he commanded America's Red Cross Commission to Russia and befriended Alexander Kerensky and Vladimir Lenin. Robins, a "romanticist, a mystic, and something of an evangelist," stood witness to Russia's disastrous experience in the war, the unfolding of the revolution, and the unremitting slaughter of the Civil War that followed. He returned to Florida, purchased a stately antebellum mansion north of Brooksville, and with his activist wife, Margaret Dyer, commented on the world's manners and morals.[136]

In the summer of 1941, the *St. Petersburg Times* church editor asked local pastors a timely question: "Should the United States, which was founded largely out of the necessity of freedom and worship, lend its aid to Russia, whose

government for the past two decades has done everything it could to stamp out the church and all forms of worship?" The debate was fierce.[137]

A fascinating glimpse into racial attitudes toward the draft occurred in Ocala. W.H. Long, a young Black man attending Howard High School, registered for the draft. When bullied by a civil servant, he replied honestly: "I am registering because I have to." The registrar responded, "I see you don't love your country." Long retorted, "Oh, but I do love my country, but my country don't love me."[138]

In June 1941, Hitler unleashed a blitzkrieg upon Russia, taking vast amounts of territory and prisoners within months. One would assume that Floridians may have agreed with Churchill, who upon hearing the news of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, said, "If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favourable reference of the Devil in the House of Commons." In July 1941, the *St. Petersburg Times* asked clergymen a provocative question: "Should U.S. aid godless Russia against Nazis?" Dr. James McClure, pastor at First Presbyterian church, echoed the sentiments: "Let Russia and Germany solve the matter."[139]

Pepper, a foursquare interventionist, wrote in his diary on June 21, 1941: "About midnight the press called and announced Hitler's invasion of Russia. At least the logic of his course has prevailed. This is another battle of Tannenberg, to knock out Russia before final assault on the west. Britain and we now are the western front." The next day, he added, "Some foolish people hate Russia so they will not help destroy

Hitler; so with some about Roosevelt." Pepper may have been the most belligerent interventionist in the U.S. Senate, who asked his colleagues in 1941, "Do we want to let millions be crucified later because there is a jeopardy that a few might die an honorable death now?"[140]

Preparing for the Conflict

The war in Europe did not seem so far away. In June 1939, a German liner, the S.S. *St. Louis*, attempted to land in Miami. The vessel was carrying 907 Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. American authorities refused the *St. Louis* and its desperate passengers' requests for asylum. The vessel was so close to Miami that passengers could see the city's skyline. A few days before, the Cuban government turned down the passengers' request. Americans may have been sympathetic with the plight of Jewish refugees, but its leaders were unwilling to rescue "the voyage of the damned." The *St. Louis* returned to Germany, dooming passengers to concentration camps.

In December 1939, astonished stevedores at Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale watched a German freighter, the *Arauca*, seek refuge after having been chased by the British cruiser SS *Orion*. The British vessel fired a shot across the bow. The event became a footnote in American history: the first shot fired in WWII on American soil, or in this case, waters. The *Arauca* and its crew remained prisoners, as well as a tourist attraction. In March 1941, Roosevelt sailed into the harbor aboard his presidential yacht. He was shocked to see "a Nazi flag fluttering over American soil." The Justice Department then intervened and issued arrest warrants to the entire crew.

The legal grounds? The German sailors had overstayed their visas! The crew spent time in local jails and Ellis Island, and when America entered the war they were interned at Fort Lincoln Camp in North Dakota.[141]

Fearful of German spies and saboteurs, the War Department banned fishing from certain bridges in Florida in the summer of 1940. In West Palm Beach, a manufacturer of fishing lures complained that his business could no longer obtain feathers from Siberia or glass beads from Czechoslovakia. German ornaments no longer festooned Christmas trees. Not only did Floridians read about blitzkrieg and Operation Sea Lion, but they also witnessed the first consequences of the European war. In early December 1940, the first refugees arrived in Lakeland from England, a country fighting for its life in the Battle of Britain. The refugees, the Smiths from Essex, consisting of a mother and three daughters, were worried about Ronald Smith, a furniture maker who had participated in the Dunkirk evacuation.[142]

Dr. New Deal had not yet become Dr. Win the War, but the president was preaching the doctrine of military preparedness. The New Deal had funded the construction or improvement of municipal airports, many of which became military airfields. Pork-barrel lobbying by Florida congressmen helped bring the planes, ships, and military to Florida before Pearl Harbor. Key negotiations, fierce lobbying, and New Deal initiatives designed and implemented Florida's citadel. The WPA installed a primitive runway and a few buildings in isolated Okaloosa County, astride northwest Florida. Officers from the Montgomery, Alabama, Maxwell Army Air Corps Base used

the site for weekend hunting excursions. In 1935 the Eglin Bombing and Gunnery Range opened. In 1940, Congressman Sikes oversaw the transfer of a large chunk of Choctawhatchee National Forest to the army for the expansion of Eglin Field. The WPA resurfaced Orlando's Municipal Airport's crumbling runways and built a new hangar. The WPA had also dredged St. Petersburg's Bayboro Harbor in the 1930s. The U.S. Coast Guard established an air station and training facility at the Bayboro site.[143]

Tampa, Lakeland, and Miami benefited from defense programs launched in the late 1930s. Tampa citizens had been devastated to learn that Mobile, Alabama, and not Tampa, won a major aircraft factory competition. But Tampans cheered the July 1939 *Tribune* headline, "WE WILL GET AIR BASE." Florida Congressman J. Mark Wilcox, one of the authors of the 1935 National Defense Act, had helped Tampa acquire one of six new airfields planned for the Southeast. MacDill Army Air Field began to rise from the 5,500 acres of palmetto on the isolated Interbay peninsula.[144]

General "Hap" Arnold, fearful that the United States could not respond quickly enough to meet an impending crisis, recommended that the government authorize private companies to prepare and train pilots and flight technicians. In 1939, J. Paul Riddle opened the Embry-Riddle School of Aviation in Miami. By the fall of 1940, 500 students – including some British air cadets – enrolled at the flight school. Classrooms and dormitories included the abandoned Fritz Hotel, once a chicken coop. In Lakeland, officials welcomed the Civilian Army Air Force Pilot Training

Program in 1940. Located on the site of the former municipal airport, the establishment was renamed the Lodwick School of Aeronautics, in honor of Albert I. Lodwick, aviator and financier. A complex soon opened in Avon Park.[145]

Tourists also returned to Florida in 1940 and 1941 in record numbers. When asked about his business, J. A. Stiles of Tallahassee's Cherokee Hotel replied, "Gee, that was the best, 1939 one of the best Florida had had in ten years." *Time* quoted a lyrical Floridian, "There are no boll weevils in the tourist crop."

In 1940, Florida was many things to many people. It seemed to have one foot in the nineteenth-century South and one foot pointed to the future, an opportunity to break away from the hangover of poverty, agriculture, and extractive industry. If DeFuniak Springs and Crawfordville felt like the Deep South, other parts of Florida felt and sounded like Trenton (Florida and New Jersey), Toledo (Spain and Ohio), and St. Petersburg (Russia and Florida). There seemed to be no center holding together the state.

The larger cities contained residents who understood or had experienced poverty, racism, rural life, Old World Europe and New World New York, but Miami had little in common with Pensacola, nor did Jacksonville with St. Petersburg. Students of the social sciences frequently use the suitcase metaphor to explain the difference between historians and advocates of other disciplines. A vast quantity of facts and evidence awaits scholars attempting to understand a subject, in this case, 1940 Florida. A political scientist might wish to

cram the evidence into a suitcase and write about the relevant facts. Any messy garments hanging outside the suitcase are discarded as deviant or irrelevant. A historian, however, is attracted to those odd fabrics with interesting patterns. Thus, it is with Florida in 1940, on the eve of war.

A May 1941 Gallup Poll found Floridians among the most interventionist Americans. Thirty-five percent of the respondents favored belligerency. Historically, the South has been more "hawkish" than any other region. From the Castillo de San Marcos to the Warhawks of 1812, from the Seminole Wars and Civil War and through wars with Spain and Germany, Floridians and Southerners responded to the battle tocsin, sending their young men to fight. Memories of past wars lingered into the 1940s. In June 1941, St. Petersburg hosted the 31st annual encampment of the United Spanish War Veterans. Each Confederate Memorial Day, the last remnants of Perry's Brigade and the Governor's Guard shuffled to cemeteries and courthouse squares.

During the summer of 1940, concerned that Florida was vulnerable to invasion, a Tampa businessman proposed a novel defense strategy. Guy Allen, an oil company manager, World War I veteran and member of the American Legion, wrote a flurry of letters to politicians and military brass. Concerned that the horse cavalry was obsolete, he proposed to replace the dragoons with a fast-strike motorcycle brigade. Authorities politely rejected his idea. Rejected but not defeated, Allen organized his own Florida Motorcycle Corps.

Forty helmeted riders formed the Mechanized Minute Men. Other communities organized motorcycle troops. In October 1940, the State Defense Council was organized.[146]

When the national draft lottery was held on September 16, 1940, George Thomas Micholle, a resident of Gulfport, Florida, held the distinction of having his number, 158, drawn first. Micholle, age 25, was an upholsterer who hoped to go to medical school. He enlisted in the Army New Year's Day 1941. His father also enlisted.[147]

Epilogue

The ancient Janus is the Roman god of beginnings and endings. The two-faced deity looked forward and backward simultaneously. He also presided over war and peace. Janus would have appreciated two overlapping events that occurred in 1939-1945. One was a nostalgic, tearful glance at Florida's past; the other a toxic taste of war, xenophobia, and genocide.

The 1938 publication of *The Yearling* by Rawlings was wildly successful, culminating with the Pulitzer prize, the first such distinction by a Florida author. It seemed fitting and inevitable that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) purchased the rights. Bestselling novels were the currency of the realm in Hollywood. Simply consider the iconic films made by MGM in 1939: *Of Human Hearts*, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Gone with the Wind*.[148] Like a bootlegger on the Alachua-Marion County line, fortune shined on Rawlings. She signed a handsome contract selling the rights of the book

to MGM and was paid to scout sites for filming in the Ocala National Forest. The studio announced that filming would begin in mid-1940.

Shortly before dawn on September 1, 1939, German ground and aerial forces invaded Poland. Hitler called the incident a counterattack. On what would soon be called the Eastern Front, Soviet Union forces hammered Poland. The Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact doomed Poland, which lost six million citizens in the conflict that would soon be called World War II.

Stateside, production of *The Yearling* was underway. Spencer Tracy, a Hollywood legend, was cast as Penny Baxter, Anne Revere as Ora Baxter, and the great child actor Roddy McDowall was assigned the role of Fodderwing. Victor Fleming – he of *Gone with the Wind* fame – signed on as director.[149] Gene Eckman was cast as Jody, Ora and Penny's son and their only surviving child.

The film seemed cursed. Actors and crew complained of mosquitoes, humidity, and boredom. A rumor has it that Tracy, furious at the crude conditions, fled to Atlanta by taxi. In addition, a Noah's Ark of animals – a total of 441 deer, black bears, dogs, wild birds, buzzards, owls, chickens, pigs, rattlesnakes, horses, and raccoons – graced and terrorized actors, trainers, and staff. But not even the ornery Forrester boys of the novel could prevent a sneak attack that shook Cross Creek. Pearl Harbor canceled the first effort to transform *The Yearling* from paper to celluloid.

Ripley's Believe It or Not was a national newspaper cartoon that entertained readers with the oddities of man and animal. Ironically, several generations of modern tourists have flocked to the Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum in St. Augustine. The attraction's home is the former Castle Warden Hotel, built in 1887, and owned in the 1940s, as previously noted, by Baskins, popularly known as "Mr. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings." The hotel's much-anticipated seasonal opening occurred on December 7, 1941. "An era began yesterday," declared *The Washington Post* the next day. The paper added glumly, "What lay ahead as Europe plunged into the second World War nobody could know or guess."[150]

In the film, Ora, who had already lost several babies, fully understands sacrifice. When Jody's best friend, his pet yearling Flag, once again invades the family's precious garden, she demands that he shoot his pet. He pitifully wounds Flag, forcing his mother to finish the task. Jody runs away, returning days later ragged and afraid. "You come back," his father announces. "You ain't a yearling no more!" Soon, Eckman wouldn't be, either. War had touched the backwoods and bayous of Florida, and between filming and fighting in WWII, he, too, matured quickly and came back a man. When filming resumed in 1946, with Gregory Peck as Penny and Jane Wyman as Ora, Eckman was too war torn and cynical to play the role of the innocent Jody. Innocence was in short supply following a horrific war that claimed one death every three seconds.[151]

In 1940, alarmed that the fate of her beloved England and France were doomed, St. Vincent Millay penned a profound

sentence: "There are no islands, anymore." She may also have been thinking about the fate of her beloved Sanibel and Captiva. Or she might have imagined the steady march of technology devouring time and space, reaching the remote islands along the Gulf Coast, and even the Scrub. In June 1940, the war in Europe did not seem so far away. John Donne, too, understood centuries earlier when he penned, "No man is an island."[152]

Floridians heard about desperate Jews, happy housewives, angry politicians, and events in Europe and Asia over the airwaves. In 1939, almost 300,000 radios rested on kitchen tables, private studies, and living rooms in Florida homes. Floridians boasted more radios than cars. From handsome mahogany cabinets to coffee tables and kitchen shelves, the radio had become an essential and trusted medium. Citizens debated the merits of local and national newsmen who broadcast from Daytona Beach's WMFJ to Gainesville's WRUF, from Jacksonville's WJAX to Miami's WIOD, from Pensacola's WCOA to West Palm Beach's WJNO. St. Augustine's WFOY saluted the "Fountain of Youth." Florida's radio age began with WDAE in 1922, the state's first radio station to be licensed commercially by the Federal Communications Commission. Tallahassee's WTAL broadcast its first signal in 1935.[153]

New technologies can erase time, capture the moment, and generate mass movements. Radio was bewitching and banal, and for three decades, it had no rival. Radio erased and enforced boundaries. Consider Gustave G. Damkohler. In April 1882, he brought his family to Punta Rassa, then part of

frontier southwest Florida in Lee County. The family noticed a sign at the south end of a dock. The sign read, "This is the end of the earth – jump right off."

Yet this small community at the seeming edge of the known world boasted a telegraph office. Nearby was the Utopian experiment of Koreshan. In 1940, only a handful of Koreshan colony members were alive, in large part because its eclectic leader, Cyrus Reed Teed, also known as Koresh, had demanded sexual abstinence. But technology could not be denied. Steamboats navigated the local rivers and Gulf of Mexico. The first railroad arrived only four years later. Radio waves made every American living room an auditorium. Roosevelt was one of the first politicians to realize the persuasive powers of radio and communication. Listeners swore the president's "chats" were directed at them.[154]

If moral leaders comforted listeners over the radio, other voices alarmed Americans. Coughlin, Lindbergh, Long, and Amy McPherson used the medium of radio as a divining rod. Radio captured Americans' passions and despair, their dreams and nightmares. On October 30, 1938, 23-year-old boy wonder Orson Welles terrified millions in a radio recreation of H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*. Americans were already familiar with the distinctive vocal cadences of radio newsmen H. V. Kaltenborn, Edward R. Murrow, and John Charles Daly.

