

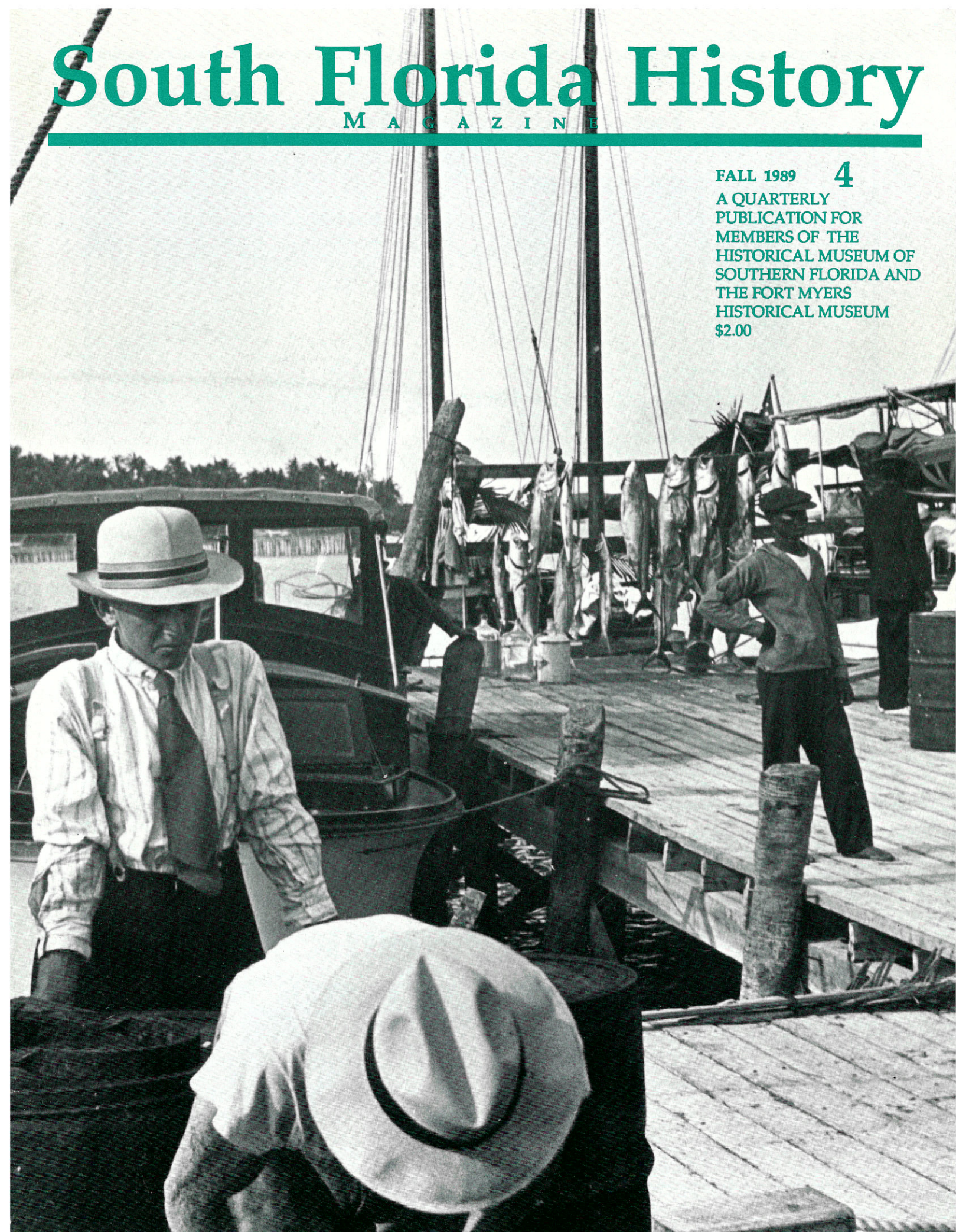
South Florida History

M A G A Z I N E

FALL 1989

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A QUARTERLY
PUBLICATION FOR
MEMBERS OF THE
HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF
SOUTHERN FLORIDA AND
THE FORT MYERS
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On the Cover: This photo of Brown's dock, Bimini, Bahamas, was taken during Prohibition. We can be reasonably safe in assuming that the nattily attired gentlemen caught by the camera were rum runners. In 1934, one year after Prohibition was repealed, Ernest Hemingway discovered and fell in love with Bimini and it became his island in the stream. (see page 5)

Contributors

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South Florida History

M A G A Z I N E

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Editor's Notes

by Tim Schmand

A Cool Dry Day in August

A number of major cities have catastrophic events as part of their heritage. The Chicago fire and the San Francisco earthquake come to mind almost immediately. In South Florida we live in the shadow of the 1926 hurricane that devastated Miami and contributed to the end of the real estate boom. During the last four years, while helping to put together the Historical Museum's publications, I have read an awful lot of hurricane articles. Some were good and some bad, but I was sure that it would be a cool dry day in August before I would be party to another hurricane article, let alone a personal account of the '26 Storm. Then three factors combined to change my mind: the Museum acquired an extremely interesting personal account of the '26 storm, Hurricane Hugo terrorized the Caribbean and tore through the Carolinas, and Jack Smith donated Clarence Steiglitz's scrapbook to the Museum.

Clarence Steiglitz was a photojournalist who began his career in Cleveland and worked there from 1905 - 1924. In 1926 Steiglitz went to work for the *Miami Herald*, placing him in the path of the storm. Fortunately for us he was armed with a camera. While the Museum's collection of hurricane damage photos is quite extensive, there were not many photographs of the relief efforts that followed the storm. Steiglitz's images chronicle those efforts.

In addition to the September 1926 storm in Miami, Steiglitz also photographed the effects of the October 1926 storm that hit Cuba. The *Herald* had sent him to Cuba as part of the **Miami Committee to Help Cuba**. Those photos have also become part of the collection.

We don't know much of Steiglitz after that. In 1927 he was the official photographer at the Sevilla - Biltmore in Havana for the winter season. And we currently know little else. Anyone who has additional information on Clarence Steiglitz is encouraged to call the Historical Museum of Southern Florida's Research Center at 375-1492.

SFHM for Fort Myers' Historical Museum Members

About two years ago we began discussing the possibility of changing the name and format of *Update*, one of the Historical Museum's publications. Early on in the talks it was decided that we should make the publication more regional in nature - and make it available to other historical organizations for their members. With this issue, *South Florida History Magazine*, becomes a membership benefit for supporters of the Fort Myers Historical Museum. Welcome aboard. We look forward to receiving articles from our new readers in the Fort Myers' area.



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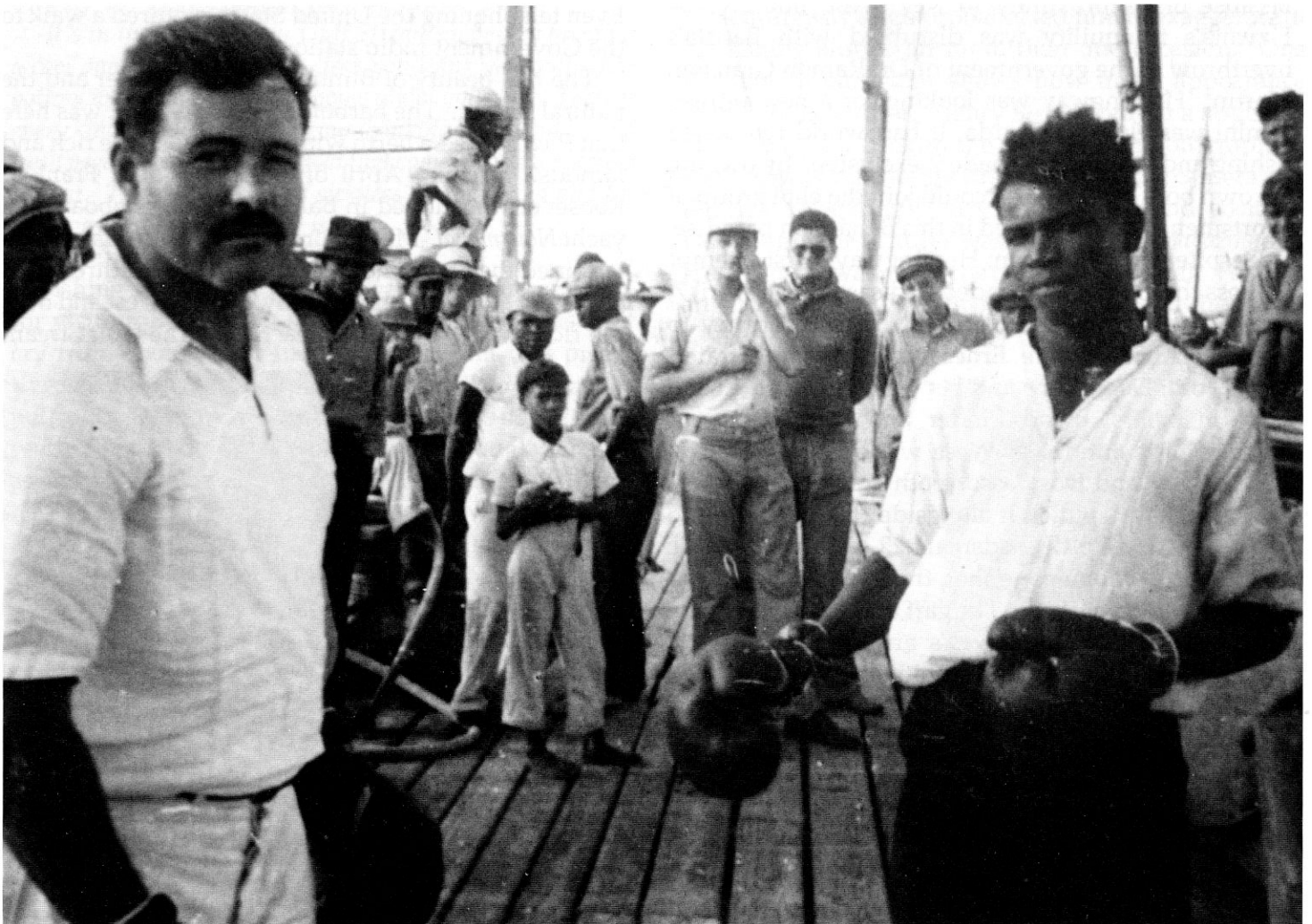
Bimini, Bahamas: Hemingway's Island in the Stream

