

# South Florida History

M A G A Z I N E

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**Everglades and Friends**  
**Cruising Aboard the SS Florida**  
**Flagler Before the Orange Blossom**  
**Once a Fort Myers Favorite**  
**When Blimps Were Warships**

Published for Members of  
Historical Museum of Southern Florida  
Fort Myers Historical Museum  
Collier County Museum  
Clewiston Museum  
Loxahatchee Historical Museum



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On the cover: In one of South Florida's early environmental battles, these demonstrators on January 23, 1963, wanted to see an oil refinery and chemical plant, Seadade, placed on the shores of lower Biscayne Bay. (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-14759). See full story, page 9.



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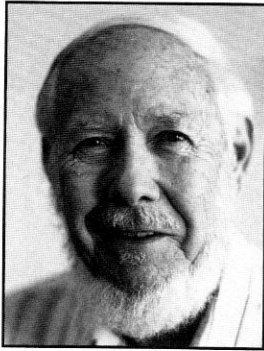
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# Editor's Notes

by Stuart McIver



The Historical Museum of Southern Florida has found its way into the pages of a popular mystery novel written by one of our members, Barbara Parker. Her book, *Suspicion of Innocence*, published in hardback by E.P. Dutton, is now in circulation around the country in paperback.

Gail Connor, the book's heroine, is a Miami attorney suspected of murdering her sister Renee, who had worked as a volunteer at the Museum. Renee's body is found by Jimmy Panther, as she cruises the Everglades in his airboat. As her defense attorney Gail engages the services of Anthony Quintana, who also supplies the novel's love interest. Thus, we find one of the book's major strengths, the interplay between three cultures — traditional American, Cuban American and native American. It all adds up to a "good read."

Gail's quest to free herself leads her to the Museum where her sister had worked. Renee had worn the colorful Miccosukee jacket but on one occasion removed it along with other items of clothing to engage in decidedly naughty misbehavior in the City of Miami streetcar.

Other aspects of the Museum appear in the story. The education director, Edith Newell, a fictional character, plays an important role in helping Gail trace relevant leads. Parker saw the lighthouse exhibit as a metaphor for the search for the truth that will set her protagonist free. In the picture of an early retail establishment, the author saw people who would become the ancestors of Gail's family:

"Ahead of her she saw a photograph, a grainy, life size enlargement of a dozen people standing outside the first dry goods store on Flagler Street, before it was even named Flagler, back when it was still paved with limestone rock. A horse and wagon waited at one side. Most men wore collarless white shirts, another a straw hat, others had beards or mustaches. The women's blouses were buttoned to their chins. All stared straight into the camera, nobody moving, the sun cutting harsh shadows on their faces."

Like her heroine, Barbara Parker is an attorney, a former prosecutor for the Dade County State Attorney's office. She was hired by the late Richard Gerstein and worked at one time for Janet Reno, now the U.S. Attorney

General. After a period of private practice, she switched to writing as a full-time career. In 1993 she earned an MFA from Florida International University's esteemed creative writing program. Her daughter, Andrea Lane, worked briefly at the Museum while attending FIU.

Particularly helpful to Parker in researching her novel were Bob Carr and Willard Steele, of the Archaeological & Historical Conservancy. Steele worked for a number of years at the Museum.

Parker, who now lives in West Broward County, was born in Columbia, South Carolina, but moved to Inverness, Florida, in 1960. After majoring in history at the University of South Florida in Tampa, she moved to Miami in 1974. Her law degree from the University of Miami was awarded three years later.

Her next book, *Suspicion of Guilt*, is due out in March. It will again make extensive use of the Miami locale and its fascinating mix of cultures. I know I look forward to it.

Each Monday the *Miami Herald* publishes "Tales of Old Florida," an historical column by Joe Crankshaw. Not only do we wish to commend him for sustaining an interesting column week in and week out, no easy feat, but also for his thoughts on gifts for the Christmas season.

"Each year," he wrote, "I have tried to make some recommendations for gifts with a Florida historical connection. This year I am making two suggestions for gifts with a difference: books, and memberships in your local historical society.

"The two major societies you should consider are the Florida Historical Society and the Historical Association of Southern Florida. Both of these agencies offer excellent publications and membership benefits that certainly would please any historically minded friends or relatives.

"Do not, however, slight the local historical societies that exist in almost every Florida county. These groups work hard to preserve the history, traditions and culture of the community in which you live, and they deserve your support."

It's too late now for the holiday gift-giving season, but keep Joe's ideas in mind. Friends and relatives have birthdays which keep cropping up and, besides December of 1995 will arrive long before you're ready for it.

Congratulations to Miguel A. Bretos. A former member of the Historical Association's board of trustees and the curator of the Museum's acclaimed *Cuba & Florida* exhibit, Dr. Bretos has been named first counselor for Latino affairs at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. According to a front page story by Paul Anderson in



*The Miami Herald*, "He has been given a broad mandate to change hiring standards, curatorial practices, even exhibits in the Smithsonian's empire of 16 museums and the National Zoo, in hopes of better reflecting the contributions of Hispanics to America's history and culture."

Dr. Bretos is particularly well known in South Florida as the founder of the Cuban Archives at Florida International University. We wish you well, Miguel.

The Kleinberg family has come up with an unusual father-and-son act. Dad Howard and son Eliot have each written histories of notable South Florida cities, both books published at roughly the same time in the fall of 1994. Howard Kleinberg, former editor of the *Miami News* and currently an historical columnist for the *Herald*, has written *Miami Beach* published by Centennial Press. Eliot, who writes for the *Palm Beach Post*, has teamed with Jan Tuckwood to write *Pioneers in Paradise: West Palm Beach, the First 100 Years*, published by Longstreet Press, Marietta, Georgia.