Historians debate the precise beginnings of what would become known as WWII. Some historians argue that the events that occurred between 1939 and 1945 have their

origins in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). The conventional beginnings date from September 1, 1939, but that moment ignores the Japanese invasion of China in 1931. Author Rick Atkinson argues for the German and Soviet Union invasion of Poland. He adds a heaping measure of perspective in his work, *An Army at Dawn*:

September 1, 1939, is the first day of a war that would last for 2,174 days, and it brought the first dead in a war that would claim an average of 27,600 lives every day, or 1,150 an hour, or 19 a minute, or one death every 3 seconds.[155]

For Americans and Floridians, the decade of the 1930s yielded to the 1940s. Floridians expressed little nostalgia for the exhausting ten-year struggle. By Sunday afternoon, December 7, 1941, a Florida unrecognizable eight decades later was born. In an astonishingly short period of time, familiar patterns accelerated, new trends exploded, and old ways died.

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Black Caesar: Public Memory, Elusive History & the Strange Afterlife of Black Piracy

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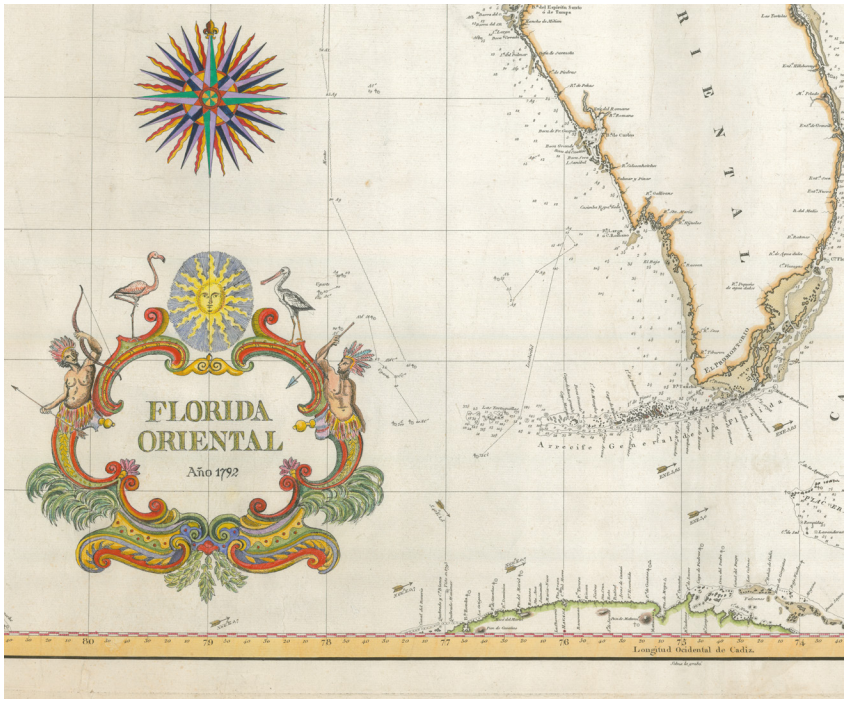


Coastal survey chart No. 66, circa 1890, showing Tottens Key, Rubicon Key, Porgee Key, Adams Key and part of Elliott Key, as well as Caesars Creek and water depths in nearby parts of Biscayne Bay.

Geo. S. Harris & Sons, lith[ographers], Philadelphia. U.S. Geological Survey. Thirteenth Annual Report. Pl. XLII. Map Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1981-204-1.

Black Caesar has captured the public memory of South Biscayne Bay and Florida Keys residents for some time, yet the historical record that surrounds him is elusive at best. He may have been an African tribal leader, may have sailed with Blackbeard, and may have hanged in Williamsburg, Virginia. He, of course for Keys residents, may also have buried treasure somewhere on or near Elliot Key in the southern reaches of Biscayne Bay. That two other Black Caesars exist, one a Haitian revolutionary who served with Toussaint L'Ouverture, the other an Australian convict supposedly from Madagascar, only adds to the web of public memory shaping the understanding of this mythical figure. This article examines the Black Caesar story and its afterlife in television and novels, and argues that public memory occasionally matters more than the actual historical record, and that while memory is shaped by historical, political, and social factors, it is often a constitutive force for even small, diverse communities.

The story of Black Caesar Keys residents are most familiar with, perhaps, is that of Black Caesar I, the supposedly formerly enslaved African who reportedly shared a ship with Blackbeard and buried treasure on or near Elliot Key. This story has Black Caesar in the Florida Keys in the early 1700s on a slaving ship after the African king or war chieftain was taken from Africa. On board the ship, he befriended an unnamed member of the crew. A storm ravished the ship, Black Caesar's crewmember-friend unshackled him, and the two men escaped the sinking ship in a dinghy, eventually

mastering the rough seas to land on what is now known as Caesar's Rock, a small island to the south of Elliot Key and to the north of Old Rhodes Key in south Biscayne Bay.

The two men turned to piracy, luring passing ships to them by appearing in distress. When the ships offered assistance, Black Caesar and his friend would take everything from treasure to supplies to women. He had a prison for men and amassed a fortune in silver and gold. Women would be the downfall of this piratical duo; Black Caesar eventually killed his friend in a fight over one. Supposedly he would go on to capture some one hundred women. He persisted from this base for approximately ten years, until he joined Blackbeard, although the details of this meeting are unclear. Blackbeard did not re-enslave Black Caesar, but rather made him a part of his piratical crew.

Eventually, Blackbeard was caught in 1718 and, in a much-fabled story, was shot and stabbed multiple times before succumbing to wounds delivered by the hands of U.S. Army Lieutenant Robert Maynard and his crew. Black Caesar was entrusted with detonating explosives in Blackbeard's ship's hull, but was unable to do so before being captured himself. He was then hanged in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1718.

The other most popular story of Black Caesar is that of Black Caesar II, the Haitian revolutionary. This story involves an enslaved man named Henri Caesar born in Haiti. He endured forced labor at a lumberyard with an abusive and violent master who Caesar eventually killed during the Haitian Revolution. Caesar was active in revolutionary fighting until

he took to the sea in search of fortune, attacking a Spanish ship in his supposedly first piratical act, and then attacking small coastal villages.

This Black Caesar collected up to six million dollars and hid this treasure on a variety of islands that included Marco Island, Sanibel Island, Pine Island, and Elliot Key. He disappeared around 1830, and there are multiple explanations for this disappearance – including fleeing from Florida when the U.S. took possession of it and being captured and immolated in Key West. Here then is another fantastic story, one full of violence and treasure, that appears one hundred years later than Black Caesar I.

There are problems with these stories, however. Black Caesar I does not exist in the historical record lest we are to assume that the Black pirate "Caesar" that was with Blackbeard when he was attacked and killed is the Black Caesar of Keys lore, but one would have to make several assumptions to believe that the two are the same.[1] Black Caesar II was a Haitian revolutionary who seems to have also engaged in piracy and his story tends to revolve mostly around the west coast of Florida and Sanibel Island, so while he may have also practiced piracy in the Florida Keys, it is not quite clear that this Black Caesar's connection to the Florida Keys is as great as that of Black Caesar I. He is described as simply Black Caesar in David O. True's early article, and it seems to be a conflation of the story of Black Caesar I and Black Caesar II.[2] In True's account, Black Caesar seems to be located in Sanibel and dies in Key West.

Black Caesar II received a whole chapter in Jack Beater's 1952 book.[3] His story is a remarkable tale of revolutionary warfare with French occupiers and meeting Gasparilla, the pirate whose name now graces Tampa's pirate festival. Although, this too has been cast into doubt in two ways. Gasparilla may not have been a pirate or at least not the pirate west Floridians think he was.[4] And, Gasparilla may be derived from a Friar Gaspar and not any pirate at all.[5] Indeed, Black Caesar II may be the more interesting of the two pirates but for his lack of connection with the Florida Keys.

Another classification of the Black Caesars has Black Caesar I as the pirate of the Florida Keys, another Black Caesar as the Caesar that sailed with Blackbeard, and Black Caesar II as a pirate who "attacked ships off Florida's east coast," to write nothing of Haitian Black Caesar or a Black Caesar of the future Tampa area.[6] This other Black Caesar complicates the historical reality even more for even the most earnest and well-meaning historians. While historians may lament the confusing ways in which the various Black Caesars are written about, this nonetheless explains why the stories mean more than the historical record.

Alan F. Troop has written that Tom Hambright, then director of history at the Key West Library, has argued that "almost any black pirate who lived during the 1700s and 1800s was apt to be called Black Caesar."[7] Troop even-handedly reports that there is much disagreement about who Black Caesar was, what he did, and how his life ended, which is why the story persists.[8] Everyone has their own "Black Caesar," and thus the stories continue.

Occasionally those writing about Black Caesar have significant self-reflective moments, as when Jim Woodman wrote, "The pirates . . . were colorful seadogs whose deeds and misdeeds have been told by generations of storytellers. These romantic yarns are fascinating and as one listens to the old local stories one particular rogue emerges."[9] Of note is the emphasis on "old local stories" and "romantic yarns." Both cast doubt on the veracity of these stories, distancing them from the present and historical fact. Old local stories are something different than history. They are those stories traded around by a certain generation and not the stuff of dusty historic tomes. Romantic yarns are not findable in county archives nor countable in census reports. This framing also serves an important historiographic function in that it allows Woodman to tell his story without having to worry about historical accuracy. He can be an historian for some and for others a folklorist. In doing so, Woodman gives life to his writing encouraging multiple interpretations.

Yet, even well-established sources seem to rubber-stamp the story of Black Caesar as a crew member of Blackbeard's without much evidence to support such an interpretation.[10] Given that many pirates were likely Black (and we have some evidence that many were), that Charles Johnson mentions a Black pirate on Blackbeard's crew is simply not enough to state with veracity that Black Caesar existed, let alone served with Blackbeard.[11] Because Black men were not treated equally and many were subject to the abject horror of the slave trade where their names were taken and they were renamed or de-named, it is difficult to determine whether a Black "Caesar" was *the* Black Caesar. Then there are the seemingly blatant

conflations of identity as happens in a post on *War History Online*, where Black Caesar I and II seem to be one character, both a member of Blackbeard's crew and also the Haitian-born freedom fighter Henri Caesar.[12] To write that the history of Black Caesar(s) is confusing is understating it.

Cliff Gardner, *Black Caesar, Pirate* (Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 1980). Noah Scalin/CC BY-SA 2.0, https://flic.kr/p/9dEQHn.

As shocking as it may be for some historians, sometimes history does not matter. Public memory often shares something with traditional historical study, but it also lives beyond it, impacted by the historical, political, and social

events of the time and over time. Memory exists beyond history, but not absent it. Memory, history, and various ways of recording and repeating these ideas are all "densely interwoven dimensions of larger symbolic and discursive processes."[13] Memory is also contested and claimed, circulated and recirculated by multiple actors, thus creating a constant mediation of meaning.[14] So, one can have Black Caesar who buried treasure, one who was a bloodthirsty seadog, one who appears in novels and television shows in various ways, and one who was a Haitian revolutionary. All of these can be the same person even if they are not, and even if they never were people.

Confino's definition of collective memory is helpful: "an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group, be it a family or a nation, whose members nonetheless have different interests and motivations."[15] Memories of Black Caesar unite people – tourists hungry for more pirate lore and themed bars, locals invested in their community's identity (the tongue-in-cheek conflict between the Conch Republic and the Upper Keys),[16] and pirate enthusiasts and historians the world over. Those people who share a collective memory also "have different interests and motivations," so there may be both historians actively criticizing Black Caesar lore, tourists enthralled by the chance to walk where pirates walked, and business leaders eager to capitalize on the marketability of pirates all working together to promote Black Caesar in the region's collective memory.

For the latter two groups, the history does not so much matter. Public memory shares many of the same characteristics

as collective memory but is often discussed in terms of its political uses, and done so in relation to museums, cultural performances, monuments, and memorials – all public events or locations where a certain version of memory is used for political purposes.[17] Public memory, then, can help bring people together to strengthen a community and collective identity.[18] If one has visited the Lower Keys, Upper Keys, or even South Florida writ large, one has no doubt gotten a sense of collective identity evident throughout the region, expressed in everything from cuisine to clothing, public spaces to museums.

History and memory are co-constitutive, working together to create the world that we know, and even occasionally that we love, like the lore of the Florida Keys. It is no wonder that Black Caesar's story has persisted for so long despite the lack of evidence to support his exploits and even his existence. To fill in the gaps, we create stories, and after a while those stories become historical artifacts in and of themselves.

That Black Caesar was African, or Black, is also significant in explaining the resonance of this Key's character and his story. Blackness has increasingly become politicized with significant increases in politicization during various eras of United States history. Crispus Attucks is one example of a Black individual who has received increasing attention at times when political Blackness garnered more attention, both as a subject of historical inquiry and as an important point of Black activists' quest to change society.[19] While Black Caesar has not become a political icon yet, one could imagine that a free Black man exacting revenge on people who were like

those that enslaved him could become an important figure in modern Black radical rhetoric. Of course, since the history of piracy has been whitewashed, Black Caesar functions as an important corrective. Yet, there is a danger in romanticizing Black Caesar or any pirate given their proclivity for violence, of course.

Still there are competing interpretations about the evidence available to support pirate activity in the Florida Keys. John Viele concludes that "Despite numerous legends to the contrary, there is no evidence that there were pirate bases in the Keys."[20] Viele continues, "The story of a pirate named Black Caesar operating out of Caesar Creek between Old Rhodes Key and Elliot Key has never been supported by documented fact."[21] Such firm, declarative statements seem to present a definitive conclusion for the lack of piracy in and around the Florida Keys, yet Woodman recounts early 1900s stories of recovered gold and silver coins, a skeleton, and other pirate artifacts throughout the Florida Keys and the surrounding area.[22]

Prominent South Florida archaeologist Robert S. Carr offers that "A true account of known piracy in South Florida waters would, at best, fill several note cards."[23] Carr, then, is somewhere in the middle between Viele and Woodman. Joan Gill Blank's well-written and informative history of Key Biscayne only gives passing notice to Black Caesar in the form of a vague description of plantation workers' children searching for Black Caesar's treasure, but provides nothing in the way of documentation on Black Caesar himself.[24] The story continues to outlive the historical record, and at each

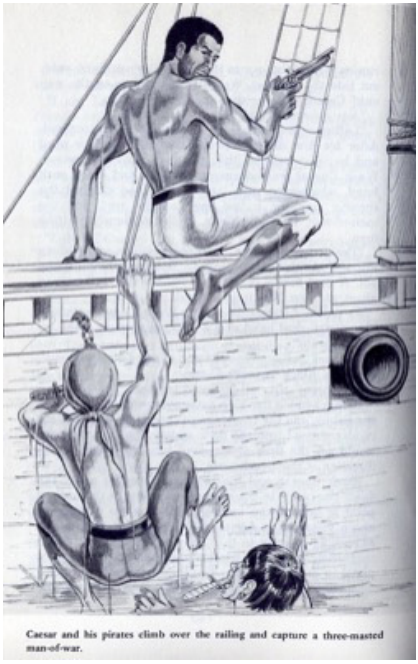
turn authors all seem invested in nodding toward Black Caesar, his gold and silver, and his harem, even if there is not much more than widely circulated stories to support it.