by Jane Day

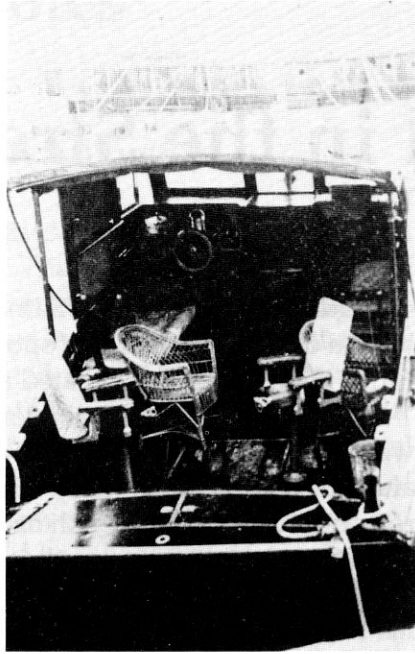
Ernest Hemingway's new cabin cruiser arrived in Miami on May 9, 1934. It cost \$7500 and was named *Pilar*, a nickname Ernest called his second wife Pauline Pfeiffer. As was often the case Hemingway was short of funds. He asked Arnold Gingrich, the founder and editor of *Esquire*, for an advance of \$3300 against future articles for the magazine so that he could make the down payment. The loan was well spent. The 38 foot diesel powered boat slept six, travelled at 16 knots, and in April of 1935 took Hemingway on the first of many trips to Bimini, Bahamas. On this small set of islands,

45 nautical miles from Miami, Ernest Hemingway helped change the course of sportfishing, got the inspiration for a novel, and created a Bahamian legend.

Bimini's reputation as a sportfishing paradise was well known in the 1930s among wealthy anglers. Author and sportsman Zane Grey wrote that of 29 world record catches, 16 of the fish had been taken in Bimini. Ernest was anxious to see the giant bluefin tuna that migrate through Bahamian waters for himself and try his luck. Hemingway was also enthusiastic because Bimini was out of the way and inaccessible. Cuba had



Boxing with Ernest Hemingway, called "trying him," became a popular local pastime during the summer of 1935. The prize money offered was somewhere between \$100 and \$250. Here Hemingway is pictured with Biminite Lewis Butler. (Reproduced by permission of the Ernest Hemingway Foundation.)



The cockpit of the *Pilar*, purchased by Hemingway in 1934 for \$7500.

proved to be a favorite destination for Hemingway because of its proximity to Key West, but in 1934 Havana's tranquility was disrupted with Batista's overthrow of the government of Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin. Hemingway was looking for a new retreat. Bimini was close to Florida. It had world renowned fishing and its isolation made it exclusive. By owning his own boat Hemingway could join the elite group of sportsmen who vacationed in this Bahamian paradise.

Despite his enthusiasm, Hemingway's first attempt to cross the Gulf stream ended in disaster. On April 7, 1935, *Pilar* left Key West on the 230 mile journey to Bimini. Aboard were Ernest, artist Henry Strater, writer John Dos Passos and his wife Katy, and Conch crew members, Bread Pinder and Sacher Adams. Twenty miles out of Key West, while trolling for dolphin, Strater and Dos Passos both got strikes. Ernest hooked a shark, pulled it alongside *Pilar*, and tried to shoot it with a Colt Woodsman .22-caliber automatic pistol. At the moment he shot, the shark flipped away from the side of the boat. The gaff that was holding the beast broke, hit Hemingway's arm, and the bullets ricocheted into the cockpit. Hemingway was wounded in both legs and *Pilar* headed back for Key West. A week later Ernest started out again, although Henry Strater had been replaced in the party by Charles Thompson, one of Hemingway's closest friends in Key West. This time the group made the journey without incident but Hemingway used his first experience as the basis of an article for *Esquire*, called *On Being Shot*, published in June of 1935. Presumably this would help pay back the money he owed Gingrich for the down

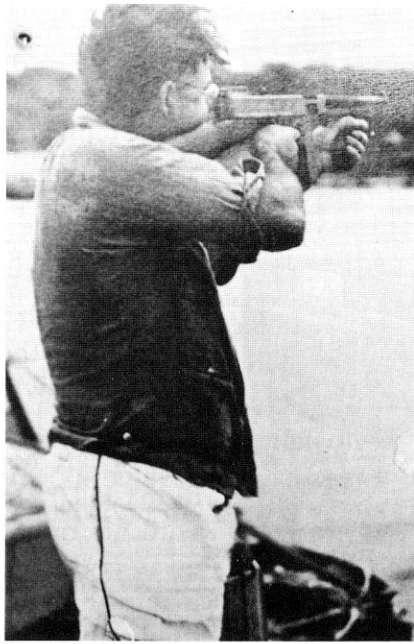
payment on *Pilar*.

Bimini in the 1930s, like the United States, was in the midst of an economic depression. During Prohibition the island had boomed with the rum running trade. Thousands of cases of liquor had been sold and shipped on speed boats back to Florida. As a British Colony, this trade was completely legal in the Bahamas and the government benefited as well as the citizenry. With the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in the United States hard times came to Bimini. Not only was rum running over but the small tourist trade had dried up as well. The Bimini Rod and Gun Club that had filled 104 hotel rooms in Prohibition's heyday had been damaged in the 1926 hurricane and had not been rebuilt. When Ernest Hemingway and his party arrived they found a few docks, a store with an attached bar, and some native houses. Mrs. Helen Duncomb, the wife of the Island Commissioner, had just built a small hotel called The Compleat Angler. There was one street, the King's Highway, but Bimini still didn't have an automobile. Even telephoning the United States required a walk to the Government radio station.

The real beauty of Bimini was in the water and the natural setting. The harbor lay to the east. It was here that *Pilar* shared a berth with the yachts of the rich and famous. (During April of 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt vacationed in Bahamian waters aboard the yacht *Nourmahal*. Millionaire William B. Leeds also entertained the Duke and Duchess of Kent for three days of fishing at Bimini and Cat Cay.) To the west and over the ridge was a beautiful beach with the Gulf Stream



Before Hemingway developed his aggressive style of fishing most fish were "apple cored" before they could be landed.



Not satisfied with the effects of a pistol on the sharks that followed his boat, Hemingway took to using a Thompson submachine gun.

beyond. In a letter to his friend Sara Murphy, written on July 10, 1935, Hemingway described Bimini:

It's in the middle of the Gulf Stream and every breeze is a cool one. The water is so clear you think you will strike bottom when you have 10 fathoms under your keel. There is every kind of fish... We bring our drinking water and ice and fresh vegetables on the pilot boat that comes once a week from Miami. There is no kind of sickness on the island and the average age in the cemetery is 85.

Hemingway loved the place!

Fishing was Ernest Hemingway's primary reason for visiting Bimini, but sportfishing in 1935 was a far cry from sportfishing today. Equipment was primitive, tackle was inadequate, and boats like *Pilar* lacked both outriggers and a flybridge. There was no big game reel. The tuna door was unknown. Although Bahamians reported seeing and catching many large fish, few had been brought back to the docks without being apple cored (eaten through the middle by sharks). Hemingway's aggressive fishing style changed all that when he brought the first two unmutated tuna back to Bimini. Instead of just passively taking in slack, Ernest actively worked to bring in the fish as quickly as possible. He used all the muscle he could muster and he was happy to share his tricks with other fishermen. Before his skill became an accepted fact Hemingway even earned a little extra money by betting on catches with the "rich boys." Eventually the bets stopped and a fish caught in this high powered style was said to have been "Hemingwayed."

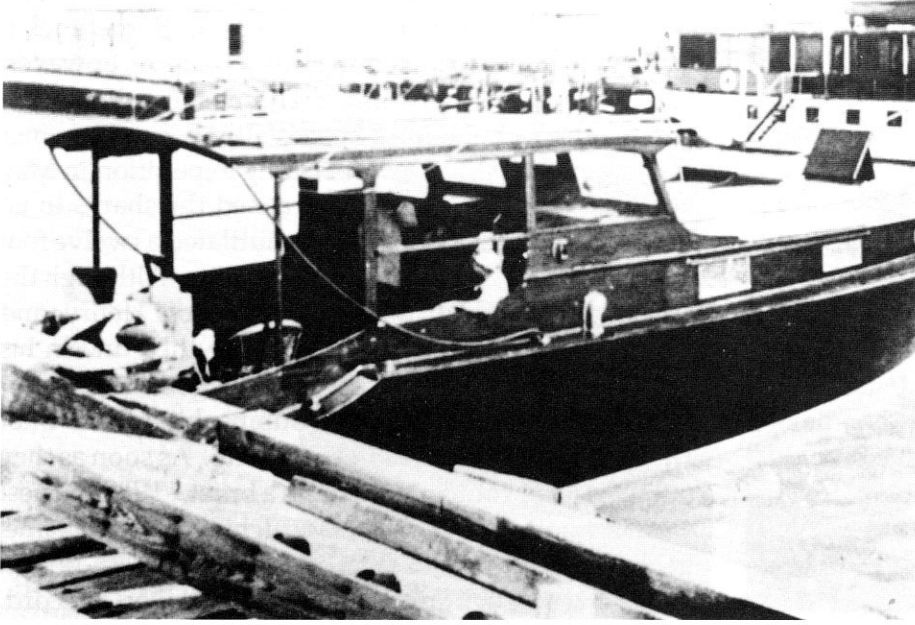
Besides improving technique and equipment, and despite the accident on his first trip across the Gulf

Stream, Ernest still dealt with the menacing sharks by shooting them. Sometimes it worked. Sometimes it made matters worse. Hemingway's weapon, however, had grown from a pistol to a Thompson submachine gun that he had obtained from Walter B. Leeds, owner of the yacht *Moana*. On one fishing expedition in May of 1935, the machine gun fire caused the sharks to go into a feeding frenzy that badly mutilated a twelve foot marlin that Henry Trater had on the line. Although the incident caused hard feelings between Henry and Ernest, Hemingway continued to use the gun. In his July letter to Sara Murphy he bragged, "We shoot sharks with it (the Thompson submachine gun). Shot 17 in two weeks. All over ten feet long. As soon as they put their heads out we give them a burst." When Ernest wasn't shooting sharks he was catching them on a line. In the summer of '35, Hemingway landed a 786-pound mako that was within 12 pounds of the world record. He claimed it had taken him only 35 minutes to bring the fish into the boat.