On April 7, 1890 Marjory Stoneman Douglas was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Our lead story in this issue pays tribute to her as she approaches her 105th birthday. The story, an excerpt from an upcoming book, tells how she moved from Everglades author to Everglades spokesman, defender, lobbyist, champion—whatever it took to save the River of Grass. Happy birthday, Marjory.

*In Memory of Henriette Harris*  
We were all saddened by the sudden passing of Henriette Harris, Brickell Avenue's longest resident who was featured in the last issue of *South Florida History Magazine*. We know that the article by Cesar Beccera brought her great joy. We will all miss this charming, courageous champion.

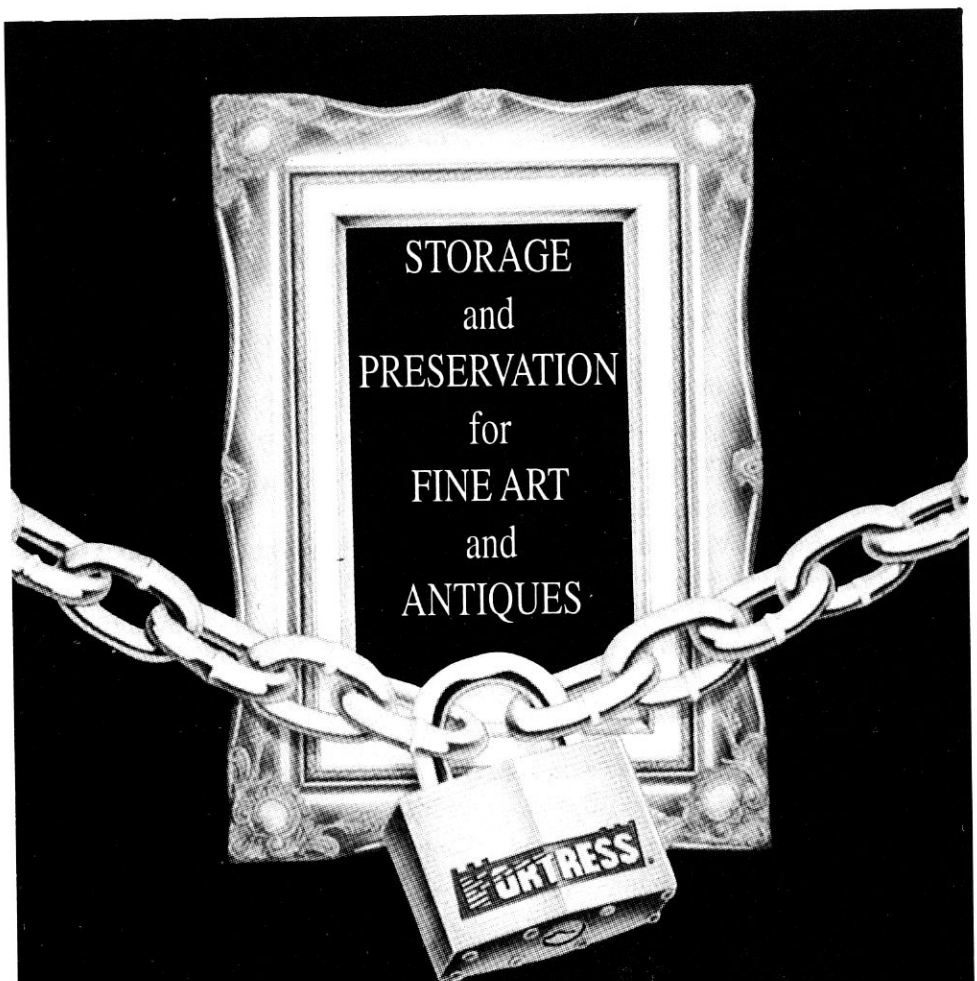
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# Around the Galleries...



## HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

**Metro-Dade Cultural Center**  
**101 West Flagler Street, Miami**  
**(305) 375-1492**

### Exhibitions

#### **The Great Ships: Ocean Liners and Cruise Ships**

March 9 - June 4, 1995

An exploration of Miami's maritime history and the vessels that have been a part of the cruise passenger and cargo industries. Created by the Historical Museum, the exhibition will feature rare and antique models, paintings and memorabilia from the 2,000-piece Gottlieb collection. Dr. Richard Gottlieb will serve as guest curator.

#### **The Golden Era of Gum Cards**

October 25, 1994 - February 20, 1995

An exploration of when kids collected and traded cards that came with bubble gum, featuring Gum Inc.'s 1938 "Horrors of War" card set. This set is one of the single most popular and sought-after of all non-sports sets. Much of the artwork was done by Charles Steinbacher; the exhibition is made possible by the Steinbachers and son Michael.

#### **Impact: Women of Distinction in Dade County**

March 2 - April 2, 1995

This annual exhibition features the portraits of 10 outstanding women.

### Special Events

#### **Miami Map Fair**

February 24-25, 1995

This second annual event is geared for hobbyists, collectors and dealers of antique maps. Includes lectures and workshops on conservation and care conducted by experts; discussion of collecting in the 1990s; expert opinions and prominent dealers showing and selling their maps. Participant registration is \$35 per person for full program or \$4 for general admission to the map dealer marketplace only. Call Marcia Kanner for a registration package.

#### **Tropees' Fourth Annual Dessert Reception**

Thursday, March 2, 1995

Watch for details on this delicious annual event sponsored by the museum's young support group.

#### **Tropees' Mangia Italiano at Tutti's** Saturday, April 8, 1995

A special cooking class with Tutti's chef, Coral Gables.