The existence of piracy in the Florida Keys, let alone Black Caesar, is far more complicated than any two-line summary in a book can explain, which, in turn, helps explain the resonance of Black Caesar's story. We, the public, not to mention historians, folklorists, residents, and others, simply cannot be sure, so we have stories to make sense of our partial knowledge. Even Black Caesar's Creek between Old Rhodes and Elliot Keys was a relatively recent intervention in the geo-historical record created by a surveyor, yet this creek has also been recorded as Black Sarah's Creek on several maps, so how the creek got its name is less related to any pirate than it is to perhaps a case of a writing error.[25] The name of the creek has not been consistently recorded. This also explains why one could easily happen upon a group of South Florida or Florida Keys denizens and find some who have never heard of Black Caesar, others who are convinced his treasure lies somewhere in the area, and still others who think the story is great, but have never given much thought to its history.

Narratives help us make sense of a world it is impossible to know, and the importance or helpfulness of a narrative does not pertain to its truth or falsity.[26] In a sense, asking whether Black Caesar existed or buried gold on Elliot Key simply does not matter, because it is the story and not the content that is culturally significant. But, this does not mean historical fact does not influence the nature and resonance of certain stories, as Woodman reminds us: "[Possibly] steam shovels clearing

Cape Florida [Key Biscayne] homesites will uncover a hidden horde. Then stories of Biscayne Bay's two Black pirates will come alive again."[27] A children's or young adult's book makes much the same point. Kevin M. McCarthy writes, "If tractors and backhoes clearing the land on the mainland or the islands uncover more loot, you can be sure that tales of the Black Caesars will surface again."[28]

The lore of Black Caesar apparently resonates with all age groups. That the language used in Woodman's and McCarthy's books is so similar gives a written indication of the permanence these stories have as even their potential spread is described in similar ways – we're all just one construction project away from Black Caesar joining us again. Much like other legends that are reinvigorated by present actions, so too



Cliff Gardner, *Black Caesar, Pirate* (Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 1980). Noah Scalin / CC BY-SA 2.0, https://flic.kr/p/9dHT6Q.

is Black Caesar's legend likely to be reinvigorated, especially given rapid development and constant tourism in and around the Florida Keys – treasure is always waiting!

Furthermore, although one version of Black Caesar's story has him being hanged in Williamsburg, Virginia, after being captured with Blackbeard's crew, another has him retiring in Elliot Key to live off "the spoils of his piracy."[29] Dead or not, real or not, Black Caesar remains.

Black Caesar also lives on in public memory in other ways, including in a series of foggy memories about Black Caesar's Forge, a restaurant in what is now Palmetto Bay near the Deering Estate. The menu cover featured a Black pirate with exaggerated racist features (large lips and nose), and Carr cites what appears to be his copy of a menu from the restaurant:

> A princely fortune in gold and treasure trove, including Black Caesar's favorite coins and jewels is believed to have been buried in the area centered by Black Caesar's Forge . . . As you dine in the pleasantly cool, coral-walled cellar of the forge, who is to know how near, or far, the golden loot of countless ships lies hidden, awaiting but the lucky hand.[30]

The menu's authors seem to nod toward the lack of history supporting their interpretation – "is believed." And, "who is to know how near, or far" treasure is. Of course, this language supports there being no treasure or at least treasure quite far away (perhaps not even in the Florida Keys). Nonetheless,

the restaurant mingles with Black Caesar's story and contains similar elements of treasure and even sex, harkening back to Black Caesar's harem of one hundred women. Several online comments link memories of the long-gone restaurant to these themes of the original Black Caesar tale. Erik Hare's blog, *Barataria*, contains an entry for "Cutler," which has a lively comment section featuring many reminiscences about Black Caesar's Forge.[31] The comments report Bahamian servers (one of whom was a drunk), a woman describing herself as "dessert" after a meal, a thriving LGBTQ+ community, and visits by gangsters.[32] The restaurant seems to have been just as enmeshed in flamboyance as was the pirate who inspired it. Yet, while stories of the restaurant's past have an air of truth, Black Caesar's story remains shrouded in mystery.

Black Caesar, in various forms and with an even more muddled story, appears in novels, documentaries, and films as well. Coconut Grove pioneer and famed author Kirk Munroe wrote *The Coral Ship*, which tells the story of a treasure ship of Black Caesar's time, but it is not about Black Caesar, although it gives one a sense of the maritime environment of the time.[33] The connection between *The Coral Ship* and Black Caesar is scant, but True connects the two.[34] *Black Caesar's Clan: A Florida Mystery* is not so much about Black Caesar as it is about a mystery in South Florida, but the title is clearly intended to invoke ideas of piracy and treasure.[35] The name "Black Caesar" recurs in the title of a 2013 true crime book about a Black drug lord who hopped bail with a beautiful woman, with money and women seemingly the only connection to either Black Caesar of piratical fame.[36] The term "Black Caesar" has also been applied to the study of

Blaxploitation cinema, denoting a trope of Black masculinity concerned with power and women.[37] A Blaxploitation film from 1973 bears the *Black Caesar* name and tells the story of a Black man assaulted by police who turns to a life of crime, alluding to the violence Black Caesar endured as an enslaved man and his turn to piracy.[38]

Black Caesar's treasure received the documentary treatment in 2020 from Discovery UK, where actor Rob Riggle unsurprisingly finds no treasure.[39] Black Caesar is also featured in PBS's *Rogue History*, where one gets the best sense that the story of Black Caesar is a fantastic tale, but one only tenuously connected to historical record.[40] Media like this help to correct historical understanding, while also continuing the myth even while critiquing it because they emphasize the importance of the story and kindle and rekindle interest in its circulation. These disparate literary lives of Black Caesar all support the enduring significance of his story in south and west Florida, and beyond.

The Black Caesar story's resonance extends far beyond the Florida Keys. Black Caesar II's story was covered in the *Bradenton Times* in 2014, concluding that the author "will leave the dispute of Caesar's existence in the hands of the reader."[41] The story involves the standard Elliot Key treasure burial trope. The story also makes its way to Martin County, where Black Caesar I's ship makes a ghostly appearance, plying the St. Lucie River as a ghost ship in the 1920s.[42] This story recounts Stuart resident Wallace Williams Stevens's

(noted as the Stuart newspaper editor's son and therefore a believable source) experience.[43] Thus, the Black Caesar story has made its way up both of Florida's coasts.

What historians, residents, and tourists are left with is a bare historical record and a vibrant story that withstands historical inquiry. Even if one wanted to kill the story by simply presenting the lack of evidence about a Black Caesar who spent time in Elliott Key, it would be virtually impossible given the story's resonance. Sometimes good stories never end. Indeed, at some time in the future, we may be more interested in the Black Caesar story than in Black Caesar the pirate, if we are not already at this point, for which this article hopes to lay the groundwork. Dead men may tell no tales, but sometimes the stories we tell are better than the history we know.

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Freedom Awaits by Sea: Exploring the "Saltwater Railroad" of Key Biscayne to the Bahamas

Sara Feinman

In 1878, the Fowey Rocks Light, near the Great Florida Reef, replaced the land-bound lighthouse, seen here with the abandoned cottage of the lighthouse keeper, on the edge of Key Biscayne, circa late 1800s.

Cape Florida Lighthouse and keeper's cottage, circa 1880. Ralph Middleton Munroe, photographer. Ralph Munroe Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, Munroe 98D.

Shining brightly at the tip of Key Biscayne's barrier island sits the Cape Florida Lighthouse. To this day, it serves as a navigational and protective tool for boats and ships sailing by. Constructed in 1825, it represented the United States government's determination to settle its newly acquired Florida territory and to use its southern waters safely.[1] Although its first lighting in that same year signaled a beacon of hope for American sailors looking to navigate around the southern tip of the state, it also initiated the deterioration of an intricate water escape route that depended on the area not being lit or detectable at all.

Before the Cape Florida Lighthouse was built, its surrounding beaches were vital to enslaved peoples attempting to escape for a better life by leaving the territory and the United States altogether. Those daring enough to use this southern departure route were suspected of negotiating for passage by sea to the Bahamas from friendly passing ships or by making the potentially perilous journey by individual makeshift canoes. While this escape route was seemingly active from the late 1700s until the onset of the Civil War, it was not widely revealed by those who used it through ancestral or personal experience; nor was it studied by historians or archeologists, even those who focused on the Underground Railroad, until the late twentieth century.[2]

Hundreds of miles south from the more traveled Underground Railroad used by fugitive enslaved people/individuals seeking passage north into freedom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this very southern portion of South Florida offered a "Saltwater Railroad" route that accomplished the same

objective for enslaved people/individuals hoping to escape from the mainland. It provided an escape route from Florida to another place of refuge, the Bahamian island of Andros. The channel became more established in the early 1800s, and the area in what is now Key Biscayne became one of the central points where Bahamian boats reportedly picked up escapees.[3] Although a few scholars have recently begun exploring this water route from Key Biscayne to the Bahamas, its initial founding and longevity remain something of a mystery. Additionally, just how successful this Saltwater Railroad route was as a destination of freedom for the enslaved is difficult to determine.

Florida's tumultuous territorial history coupled with its geographic position made it a coveted haven for those escaping slavery or removal throughout history. After the Spanish "discovered" the Floridian peninsula in the early sixteenth century, their subsequent colonization focused on converting and subjugating the Indigenous population. The colony, established as San Augustin (St. Augustine) in 1565, became a small military outpost for the crown after a fort was built along the coast. Despite the fort's protection, the colony was plagued by pirate and Native American attacks. The Spanish struggled to maintain a thriving population in the area throughout the next century, but they considered Florida's location to be vital: It guarded the Bahama Channel, served as a minor trading port, and stood to deter further European colonization.[4] Spanish control of the territory, however, was even more threatened by British settlements along the southeastern coast of the United States, specifically

in the Carolinas and Georgia. The two European powers often quarreled over territorial claims and fugitive extradition throughout the next few centuries.[5]

The lore of Spanish asylum for their enslaved population also maddened the British colonists within the Florida territory. Their fears materialized in 1687, when eleven fugitive slaves from the English Carolina colonies were reported to have arrived in St. Augustine. Spanish Governor Diego De Quiroga y Lossada documented that the group consisted of eight men, two women, a three-year-old toddler, and a nursing child. He assigned these "fugitives" paid labor positions; the men become blacksmiths or construction workers and the women would serve as domestics.[6]

When an English representative arrived in Florida to retrieve them, the governor refused to oblige his request, noting that they had all been converted to Catholicism and civilized through marriage and paid employment. He then sought the king and royal court's guidance on the issue and in response, Charles II issued an official decree in 1693 promising liberty to all who reached St. Augustine.[7] The decree empowered the Florida governor to provide fugitive slaves protection within the Florida territory on the contingency that they would declare their allegiance to the king of Spain, convert to Roman Catholicism, and, in some cases, take up arms for the Spanish amid raids into Florida from the north.[8] In 1738, governor Manuel de Montiano took this proclamation of asylum even further by granting these Catholic converts their own sanctioned, free Black village just a few miles away from St. Augustine, called Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, or

Fort Mose for short. Black residents who refused conversion or were purchased by Spanish slave traders who had traveled to Africa or the Caribbean were still considered enslaved.[9]

This decree, however, officially initiated a limited policy of sanctuary for the enslaved within Florida and consequently created a southern destination for the Underground Railroad. The southern peninsula provided multiple opportunities of freedom for the enslaved. Contingent independence was attainable within Spanish St. Augustine, but beyond the small colony was the possibility of autonomy in maroon or Indigenous communities within Florida's uncharted wilderness. Countless amounts of enslaved peoples either joined the Seminole tribe in Florida or lived in independent Black communities such as Fort Mose.[10]

As time went on, military conflicts and ever-changing diplomatic relations between the Spanish and the British led Florida to become an antagonistic territorial dispute between the two kingdoms. When Florida switched hands during their power struggle in the second half of the eighteenth century, locations of safe havens for the enslaved became farther and farther south as more whites began to violently assert their dominance in northern Florida. Dismally, the smaller pockets of central and south Floridian maroon or friendly Native American communities also became too risky or too far in between due to the threat of white settlement. But another opportunity for freedom, although extremely dangerous, soon opened in one of the most southern portions of the territory – one that would require the escapee to leave the peninsula altogether to achieve it.[11]

There is no definite, documented start to the Saltwater Railroad escape route, but reports of fugitive slaves from Florida arriving in the Bahamas date as far back as 1789, during Spain's second occupation. While the territory was under British rule from 1763 to the end of the American Revolutionary war, the liberties, though sometimes limited, once enjoyed by its free Black residents came to a complete halt. During the British occupation period, enslaved Blacks outnumbered their white owners approximately two to one, and because of this staggering statistic, slave codes within the territory grew harsher.[12] British settlement increased outside of Spain's original occupation areas and more white settlers began to colonize the northwestern portion of the state. Fort Mose remained, but under intense scrutiny. These early white settlers were also often met with great opposition from the surrounding natives who were rumored to live alongside what were feared to be "Black" Seminoles.[13]

After the American Revolutionary War, Florida was relinquished by the British and returned to Spain. Former British colonists were now calling themselves "Americans" and they began to rapidly expand into the Carolinas and Georgia. Multiple bands of the lower Creek tribes fled their ancestral lands within the Carolinas and Georgia in search of land and sustenance away from the hostile colonists. The Spanish even encouraged this refugee resettlement as they believed the natives would serve as human buffers between St. Augustine's residents and the remaining Americans in the northwestern portion of the state.[14]

Subsequently, by welcoming two separate groups of runaways into their territory, removed Creeks and fugitive slaves, the Spanish actually helped initiate a permanent alliance between the two. Many newly formed native villages in northwestern Florida welcomed escaped slaves looking for freedom within their tribe through adoption ceremonies and other traditions. Around 1770, these groups collectively began referring to themselves as the Seminole tribe, with Seminole meaning "wild people" or "runaway" in the Indigenous Creek language. The formerly enslaved that lived amongst their ranks were then referred to as the "Black Seminole."[15]