Hemingway's ego probably led him to exaggerate in his fishing stories on more than one occasion. One incident in particular shows how much appearance meant to the author. Henry Strater caught a large fish and brought it back to the dock to be photographed. Hemingway repeatedly stood between the camera and the fish, relegating Henry to a background position. Later one of the pictures was used in *Time Magazine* and Hemingway was given the credit for the catch. Henry's anger increased when Ernest failed to send the maga-



A bearded Hemingway with a blue marlin in Bimini, Bahamas, 1935.



The first time Hemingway attempted to travel to Bimini aboard the *Pilar* he ended up shooting himself in both legs. The experience enabled him to write *On Being Shot*, for the June 1935 issue of *Esquire*.

zine a denial. John Rybovich Jr., a boatbuilder and fisherman who knew Hemingway in Bimini, stressed the author's sportsmanship during an interview with Denis Brian for the Hemingway biography, *The True Gen*. "He called for and drafted the rules to established The International Game Fishing Association," related Rybovich. "So, despite his treatment of Strater, Hemingway did have a sense of fair play and responsibility."

In the easy-going atmosphere of Bimini, Hemingway's aggressive behavior showed itself on land as well as at sea. Although the days were spent fishing, the nights were filled with parties, drinking and fights. While a teenager in Illinois, Ernest had seen his first professional boxing match and had fallen in love with the sport. While he lived in Paris during the '20s, he had even earned extra money as a sparring partner at a local gym. Ernest's oldest son, Jack, wrote in his 1986 autobiog-

raphy *The Misadventures of a Fly Fisherman*, "Papa drank a lot after coming in from fishing and had several fist fights with other visiting sportsmen." The most famous of these fights was with Joseph F. Knapp, publisher of *Colliers* and *McCall's* magazines. According to Hemingway's letter to Arnold Gingrich on June 4, 1935, Knapp had picked the fight and refused to back down when given the opportunity. Ernest hit Joe Knapp three times with a left hook, but still the man didn't fall. After two more punches with his right, Hemingway "backed away and landed [a] Sunday punch, making him hit ass and head at almost [the] same time on [the] planks." The fight took place bare handed on a Bimini dock with about 60 people looking on. After the action Joseph

Knapp was carried onto his boat, *Storm King*, unconscious. By 4 a.m. Knapp's crew was so worried that they took him back to Miami for medical treatment, where he recovered completely. Ernest Hemingway, barefoot during the fight, lost two toenails. Nattie Saunders and a Bimini calypso band wrote a song about the night's activities called *The Big Fat Slob* and



Hemingway's haunt, The Compleat Angler, as it looks today. In addition to a hotel and bar, The Compleat Angler contains a small museum.

Hemingway's reputation as a fighter was established.

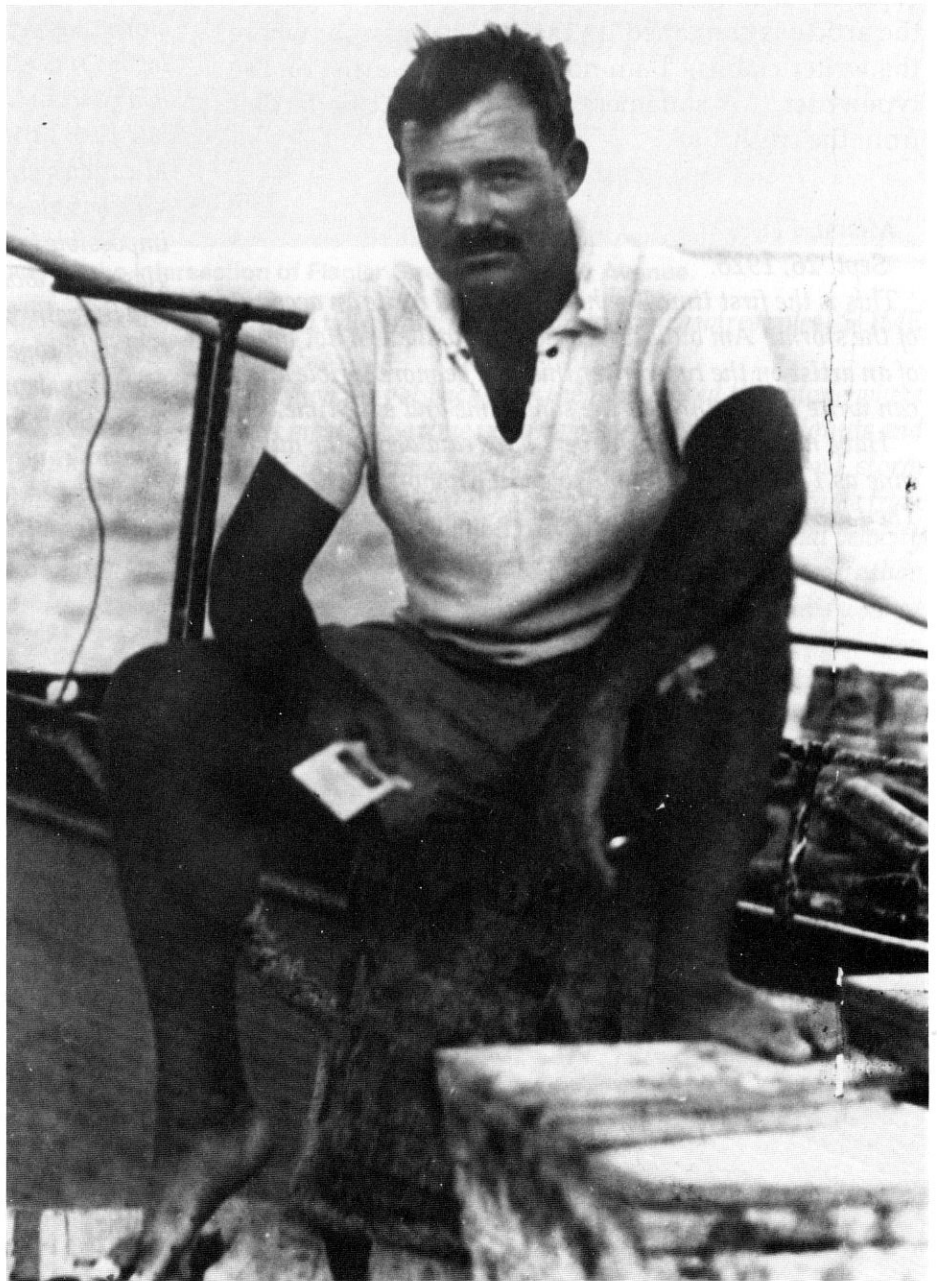
Challenging Ernest Hemingway--called "trying him"--became a local pastime during the summer of 1935. After a short trip home to Key West to visit his family and catch up on the mail, Hemingway returned to Bimini offering to pay any fighter who could stay in the ring with him for three rounds. Sources vary on the amount of the prize money that was at stake in these matches, but it was somewhere between \$100 and \$250. No one ever beat *The Big Fat Slob*, however, and Hemingway bragged to Gingrich that he had knocked out four contenders including the toughest man on the island. Ernest also sparred with Tom Heeney on the beach at Bimini. Heeney, who had once held the title of British Empire Heavyweight Champion and had fought Gene Tunney, came over from Miami. The match ended in a draw, and Hemingway was pleased with the result.

When Hemingway's family visited Bimini they often arrived on the *Pan Am* seaplane that landed at the private island of Cat Bay with permission of owner Lou Wasey. Ernest liked to stay on board *Pilar* when he was in Bimini alone, but when Pauline and the children were on the island they all stayed in a cottage that belonged to The Compleat Angler. Hemingway's youngest son, Gregory, called it "the college." Their boat was moored to a dock in front of the inn and according to Gregory in his biography entitled *Papa, A Personal Memoir*, Ernest told the children to "go wherever you want, kids. There's plenty to explore and you can't get lost here." After establishing a friendship with Mike Lerner, the successful businessman who founded the Lerner Marine Laboratory, the family sometimes stayed at his home overlooking the beach on the highest point on the island. This house would later be described in Hemingway's novel *Islands in the Stream*.

During Hemingway's visits to Bimini in 1935, 1936 and 1937, he impressed people from all segments of society. Naaman Rollins, who was

born on Bimini in 1916, was a cook at The Compleat Angler, during the Hemingway years. When Hemingway brought in a catch Rollins cooked it to order. One evening during a formal dinner given by the owner of the hotel, Mrs. Helen Duncombe, Rollins was waiting on tables. Everyone was dressed in formal attire. Ernest arrived late. He was appropriately dressed in tails but had come to the table barefoot because he had cut his toe the day before and couldn't put on shoes. Hemingway's gesture was well received by everyone. The society folks laughed, and the Biminities thought of Ernest as a "real down to earth guy."