#### **Springtime Harvest**

Saturday & Sunday, April 29 - 30, 1995

Dade County Youth Fair Grounds & Expo Center at Tamiami Park, Coral Way at 112th Ave. Celebrate spring with crafts booths, flowers, international foods, music, reenactments, folklife demonstrations and fun at the Historical Museum's *Springtime Harvest*, just in time for Mother's Day. Adults \$4; Children (5-12) \$2.

### General Information

Open Mon-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thur. til 9 p.m.; Sun. 12 noon-5 p.m. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day. Adults \$4; Children 6-12 \$2. Members free.

### Dr. Paul George Historic Neighborhood Tours

#### **City of Miami Cemetery Walking Tour**, Saturday, February 4, 10 a.m.

Don't miss this ever-popular tour and a spiritual visit with the city's early pioneers, including Julia Tuttle, the Burdine family, the Budes and others. Refreshments compliments of **Temple Israel**. Meet at the cemetery entrance, NE 2nd Ave. & 18 St., Miami. Members: \$10 Non-Members: \$15.

#### **Downtown/Miami River Walking Tour**, Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m.

This, the "granddaddy" of all of Dr. George's tours, covers the most historic portions of southeast Florida. Begin with a stroll along the river that's been central since Miami's beginnings. Continue Downtown for a close-up look at beautiful Gusman Hall and other architecturally historic buildings. Enjoy complimentary refreshments at Miami's oldest, most decadent saloon, **Tobacco Road**. Meet behind the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 400 SE 2nd Ave., Miami. Members: \$10 Non-Members: \$15.

#### **Stiltsville/Key Biscayne Boat Tour**

Sunday, February 26, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Get an up-close look at the unique Biscayne Bay abodes on a relaxing Sunday bay boat ride. Learn of the rich history of the bay, Virginia Key and Key Biscayne. Advance reservations and non-refundable payment required. Members: \$20; Non-Members: \$25. To reserve: 375-1625.

#### **Metrorail Tour**, Sat, March 11, 10a.m.

The season's most comprehensive tour, covering 20 miles via rail. Meet at the Dadeland South Station, at the rail entrance. Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$15, plus rail fare of \$1.25.



# Florida History Center & Museum

(Formerly named the  
Loxahatchee Museum)

**Burt Reynolds Park**  
805 North U.S. Hwy. 1, Jupiter  
(407) 747-6639

## Exhibitions

### The Civil War

January 18-February 25

An exhibit featuring the renowned Civil War collection of Mr. Kenneth Laurence, including memorabilia, surgical instruments and military documents. The exhibit addresses the participation in the war of African Americans, Native Americans, foreign born soldiers and women.

### From the Attic of Civilization

February 16, 1995

Dr. Leonard Girsh will speak about his new book on the interpretation of Biblical art by Rembrandt and his contemporaries. 7 p.m. at Juno Beach Town Hall.

### Antique Lecture Series

February 28, 1995

A Christie's of Palm Beach expert on antique art and furniture, The City Club, 7 p.m.

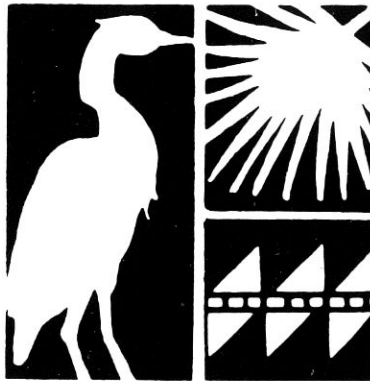
### Rollin' Along: Boats & Settlement of the Loxahatchee River Exhibit

March 15 - June 11, 1995

An exhibit celebrating Florida's 150th anniversary of statehood by depicting the role of boats in settlement and development of southern Florida.

## General Information

Open Tues.-Fri. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and weekends 1-4 p.m. Closed on Mondays.



## Collier County Museum

3301 Tamiami Trail East  
Naples  
(813) 774-8476

## Exhibitions

### Archaeology Week

February 6-12, 1995

The Collier County Museum and the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society will sponsor a series of special programs, including a film series and Archaeology Fair, designed to introduce archaeology and its goals to the general public.

### Black History Month

All February

Throughout the Black History Month, area African-American artists will exhibit their works of art in the Museum's new lecture hall.

### Second Annual Black Arts & Cultural Festival

February 19, 1995

This second annual event will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call the museum for details.

## General Information

The Collier County Museum explores the people, places and everyday events that have shaped Collier County's heritage—from prehistoric fossils and long vanished Indian civilizations, to the settlers and visionaries of the area's pioneering past. The museum and four-acre historical park is open Mon. — Fri, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free.



2300 Peck Street  
Fort Myers, Florida  
(813) 332-6879

## General Information

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Closed Sundays and Mondays. Admission is \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children under 12.



## CLEWISTON MUSEUM

112 So. Comercio St., Clewiston  
(813) 983-2870

## General Information

The Clewiston Museum, founded in 1984, is a growing museum, collecting and displaying items, large and small, important and trivial, which reflect the past of Clewiston and its surrounding area.

Open 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, with seasonal adjustments. No admission fee is charged, however, donations are encouraged.

# Letters to the Editor

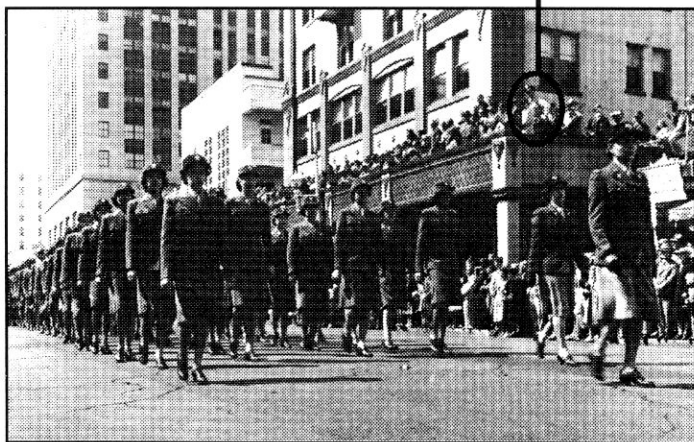
We received many favorable comments about the Summer 1994 issue of *South Florida History* featuring women and World War II. The letter below came from HASF Member Richard Friberg who spotted his brother in one of the photos. Thanks for your letters. We enjoy hearing from our readers.