According to anthropologist and Black Seminole scholar Rosalyn Howard, it was only natural for the Seminole to welcome the enslaved because not only could they serve as additional warriors, but their African "military, linguistic, artisan, and agricultural skills were highly valuable. Many of them had guerilla warfare experience, the ability to speak several European languages, and were knowledgeable about agricultural techniques that were well adapted to the tropical environment."[16] They became integral members as war leaders and interpreters. Black Seminole were not enslaved by their native counterparts in the "traditional" sense, since they remained largely independent living among the tribe's ranks.[17]

Yet, for the enslaved population of Florida that lived on Spanish or American plantations, there was a constant desire for freedom. Plantation life as an enslaved person was particularly cruel as multiple forms of torture were omnipresent, including outward physical or sexual violence

and purposeful familial separations. Slaves' places of refuge, while limited, still existed in Florida during the Second Spanish Occupation, especially within the Seminole tribe, but many enslaved people believed that the only opportunity for a better life was to escape from Florida altogether. Some of these people chose the journey to the Bahamas.[18]

The first reported advertisement seeking an escaped slave from Florida suspected of reaching the Bahamas was written in 1789. Mr. John Imrie, of the colony of East Florida, placed an announcement in the *Bahama Gazette* imploring for the return of his "Negro Fellow called PRINCE." Prince was listed as a "shipright" (sic) who had "absconded" from Imrie on one of their voyages. Imrie promised within the note that if Prince were to be returned, he would be forgiven, but it is suspected that Prince never returned to Florida.[19]

Other enslaved people followed in Prince's footsteps in the years after this posting. Escapes to the Bahamas most likely increased during this time due to the racialized decree presented by Florida's Spanish governor Vincente Manuel de Zespedes y Velasco in 1790. The governor decided to remove Florida's sanctuary status as he was seemingly exhausted from dealing with accusations and increased pressures from American slave owners claiming to have fugitives living in Florida with Spanish permission. From 1784-1790, the governor dealt with countless claims from Americans seeking extradition for their fugitive slaves. Refusing to give up their property, some families would spend years lamenting to the Spanish governor in attempts to re-enslave their runaways.[20]

Despite ostensibly refusing to return the supposed fugitives to their American seekers, Zespedes never granted them absolute equality. In 1790, he removed the possibility of even a limited freedom within Spanish Florida. On January 15, 1790, the governor delivered an edict stating that "no free black is permitted to cultivate lands, or live in the country side unless it is with a white man, and with a formal contract and my approval of the conditions."[21] A few months later, after even more immense pressure from the newly formed American government, the Spanish king suspended the original 1693 policy of sanctuary for fugitive slaves within Florida. He then ordered for notice of these changes to be widely announced and circulated throughout Spanish Florida and neighboring American settlements. He hoped to curtail any future "fugitive migration" and to better his diplomatic relationship with the United States. South Carolina and Georgia then published these royal orders in their respective gazettes on August 23, 1790.[22]

Thomas Jefferson, America's secretary of state at the time, praised this new policy in a letter to the governor who succeeded Zespedes, Juan Nepomeuceno de Quesada, calling it "essential" to the peaceful diplomacy between Spain and the newly formed United States.[23] The *Philadelphia Inquirer* also hailed the new policy for ending the protection of runaway slaves in Florida. The article stated that "should any such people go there [Florida] they will be thrown into prison, until demanded by their owners . . ."[24] After 1790, for a short time, reports of fugitive slaves and advertisements for their return from Spanish Florida declined. But even though the journey into Florida no longer offered the contingent

Spanish freedom, its wild northern terrain was still dotted with Seminole villages. Moreover, the southern portion of the peninsula and its barrier islands were rumored to have never been settled by Europeans up to this point, meaning that an opportunity for freedom could also be awaiting there or even beyond it by sea.[25]

The small island near Miami Beach now called Key Biscayne was historically occupied by the Tequesta Indians, so named by the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León. When he landed on its shores in 1513 and claimed the island as Santa Marta for the kingdom, he claimed the natives to be inferior and began to threaten their very existence.[26] The Tequesta unfortunately suffered tragic losses due to their lack of immunity against Spanish diseases, coupled with their barbaric treatment at the hands of Spanish explorers. Key Biscayne, cleared of Tequesta encampments, was then left vacant for more than two centuries. It was referred to at this point, by those who knew of its existence, as Cape Florida or as "Key Biscayno" or "Buskin" by the Spanish. However, during the Second Spanish Occupation of Florida (1783-1821) there was a slight increase in attempts by Spain to establish a stronger foothold there by the awarding of lands by the king of Spain or designated representatives within the southern portion of the peninsula.[27] Within these land grants, Spanish aristocrat Pedro Fornells was given "175.00 acres" on the island of "Key Biscayno" in 1790 by Governor Enrique White.[28]

Fourteen years later, after securing enough supplies, Fornells arrived in Key Biscayne with his family. He had intended to cultivate a coffee plantation on the island and brought with

him two Spanish farmhands and several African slaves.[29] The manor produced small corn and coffee harvests, but Fornells was unable to form a large farmstead. His home's location on this southern barrier island also made it extremely vulnerable to attacks by marauding pirates, natives, and even the British as it stood alone.[30] Within a year, Fornells and his family became too intimidated by the constant threats living on the island and the increasing tensions with the British. They fled to St. Augustine in 1805, leaving behind their farmhands and most of their slaves.[31] A few months after this retreat, Fornells passed away, bequeathing his land grant to his son, Raphael Andrews, but Andrews reportedly never returned to reclaim the land or the slaves and farmhands that were left behind.[32]

The old Fornells settlement was thus abandoned by white settlers for the next two decades. While little is known about the true activity within this "uninhibited" island during this time period, conjecture and archeological excavations have led scholars to produce a few theories. I am proposing that it was during this period of European abandonment that a more established Saltwater Railroad route from this destination to the Bahamas was formed. As there is no record of the Fornells farmhands or enslaved workers returning to St. Augustine, it is possible that they could have played a role in establishing the Bahamian escape route. In fact, according to Key Biscayne historian Jim Woodman, "one report tells of a day in 1821 when 120 negroes and Indians were on the Key in search of subsistence."[33] Perhaps this report was referring to the former Fornells slaves, or their descendants, and their Indigenous allies, most likely Seminole and Black Seminole. After failing to set up a true community on the island for whatever reason,

there is a chance that they could have received word about the opportunities for freedom and connections with other formerly enslaved Africans within the British-controlled Bahamas.[34]

During the American Revolutionary War, the British military commander proclaimed that all Africans who enlisted within their ranks would be granted their freedom. In the aftermath of the conflict, some former Black soldiers were granted British-issued freedom certificates and were subsequently permitted to settle in the Bahamas.[35] Additionally, after the British abolished their international slave trade in 1807, the Royal Navy began intercepting slave ships that passed through their waters and began liberating their passengers, relocating many of them to the Bahamas. It has been reported that between 1811-1841, more than 3,500 liberated Africans were relocated to the British island colony. While most settled in the more densely populated areas around the main New Providence Island and its capital Nassau, some sought out more remote areas, like the Red Bays of Andros Island.[36]

Tensions between white settlers and the large numbers of free Africans began to rise as the racially based law codes on the Bahamian mainland became more oppressive. Red Bays, a remote area along the northwestern coast of Andros Island, however, remained largely an area of lawlessness and sanctuary for its Black residents. The area was hidden by thick *coppitts* (a Bahamian term derived from "coppices" or a densely wooded area) and was also surrounded by sand bars and shallow waters that made it difficult for large ships to locate or pass through.[37] It also bordered the Gulf Stream

that runs between the island and South Florida. Once settled within, it was very hard to be detected by slave catchers or government officials. Therefore, one can hypothesize that the promise of a mostly undisturbed oasis within the Red Bays area of Andros Island made it the coveted Bahamian destination of the Saltwater Railroad.

Most scholars tend to agree that the Saltwater Railroad route from Key Biscayne to Andros Island was most active from 1805-1821, with dwindling activity in the years following. These dates hold great significance, with 1805 representing the year after Fornells left the area and 1821 signifying the complete transfer of the Florida territory from Spain to the United States in the aftermath of the First Seminole War (1816-1818) and other events that made it evident to the Iberian nation that it was further losing its grip over its troubled colony. Total American control of the territory in 1821 meant dire consequences for the Black and native populations as Florida became home to a large enslaved population.[38]

White settlement in northern Florida became more permanent in the nineteenth century and starting in the 1780s the city of Pensacola began to rival the business and population of St. Augustine. Increasing numbers of American planters began moving into the surrounding area despite Spanish occupation and the Black population of the territory (mostly enslaved) increased from twenty-seven percent in 1786 to fifty-seven percent in 1814. The American presence in

Florida was enduring during the Second Spanish Occupation but the young country's "paranoia" regarding British attempts to reclaim it never subsided.[39]

In 1812, this fear represented one of the many causes for another war between the Americans and the British, the War of 1812. Again, the British offered freedom to any Black solider who fought within their ranks but after experiencing another devastating loss to the Americans, the offer of freedom was partial once more. Following their loss at the Christmas Day Battle of New Orleans in 1815 – and the subsequent peace treaty ending the conflict, which left neither side with a "victory" – British military commanders and most of the soldiers in their ranks deserted their most southern post, a fortress within the northern Apalachicola Forest in northwestern Florida. They left it to be held and maintained by its patrolling Black soldiers.[40]

The British, in this move, outwardly abandoned the Black warriors in this fort, but the soldiers eventually used this opportunity to make this "Negro Fort" or "Fort Negro" another place of sanctuary for free Blacks living in Florida. It then attracted runaway slaves from Georgia and the Carolinas who wished to live within its protective walls. Neighboring Seminole villages consisting of Black Seminole also developed friendly relationships with Fort Negro and the two groups were able to thrive in the area for about two years without much foreign interference. In 1816, it was reported that at least 350 Black individuals were living within the fort.[41] According to American Colonel Duncan Clinch, the fort was "situated on a beautiful and commanding bluff,

with the river in the front, a large creek just below, a swamp in the rear, and a small creek just above which rendered it difficult to approach."[42] The formidable structure and its allies represented a peril to white people living or trading within its vicinity who bemoaned this situation.

Merchants and other businessmen were fearful of traveling between Pensacola and St. Augustine because of the fort's position in the middle of the passage. Many Americans also believed that the "fort was built and armed [by the British] to annoy the United States."[43] Complaints to the Florida governors and the federal government were made by multiple slaveholders within the area as they claimed that the fort posed an economic and violent menace to their existence.[44] American military general and known "Indian Killer" Andrew Jackson, in charge of the Southern Division of the Army at the time, then started to plot the fort's demise without any specific orders from Congress. He charged the Spanish with the task of eliminating the fort in April of 1816. With no news of such elimination reaching him, in July of the same year he initiated a full-frontal attack on Fort Negro and its neighboring Seminole villages. This started what is referred to as the First Seminole War.[45] Jackson ordered a small battalion into northern Florida to scope out a proper attack on the fort. On July 27, 1816, the fort and most of its residents were decimated from one strategic cannonball shot that struck the fort's main powder magazine and leveled it almost in its entirety. The explosion was reportedly heard more than one hundred miles away in Pensacola.[46]

The destruction of the fort was followed by violent attacks on the neighboring Seminole villages. Most encampments were burned to the ground and abandoned. Believing that they had eliminated the main threat, Jackson and his commanding officers claimed victory for the United States against the Seminole in 1819. In response, Congress, through its subsequent purchase from Spain, annexed the Florida territory, and all foreign sanctuary was thus eliminated in Florida from this point on.[47] Survivors of the initial fort explosion and the ensuing attacks on neighboring Seminole villages traveled south for refuge. Fort Mose and other maroon communities like it were eventually destroyed by American forces shortly after the United States formally took the territory in 1821. With a severe shortage of safe havens, survivors of the First Seminole War and other enslaved people who were using the chaos to flee most likely attempted to reach Cape Florida. Likely those who made it there used the Saltwater Railroad Route to leave Florida for shelter in the Bahamas.[48]

Howard contended that Seminole, Black Seminole, and formerly enslaved leaders who were in dire need of reprieve started to use this route after realizing that the United States exercised full control over Florida. They decided to turn to their former ally who had relocated away from Florida and the United States altogether: the British residing in the Bahamas. Seminole tribal elder Chief Kenadigie arrived in Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas and one of Britain's main Caribbean trading posts, in a dugout canoe on September 29, 1819. He arrived with what an interpreter described as "an Indian of mixed blood," which one could assume was a Black Seminole,

to discuss a possible asylum negotiation for the tribe on the island.[49] The British denied his request due to their improved relations with the United States but allowed the chief to stay to rest and offered supplies for a journey home. Two years later, another party of about ten Seminole arrived in New Providence again to request support but were once more denied British assistance, excluding enough supplies to return to Florida.[50]

The Seminole and Black Seminole then altered their plan. They still wanted to settle in the Bahamas, but now they knew they could not depend on the British for assistance. Thanks to their expertise in building large dugout canoes, they were able to construct versions that could hold at least thirty people while completing long-distance voyages. It is purported that groups of determined Seminole, Black Seminole, and other escaped slaves assembled in the Cape Florida or Key Biscayne area after 1821 to set sail for the Bahamas in these large canoes. These people could have also been in the 1821 report to which Woodman referred.[51] Their Bahamian destination would no longer be New Providence. Instead, these people chose to land in the coveted Red Bays area on the coast of Andros Island.[52] There they would create independent villages for themselves among other refugee Africans and natives who had been living there for years without British assistance.[53]

Howard and other scholars have posited that about 150-200 Black Seminole and Seminole used the Saltwater Railroad route from Key Biscayne to Andros Island between 1821-1837.[54] Escaped slaves from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Florida were also using this route simultaneously. There is a

chance that they could have made the voyage together, but if escaped slaves were not able to align themselves with the Seminole, they may have been able to negotiate passage to Andros from friendly merchant ships or wreckers. Numerous reports have been made about friendly Bahamian fisherman bringing escaped slaves to Red Bays. These reports confirm that this Saltwater Railroad was more active than once thought in the years following the American annexation of Florida. [55]

Moreover, the British colonial government within the Bahamas eventually provided assistance for fugitives by affirming that presumed escaped slaves would not be extradited to the United States. In 1825, Great Britain's Colonial Office in the Bahamas proclaimed that enslaved Americans arriving on their islands would be declared "free" as any person "who reaches British ground."[56] According to historians Irvin D.S. Winsboro and Joe Knetsch, this ruling ushered in at least 300 marine escapes by slaves from the American mainland (possibly from Florida) to the Bahamas in the following few years.[57]

This proclamation and its effects were without a doubt loathed by American slaveholders. Immediately following the proclamation, American officials learned of the Cape Florida escape route and initiated steps to end it. In 1824, the old Fornells land grant was sold to a wealthy Florida pioneer woman, Mary Ann Davis.[58] A year later, Congress requested that the Davis family relinquish three acres of their land along the shore to be used for military business. The Davises were paid $225 and Congress decided to use this land to build a

lighthouse.[59] The lighthouse began operating in 1825 and its surrounding beaches were then illuminated instead of hidden. Davis also began her attempt at cultivating the land. These impediments made the Saltwater Railroad route from Key Biscayne to Andros Island much more dangerous.[60]