(Continued on page 24.)



A tanned and relaxed Hemingway on Brown's dock, Bimini, Bahamas.

In the Wake of Hugo: The '26 Storm Revisited

Editor's note: This anonymous account of the 1926 Hurricane was acquired by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida this past summer. It is a report of the storm written by an employee of the Sinclair Refining Company to his home office in New York City. Presented here exactly as written, the manuscript runs three and one quarter typed pages, and the Museum's copy is one of the carbons. The most obvious error in the article is contained in the first paragraph, where the writer claims, "I am not much of an artist on the typewriter." A statement which couldn't be farther from the truth.

Miami, Fla.

Sept. 26, 1926.

This is the first time I've had to try and write an account of the storm. Am out at the office and while I'm not much of an artist on the typewriter this will be more legible and I can write two or three at the same time and save time.

Have no idea what the papers have said about the hurricane as I haven't been able to get a copy of a N.Y. paper. They are all gone almost as soon as they get on the news-

stands at 9.00 A.M. It was a whopper and makes me think of the city of Chelsea after the fire.

Friday afternoon I had off and after having a sleep went down town and had dinner and went to the movies. When I came out the wind was blowing a gale tho it was pleasant. The papers had an extra out with a warning from Washington about the storm. The city sent around a notice to all work under construction to tie down securely anything that might blow off, tho it didn't do much good. Went home to bed and to sleep. About 3.00 A.M. woke up when Frank got up and it was blowing and the rain was coming down in sheets. The wind was coming from the N.E. so didn't feel it much on my side of the hotel and went back to sleep. Frank woke me up at 4.30 and said I better get up and dress. The storm was getting worse, so I dressed and went down to the lobby. It was full of people, guests of the hotel and some who had come in to get in a safer place. All power and electricity had been turned off and there was no water. Mr. Brill had lit candles and had them all around the lobby. The mezzanine has glass doors on the north and west sides and it was impossible to keep these closed. Each time one flew open the glass in it would smash with a crash—a regular bedlam—and the rain came in like a flood. We finally got most of them tied with ropes made by tying towels together and that kept from from banging tho every once in a while one would tear loose. Somewhere around 5.30 the elevator shaft blew in the timbers came threw the side of the shaft on the third floor. That let in more rain and the stairs began to look like the Cascades. There is no cellar in most of the buildings here.



The '26 storm shattered lives as well as these houseboats along the Miami River. The Scottish Rite Temple is visible in background.



In water to their hubs, these cars attempt to navigate the intersection of Flagler Street and Tweelfth Avenue.

A house across the street had blown down—the wind then was only blowing 100 miles an hour—and a man, three women, and a little girl had managed to get across to the hotel. This hotel was built for a ten story one and only has five so I felt that it would stand as long as anything in the city. Tried to reassure the women by telling them that tho most of them were taking it very calmly, outwardly anyway. Went around the lobby trying to find out how many languages were being used in prayers. Counted Hungarian, Polish, Swedish, Irish, English, and Profane. Then a little more excitement was furnished by the shack in back where the bell and buss boys lived, blowing down. One of them got into the hotel and said there was a chap in the wreckage badly hurt. It was dark as the ace of spades and we could do nothing, just wait for daylight—later found he was all O.K.

Burns, one of the drivers who meets me every morning, made his way up about 6.30 just after daylight. Of course there was no getting out to the plant. The rain stopped, or nearly, at 7.00 A.M. so Burns and I decided to walk downtown and look over the damage and get some breakfast. It was still blowing so hard that to walk you had to bend over against it at about 45 degree angle.

What few lunch rooms were open were not serving anything and most of them were closed. Walked down to the bay front, lots of boats sunk and the palm trees in the park most all blown down. Automobiles were turned over, not only Fords but big cars. All signs and awnings were down and most of the show windows open. You could help yourself to anything in them and some were doing it. The streets were

littered with trees, telephone and trolley wires poles. SOME MESS.

When we got back near the hotel found the couple where I eat most of the time in there place and got some donuts and their last glass of milk. While eating the second storm started and we beat it back to cover. This storm came from the opposite direction. The wind attained an official velocity of 136 miles and it rained. This second storm was worse than the first and was accompanied by a tidal wave. This washed boats up two blocks from the waterfront, the paper I am sending to-day shows some of them and I have some snapshots that do too. The damage from this storm was worse than the first by far. The only redeeming feature was that it wasn't dark.

My room was now on the windward side of the house. Tho windows are steel casement ones and I had them tightly locked but the rain came thru just as tho they were open. A thick carpet covers the floor with padding underneath and it wasn't long before it was soaked thru and water standing on it. Then the water began to come thru the ceiling. Many of them fell but mine stayed up. The carpet is still wet tho I have left my door open all the time since so the draft thru would dry it out. Have dressed on the bed till yesterday.

The hotel had filled up with refugees, many of them having lost everything they owned except what they had on, and their lives. The room two doors from me had five children in one bed, four lying side by side, and a little tiny baby at the foot. Quite a sight to see them with there eyes as big as saucers. The dining room was taking care of as many



A make-shift hospital set up in the McAllister Hotel.

as it could but food began to get low. About noon the wind let up a little and a chap who works for the Southern Dairy and I decided to go out in his Chrysler and try to get some eats and some milk. Bot some gas around the corner and there was water in it so we only got a few blocks when we had to stop and get out in the pouring rain and drain the carbuereter. Needless to say we were wet thru. However we got some sandwiches and six bottles of milk and went back with them. That helped the children out. I had half a bottle myself so I felt fine. We then changed our clothes as all mine were dry, the closet ceiling not leaking at all.

Burns had got a lift up to Little River and walked over to the plant. He got the Dodge stake truck started and came down and got me. Cunder had come to the hotel so we all three rode out. Had to go round fallen poles thru wire and get by houses that were in the streets. Never saw such destruction in all my young life. Practically every house was damaged in some way, porches gone, roofs off, windows and awnings gone, and some absolutely demolished. They are still finding bodies in them often looking because of the odor coming from them. I can not begin to describe the plant. The next day borrowed Mr. Brill's Kodak and took a lot of pictures on the way out here and here. They will show what it looked like. Was very lucky that they all came out well as it was a dull day. The roof was off the office and many records destroyed but the cupboard had stood and things in there weren't bad. Opened the safe and took the money and a box full of the more important records back to the hotel. There were also two of the water bottles not broken and I took them back and rationed

the water out, women and children first. The nightwatchman was here during the storm and in the office when the roof went off. Glad I wasn't him.

During the evening sat around the lobby and talked with different folks. They were sleeping on chairs, couches, and the floor, many of them very pitiful sights. Talked with one young couple quite a while. They had an apartment on the ground floor right on the bay front. The owner had the opposite one and had nailed up his door. They had theirs locked and furniture against it but the force of the water finely broke it down and the water rushed in as it does in the movie comedies—not much comedy to this however. They went out the back door and had to wade thru water up to her chin. There car was washed away and all their belongings. She tried not to cry but put her head down on her husband's should and said, "Oh I wish we had never seen Miami." Somebody had given them each a suit of overalls and that is what they had on.

One family were living on a houseboat which was washed out into the bay and then back and they were able to wade ashore. Two men, one woman, and three children. They were lucky as that is where many lives were lost. Finally went to bed, moving my bed so if the ceiling fell I wouldn't be under it. Frank's was nearest the window and he couldn't sleep in it, shared Tom's room. In the morning Burns took the stake truck and I went out with Pierce, another driver, who had got one of the Dodge tank trucks out and sold its load of gas and come down me. Took some pictures on the way out. P had got delivery on a brand new Oakland sport roadster two days

before. About three in the morning he and his sister drove to a school house for refuge, their house having blown down. They had just got inside when the roof blew off of that and they decided they'd be safer outside. The roof had hit the car and completely finished it. Have a good picture of it. Was able to get one of the big trucks out of the debris and set them all out with gas. Everybody wanted gas to go sightseeing and for relief work. Many service stations were of course blown and all the rest were sending for gas, all of course "supplying ambulances and police dept." There was also a big demand for kerosene, needed both for cooking and lights. The boss came out in the middle of the morning and was sure heartbroken by the looks of his new plant. Tho demand was way above normal and I sent 14,000 gallons before I quit at 8.30 P.M. Had to work by the light of a flashlight and the headlights of the trucks.

This week has been hectic, tho the demand has fallen way off. Have had to work under the most adverse conditions. We have a Ford jacked up with a belt around the hind wheel and a pulley on a pump shaft to get the gas out of the tank cars. The officials were down from Atlanta and are going to rebuild the plant. They all wanted copies of the pictures for themselves and to send to New York. As I said the office roof was gone and I've sure got some color. The only place that was sore from sunburn was parting in my hair. Now have a temporary roof, tho it didn't keep out the rain yesterday.

Luckily it didn't rain all day.

Have about told the story or the highlights of it. God gave us fine clear moonlight nights this week and that helped immeasurably. The city was under martial law and no one allowed on the streets after 6.00 P.M. I didn't have any trouble tho as I used the Sinclair truck and they didn't even stop me. Consider myself very fortunate as I was safe and haven't lost anything. It did cost me \$22.00 tho as working under the poor conditions I checked that much short, and had to make it up. Perhaps you remember Tom wanted me to go and share his room when he left the hotel last week. Sure glad I didn't. The roof of his place came off in the night and the water was so high outside that they couldn't leave. He said he never expected to get out alive—and I wasn't with him.