Dear Editor:

Thank you, thank you for your prompt response to my phone call and for the extra copies of the magazine. I am sending one copy to my sister and another to my brother's daughter who lives in Davie. I am certain both will be happy to see the article and see the picture of Harry.

I am enclosing a copy with a part circled showing my brother, Harry J. Friberg. Isn't this fun!

Richard E. Friberg



Dear Editor:

I was poring over the latest issue of *South Florida History Magazine*, and thought that it was the best issue ever. The articles were terrific, from the WAVE experience to Vic Knight's article on the land boom. Then I thumbed over to the Editor's Notes (hooray!). Thank you for your kind words about the Ft. Myers Historical Museum. Randy, Linda, and Dan's efforts are very much appreciated by me and by the community as a whole, and the *South Florida History* article will increase the impact of their report. (I don't think the administrative

end of the City of Fort Myers thought there would be any reaction at all to the budget cuts.)

Please note we're now in North Carolina. My husband and I have some book contracts, and we miss seasonal changes. I'm just physically relocating; most of my brain is still attuned to Florida history.

Thanks for your help.

Patti Bartlett

Dear Editor:

It boggles the mind to think that for many years the Historical Museum of Southern Florida has had the first WAVE on Miami Beach in its midst and never knew it. Ruth Elsasser's article in the Summer 1994 issue of *South Florida History Magazine* was a revelation.

I have admired Ruth since she first began working in the Museum Store. I have always thought that if we could attract volunteers with her talent and dedication, it must say something good about the museum.

World War II has been in my thoughts. As I watched the television coverage of D-Day this summer, it reminded me of all those who served our country half a century ago, and the debt we owe them. It is important to remember. Thank you, *South Florida History Magazine*, for helping us remember by bringing us Ruth Elsasser's fine story.

Marcia J. Kanner



**Betty McQuale, Ed.D., GRI**

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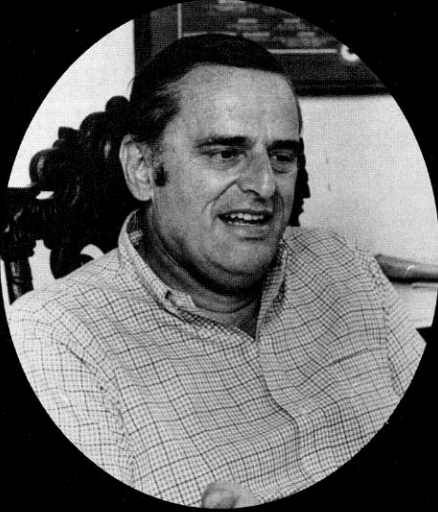


# The Everglades and a Few Friends

by Martha Munger

*"There are no other Everglades in the world."*

*These are the opening words of a book that was to change South Florida's history.*



Jim Redford, early environmental pioneer and former Dade County commissioner.



Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Friends of the Everglades founder.



Polly Redford, early environmental pioneer.

(HASF Miami News 1989-011-23503, 1989-011-23061)

Marjory Stoneman Douglas' volume, *The Everglades: River of Grass*, was published in 1947. That same year, almost simultaneously, Everglades National Park—a mere fraction of the original area—was opened and dedicated to Americans and the peoples of the world by President Harry Truman. It was indeed a momentous year in our nation's history.

Mrs. Douglas had lived since 1926 in her unique home in Coconut Grove, a part of Greater Miami. She was by profession a writer and editor and columnist on *The Miami Herald*, of which her father was founder.

She was, in addition, an author of short stories, of books and of poetry. *The Everglades* was her ninth book. This she wrote for a "Rivers of

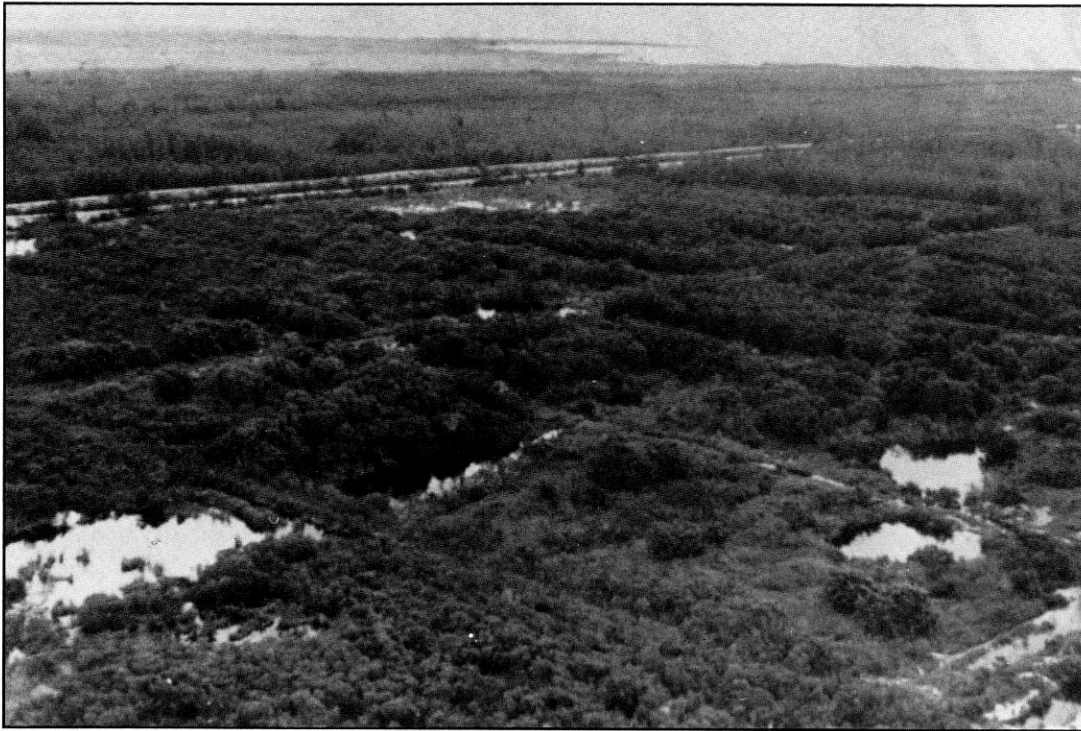
America" series by Rinehart and Company. She explained in her autobiography, published in 1987 with John Rothchild, just what her deeper involvement with the Everglades meant to her 20 years later. "It was another case where a great project seemed to fall into my lap. It was almost as if the Everglades had waited for me. It was a cool subject to which I could apply my passion."