In order to further deter marine escapes and to economically retaliate against the proclamation, the United States attempted to ban maritime trade from Florida to the Bahamas in 1826. An article from *The United States Gazette* stated that news of this blockade reached the northeastern United States in May 1826 and that "all Bahama vessels were ordered off the coast of Florida and will not be permitted in the future there."[61] This blockade did not last long due to loss of tax revenue, but it did further weaken Key Biscayne as a launch port for sanctuary abroad, as fewer ships were permitted to voyage between Florida and the Bahamas. Historians believe that the route's success was even more limited from this point on.[62]

Despite these major setbacks, this Saltwater Railroad route persisted. Reports of fugitive slaves and Black Seminole arriving in Red Bays, though fewer, continued through the next few decades. In 1828, a British Customs agent wrote the Bahamian governor about the seizure of "ninety-seven foreign Negro Slaves." They were brought to Nassau's Port and detained as Spanish slaves for a year. Interviews with British Customs agents, including the author of the letter, led to the discovery that these people had been living on Andros Island "peacefully and quietly" for years prior to being located by the agency.[63] After a year of detention, the Bahamian

governor decided that they would be allowed to return to Red Bays as he found no reason to "doubt the truth of the story told by the poor people themselves, particularly as many of them still have their discharges from his Majesty's service."[64] Howard theorized that the majority of these people were Black Seminole but there is reason to believe that some of them could have also been Black veterans from the American Revolutionary War or the War of 1812 who passed through Florida.[65]

The Bahamas remained a destination for freedom for many, especially after the British abolished slavery throughout their imperial holdings in the 1830s. According to Winsboro and Knetsch, "British records reveal that when the end of slavery came in the Bahamas in the 1830s, customs officials had recorded the entry of approximately 6,000 liberated or fugitive Americans from nearby waters or landmasses . . . By the 1840s, the Bahamas had more liberated or escaped slaves than any British colony in the Caribbean."[66] Furthermore, American policy in support of displacing Indigenous populations in favor of clearing the way for white settlers led to the Second Seminole War (1835-1842), which exacerbated the need for Blacks and natives to leave the state in search of freedom in the Bahamas. A prevailing theory suggests that hundreds of Seminole and Black Seminole could have migrated to the Bahamas and settled in Andros during and after the Second Seminole War.[67]

After the war's conclusion in 1842, the escape route became even less active. While reports of fugitive slaves from Florida arriving in the Bahamas became fewer and further between,

they still arose sporadically until the onset of the American Civil War. In 1851, abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* published an account from a Miami report that "five negro fellows – two of them belonging to Mrs. A. Sabate of St. Augustine, two to Col. W.E. English (Colonel William English, who owned a slave plantation straddling both banks of the Miami River near its mouth), and the other to Mr. G.W. Crawford . . . made their escape to the Bahama Islands. According to the article, "one of English's boys had been running the sloop for some time between these places."[68] Thus these enslaved persons could have facilitated multiple asylum trips, while there is reason to speculate that many other similar journeys were made.[69]

Voyages to the Bahamas continued into the late 1850s as well. In 1858, multiple newspapers printed the report of a Nassau correspondent of the *Savannah Republican* who suggested that the route remained active. They claimed that the swamps of South Florida continued to conceal boats and canoes of fugitives destined for the Bahamas "under the guidance of colored pilots from Andros Island."[70] They continued to lament that one slave had even managed to steal a boat that was docked by the Cape Florida Lighthouse and sailed in it to the Bahamas. Additionally, at least twenty-seven slaves from Florida arrived in Andros "in safety" in 1858, confirming the route remained operational and successful in the later 1850s.[71]

These 1858 reports were possibly the last communications regarding enslaved fugitives using the Saltwater Railroad route from Cape Florida or Key Biscayne to Andros Island in the Bahamas. Shortly after, the United States was immersed

in a civil war, the greatest crisis in its history. Florida followed the lead of other Southern states and joined the Confederacy hoping to maintain its slave-based economy. The Union Army's determination to blockade the state during the war effectively shut down the Saltwater Railroad. Its unconditional victory in 1865 was followed by the abolition of American slavery through the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, meaning that the Underground Railroad was no longer necessary.[72]

Thus, until the Civil War era, the Saltwater Railroad route proved to be a viable option for enslaved and removed Indigenous people years beyond what was previously thought. Its success as an overall escape route, however, is difficult to determine. Florida historian Marvin Dunn has insisted "there is no possible way to come up with a number of how many enslaved people used the Key Biscayne route to the Bahamas. My guess is thousands, but it could be more."[73] In my personal interview with him, he laughed while he made a generalization about historians having a hard time evaluating Underground Railroad routes because "people didn't like to really talk or write about what they were doing when they were doing this stuff."[74] His words and research, along with anthropological studies of Andros Island by scholars like Howard, still assure us of its extensive usage. The discussed newspaper reports from across the United States also suggest that the escape route was quite successful from 1789 to at least 1858.[75]

Seen here is an aerial view of Key Biscayne in 1958, which was at the time in the early stages of its redevelopment as both a residential community and as the site of a stunning public beach on the island's Atlantic Ocean side.

Aerial view of Key Biscayne, February 1958. Jay Spencer Collection. HistoryMiami Museum, 1985-136-335.

The Cape Florida Lighthouse, resting on the southern tip of Key Biscayne's beach, remains the oldest structure in Miami-Dade County.[76] To many locals, it's a landmark; to many tourists, it's a pleasant attraction and photo opportunity. The structure now resides within Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park and its grounds are open to the public. If one travels to the park and takes the time to look at the lighthouse's surrounding placards, they will notice something very special

among the natural flora and fauna posters. In 2005, a special ceremony declared the lighthouse and its beaches a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site. At the ceremony, signage about the shores being used as a launching point for the saltwater extension of the Underground Railroad were unveiled along with an artist's rendition of a freedom seeker in a dugout canoe.[77] This sculpture, still on display today near the lighthouse, conveys the effort that so many people took to resist enslavement and the courage it took to seek freedom by sea.

Endnotes

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The Orange Bowl Stadium: The First Two Decades, 1937-1957

Casey Piket

Miami's Orange Bowl stadium was the most revered sports venue in the city for more than 70 years. The inception of the stadium and the signature New Year's Day game that was played there was inspired by the love of football and the need to boost tourism. The idea behind the game was to encourage fans of the top collegiate football programs to travel to Miami to play in a warm-weather climate during what was the worst part of winter for much of the nation. This would provide a reason for tourists to spend their limited travel budget during the Great Depression on a trip to the Magic City to root their favorite team on to victory.

Although the venue was not originally named for the football game, it was so tightly linked with the event that it did not take long before virtually everyone just referred to it as "Orange Bowl Stadium." Almost from the first game contested there, the venue became a shrine for football and some of South Florida's biggest events. Interest in acquiring tickets for the big New Year's Day game grew exponentially through the years. This put pressure on city and Orange Bowl officials to continually modernize and expand the seating capacity of the stadium. Miami's iconic steel-and-concrete altar to football could not afford to fall behind the size and features of other stadiums for fear of losing the right to host the best matchups during college bowl season each year. If the Orange Bowl was

relegated to a second-tier postseason game, it would have serious financial implications for the city's pivotal tourism industry.

The first twenty years of the stadium's life represented a time period of heavy use, enlargement, and reconfiguration to accommodate the growing popularity of the sport of football. The stadium advisory and Orange Bowl committees, as well as city officials, were constantly planning the next expansion and renovation of the venue. The evolution of the Orange Bowl Stadium was continuous. This is the story of the stadium's first two decades, from 1937 to 1958.

The Mad Genius: Earnie Seiler

Earnie Seiler, "The Mad Genius," at the Miami Orange Bowl.

Earnie Seiler at the Miami Orange Bowl, October 10, 1967. Kosmeder, photographer. City of Miami Photograph Collection. CM 1-11190.

South Florida has been home to a long list of creative boosters who could all present a master class in how to promote an idea. Carl Fisher convinced the world that

Miami Beach was "America's Winter Playground" in the 1920s, while it was being developed from a barrier island into what would eventually conform to the vision he was selling. Bill Veeck was a pioneer baseball innovator who made minor league baseball popular at the former Miami Stadium, which stood on the eastern edge of Allapattah. However, the person who stood the test of time in providing strategically inventive promotion of the Orange Bowl game and stadium, decade after decade, was Earnie Seiler, nicknamed the "Mad Genius" by *Miami Herald* columnist Jimmy Burns.[1]

Seiler was no stranger to the game of football. His involvement dated back to the 1920s, when he was the head coach for the football program of Miami High School. At that time, the team played on what Seiler referred to as a "sandspur field" at Royal Palm Park, which was located between today's Biscayne Boulevard and SE Third Avenue, just south of Flagler Street and north of Henry Flagler's celebrated Royal Palm Hotel. It was on this field that Seiler made a humorous blunder that he revealed in an interview that aired on WQAM in 1973.

In that interview, he shared the following story:

"It happened when I was coaching at Miami High in 1925. In those days, a coach couldn't send a substitute player into the game with a play. The substitute player couldn't say a word when he got into the huddle. So, I set up three buckets on the sideline. If I kicked down one bucket, it meant that I wanted the play to go off right tackle. Another

bucket meant left tackle. Anyway, we were marching down the field like wild this day, we got down to our opponent's 20-yard line, and in the excitement, I (accidently) kicked over the middle bucket. I didn't notice it, but my quarterback did. I had told our quarterback to punt whenever he saw that I had kicked over the middle bucket. Well, this kid punted from the 20-yard line, kicked the ball into the street, and through the window of the old Calumet Building. We couldn't get the ball out of the building, so we had to hold up the game until we found another football."[2]

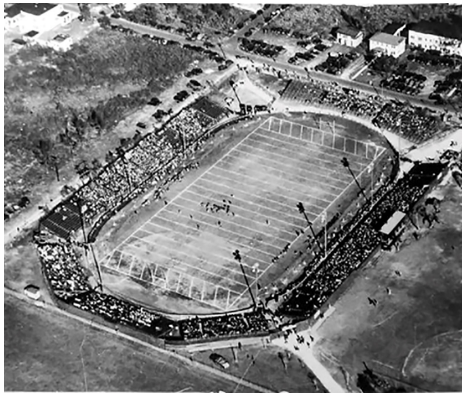
Seiler was so synonymous with the venue that the Orange Bowl was called "the stadium that Earnie built" by the author of the book *Fifty Years on the Fifty: The Orange Bowl Story*. It was he who convinced the Public Works Administration (PWA), one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Depression-era alphabet soup agencies responsible for funding worthy municipal projects around the country, to commit to help fund the initiative to construct the original Orange Bowl in 1937. He was also responsible for conceiving and organizing the Orange Bowl Parade before the game, and the halftime show during the game. Some of the halftime extravaganzas would prove to be for many as captivating as the game itself.[3]

A great example of how creative and committed Seiler was to the Orange Bowl came in 1939. He convinced the undefeated Oklahoma Sooners to accept half the money offered by the Sugar and Cotton bowl games by sneaking on campus in Norman, Oklahoma, after the team won its final game to remain undefeated, and writing "ON TO

MIAMI!" in chalk on the sidewalks.[4] He then convinced the Sooners on why the Orange Bowl was best for them with a morning lecture highlighted by huge posters of beautiful women in swimwear on the sands of Miami Beach. After the team accepted the offer, Seiler was quoted as saying "I'm a great believer in visual aids."[5]

Seiler was not only a co-founder of the Orange Bowl game and a catalyst for the construction of the original stadium, but he also remained a consistent presence on the Orange Bowl Committee, serving as executive director until 1974, and became the game and stadium's most ardent advocate. When he believed the venue was falling behind the seating capacity and quality of other big game stadiums, he would push the city to invest in the Orange Bowl. Seiler was both the Orange Bowl's most animated booster and the game and stadium's caretaker.[6]

Wooden Stadium: 1935-1937



The wood frame stadium that preceded Roddey Burdine Stadium. Located on the site of the future Orange Bowl, it was in operation from 1935-1937.

@OrangeBowl/X

Prior to the construction of a permanent concrete-and-steel stadium, the first three Orange Bowl games were played in a temporary wooden stadium that was put

together by the ingenuity of the "Mad Genius." There were two games played at northern Allapattah's Moore Park as part of the Palm Festival on New Year's Day in 1933 and 1934; these contests preceded the Orange Bowl games. No one was happy with the location at Moore Park so a new location was sought.[7]

The committee for the first Orange Bowl chose a lot near a baseball diamond called Miami Field, formerly named Tatum Field, in the Riverside neighborhood (today's loanDepot Park site), to host the first game. In 1934, Seiler, who was the Miami recreation director at the time, signed a note to purchase a set of wooden bleachers that were used for the 1934 American Legion Convention in downtown Miami. He then convinced the local Works Progress Administration (WPA) officials to provide labor to move the stands from Biscayne Boulevard to the new site. Although Seiler had no authority to sign the note or authorize the use of labor, he chose the path of ask for forgiveness rather than permission to get things done.[8]

For the next three years, on January 1, the Orange Bowl was played in a makeshift field surrounded by wooden bleachers, but still attracted 5,134 attendees in 1935, a slightly larger crowd of 6,568 in 1936, and an even larger crowd of 9,210 in 1937.[9] Attendance at the first game, played in a temporary rickety facility, provided enough encouragement that people were interested in traveling to Miami for a New Year's Day football game, prompting a groundswell of support for the idea of a permanent stadium to host the Orange Bowl.