This has been written with many interruptions. Started at 9.00 A.M. and it is now 2.30 P.M. The Ford we are using for pumping broke down and I had to fix it. The second car is now nearly done and I've sent out 3000 gals. of gas so I'm ready to call it a day. Am going to take a few more pictures on the way home. Will send you some in a day or two.

Forgot to tell you the Hulkenbergs arrived back in town last Sunday night. They had to get a pass to get into the city and all sightseers are turned back at Palm Beach. Their money is tied up in real estate mortgages which have lost much if not all of their value. Emmet wanted to go to work so I now have him driving a tank truck for me.



Reminiscent of scenes from Charleston and the many islands touched by Hugo in the Caribbean, after the '26 Storm the children of Miami stood on line for a ration of milk.

"Crying For No Reason at All But Because of How Lovely It Was"

by Deborah A. Coulombe and Herbert L. Hiller

Editor's Note: The Pickering Press has done it again. They have produced an extremely interesting and readable South Florida history book. The latest in their series, **Season of Innocence: The Munroe's at the Barnacle in Early Coconut Grove**, was co-authored by Deborah A. Coulombe and Herbert L. Hiller. The following article is excerpted from **Season of Innocence**, which, along with other Pickering releases, is available at the Indies Company Museum Store.

Patty and Wirth Monroe felt no misgivings about life at the Barnacle. They had a big place and they loved the water. They were each other's best friend. They found their own play things, and made their own fun.

In winter, the children of Camp Biscayne guests brought many more playmates, but the rest of the year they had each other and their one-street town. There were friendly people, and they were all like one big family. As Patty tells it:

It was growing up free. There was no danger, no developers, nobody interfering with you. Though Daddy didn't like us going back on the streets by ourselves, I could always walk cross-lots to visit. There was none of this modern--well, just everything under the heading of crime. Now you have to watch and wait and listen. But I could always just walk into anywhere I wanted.

Wirth especially, but Patty, too, were avid tree climbers. Patty was supposed to take it easy, but both kids loved climbing the big poinciana at the foot of the lawn (which blew over in the 1926 hurricane). Patty could climb to the top and lie perfectly still during hide-and-seek.

As for pranks, according to Patty, Wirth was the ingenious one for getting into trouble, though she admits having been an active conspirator. She and Wirth

were about six and four when they went across the trail to Sanders-Peacock Store. They picked out a tricycle, and just like that charged it to their mother and brought it home. When their mother Jessie found out what they had done, she marched them right back with it. The Barnacle was a poor place for riding. The porch of the house would have been perfect for tricycles, but that was forbidden.

Patty recalls years later she and Wirth pushing off on their bikes and the two of them flying lickety-split across the yard, crashing themselves before reaching the marsh. One day Wirth brought home a chum, Bill Catlow, whom he and Patty introduced to their daredevil stunt. Bill and Patty eventually were married for



Wirth, Jessie, and Patty Munroe.



The Barnacle, the boathouse and the *Melody*.

fifty-two years.

A favorite lawn game was mumblety-peg. The way Patty remembers it, somebody would take a small honest-to-goodness knife with one blade open, or a paper cutter, and set it in the ground enough so it stood loosely. Then you'd wham it with your hand. It would go anywhere, to Patty's delight still, telling of it many years later.

Sometimes it would stick back in the ground, and that was the object, even though I can't remember how the game was scored.

Dodie introduced them to caterpillars and cocoons. The frangipani tree was loaded with large black, green and red caterpillars. Patty remembers:

...about five inches long with black hair-like tails. We kept them in big shoeboxes punched full of holes on the upper porch. In some way one night they got out, so what a search we had the next morning to round them up. After the cocoon stage they hatched and we pinned them out in the wood glass display boxes. Some of them were monarchs.

Jessie was their bird person and plant person. She also taught them astronomy at the end of the wharf. Patty says she and Wirth never gave their mother any trouble about learning these things. "You know, like so many people say, 'Oh, I don't need that.' She made it interesting for us."

Patty could identify all the birds by their sounds. Mockingbirds could be so bothersome on moonlit

nights that she couldn't sleep. She loved the "phoebe, phoebe, phoebe" sound of the bird by that name, but remembers they didn't come after a time, and the same with the endless warblers that once passed through.

On rainy days, paper dolls were a diversion—for the boys, too, Patty recalls, "though they wouldn't admit it." She would cut out each month's page of Ladies Home Journal. A favorite place to play with them was upstairs in Dodie's bedroom, where she could stretch two to three rows across the floor.

Patty played with regular dolls, too, often joined by Jessie. Many were gifts, including her prized possession, a four-poster doll bed which her father, Ralph Munroe, made one Christmas, and for which Jessie made the mattress, pillows, linens and spreads. That was especially for Patty's biggest doll, Lucy. Patty also remembers including her pet chicken in her playtime. She would sit in the little chair her father made for her and entertain the bird.

The attic was a favorite indoor play area. Access was up very steep stairs, off Ralph and Jessie's room, that Patty remembers crawling rather than walking up. Although extremely hot ("We used to roast up there!"), the attic was ideal for dolls, hide-and-seek and make-believe. Chimneys and old trunks were there for props. Parchesi, chess, and checkers were popular. So were "500", "I Doubt You", and rummy



Ralph Munroe in a skiff.

among other card games.

Rarely did their parents join Patty and Wirth, as they didn't have time, according to Patty. And their father was adamant that indoor games involve no fighting or arguing.

Occasionally Patty and Wirth would sneak out of the house very early and go fishing under the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club clubhouse, which at the time was beyond the Pooles' at Camp Biscayne. The house was built on pilings the kids could crawl beneath. The bottom was "a mess of grunts and snappers and yellowtails and I didn't know what all," says Patty. "But they were very smart snappers. They'd take your bait but they wouldn't take your hook." Patty remembers doing better off the dock behind the boathouse.

The waterfront was a child's paradise where Patty and Wirth could enjoy themselves harmlessly. The boathouse and wharves were meant for endless exploration.

Ralph and his friends never minded their kids being around. The grown-ups would pick-up on Ralph's nicknames for them, so that after they had listened to the grown ups long enough, Maginty and Plumb-Bob (also sometimes called Brother) would put on wooden shoes and wade along the shallow shore waters. Visible beneath were hermit crabs with their pretty shells in different sizes and colors. Blue and brown sea crabs scuttled from one patch of seaweed to another. Snails

and barnacles clung everywhere to the wharf pilings.

The kids had to watch their footing for the clumps of oysters, whose shells were very sharp. Patty vividly recalls when Wirth was about six or seven that he waded into deeper water between the wharves and got tangled in a man-of-war. They learned that lesson right away.

Another day Patty remembers Wirth and herself catching baby flying fish that a storm blew in from the Gulf Stream. The fish were beautiful little things, every color imaginable, from a quarter inch to almost an inch. The children kept them in a globe Wirth fixed up with water he could change.

Especially entertaining were Sundays when a congregation sometimes appeared at the next waterfront over and held baptisms. Two men in black gowns would wade out to the end of the wharf where the initiates were led out and dunked.

Occasionally, there would be Holy Rollers. When they came back ashore, they would roll on the ground and cry and shout and sing until they cooled down. Patty and Wirth would sit as silently as they could upstairs on the boathouse porch, trying not to giggle.

When they were a little older and had their own cabin boat, the two would sneak out of the house to finish their night's sleep on their boat's spring mattresses, which they found more comfortable than theirs in the house.

Family birthdays were usually kept within the fam-

ily. Holidays involved others, especially the Fourth of July. The ritual began first thing in the morning with the kids reading the entire Declaration of Independence. After breakfast a huge American flag was flown, which Patty and Wirth thought was the biggest flag ever. They valued it all the more because it was a Revolutionary heirloom from the Munroes of Concord.

The women of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club always had tea on the Fourth, but the prized thing for the children was the freshly made ice-cream, churned by all the extra hands. It was the fastest ever made.

Thanksgiving and Christmas were usually celebrated quietly at home with close friends, who might include any of Jessie's three other sisters and two brothers with their families from up north, or Ralph's sister, Nellie Austen and her grown children from Brooklyn.

For Christmas the Munroes would cut a local pine and decorated with handmade ornaments. Fancier ones were sent down from New England. As the children grew older and were able to stray from the nest, store bought ornaments began to replace the originals. Gifts were mainly "house-made" when Patty and Wirth were little.

Patty recalls that around Christmastime the door to the boathouse was always locked. She could never figure it out. Their father made many beautiful wooden toys for the children, including Patty's beloved dollbed

and small chair, and Wirth's prized model train and boat.

Patty learned photography from her father and took pictures all her life. When Ralph arrived in South Florida he brought with him one of the first cameras made by the Blair Camera Company of Boston. A large, mahogany bellows contraption, it had a reversible back and could take both vertical and horizontal "views" as photos were then called. This was one of the first dry plate cameras, meaning that the negative could be developed long after the exposure was made.