The events that triggered her active involvement in serving the Everglades began in the early 1960s. The people involved were members of the Mangrove Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, chaired by Lloyd Miller, an old time resident of Homestead. He called himself, with a grin, an original "Pennsylvania Dutchman."

Miller, an enthusiastic, robust

elder statesman, explained that the small branch of the Izaak Walton League, less than a dozen in number, fought the good fight in those early days as the "poorest of the poor" organizations. Now, as "old duffers," those left are still in the battle lines.

Miller was assisted, among others, by Jim Redford, plus Tropical Audubon Society's Polly Redford, one of the most ardent environmentalists of her day. Included in the fellowship of Tropical Audubon was Joe Browder, at that time reporter and producer for the Miami NBC television affiliate, Channel 7. He was also a director of Tropical Audubon. Today, Joe, with his wife, leads his national and international consulting firm, "Dunlap and Browder,"



The caption on the original photograph captured the sentiment of some: "This is the site of the proposed Seadade oil refinery and enclosed deep water harbor in South Dade, as it looks today [7/23/62]. This marshy, mosquito-infested wasteland will be converted into one of Dade County's most valuable assets by the proposed \$300 million Seadade industrial development." (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-14761)

in Washington, D.C. He, too, is still at it.

**T**he first fight was directed against a developer, Daniel K. Ludwig. Reported to be the richest man in the world, he proposed to place "Seadade," an oil refinery and chemical manufacturing plant, on the shores of lower Biscayne Bay. Most of greater Miami's economic development community liked the idea of turning this area into an industrial complex, so the campaign to block the development was very difficult. But the small band of conservationists persuaded local officials not to approve Ludwig's construction permits, and the petrochemical project was abandoned. Ludwig withdrew.

Almost immediately, South Florida's electric power company, Florida Power and Light, proposed another industrial use for lower Biscayne Bay: to serve as the dumping ground for the heated, polluted wa-

ter from a nuclear power plant the company was building at Turkey Point, not far from the site of the proposed refinery. Again, after a long struggle in which developers ridiculed the Bay's wildlife as nothing but a bunch of "worthless worms," the small group of conservationists prevailed, and the power company was forced to cool the water before discharging it into the Bay.

After one more short-lived proposal for an industrial seaport, came the final battle for Biscayne Bay: a plan by Miami real estate promoters to build a causeway to the barrier islands in the south part of the Bay, and develop the islands as a new Miami Beach. Once more, the Redfords, Lloyd Miller, Joe Browder, and Congressman Dante Fascell worked to save the Bay, and not only stopped the development, but persuaded Congress and President Lyndon Johnson to establish Biscayne National Monument. It has since

become Biscayne National Park, encompassing most of the lower Bay, the off-shore islands and the mangrove wetlands on the mainland shore.

By that time it was the late 1960s, and Joe Browder had left the television news business to devote himself to full-time conservation work, as the southeastern representative of the National Audubon Society. In that capacity, while continuing to help with the Biscayne Bay conflicts, he was also coordinating the national environmental community's efforts to protect Everglades National Park.

In one battle, which continues to this day, the Park was struggling to restore its historic natural water supply, which had been cut off by the Army Corps of Engineers and State of Florida drainage and flood control activities north of the Park.



Dante Fascell receiving award for "outstanding contributions in the cause of conservation." (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-20603)





The proposed Jetport's already constructed landing strip, November 4, 1969. (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-9093)

In another battle, Miami officials planned to build the world's largest airport in the Everglades' Big Cypress watershed — the privately owned northwestern portion, included in the National Park's original boundaries but dropped out of the Park in the 1950s.

While national conservation organizations were rallying to fight the airport, Joe Browder was having difficulty getting the public and politicians in Florida to recognize the need to stop the airport.

Dade County had secretly purchased the land, and then begun construction of the airport. Access roads were beginning to penetrate this prairie wilderness. A 10,500 foot

air strip was scheduled to go into use by September 1969, for jet pilot training. A jet tram was to travel at speeds of 250 miles per hour, connecting the jetport with Miami and Miami Beach. A commercial, industrial and residential complex was planned to fill the surrounding region. "A dream for the developers and a nightmare for the Everglades" declared an editorial in the *Living Wilderness Magazine* in the Autumn 1968 issue.

And this was all to take place in what the National Park Service described as "the largest remaining subtropical wilderness in conterminous United States; extensive fresh- and saltwater areas, open Everglade

prairies, mangrove forests, abundant wildlife including rare and colorful birds." And, of course, alligators.

If this jetport and its urban developments were to be completed, what of the noise and the pollution of both air and water of the Everglades?