Miami Municipal Stadium Constructed

After the completion of the first game in 1935, Seiler traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with an old college buddy, Charlie Gaines, who was a high-level official within the Roosevelt administration. After a short exchange of pleasantries, Seiler shared his reason for coming, expressing he had hoped Gaines could help facilitate introductions to those in the federal government who could assist Miami in building a permanent stadium. Gaines introduced him to Postmaster General James Farley, who listened to Seiler's pitch for a stadium project in Miami and offered a sympathetic ear. When Farley asked who would play in the next edition of the game, Seiler, who had done his homework, suggested Catholic University, which was Farley's alma mater.[10]

Farley then introduced Seiler to Colonel Horatio B. Hackett, who was the assistant administrator within the PWA. Hackett was a former college football player at the U.S. Military Academy (Army) and was a big fan of the game. He agreed to come to Miami and assess the stadium project idea while he visited other ongoing PWA projects in South Florida at the same time. One of those projects overseen by Hackett was Liberty Square, a public housing project resting in today's Liberty City.[11]

After spending New Year's Eve day visiting the other projects, Hackett attended the Orange Bowl Game played on January 1, 1936. He was joined by Seiler, other Orange Bowl Committee members, and Farley, who watched his alma mater, Catholic University, defeat Ole Miss in an

exciting game decided by one point in a 20-19 victory. After the game, Hackett's favorable report to the secretary of the interior and PWA leadership led to the approval of the project.[12]

The contract for construction of the stadium was awarded on July 2, 1936, to the Rodney Miller Inc. general contracting firm for an estimate of $232,081.[13] Although the contract was awarded in July, the official groundbreaking ceremony for the new stadium would not occur until the January 1, 1937 Orange Bowl game. Hackett returned to Miami to be a part of the ceremonies as well as to watch the final Orange Bowl game in the temporary wooden stadium that would soon be replaced with a permanent stadium prior to the next New Year's Day game.[14]

Construction of the structure was completed in mid-September of 1937 and was ready to be turned over to the city of Miami. On September 20, 1937, C.S. Nichols, public service director for the city, and O.P. Hart, city WPA project manager, inspected the stadium and both gave their stamp of approval. The venue was given the green light just days before the first game scheduled to take place there.[15]

In the end, the total cost of the project was $320,865, with $17,525 paid by the city, $141,340 provided as a grant from the PWA, and $162,000 extended as a loan from the PWA to the city. The Miami Municipal Stadium, as it was initially called, was constructed to provide a seating capacity of 23,330 seats.[16]

The first game at the new stadium was played on September 24, 1937, featuring a matchup between Miami Edison and Ponce de Leon high schools. Edison defeated Ponce by a score of 36-0, but the outcome of the game was not the headline. The next morning, the *Miami Herald* lead read: "Everything Runs on Schedule Until Lights Fail at Stadium." With two minutes remaining in the game, the lights went out on the four center towers putting the part of the field between the twenty-yard lines into complete darkness. Despite the confusion caused by the light malfunction, the first game at the stadium was considered a huge success.[17]

Roddey Burdine Stadium Dedicated

Shortly after the completion of the Municipal Stadium, Miami city commissioners voted unanimously to honor the late Roddey Burdine, the "merchant prince" of department store magnates and former president of Burdine's Department Store, by renaming the stadium in his honor with a resolution issued on August 4, 1937. The decree stated "Mr. Burdine … was ever faithful in his efforts to build up and preserve a high standard of athletics and sports in this community and his long and faithful service should be commemorated by a suitable and appropriate memorial."[18]

Burdine died unexpectedly on February 15, 1936, but he was as pivotal in the creation and early promotion of the Orange Bowl game as Seiler. Both men understood the

Sports | The Miami Herald | Classified

FLORIDA'S MOST IMPORTANT NEWSPAPER

FRIDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 10, 1937 SECTION D

HURRICANES TO TACKLE GEORGIA TONIGHT

President Roosevelt To Light Roddey Burdine-Orange Bowl Stadium

RECORD 20,000 CROWD TO DEDICATE STADIUM

HERE ARE LEADING CHARACTERS AND SCENES OF DEDICATION GAME

EXECUTIVE TO PRESS KEY IN WHITE HOUSE

Powerful Bulldogs Given Edge of Touchdown Over University of Miami

Continued From Page 1

Mayor Robert R. Williams To Receive Structure For City of Miami

BULLDOGS OUT TO WIN THIS GAME FOR MEHRE

Serious-Minded Gridders Bent on Closing Season With Rousing Victory

RACE COLONY TO SEE TONIGHT'S GRID GAME

Horsemen Favor Georgia To Defeat University of Miami Hurricanes

AMATEUR BOUTS LISTED TONIGHT

Lew Hawkette Billed On Pine Grove Camp Card

The front page of the *Miami Herald*, December 10, 1937, marked the day Roddey Burdine Stadium was dedicated.

Courtesy of the *Miami Herald*.

value a big event like a New Year's Day football game would mean for tourism after nearly a decade of economic malaise following the building bust of the 1920s.[19]

The dedication game, also played at night under the lights, pitted the University of Miami Hurricanes against the powerhouse Georgia Bulldogs on Friday evening, December 10, 1937. Prior to the dedication ceremony, the city commission authorized the engineering department to prepare a bronze plate to be placed at the entrance of the stadium designating it as "Roddey Burdine Orange Bowl."[20]

During the opening ceremony, which was officiated by Hackett, the man who was ultimately responsible for obtaining approval from the federal government for funding the project, the stadium was officially dedicated to the memory of Burdine. Lillian Burdine, his widow, was in attendance to accept the honor. In a dramatic moment during this event, the lights were turned off so that President Franklin D. Roosevelt could push a button from a thousand miles away in the White House to officially light the stadium.[21]

Despite all of the excitement around the launch of a new stadium, the morning headline in the *Miami Herald* on the next day read: "Bulldogs Submerge Our Hurricanes," after the University of Miami lost to Georgia by a score of 26-0. Although it was a difficult opening game for the Hurricane football program at what would become its longtime home, there would be plenty of great memories for the University of Miami gridiron faithful within the confines of this arena over the next seven decades. These memories would include those from games played during and immediately after the war years (1941-1945) as a short-lived professional football team joined the Orange Bowl's tenant ranks of high schools and UM and other universities playing in this venue.[22]

First Stadium Enlargement: 1945

By the spring of 1944, Roddey Burdine Stadium seating was not keeping up with demand. The stadium advisory committee for the Orange Bowl offered a proposal to increase the size of the stadium by adding 10,000 seats to

the west end of the bowl to match the configuration on the east end of the venue. The plan also called for an additional 7,000 seats by adding rows to each of the existing sections of the stadium. Overall, the plan was to expand the seating capacity by 17,000 seats. Chair of the advisory committee, A.A. (Art) Unger was quoted in the *Miami Herald* in an article describing the plan on April 28, 1944, when he said, "I think a stadium of 40,000 is plenty large for Miami for many years to come." That sentiment would change a few years later.[23]

Because the expansion was planned during World War II, when there was tight control over the allocation of steel and cement, there was concern about how long it would take to begin construction. Ultimately, contractors were able to procure enough of both to add 11,700 new seats, mostly by placing permanent seating in the west end zone. The project was estimated to cost between $100,000 and $200,000 prior to its start of the venture, but it is not clear what the actual cost was once construction was completed.[24] The enlargement project was finished by the fall of 1945 and brought the seating capacity of Burdine Stadium from 23,330 to 35,030. During the first major game after the renovation, the stadium was able to support an attendance of 35,709 fans for the Orange Bowl game played on January 1, 1946, when the University of Miami defeated No. 13-ranked Holy Cross by a score of 13-6, in a thriller decided after the final whistle had blown![25]

New Stadium & Location Considered

When the stadium advisory board was planning for a stadium enlargement in 1944, Miami city commissioners had a different idea. During advisory board meetings throughout the course of 1944, a different commissioner would drop in to advocate for a new stadium at a new location. The commission took a bold step when it "condemned" the action undertaken to allow a municipality to take property through eminent domain – a 130-acre tract located on the northeast corner of Douglas Road and Coral Way, near the Coral Gables city line – on December 10, 1944. This tract of land is where the Coral Gables Sears store has stood since its opening in 1954.[26]

When the condemnation notice was announced by the city's manager, A.B. Curry, the description of purpose for eminent domain was: "Purchase of the property has been advocated for use as a recreation center and site for a future Orange Bowl Stadium to seat 75,000 to 100,000 persons."[27] An architectural rendering of a proposed 56,000-seat stadium designed by Steward and Skinner was published in the *Miami Daily News* on December 4, 1945. The city had hoped to negotiate a purchase directly from its owner, David H. Clark, but he did not answer the correspondence he received from Curry's office. The condemnation proceedings lingered into 1946, but were ultimately dropped by the city.[28]

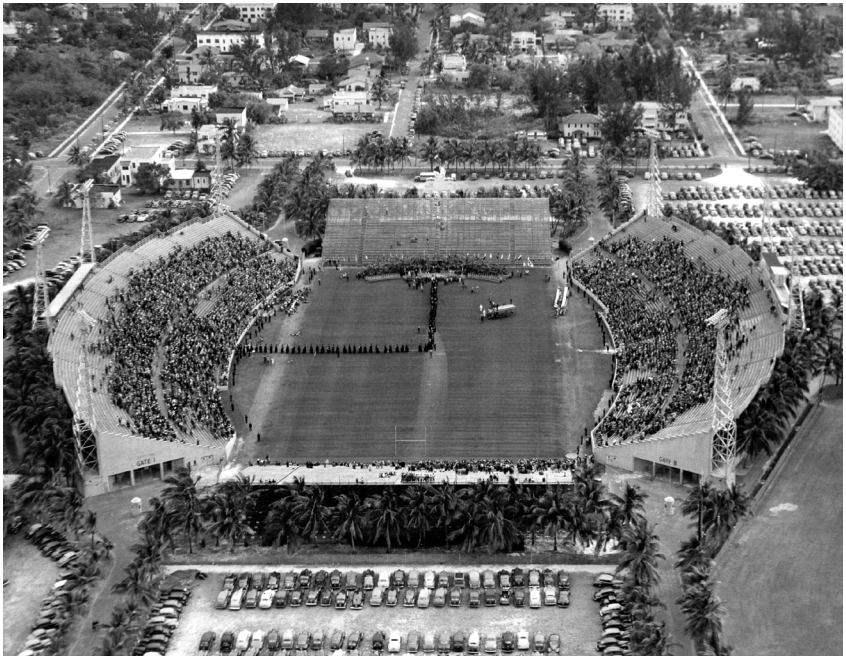
But this large 130-acre tract of land was not the only location the city manager had in mind for a potential new stadium. In 1946, Curry recommended that the

city condemn a 320-acre tract of land located between Douglas and LeJeune roads (east to west boundary), and from NW Seventh Street to the Tamiami Canal (south to north boundary), for a combination of purposes including a municipal golf course, incinerator, and new Orange Bowl Stadium. Once again, the idea was considered too ambitious and was dropped, allowing the city to shift its focus to enlarging the existing Burdine Stadium. The northern portion of the 320-acre tract was later developed into LeJeune Golf Course in 1962, but was renamed Mel Reese Golf Course in 1973.[29]

While Curry and the city's commissioners were keen on the idea of building a new stadium, Miami's mayor, Palmer Perrine, president of the Orange Bowl committee, George Whitten, chairman of the stadium advisory board, Unger, and Seiler, who was an executive director of the Orange Bowl Committee at this time, were not enthused about building a new venue. Given the cost of construction and land acquisition, building material scarcity coming out of the war, and the time it would take to construct a new stadium and dispose of the existing one would cause significant delays in completing the project. They were apparently more interested in what could be accomplished for the 1947 Orange Bowl game, scheduled for January 1, 1948. In the end, the new stadium cost was estimated at $1.329 million, which kept the project from gaining traction beyond the attempted acquisition of property by eminent domain.[30]

The Eventful Year of 1946

During its first decade of existence, Burdine Stadium was more than just a football venue. The building hosted boxing matches, Easter sunrise services, and concerts such as the "Opera Under the Stars" series in the early 1940s. One of the biggest non-sports events to take place in the stadium came on February 26, 1946, when Winston Churchill



Roddey Burdine Stadium, February 26, 1946, on the occasion of the great British wartime prime minister, Winston Churchill, receiving an honorary Juris Doctorate from the University of Miami.

Courtesy of Casey Piket.

received an honorary Juris Doctorate from the University of Miami in a special ceremony on Tuesday, February 26, 1946.[31]

Seventeen thousand-five hundred spectators filed into the stadium to get a glimpse of the great wartime prime minister of England and to hear him speak. He thanked the school's officials for the honor and for hosting members of the Royal Air Force, who received part of their training on the UM campus during the war years.[32]

Churchill's comments were insightful and focused on education. This was not his first honorary degree following the conclusion of the war and he alluded to it by beginning his remarks with the following observation:

"I am surprised that in my later life I should become so experienced in taking degrees, when, as a schoolboy, I was so bad at passing examinations. In fact, one might almost say that no one ever passed so few examinations and received so many degrees."[33]

Despite the evident enthusiasm here and for other events, football remained at center stage during the stadium's first decade. In 1946, the fledgling All-American Football Conference awarded Miami and South Florida a franchise, the Miami Seahawks, who played their lone season in Burdine Stadium. Due to sparse attendance and financial struggles, the team moved to Baltimore for the following season.[34]

Amateur football was the far bigger draw during the stadium's early years. The venue was UM's home field from the first dedication ceremonies until its final years. Major local high school football games were also played on this field. As an example, on Tuesday, November 26, the No. 1, nationally ranked Catholic football team, Boys Town from Omaha, Nebraska, traveled to Miami to play Saint Peter & Paul High School, defending state Catholic champions, in a mythical national Catholic League championship match. Boys Town prevailed easily by the score of 46-6, but the game was one of many national matchups between great high school teams from different parts of the country traveling to Miami to settle unofficial national championship bragging rights.[35]

Miami, Jackson, Edison, and Ponce de Leon high schools all played their biggest rivals at Burdine Stadium during its first ten years. The annual matchup between Miami and Edison became a Thanksgiving evening tradition. Great games and plenty of memories were made during those early years, which foreshadowed what spectators could expect to see over the next six decades on the hallowed grounds of the fabled Orange Bowl Stadium, its official name granted in its second decade.

As noted, the first decade of the Roddy Burdine/Orange Bowl Stadium was a time of constant change and reconfiguration. The next ten years were no different. A reconfiguration of the official name, a consideration for

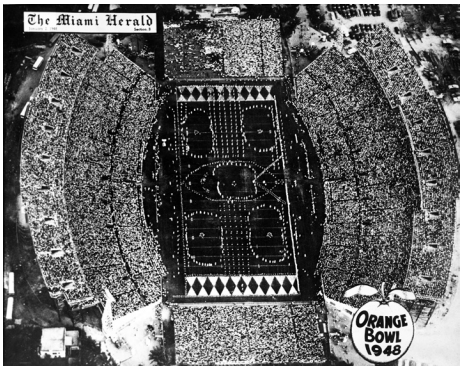
an entirely new name, and several additional enlargement projects highlighted the evolution of the venue in its second decade.

As a city-owned stadium, the municipality was responsible for raising the funds for and overseeing its expansion projects. Bond issuances were sometimes controversial, but city officials, along with the stadium's advocates, were generally successful in acquiring the monies to grow the venue over time.

College football bowl games brought large revenues to their host cities while creating an arms race of sorts to ensure that each of the municipalities hosting a major bowl game had a state-of-the-art facility and enough seating capacity to attract the optimal matchup for their annual gridiron classic. This process accelerated in the Orange Bowl's second decade.

Upper Deck Constructed: 1947

Once the desire for a new stadium subsided, city leaders and committee members arrived at a consensus on enlarging the existing stadium. As early as January 1946, the city was interested in understanding how Burdine Stadium could be redesigned to provide for a double deck resulting in an additional 22,000 seats. The committee reached out to the structural engineering firm of Jorgenson and Schreffler to aid its engineers in designing the reconfiguration. One of the renovations was to have it completed in time for the 1946 Orange Bowl Game, played on January 1, 1947.[36]



An aerial view of Roddey Burdine Stadium during the halftime show of the Orange Bowl game, January 1, 1948.