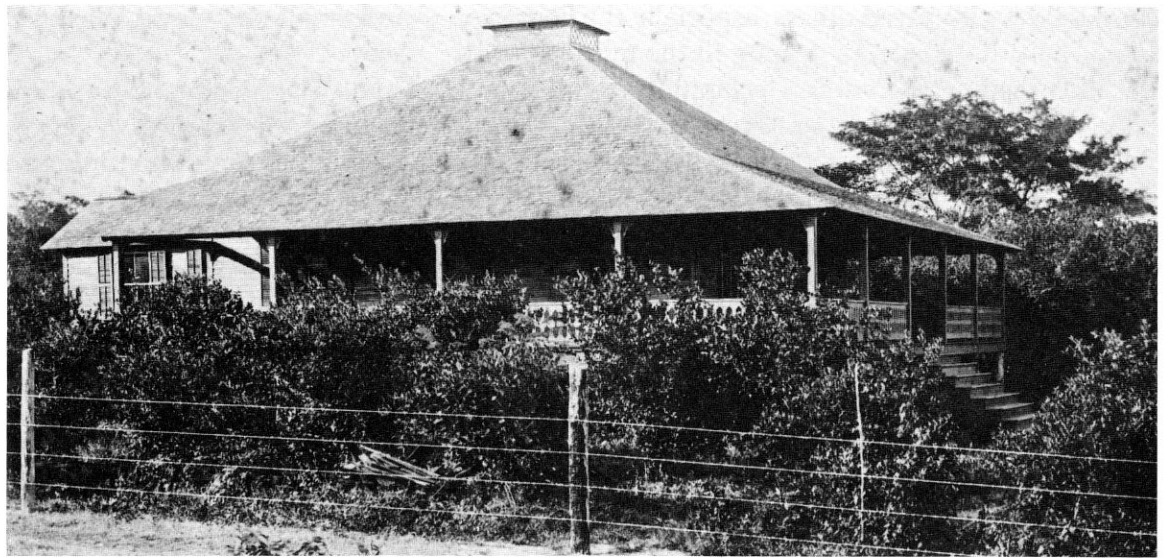
Before that, one had to develop the view immediately (which made wilderness photography a challenge at best.) Ralph's Blair wasn't cheap: for the deluxe model, including camera, tripod, and plate-holder he paid \$55. What the kids got from it, and later the rest of the world, was the inestimable record of a transcendental wilderness community.

Ralph's lantern slide, as they were called, were shown around much of the United States by his friend Isaac Holden and others, thereby for the first time popularizing the southeast coast of Florida. Ralph regretted that almost everything else the world later learned about the coast was misused for hawking land.

Twenty years after his slides toured the Northeast, Ralph was teaching Patty the intricacies of photography. Wirth never got interested. Ralph had the dark



A young Patty mimicking her father.



The Barnacle before the second floor was added.

room downstairs in the boathouse, but Patty remembers her father developing film with her in the kitchen at night, and next day printing in the sun. The negative was placed against the glass in a wood frame, with the photographic paper on top. The sun printed the image.

Later, when the Barnacle was wired for electricity, Ralph and Patty had a printing machine with an electric bulb in it.

Patty's first camera was a Brownie, given by her parents even before she was a teenager. Next came a more advanced Kodak that folded flat until the door was pulled down and the bellows came out and locked the end. Patty was a prodigious photographer, and still has many of her snapshots, extending the record of her father into an era of leisurely innocence.

Many evenings the Munroes sat together playing and listening to music. Ralph played two flutes, Jessie the violin and piano, and a friend the cello. Jessie could read music very well—Patty regarded her as a "home professional" at the piano. Friends would come for their musicales which Patty rated as "thoroughly enjoyable, all classics of course."

Patty remembers being in the next bedroom supposedly asleep but instead lying awake and softly crying "for no reason at all but because of how lovely it was."

When Patty was older, she joined the ensemble as a piano player. The Munroes bought a Victrola, for which Wirth made a cabinet, and a Philco radio as well. The radio was a center of entertainment for many years.

The everydayness of their lives was rarely interrupted by unwanted outsiders. Nature was some-

times a surprise, though. Patty remembers one Sunday afternoon in her early teens when she and Wirth were sitting on the floor playing Parchesi—which their father said was fine as long as they were quiet. He was reading the paper. Jessie was reading a book.

Suddenly in the middle of a sunny clear afternoon a dark cloud came up full of lightning and thunder. A bolt snapped down and hit three of the coconut palms in the middle of the yard. Instantly, they burst into flames.

Patty was sent running to fetch Billy Wagner, their helper who lived across Main Highway. To no avail. The burning fronds fell on the grass. Nothing could save the trees. In the end, seven palms died from the hit. There was never a drop of rain.

Patty recalls her mother always reading aloud to Wirth and herself. She only gave it up when the children begin coming home with schoolwork. Early on they read by lamps, then "mantle" lamps, and when the house was rebuilt, with electricity.

Patty recalls after supper reading aloud one of her favorite books, *Our Little Old Lady*, by Eleanor Hoyte Brainert. "I suppose I'm terribly old-fashioned," she reflected in her diary, "but I wish people now were like the ones of the old days. They were far more Christian-like and sensible."

Another time she recalls her mother reading aloud about the disarmament conference in Washington, and about President Harding's speech. Patty felt it was "as big a thing as happened in centuries, perhaps ever. And to think we were living through it!"

For Patty reading was a major part of her schooling. Although there had been an elementary school in

(Continued on page 25.)

Through the Lens

A local amateur photographer approached the editors of *SFHM* a short time ago and wondered if we had any use for her pictures. She had done a photo study of the Miami River that we found extremely interesting. We suggested that she get in touch with Don Gaby and do a study of Miami River bridges past and present. The contemporary photographs are Susan Randall's; the background information on the bridges was provided by Donald C. Gaby.



Except for the bridge and the river, nothing in the older photograph is pictured in the new.

Brickell Avenue (SE 2nd Avenue)

The gateway to the Miami River, this bridge is the second youngest on the river, constructed in 1929. A new "signature" bridge is being designed to replace it.

Bird's Eye View of Mouth of Miami River,
Miami, Fla.

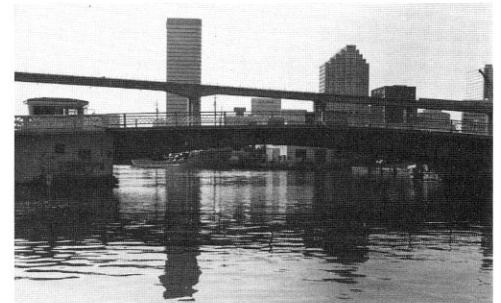
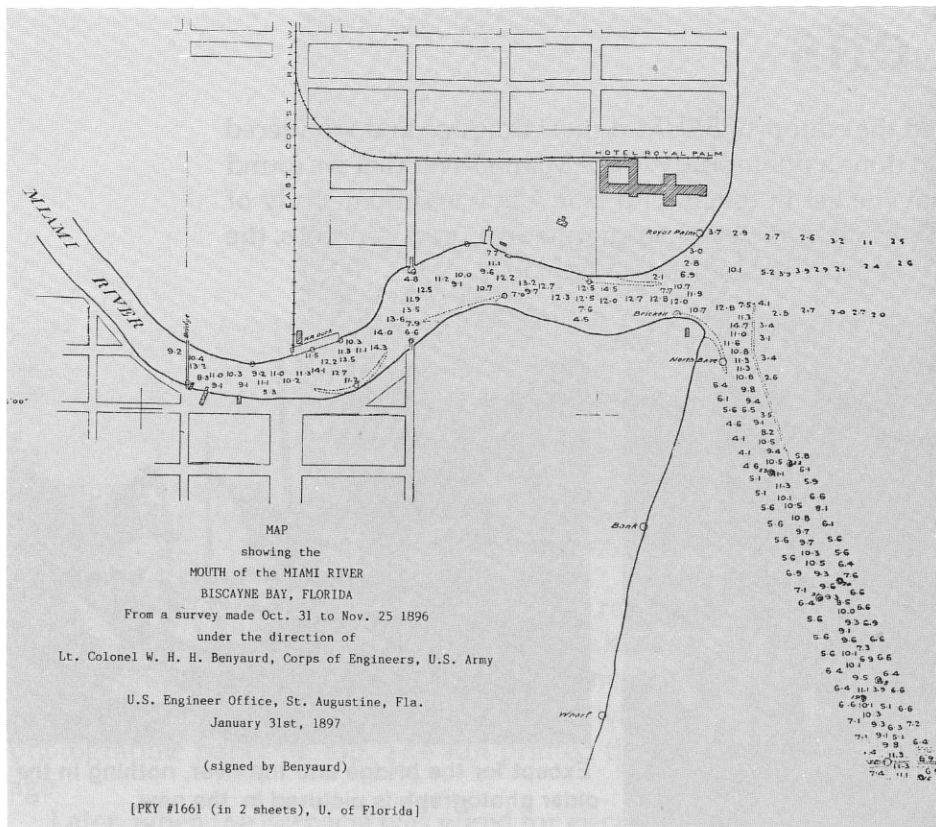


This early Bird's-Eye view of Miami was taken from a water tower. Today's photo wasn't.



Miami Avenue

The first steel bridge to cross the Miami River, opened in 1903. It was originally a swing bridge, replaced by an electric drawbridge in 1917, and by the present hydraulic, six-lanes bridge in 1986.



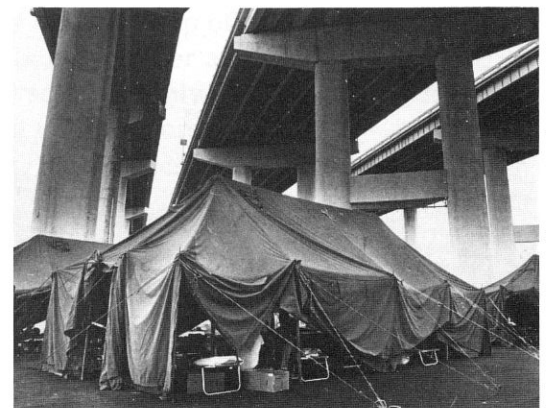
This 1897 map shows location of first bridge to cross the river. The Second Avenue bridge now stands in its location.

Metrorail

Follows the right-of-way of the Florida East Coast Railway bridge built in 1903 and removed in 1969.

SW 2nd Avenue

Location of the first wooden bridge to cross the river, 1896 to 1903, after which there was no bridge until 1924.