And what of the Miccosukee Indians, living on their traditional lands in the Big Cypress, but with no recognized rights, and faced with the drainage and development of the lands for industrial and urban construction? Their way of life, along with the natural systems that supported the rich wildlife of the Big Cypress and provided critical water supplies for northwest Everglades National Park, was doomed.

Joe Browder organized a fight to stop the jetport and put the Big Cypress in the National Park system. He worked with the Indians, with hunters and fishermen from the Big Cypress, and with other environmental leaders like Johnny Jones of the Florida Wildlife Federation, Nathaniel Reed, and scientist Art Marshall.

Their campaign succeeded in getting President Nixon to order federal agencies to reconsider whether the airport should be authorized and funded, and consider ways to protect the Big Cypress part of the Everglades. But political leadership in Florida, whose support was essential to final victory, was slow to agree that the Big Cypress was worth saving. It was rough going, and Joe was getting desperate.

In the end, plans for a commercial jetport in the Big Cypress were abandoned, the area was made a part of the National Park system, and the Miccosukee and Seminole Indians were recognized as rightful occupants of the land. It happened because the general public in Florida demanded that state political leaders cooperate in the effort to save the Everglades. And that happened because Marjory Stoneman Douglas led a grass-roots citizens' campaign that Florida political leaders could not ignore—a campaign that continues to demand restoration and protection for the entire Everglades ecosystem.

In her own words, Marjory described what happened next. "There was a gal working for Joe Browder by the name of Susan Wilson. I met her one night in a grocery store and I said, 'I think you are doing great work. It's wonderful.'"

"She looked me straight in the eye and said, 'Yeah, what are you doing?'"

"Oh, me, I said, I wrote the book."



Work on the proposed jetport, September 19, 1969. (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-9094)

"'That's not enough,' she continued, 'We need people to help us!' To get out of this conversation I casually mumbled some platitude like I'll do whatever I can."

"You couldn't say 'I'll do whatever I can,' casually to Joe Browder. He was at my doorstep the next day and asked me to issue a ringing denunciation of the jetport in the press. I suggested that nobody could care particularly about my ringing denunciation of anything, and that such things are more effective if they come from organizations. Without skipping a beat, he said, 'Well, why don't you start an organization?'"

"So there I was, stuck with a challenge that began as a polite rejoinder in the grocery store line."

Next, Joe told Marjory that because she was identified with the Everglades, on account of her book, and yet was unconnected with any specific faction or group, she could help unite the various individuals and organizations that had grown up in the cause of preserving the Everglades. She'd think about it, she promised.

Together, Marjory and Joe visited the proposed jetport, in the very path

of the flow of water across the wetlands. They viewed with horror the already constructed landing strip. They both knew beyond a doubt that this jetport did not belong in the Everglades.

"Yes," promised Marjory, "I'll indeed mull over your idea of my forming a new organization."

That was just what she was doing—mulling it over—one day while sitting at a table set up for her at the Ramble, a small part of the Fairchild Tropical Gardens on old Cutler Road in Coral Gables. These exquisite and unusual gardens were named in 1938 by the founder, Colonel Robert H. Montgomery, in honor of his longtime friend, Dr. David Fairchild, collector of tropical plants from all over the world. The Fairchilds were old friends of Marjory's too.

The Ramble, a small section of the gardens, was the place where an annual plant fair took place and a spot where fund raising activities were conducted.

Marjory was there to sell and autograph her books, *The Everglades: River of Grass* and *Florida, the Last Frontier*. Meanwhile, she kept thinking of Joe Browder's suggestion.



**T**he next part of the story belongs to Michael Chenoweth, a young man newly returned from the Vietnam war, who was, at the time, working in the boat business as a purchasing agent. Three or four years later he was studying environmental technology at FIU. Still later he became a lawyer, devoting much of his time to environmental issues.

He had been an outdoors person, a lover of nature since early boyhood, and on one of his days off he decided to spend some time at Fairchild Gardens.

As he approached the Ramble, he recognized Marjory as the lady who had written the Everglades book he had recently read and admired.

He went over to greet her. Soon they were engaged in conversation. "We immediately hit it off. We were both interested in the same ideas."

Mrs. Douglas told him she was thinking about forming a new organization perhaps to be dubbed "Friends of the Everglades."

"What a splendid idea!" he exclaimed and then immediately asked, "How much do you plan to charge for membership?"

She paused for a moment. "What would you say?"

"Oh, lots and lots: perhaps 15 or even 25 dollars."

"No," she immediately interposed, "I want everyone to be able to

join, including children. I guess it should be a dollar."

Michael immediately pulled out his wallet, "Here's your first dollar," he said with a grin.

"Now I had not only the idea of an organization to contend with," she wrote in her autobiography, "But also one member and an endowment. What choice did I have but to carry this further?"

The new organization, Friends of the Everglades, was launched in the winter of 1969 with a name, a president, a single member and an endorsement of one dollar. Marjory's Everglades book was 22 years old and she was 78 before she became absorbed, full time, in the great effort to save the River of Grass.

Mrs. Douglas immediately enlisted the interest and help of John P. Pritchett, of the Coconut Grove Bank, who consented to become Treasurer. Then she approached Florence F. W. Coey, member of the faculty of the University of Miami in the graduate school of international studies, who took on the task of becoming vice president and secretary. Finally, Michael Blaine, a student of Marjory's, became director of exhibits.

**W**ith an organization in place, Marjory began to talk to every person and organization that would listen to her. Each time she addressed a group, with her eloquence as a

public speaker, she enlisted 15 or 20 new members—all at a dollar apiece. The first year brought 500, the second 1,000 and gradually there were something like 3,000 from 38 states. Today, there are approximately 5,000, not only from every state in the union but from other countries as well.