Courtesy of Florida State Archives.

The city requested bids from general contractors by March of 1946, and appeared to be on pace to meet an ambitious timeline for completing the renovation by the end of that year. However, after reviewing the bids and conducting a financial analysis, Curry recommended that the city reject all bids. This decision put the stadium expansion plan out of reach for the 1946 Orange Bowl game, but the city would revisit the idea after that game.[37]

Following the game played on January 1, 1947, the city again pursued its plan to collect bids and arrange for financing the stadium's enlargement through the addition of a second deck. However, on Friday, February 7, 1947, the new city manager, R.G. Danner, was informed by the Civilian Production Administration (CPA), a federal agency that was responsible for approving civilian projects that utilized key building materials such as steel and cement, that its application for enlarging the stadium had been rejected.[38] The CPA was an agency established by the Truman administration in 1945 to replace the War

Production Board to help manage the supply of critical building materials from post-WWII until the end of the Korean War in 1953.

City leaders solicited the help of U.S. Congressman George Smathers, who represented a district that included greater Miami, and Florida's U.S. Senator Claude Pepper to meet with their contacts in Washington to determine and see if they could help with the project. Both agreed to assist with the application to ensure the project's continuation.[39] As it turned out, the CPA's rejection of the plan was based on an earlier application, and once the agency reviewed the new application with its revised material requirements, CPA officials approved the project, allowing the addition of a second level and a renovation of the stadium. The announcement was made by Earl J. Robbins, CPA district manager, on Friday, March 21, 1947, which provided enough time for the work to be completed by the end of the year.[40]

In addition to reviewing the most current application, the CPA conducted a thorough survey of labor conditions in South Florida that indicated the volume of construction projected for the area was well below the level needed to keep all local construction workers employed. The survey also convinced the district manager that the materials to be used in the project were readily available in Florida. While the original application included a number of what the CPA considered "critical materials," the subsequent application stripped the project of these materials since it called only for a steel-and-concrete framework.[41]

The official groundbreaking for the renovations was officiated by Mayor Perrine Palmer at 11:00 a.m. on June 18, 1947.[42] The shipment of steel was delayed by nearly two months, and by October the general contractor, Gust K. Newberg, advised the city that he would institute a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week work program in order to complete the project before the end of the year. As of October 19, 1947, the project was considered a month behind schedule.[43]

By mid-December, the construction of a second deck inspired many to visit the job site and observe its progress. As many as 400 spectators showed up at the stadium daily to witness the work underway, prompting Danner to issue a decree barring citizens from congregating at the stadium until the project was completed. What prompted Danner's action was the daily propensity of onlookers to tap the shoulder of a nearby laborer, who was typically working a seventy-hour week to finish the work, and ask if he thought the seats would be completed by New Year's Day.[44]

By December 19, the general contractor assured the city and Orange Bowl Committee that the stadium would be ready before the end of the year. True to his word, Newburg turned over the completed project on December 28, 1947. The project added 24,548 seats and expanded seating capacity from 35,030 to 59,578, which enabled the 1948 Orange Bowl game, played on January 1, 1948, to set an attendance record as a sellout crowd witnessed Georgia Tech's 20-14 victory over the University of Kansas.

The estimated cost of the enlargement renovation was $1,211,046, according to an article published in the *Miami Daily News* on March 21, 1947.[45]

Stadium Officially Renamed: 1949

Over the course of the stadium's first twelve years, the official name of the venue and to how it was referred were slightly different. While the city intended to honor Burdine for all he had contributed as a civic leader by naming the stadium for him following his untimely passing, it was not long until seemingly everyone, both locally and nationally, began referring to it simply as the "Orange Bowl." Given that Burdine had died more than a decade earlier, by the late 1940s Miami had grown considerably and its residents, as well as visitors traveling to Miami for the venue's New Year's Day event, had never heard of Burdine (although some were likely aware of his eponymous department store) and were confused when the facility was referenced as both Roddey Burdine Stadium and the Orange Bowl Stadium.


Miami Officially Changes Name Of Orange Bowl

Miami's stadium, pretty well known the country over, now is the Miami Orange Bowl Stadium.

Headline in the *Miami Herald* January 20, 1949, announcing a name change from Roddey Burdine Stadium to the more oft-referenced Orange Bowl Stadium.

Courtesy of the *Miami Herald*.

Less than three weeks after the Orange Bowl game of January 1, 1949, when the underdog Texas Longhorns defeated the heavily favored Georgia Bulldogs, 41-28, the Miami City Commission voted on a resolution to officially change the venue's name to the "Orange Bowl Stadium." The commission vote count was three-to-one in favor of the resolution, with only Perrine Palmer Jr. casting the dissenting vote. Palmer was the mayor when the city considered building a new stadium a few years earlier, but had transitioned to a city commission seat after his term as mayor ended on January 1, 1949. There was a vacant commission seat at that time, which is why only four votes were cast.[46]

The resolution to change the name was presented by Commissioner William W. Charles, who explained the need for the change in a *Miami News* article dated January 20, 1949: "The stadium now is known by many names, which results in much confusion, and that detracts from its publicity value." The Orange Bowl game was considered a big business venture and anything that detracted from "its publicity value" had to be addressed, which is what the commissioners used as justification for the name change.[47]

Another Expansion in 1949

A few months after the announcement of the stadium's name change, the city made available a bond issue in an effort to raise $250,000 for capital improvements to the stadium. Given the popularity of tickets for the Orange

Bowl game, the city offered $50 bonds, which entitled the bondholder to a ticket for the seat that would be added as part of the stadium enlargement plan.[48]

The bond issue was made public in June of 1949 in hopes that enough money would be raised to begin a reconfiguration that would add 5,000 seats to the venue. The extension plan called for the addition of seats in the lower sections of the north and south stands, providing for 2,500 seats on each side of the field. Room for the seats would be made available by extending the corners of the sideline stands westward and curving them toward the west end zone section.[49]

During a Miami City Commission meeting on December 6, 1949, Unger, representing the Orange Bowl Stadium Advisory Committee, convinced the commission to review an assessment of properties on the grounds of the Orange Bowl stadium which were still privately owned. An apartment building as well as a single-family residence stood in close proximity to the northwest section of the stadium which the city would have to acquire, either through a direct sale or eminent domain, to accommodate future growth. At the time of this meeting, the assessed value of these properties was a combined $65,000, but it was conceded that their purchase or condemnation would require a far larger investment.[50]

By December 1949, the stadium expansion was nearing completion, which increased its seating capacity from 59,578 to 64,552; it was completed in time for the Orange

Bowl game played on January 2, 1950. The cost of the expansion was $124,000.[51] While the expansion plan called for adding seats to both the north and south sidelines, a comparison of an aerial view a year later indicates that the additional 4,974 seats appear to have only been added on the south side of the stadium. This may have been due to the aforementioned buildings, located on the north side of the stadium property, which provided an obstacle to the expansion of seats along that section of the stadium.

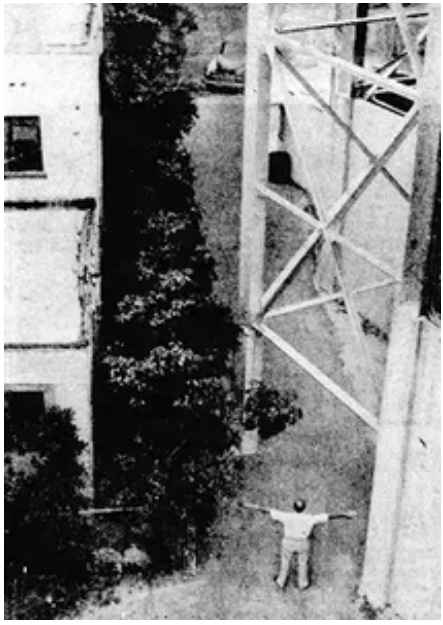
Northwest Section Expansion: 1953

Following the 1949 expansion, the Orange Bowl Committee began to put together the next expansion plan in July 1951, when the city contracted with engineer O.J. Jorgensen to present a proposal adding 6,360 seats for permanent seating in the west end zone at an estimated cost of $695,000.[52] However, it was necessary to receive approval from the National Production Agency (NPA), a federal government agency responsible for reviewing projects that required strategic construction materials during the Korean War, making this request untenable, so the initiative was not pursued beyond the proposal stage.

In April 1952, Jack Watson, Miami's city manager at that time, filed an application with the NPA for a more modest request to expand the Orange Bowl. While the Orange Bowl Committee preferred a long-term plan to expand the stadium to more than 80,000 seats, this called for 3,000 additional seats in an area of the northwest corner of the

stadium left untouched during the 1949 expansion. This required the city to remove the single-story residence and apartment building standing in the way of this expansion.[53]

Within six weeks of the submission of the proposal, the city received approval by the NPA and had purchased the residence, which stood to the west of the apartment building. In an article in the *Miami Herald* published on June 29, 1952, Pete Roberts, the city's recreation director and stadium manager, claimed that the removal of the single-family home would provide up to an additional 200 parking spaces on the west side of the stadium.[54]



Earnie Seiler standing between an apartment building and a portion of the stadium, illustrating the vexing narrowness of this entrance to the stadium and the bottlenecks resulting from it.

Courtesy of the *Miami Herald*.

However, the two-story apartment building posed a bigger challenge. For years, the close proximity of this building to the Orange Bowl's Entrance One created a bottleneck of people trying to enter, and then later, leave through the

same gate. This chokepoint had created great frustration for Seiler, who posed for a picture in the *Miami Herald* while standing between the apartment building and the stadium to show that he could nearly touch both by extending his arms in each direction.[55]

Other than just the snail's pace of bureaucracy here, one of the main contentions in removing the apartment building was the inability of the city to find a funding source to buy and raze the structure. Seiler met with city officials to emphasize the importance of the Orange Bowl to Miami by pointing out that, in the prior year, there were 981,373 paid admissions for various events hosted in the stadium. Of that total, 695,906 persons attended football games, and, of that number, 337,754 were attendees at eight University of Miami games. Seiler's point about the Orange Bowl's importance to the city's revenue coffers inspired the bureaucrats to find a way to buy and remove the apartment structure by the fall of 1952.[56]

After the removal of the obstacles on the northwest corner of the stadium, construction progressed through the 1953 football offseason allowing the expansion project to be completed by the fall. In total, there were an additional 2,577 seats added, bringing the seating capacity from 64,552 to 67,129. The cost of adding these seats was $143,066 and was paid for with stadium enlargement certificates sold to the public. The investment was justified by the city manager, who explained that "In addition to accommodating more fans, part of the added $18,000

revenue could be used in getting better teams," indicating the priority the city placed on remaining competitive with other bowls by attracting the best teams available.[57]

While the stadium gained a marginal increase in attendance capacity during the 1949 and 1953 expansions, the Orange Bowl Committee was unsatisfied with this incremental approach to enlargement and modernization of the venue. The other major bowl game stadiums continued to evolve to allow them to remain competitive in attracting the most competitive and high-profile college football postseason games, so it was an imperative that the city continue to invest in the Orange Bowl. The stadium's biggest advocate, Seiler, was constructing a plan that would ensure the Orange Bowl would not only remain competitive in attracting bowl matchups for years to follow, but also would serve as a major attraction beyond just an event venue.

Memorial Stadium Idea: 1953

Seiler remained the chief visionary and driving force behind the evolution of the Orange Bowl Stadium through the first two decades of its existence. In June of 1953, he outlined a plan to take the stadium to a capacity of 86,000 seats. It called for the replacement of the west end zone with permanent seats, with the new section elevated high enough to permit circulation of air into the stadium. He also called for the elimination of the east zone seating, replacing that with a memorial arch to honor all Dade County residents who had lost their lives during the recent wars fought around the world.[58]

Seiler described his idea for the east end zone in an article published in the *Miami Herald* on June 21, 1953:

"There should be a beautiful garden with bronze plaques, one for each Dade County resident who was killed in the first two world wars, and the Korean battles. Hundreds of sightseers would visit the Orange Bowl Memorial Stadium and we could give them free postcards to mail back home. It would be a tremendous thing, and I don't know of anyone who would object to it being (sic) the Orange Bowl Memorial Stadium."[59]

The Orange Bowl Committee again hired Jorgensen, who became the engineer for the proposed enlargement project and presented renderings of what he described as "a complete saucer" that would allow air to circulate beneath both end zone stands, which were designed to let breezes sweep the field at ground level. First-row seats in the west end zone would begin at the equivalent of the eighteenth row in the existing grandstands, and those at the eastern end would begin at the equivalent of the thirtieth row, with the war memorial garden and honor wall located below the archway. There would be a separate entrance into the war memorial and garden for those who wanted to tour that portion of the facility during set hours when there were no events scheduled.[60]

The cost of the project was estimated at $750,00 and would add 17,871 seats to bring the stadium's seating capacity to 85,000, a thousand seats short of Seiler's original idea. The enlargement plan was to be financed primarily by

spreading the cost of construction over a five-year period. Contractors were asked to provide proposals based on adherence to the five-year payment schedule. Additional gate revenue collected over the five-year period would provide enough cashflow to meet the payment obligations, at least on paper, to the contractors who provided the work.[61]

The Miami City Commission enthusiastically supported the proposal. The *Miami Herald* reported on November 12, 1953, that the commissioners were planning on passing two resolutions, one for the approval of the project, and the other to officially rename the venue to the "Orange Bowl Memorial Stadium."[62] However, the enlargement plan failed to consider one important calculation. Miami's city engineering director, Arthur E. Darlow, pointed out that "the calculations of the increased capacity to 84,000 (which was actually 85,000), were made without regard to the removal of the 11,000 wooden and steel scaffold end zone seats now in the stadium. The net gain would only be 5,000 seats."[63]

When the commissioners considered this new revelation, they were concerned about investing $750,000 to increase the capacity of the stadium to just 73,000 seats. Darlow offered a modified plan that would add 12,900 seats without removing the end zone sections by adding 2,500 new seats at the northeast corner of the stadium and extending the number of rows of the upper deck on

both sides of the field. His plan had an estimated cost of $500,000, which was more acceptable to commissioners than Seiler and Jorgensen's plan.[64]

In addition, the city's finance director, George N. Shaw, had concerns about the practicality and legality of the financing plan to pay for the construction cost out of general revenue over a five-year period. Given the revelations about the seating capacity and concerns about financing the project, city commissioners pivoted to explore Darlow's ideas for the next big stadium expansion.[65] Although Seiler's plan had lost momentum, he believed that not adding the war memorial to the Orange Bowl was one of the biggest missed opportunities by the city and the Orange Bowl Committee. He would continue to advocate for the war remembrance and to rename the stadium to "Orange Bowl Memorial" for the remainder of his time with the committee and well into his retirement.[66]

Enlargement Again: 1955

The Korean War ended on July 27, 1953, leading to the removal of many of the restrictions for non-military related infrastructure projects. Whereas municipalities, as noted, had to obtain the approval of the NPA, when requesting building materials such as steel and cement for local projects during the war, the post-war era provided more freedom to pursue large projects without the restrictions of wartime regulation.