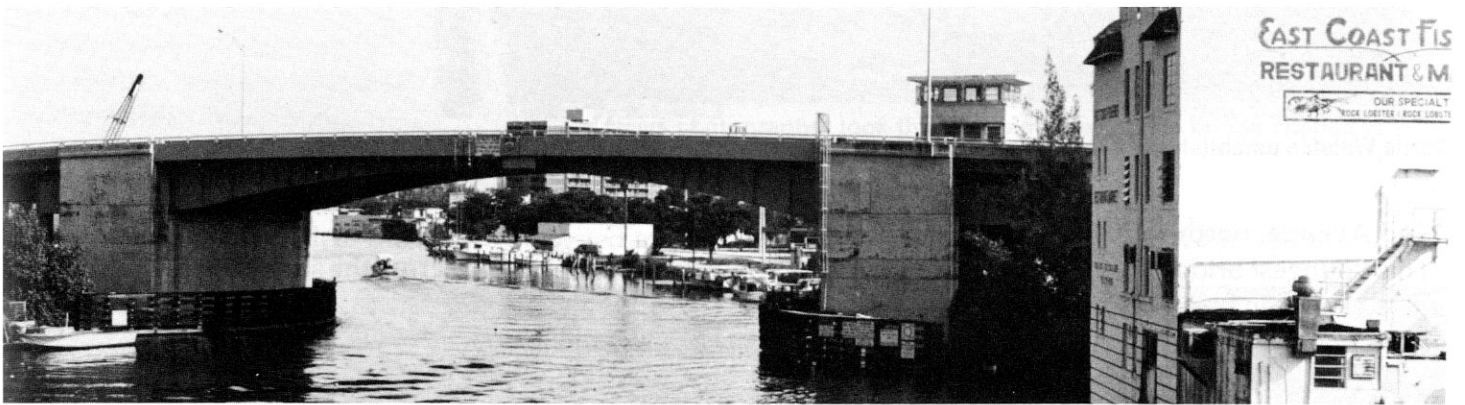
The Tent City has become Jose Marti Park.

Interstate 95

Built in 1968 as the first fixed bridge to cross the river, blocking passage upstream of tall-masted vessels. The south end was site of Tent City during Mariel influx.

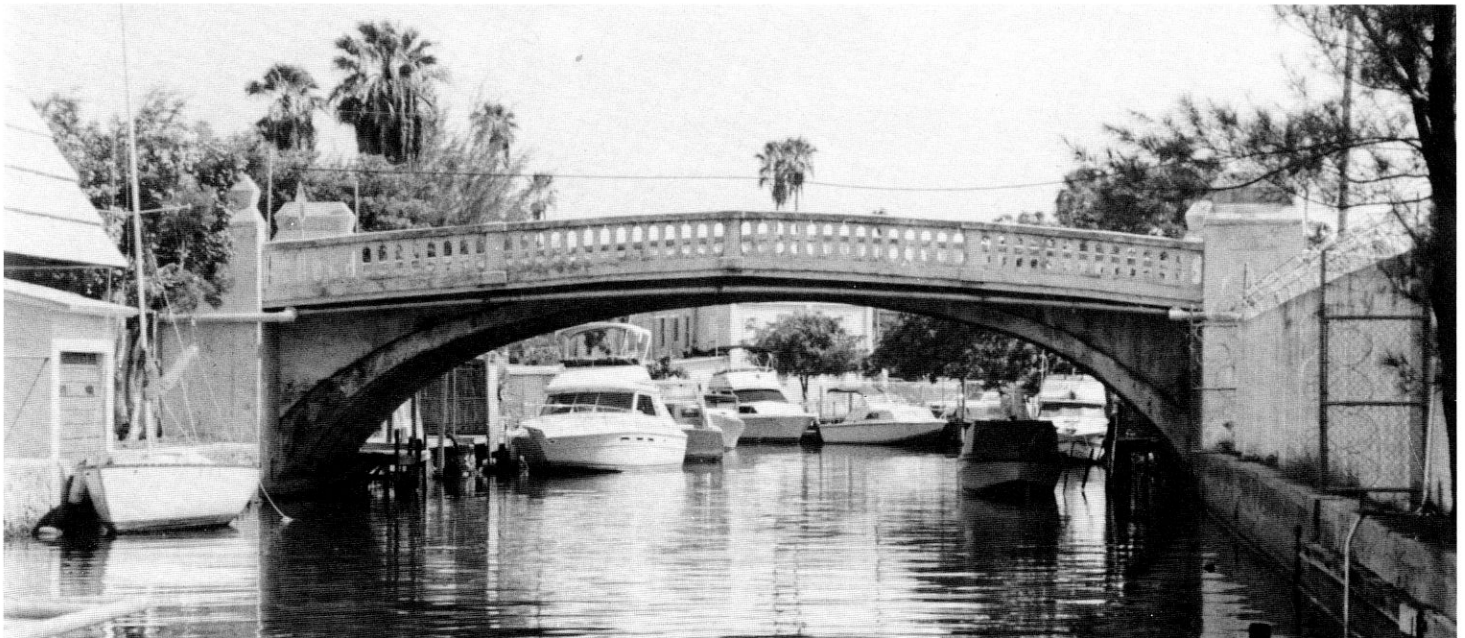


The Flagler Street Bridge after the '26 storm.



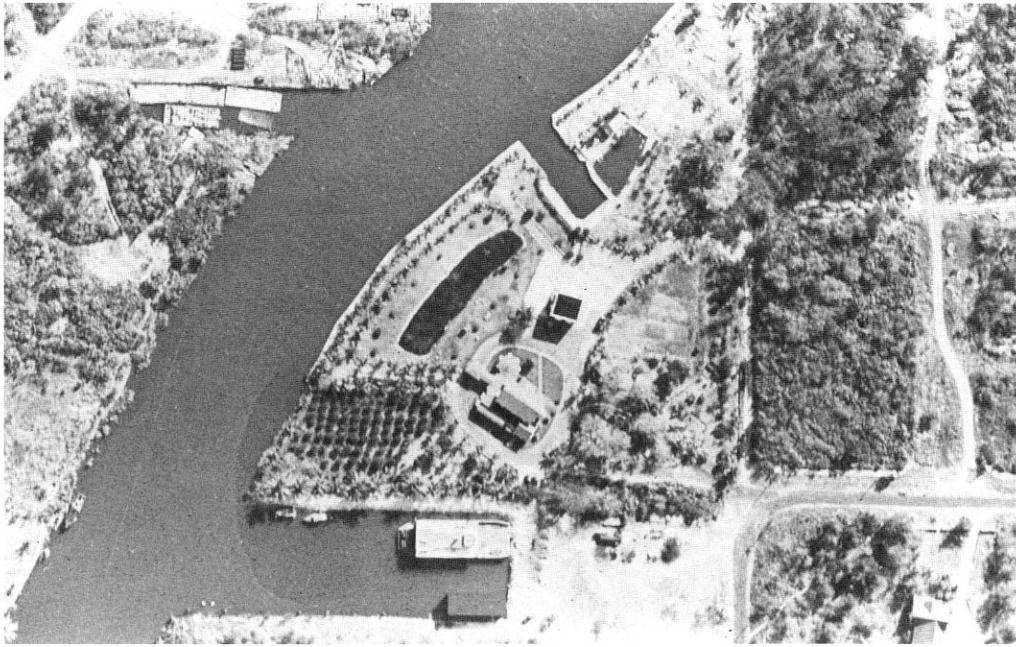
Flagler Street

Built with private money in 1905, charged tolls of 5 cents for pedestrians, 25 cents for a two-horse carriage or automobile until 1909. The present bridge was built in 1967, the third one there.



7th Street

This "hump back" bridge into Spring Garden was built in 1919 and has appeared in several movies of Miami.



Gertie Walsh's establishment is herein depicted.

22nd Avenue, north fork of river.

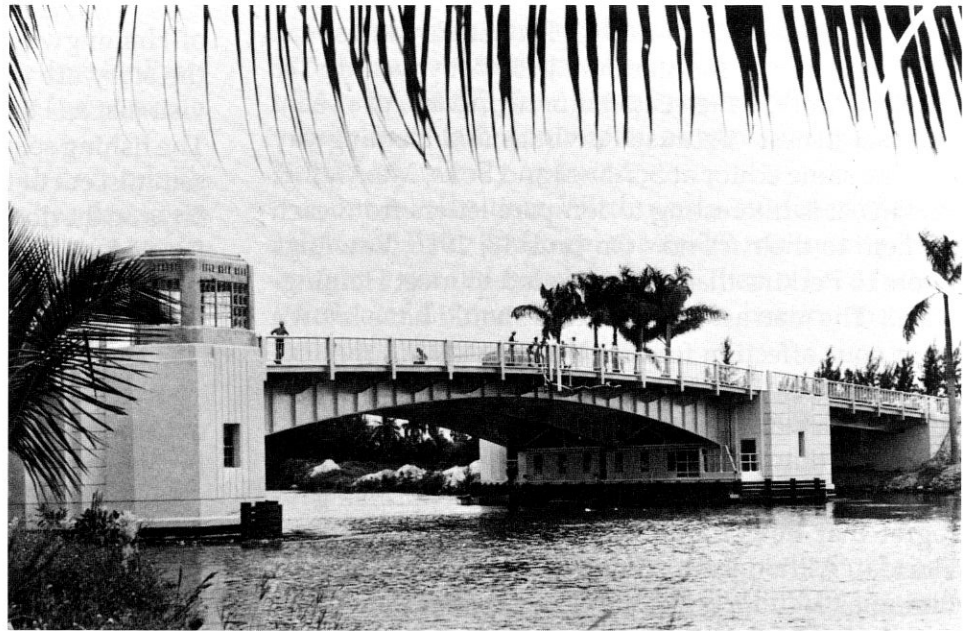
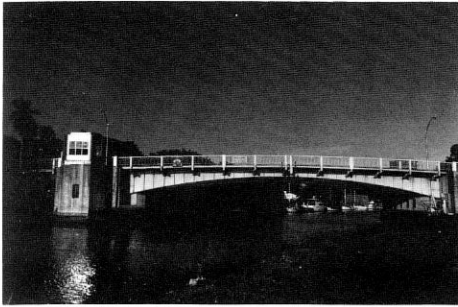
This youngest bridge on the river opened in 1966. The 22nd Avenue bridge across the south fork was originally a fixed wooden bridge built in 1908. On the south bank, behind the big freighter, was Gertie Walsh's infamous but elegant house of ill repute. It was patronized by many prominent citizens of Dade County.