A friend named Everett Skinner, owner of a camper, volunteered to let the Friends use his vehicle for recruitment purposes. Marjory and her small self-selected group circled Lake Okeechobee, stopping at all the small towns to address various groups women's, garden, business associates and a high school class.

There were usually five or six volunteers accompanying her. Michael Blaine was the driver and Dorothy Rook, a librarian for the British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, was another member of the band of pioneers. Others of the volunteers included Kitty Harwood and Meg Brown, writer for national publications. The men slept in the camper, the women in motels.

Through these rugged and strenuous efforts of the Friends and many other environmental groups, plus the responsiveness of Walter Hickel, President Nixon's Secretary of the Interior, the jetport proposal was stopped—at least temporarily.

A great victory had been won, and Friends of the Everglades next turned its attention to the general predicament of water, the crucial resource of the Everglades. And this is the battle that continues to this day. ♦

*This article was excerpted from a book by Martha Munzer, to be published soon by the Friends of the Everglades. South Florida History Magazine extends its thanks to the Friends for sharing this work with our readers.*



Martha Munzer, who is writing about Marjory Stoneman Douglas, 104, is only 95. Still, she's packed a lot in those 95 short years — 11 books, most of them on environmental subjects, most of them published by the distinguished publisher, Alfred A. Knopf. Only the second woman to graduate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in engineering (in 1922), she has taught chemistry at New York's Ethical School, worked for the Conservation Foundation and along the way found time to raise three children and indirectly produce seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. She


is shown here with granddaughter Gloria Munzer Owens. Currently a resident of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Martha came to Florida in 1983.

# *Travel Aboard the Queen of the Caribbean*



*The Visual Record  
By Rebecca A. Smith*





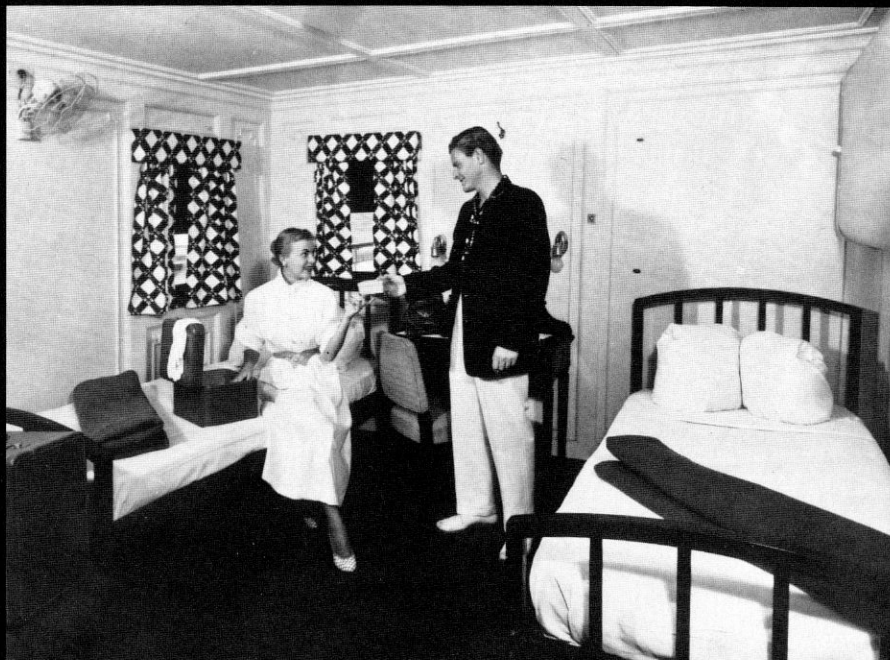
In March 1951 Rudi and Annette Rada took a trip to Havana aboard the *SS Florida*. The Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company (P & O) had hired Rudi to photograph the cruise. They sent him, his wife Annette, and, possibly, several models on the 14-hour overnight cruise from Miami, for a short stay at the Hotel Nacional in Havana. Although the P & O may never have used his images of their flagship in their publications or brochures, the resulting series of about 40 photographs splendidly captured the experiences of passenger ship tourists of the 1950s.

A 1951 P & O advertisement in *The Blue Guide to Cuba* described the trip: "Holiday fun begins the minute you come aboard the palatial S. S. *Florida*. Dine, dance, enjoy cruiseship pleasures and delicious meals as you sail to this land of foreign glamour. Round trip fare includes comfortable berth, delicious meals and entertainment at sea all for \$46.00 plus taxes." The *Florida* left Miami at 6:00 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and Havana at 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. For an additional fee, travelers could bring an automobile with them.

The *SS Florida* was initially launched 20 years earlier. She first ran between Tampa, Key West, and Havana and soon added Miami to her ports of call. During World War II, she served as a troop transport vessel, and survived two attacks by German U-boats in the Caribbean. From 1946 through the 1950s, she traveled between Miami and Havana several times a week, carrying up to 500 passengers per trip. In 1955, she added the Miami-Nassau route,



The journey began with a taxi ride to the Port of Miami, at present-day Bicentennial Park. Note the Bacardi Rum billboard in the background; at the time Bacardi was based in Cuba. (HASF 1976-199-1474 and HASF 1976-199-1482 [left])



Larger cabins offered more amenities: room to turn around, a wall fan, and a view. (HASF I.3.21-5)



Going aboard is special moment. (HASF 1976-199-1494)

which became her sole route in the 1960s. She made her last run November 4, 1966. The *Florida* ended her career as a floating hotel for the Expo 67 exposition in Montreal, Canada.