The city of Miami took advantage of this new opportunity to pursue larger infrastructure projects when John

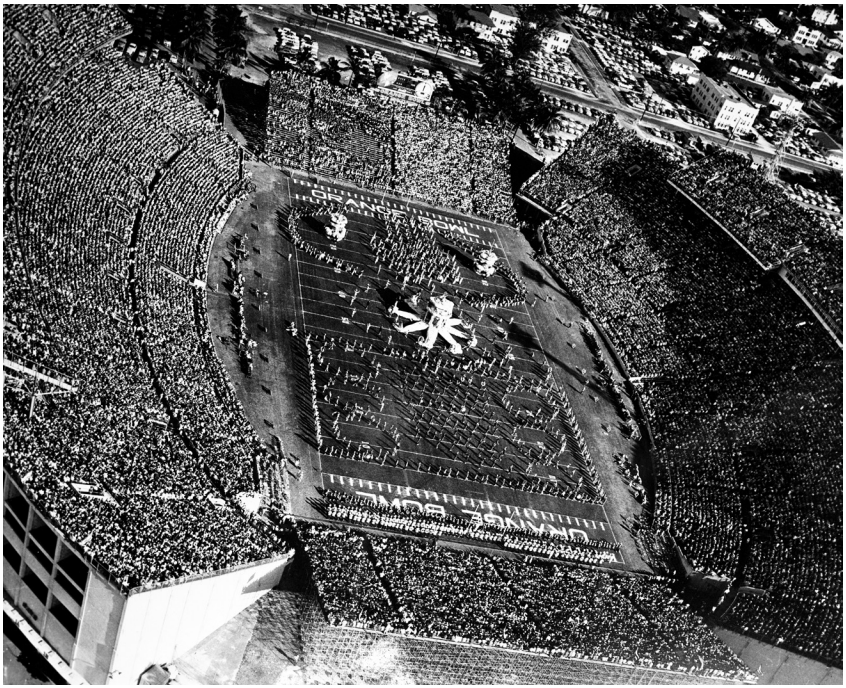
Watson Jr., the city attorney, announced, in March 1954, a $14 million bond issue for capital improvement projects within the city. One of the major initiatives centered on implementing the Darlow plan to enlarge the Orange Bowl Stadium.[67]

While some construction-related activity started in April, the stadium enlargement project officially got under way on June 10, 1954, when one of the largest cranes in the country was brought to Miami and used to hoist steel beams to buttress additional rows of seating at the upper deck level. When it was completed, the project added 8,933 new seats to bring the seating capacity of the stadium from 67,129 to 76,062. In accordance with the Darlow plan, most of the seats were added by the extension of the double decks on both sides of the regular stands. In addition, the northeast corner of the stands, which was shorter than the other three corners prior to this project, was heightened to a length equal to that of the others.[68]

The project was completed in early September in time for the October 7 game between the University of Miami and Notre Dame, which was the first matchup in a long, bitter rivalry between the two football programs. Notre Dame, the nation's most famous college football team, won this first match 14-0.

After the completion of the project, the Orange Bowl stadium became the third-largest bowl in the country, ahead of Dallas' Cotton Bowl, which had a seating capacity

of 75,000 at the time, but behind New Orleans' Sugar Bowl (81,000 seats) and Pasadena's Rose Bowl (100,000 seats).[69]



A view of the halftime show at the January 1, 1955, Orange Bowl.

Courtesy of Florida State Archives.

On January 2, 1956, the Oklahoma Sooners and the top-rated Maryland Terrapins played in the Orange Bowl with its new configuration. Oklahoma won the game by a score of 20-6, extending its winning streak to thirty consecutive games.[70] The Orange Bowl game would continue to be the

primary attraction at the Orange Bowl Stadium and the main catalyst for investment in this most important sports venue.

World's Greatest Baseball Party: 1956

On August 7, 1956, the Orange Bowl Stadium played host to a baseball game whose champions hoped to break the record for the largest crowd to attend a minor league baseball game. The current record had been realized in Jersey City, New Jersey, where 56,391 spectators watched the hometown Giants lose to the Rochester Red Wings on April 17, 1941. Sid Salomon, the president of the Miami Marlins, a minor league baseball team that typically played its home games at Miami Stadium from 1956 until 1962, and Bill Veeck, executive director of the Marlins, pushed the idea to play a game in the Orange Bowl to break the minor league baseball record and raise money for charity.[71]

Marlins executives had hoped this event would attract 80,000 spectators, but felt, at the very least, they could entice more than 50,000 fans to enjoy an evening full of entertainment. The Marlins organized the evening to include musical and sports entertainment for those who attended. The musicians who performed that evening included Martha Raye, Margaret Whiting, Russ Morgan and his orchestra, Cab Calloway, and several other notable acts. The concert preceded the baseball game which began at 8:30 p.m. *Miami Herald* sports writer Eddie Storin referred to the extravaganza as the "world's greatest baseball party" in an article published on the day of the event.[72]

The stadium's configuration was revamped to make it more appropriate for baseball. Its diminished dimensions now included a 12-foot-tall screen fence that served as a wall along the northern sideline; it stood at the edge of right field just 216 feet from home plate. The depth of the left field wall was also abbreviated, extending only 250 feet from home plate in the southwest corner of the stadium. Any balls that would bounce and end up between the left field foul line and the stadium's west end zone bleachers would be declared a ground rule double, according to these revised rules.[73]

The manager of the Miami Marlins, Don Osborn, selected Satchel Paige, the ageless wonder who made his reputation as a dominant hurler in the Negro Leagues prior to signing a contract with the Marlins, to be his starting pitcher that evening. Leading up to this game, Paige, at the reported age of 49, had the best earned run average (ERA of 1.58) in the International League, and Osborn had confidence he would keep the Columbus Jets hitters in the stadium. When he was told he would be the starting pitcher, Paige was reluctant to take the mound for the matchup because he did not like the idea of pitching in a football stadium. However, he later changed his mind and ended up the star of the game.[74]

The Marlins defeated the Jets 6-2 before a reported crowd of 51,713 paid attendees. Paige pitched into the eighth inning and drove in three runs after hitting a double into left center field. While the attendance record announced by the Marlins was close to the record set in Jersey City, Miami's

The very first and legendary baseball game played at Orange Bowl Stadium that pitted the Miami Marlins against the Columbus Jets, August 7, 1956.

Postcard courtesy of Casey M. Piket.

city recreation director and manager of the stadium, Ernie Doering, reported that the turnstile count was only 33,921. In the days following the game, local reporters had a field day attempting to convince the Marlin's organization to try to reconcile the difference between Doering's count and the team's reported attendance.[75]

Regardless of the actual attendance, the Marlins distributed 100% of the gate receipts from the game to many worthy charities, including the Variety Children's Hospital

($10,000), Histadrut Children of Israel ($10,000), Babe Zaharias Cancer Fund ($1,000), and the Miami Community Chest Children's agencies ($2,809.20), among others.[76]

The Next Five Decades

While the first two decades of the stadium were eventful, the next five decades were perhaps even more influential in underscoring the importance of the venue to the city of Miami and its surrounding areas.

In 1965, the Miami metropolitan region was awarded an American Football League franchise, the Miami Dolphins, that enjoyed tremendous early success playing in the Orange Bowl. The team went to three Super Bowls, winning two of them, in its first eight years, and celebrated the league's only perfect season, a distinction that still stands today. In addition, the Dolphins enjoyed a 27-game home win streak from 1971 until 1974 at the stadium, where they played their home games from 1966 through 1986 before moving north to the new Joe Robbie Stadium in 1987. Decades after this move to the team's new home in Miami Gardens, many Dolphins fans still miss the home field advantage provided by the mystique of the fabled Orange Bowl Stadium.

The University of Miami Hurricanes continued to call the Orange Bowl home until just prior to the stadium's demolition in 2008. The team enjoyed a 58-game home win streak from 1985 to 1994, and won five collegiate national championships during the 1983 through 2001 seasons while playing their home games in the Orange

Bowl. The football program followed the Dolphins to Hard Rock Stadium (formerly Joe Robbie Stadium), in 2008. Like the Dolphin faithful, Hurricane fans also miss the dominance exhibited by their favorite team while playing within the confines of the Orange Bowl.

The venue also hosted countless concerts starring the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Michael Jackson, and the Rolling Stones, among many performers, along with other big events. President John F. Kennedy hosted a reception in the Orange Bowl on December 29, 1962, for the prisoners of Brigade 2506 following the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of the previous year. The stadium hosted five Super Bowl games from 1968 until 1979, with many attendees arriving by boat from the nearby Miami River; it continued to host the signature Orange Bowl Game until 1996, when it too moved to today's Hard Rock Stadium.

Perhaps the best statement summing up the loss of the historic Orange Bowl was made by radio broadcasting legend and former Miami Dolphins tight end Jim Mandich, when he said:

"We don't have that many historical edifices down here, but in Dade County you can point to the Orange Bowl and say that's our building. So many great things, not just sporting things, happened in that Orange Bowl. I think it is a travesty that that building is lost to us, and it will never be replaced."[77]

And with that, "Mad Dog Mandich," as he was known, simply verbalized the feelings of so many longtime Miami residents who held the Orange Bowl in such high regard. In a city of rapidly disappearing history, there may not be a more special place that's now been lost than the Orange Bowl Stadium.

Mad Dog was right. Its mystique will never be replaced.

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"My Miami Story"

Sophia Cordova Barsimantov

Little did we know when Ben and I got married in Havana in 1958 and came to Miami for our honeymoon that this city would one day be our home for the rest of our lives.

We spent two wonderful weeks in Miami Beach in a hotel named the "Sands," and visited all of the tourist attractions, such as Vizcaya, the Seaquarium, Coral Castle, the Boom Boom Room at the Fontainebleau Hotel, Eden Roc, Castaways, and

Myself, Ben, and our son, George. (Courtesy of the author)

so on. Miami was a sleepy town where all restaurants closed before 10 o'clock. However, there was nightlife on Miami Beach.

We came back to our peaceful lives in Cuba, but on December 31, 1958, the communist government took over.

Every day we were waiting for something to happen that would end that horrible nightmare. We could not comprehend how the American government would allow a communist regime with Russian missiles to exist just 90 miles away from its borders.

In 1963, the American Red Cross put together a fleet of several cargo ships to transport the Bay of Pigs prisoners and their families to the United States. At this point, we decided to leave our country. We had to abandon all of our possessions and leave everything behind. It was heartbreaking. We came in the berths of a ship named *American Surveyor*, and because we both were fluent in English, we were selected to be the ship's translators.

We were given one cot for every two people, but I was bringing a nine-month-old baby girl to her parents in Miami, so she got our cot. My parents, Mariano Cordova and Dulce Maria Tascon, and my brother-in-law, Daniel, also came with us in this ship. We brought our dog, Canela, as well. We encountered extremely rough weather and as a result, the trip, which normally would have taken twelve hours, lasted twenty. Parents with babies were bringing them in shoe boxes (for lack of cribs). It was really horrific.

We finally arrived at Port Everglades on April 29, 1963, all disheveled and dirty from the ship furnaces. We were transported on buses to the old Opa-locka airport, where our relatives and friends were waiting for us. I gave the baby to her parents and never heard from them again. She must be 51 years old by now. I have always wondered what became

of her – did she marry, and does she have any children? Has she ever been told how she came from Cuba and who brought her?

Because Ben's relatives were living in Miami Beach, we started our life there and rented a one-bedroom apartment on Ocean Drive in the "Ocean Front Apartments." It belonged to two older brothers and a sister who were marvelous with us refugees. They learned to speak Spanish and played dominoes with us. It was like a big family.

I remember the two movie theaters, the Cameo and the Cinema, which showed movies for 25 cents before six o'clock, and after that it would go up to 50 cents. We ran like crazy to get to the movies before 6 p.m. We were so far behind in the movie business that any film was brand-new to us.

I landed a secretarial job at the Mercantile National Bank at 420 Lincoln Road. My husband was offered a position as a teacher's aide at Southside Elementary in downtown Miami, where all of the newly arrived Cuban children were studying. He served as an interpreter, teacher's aide, worked at the school office, and did whatever the principal would ask him to do, such as bringing her coffee and doughnuts from the Royal Castle nearby. This school has since been designated a historical landmark in downtown Miami.

We were able then to rent a two-bedroom apartment on Euclid Avenue. My brother-in-law slept on the couch and got a job at a Hialeah factory making plastic hangers. He did not

own a car and had to take two buses from Miami Beach to Hialeah to get to his job on time. Later on, he bought himself a 1952 Chevrolet for $250. It felt like a Rolls-Royce to him.

Our family outings were to Crandon Park for picnics or to Rickenbacker Causeway to fish. They were simple times, but very happy. We remember the small zoo at Crandon Park with lots of parrots and an old lion.

We became proud American citizens on July 4, 1970, in a swearing-in ceremony held at the Dade County Auditorium.

One Mother's Day we all went to Shorty's in Kendall to celebrate, but my mother fell ill and we took her to Mercy Hospital, where she was diagnosed with stomach cancer. She passed away two weeks later at the ripe age of 54.

We decided to leave Miami Beach and were able to buy our first home in the Coral Gate neighborhood in 1966, where a two-bedroom, one-bath would go for $15,000, with $450 down and $110 per month.

I remember that Ben only had a $10 bill in his pocket and that was what the Realtor, Fred G. Smith, accepted as our initial down payment. That night, he came to our home, we gave him a check for the full down payment, signed the contract, and he returned the $10 to us. I understand this area was developed in the 1950s for World War II veterans under the GI Bill.

My father was living with us, and he shared a bedroom with our son, George. We lived one block off Miracle Mile and our

outings were confined to McCrory's and F.W. Woolworth, and Sundays to the ponies and Burger King. I remember the park on NW Twenty-Second Avenue, which belonged to the Police Benevolent Association, where all the neighborhood children went and had a fantastic time. We used to pick green peppers, tomatoes, and strawberries at 117th Avenue, where Kendall is now a bustling neighborhood, and brought home bags full of freshly picked vegetables and fruits.

We decided to move to Coral Park Estates, a younger neighborhood full of children and excellent nearby schools, where we have lived for the last 40 years. George attended Coral Park Elementary, then Rockway Middle School, Miami Coral Senior High School, Miami-Dade Community College, and finally, Florida International University.

When George married Janet, they decided to buy a home in the same neighborhood so that their children would attend these schools. My granddaughter, Gia, attends Coral Park Elementary and is now in fifth grade. The cycle repeats itself!

My husband passed away three years ago and I still live in the same neighborhood. I have been in Miami for 50 years already, longer than in my own country, and have always considered this our only homeland. Over the years, we have witnessed its transformation from a sleepy town to a beautiful and vibrant city – an experience that I wouldn't change for all the money in the world.

Submitted February 22, 2017.

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