Historic photographs of this bridge were unavailable. We're running this image to prevent that from happening in the future.

South River Drive, Tamiami Canal

This swing bridge was originally the second bridge to cross the Miami Canal at 27th Avenue, and was installed here during World War II to replace an earlier one-lane, manually-operated bridge.



A Miami News photographer took this photo on the day the bridge opened in 1939.

27th Avenue, Miami Canal

The original single-leaf drawbridge opened in 1910. The present art deco bridge opened in 1939.



A beautiful bridge over a once beautiful river.

27th Avenue, north fork of river.

The first wooden bridge to cross the river here opened in 1908 on the county road. The present bridge dates from 1939.

(continued from page 9.)

Florida author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings won the Pulitzer Prize for literature in 1939 by writing *The Yearling*. In 1936 she visited Bimini on a friend's yacht and met Ernest. Because Rawlings and Hemingway had the same editor at Scribner and Sons, Maxwell E. Perkins, it is interesting to compare letters from each of them to their friend. On June 18, 1936, Rawlings wrote to Perkins that she "was glad to meet Hemingway... The man astonished me. I should have known from your affection for him that he was not the fire-spitting ogre. Instead, a most lovable, nervous and sensitive person took my hand in a big, gentle paw and remarked that he was a great admirer of my work." In August, Hemingway wrote to Marjorie expressing his regret that he couldn't stop to see her in northern Florida. Although she didn't spend as much time in Bimini as Hemingway, the place also left an impression on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings:

Bimini caught in my throat the way the scrub does. The struggle there for existence is terrific. Last summer's hurricane swept it almost bare--most of the roofs, most of the coconut palms, the shrubs. Typhoid and malaria followed... Unless someone really good, like Hemingway, does something about it, I'd like to go and live there some day. There is a stirring novel there.

That novel was eventually written by Ernest Hemingway. Published posthumously in 1970 by his widow, Mary Hemingway, and publisher Charles Scribner, the book, some critics say, is not a finished work. Called *Islands in the Stream*, the largest section deals with Bimini. Although the story takes place during World War II, the ambiance of the setting is Bimini in the mid-thirties. Some of the places mentioned in the text are real--the King's Highway, Commissioner's house, "the old club that the hurricane blew away," and Brown's dock. Others are transplanted from Key West and Cuba. The main characters, an artist named Thomas Hudson and his boyhood friend, writer Roger Davis, represent two sides



Hemingway in Key West in 1938.

of Hemingway's own complex personality. Parts of the story are autobiographical. Hudson's three sons visit just as Hemingway's children did in the thirties. The fishing sequences are very real. A fight scene is so reminiscent of Ernest's battle with Joe Knapp that the boys on the dock even make up a song similar to *The Big Fat Slob*.

*Captain Frank in the harbor
Tonight's the night we got fun.
Island in the Stream*

Wherever Ernest Hemingway went in his remarkable life he made an impact. Bimini, Bahamas, was no exception. Sportfishing was improved because of his participation, and island folks still remember the commotion Hemingway caused both in town and on the water. The boxing ring by the dock is gone, but Mrs. Duncomb's inn, *The Compleat Angler*, still stands. Today run by Ossie Brown, it boasts a Hemingway museum and bills itself as the island "home of Papa Hemingway." According to biographer Carlos Baker, Ernest raved to friends that "the discovery of Bimini was a great event" in his life. To Bahamians, Hemingway became more than just another tourist, he became an island legend.

Big Fat Slob

By Nattie Saunders

Big Fat Slob in the Harba
This the night we have fun,
Oh, the Big Fat Slob in Bimini
This the night we got fun.
Mr. Knapp called Mr. Ernest Hemingway
A Big Fat Slob
Mr. Ernest Hemingway balled his fist
and give him a knob.
Big Fat Slob in Bimini
This the night we have fun.
Mr. Knapp look at him and try to mock
And from the blow
Mr. Knapp couldn't talk.
At first Mr. Knapp thought
He had bills in stalk
And when Mr. Ernest Hemingway walked
The dock rocked.
Mr. Knapp couldn't laugh
Mister Ernest Hemingway grinned
Put him to sleep
With a Knob on his chin.

(Continued from page 19.)

Coconut Grove since 1889, when it came time for Patty to begin, her parents decided to educate her at home. That was the "semi-invalid attitude."

Ralph and Jessie thought that the rough-and-tumble of schoolmates would be too much for her. Jessie enrolled Patty in correspondence courses and spent every morning going over lessons with her. Afternoons were for play.

Papers and grades were sent to the Calvert School in Baltimore, and Patty remembers using the post office often. It took six years for Patty to convince her parents to let her attend the Coconut Grove School, where Wirth had been from the first grade.

No sooner had she begun sixth grade (a year behind where she should have been because of a terrible math deficiency) than she was transferred to the new private school of Julia Filmore Harris. Miss Harris was a teacher from Minnesota who thought it would be more mentally stimulating to teach students outdoors. That brought her south. Ralph was ever ready to encourage bright, adaptive minds to settle here, even though he could no longer promise wilderness.

Miss Harris began in 1914 with ten students, Patty and Wirth among them. The schoolhouse was a small bungalow with a pergola on Bayview Road, within walking distance of the community trail. Patty ended up staying with Miss Harris for all of her high school and for two years of post-graduate courses in English. Wirth stayed only a few years before Jessie consented to return him to public school.

Patty, who was tallest at school, enjoyed English

most. She was also skilled in science drawing. By the time Miss Harris relocated her school in town at Brickell Avenue and Eighth Street, Patty and Wirth had convinced their father to buy an automobile, something he had adamantly opposed.

But by that time Wirth was a student at Miami High, and Patty had to get to Miss Harris' nearby. They bought a second-hand Packard, then a Ford, which Wirth could drive--once in a while boating instead--dropping Patty off on his way.

Wirth was not as scholarly as Patty, but was mechanically inclined. After graduating from Miami High, he went to Gainesville for classes in surveying. Eventually, he followed in his father's footsteps as a talented boat designer.

During high school Wirth met Charlie Poore and his twin sister Mary, who lived in Silver Bluff, between Coconut Grove and the city. Wirth often picked them up for school and dropped them home afterward. A decade later Wirth and Mary were married.

Neither Patty nor Wirth, same as their parents, went to college. Money was tight when they would have gone. Taxes were high on Camp Biscayne, and though the camp continued to attract a clientele, and Ralph was designing boats again after a layoff in 1907 (when for a while everybody had to have motors). Ralph never earned enough from guests, instead re-investing what he earned from the camp in improving it.

Patty thinks that because their father was so much older than Wirth and herself that he wanted all the time with them he could have.

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New Books

McWilliams, Karen *Pirates*
New York, 1989, Franklin
Watts, 0-531-10464-8 \$12.95

Though competing with television, skate boards, and rap music pirates are still a source of fascination for the children who visit the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. A sure way of grabbing and holding their attention is to point out the Jolly Roger on display, and to begin to regale them with stories of William Teach and the bounding main. Of course, teaching children about pirates can pose real dilemmas for historians as well as for history teachers. Pirates on the whole were not nice people, and as role models they leave an awful lot to be desired, but still the fascination and still the

need to learn.

In June of this past year a book arrived at the Museum that helped put pirates in perspective for the teaching staff. Karen McWilliams' *Pirates*, has provided the staff with an interesting and we feel accurate view of the life and times of the pirate. A child's book to be sure, but one that provided us with a method of presenting the pirate in an accurate historical context.

Ms. McWilliams' book is divided into four sections and examines the life of a pirate, their ships and flags, compares buccaneers, pirates and privateers, and looks at the famous pirates whose names continue to be common knowledge today. She takes the pirate down from the movie screen and presents them as they really were. Her book would make a fine gift for any nine or ten year old. Young girls may also find this book interesting as two of history's more

colorful pirates were women.

The construction of the book itself also needs to be complimented. Solidly bound, it will stand up to the abuse that children often give their possessions. In addition it contains a glossary of new words (that are italicized in the copy), a bibliography, and further suggested reading.

Karen McWilliams' *Pirates* would make a wonderful addition to any young reader's library, and it is available at the Indies Company Museum Store.

TIM SCHMAND

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- The Museum's folklife program enriches the entire community by discovering and preserving the traditional folkways practiced throughout our region.
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City National Bank
Deloitte, Haskins & Sells
Eisner & Lubin
Farrey's Hardware Co.
Florida Power
& Light Co.
Graham Companies
Greenberg, Traurig,
Hoffman
Harrison Construction
Holland & Knight
IBM Corp. | Knight Ridder Corp.
Mershon, Sawyer,
Dunwody, Johnston
Norwegian Caribbean
Lines
Paul, Landy, Bailey &
Harper
Post, Buckley, Schuh &
Jernigan
Price Waterhouse
Professional Savings
Bank
Miami Herald
Touche Ross & Co.
Allen Morris Co.
Foundation
Chase Federal
DeBartolo
Discovery Cruise Lines
Drexel, Burnham,
Lambert, Inc.
Flagler Greyhound
Track
Greater Miami Visitors
& Convention Bureau
Intercept Investments
Keen, Battle, Mead
Kimbrell Hamann
Winn Dixie Stores |
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