*Rudi Rada specialized* in architectural photography, particularly of home interiors. His work appeared in *The Miami Herald*, the *Miami News*, *House and Garden*, *The American Home*, and other architectural and interior-design magazines. His wife and partner, Annette, also worked as a photographer. Their collected work dates from 1946 to 1974, and fills 24 linear feet of shelf space at the Historical Museum's Research Center. These photographs of a leisurely cruise are but one of the treasures in this collection. ♦

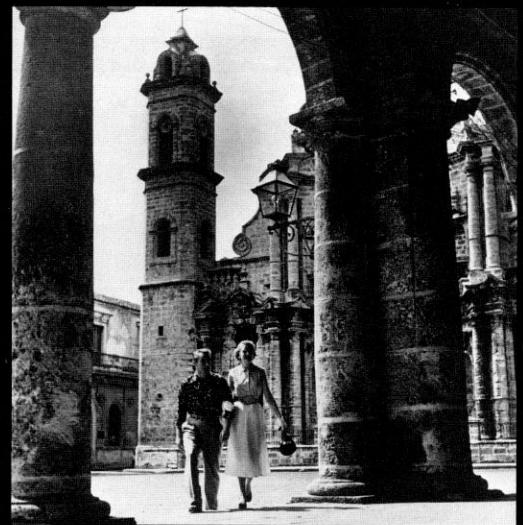
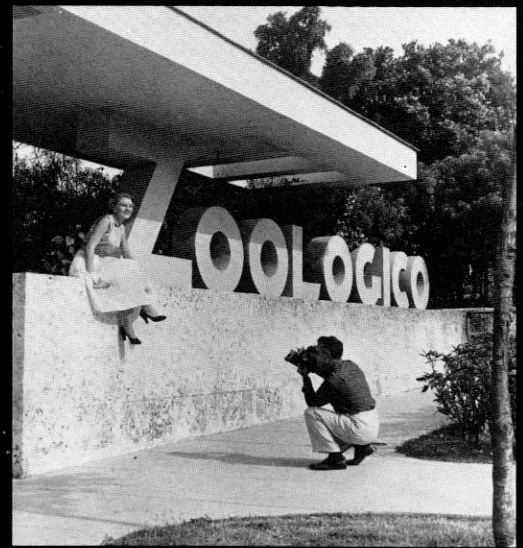


Above: The captain surveys his realm. (HASF 1976-199-1481). Opposite left: Fashionable couples relax in the lounge. (HASF I.3.21-7)



*"I first traveled on board the SS Florida from Havana to Miami" in November 1955. My father was working for the P & O Company which owned the vessel and my family and I had our first experience ever cruising aboard what was then a luxury liner. It was for us unforgettable, and it was when I first developed my love for cruise ships. Several years later when the ship was sailing from Miami to Nassau, my father, who had become First Officer on the ship, took our family on several cruises during our summer vacations. The Florida was an elegant and charming ship, and we always felt we were on board our own private yacht. It was possible to get to know all the passengers and crew, and for us the ship eventually became part of our own family. I will always treasure my many memories on board."*

—Tony Ojeda, Metro-Dade's Assistant County Manager, remembering the SS Florida

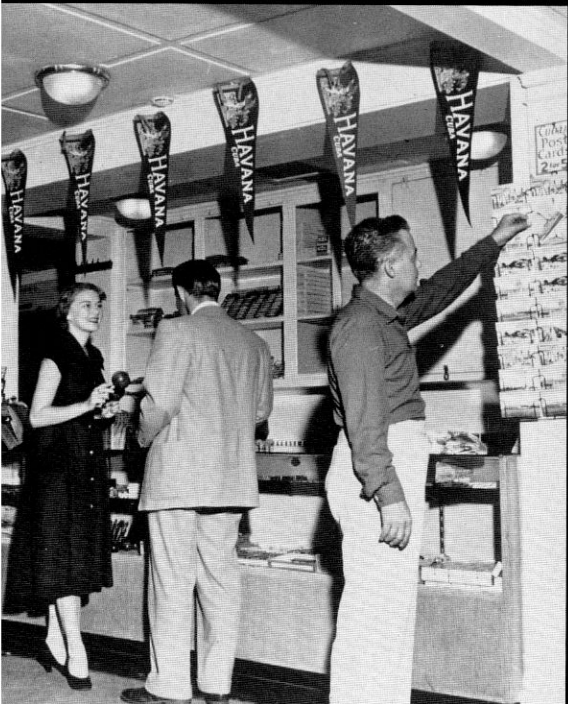


After a leisurely overnight trip, our travelers disembarked in Havana. Here, they arrive at the Hotel Nacional, Havana's grand hotel. (HASF 1976-199-1488) "The Hotel Nacional de Cuba is the finest in Havana, and naturally the most expensive. . . . The site — on a bluff where the city proper joins the Vedado, with the long sweep of the Malecón on one hand and the Maine monument and plaza on the other — is incomparable. . . . it is a standard international hotel, and the sort of guest who sticks close to its comforts will not see much of typically Cuban life." W. Adolphe Roberts, *Havana: the Portrait of a City*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1953.

Top: Rudi photographs one of the models (Annette?) at the entrance to Havana's recently opened zoo. (HASF 1976-199-1504)

Middle: Our tourists stroll through Cathedral Square, in Old Havana.. (HASF 1976-199-1502)

Bottom: During the 1950s, Cuban dance music attained enormous popularity among Americans. Bands and ensembles added exotic excitement to shipboard entertainment.



Travelers relax on deck. (HASF 1976-199-1478)

Top: Ship officers and tourists look out to sea. (HASF 1976-199-1479)

Middle: Anyone who has ever cruised will have spent considerable time wandering up and down stairs and along endless corridors, in search of the dining room, entertainment or the cabin. (HASF 1976-199-1484)

Bottom: The ship's store offered Cuban souvenirs: postcards, pennants, maracas, and cigars. (HASF 1976-199-1495)





# BISCAYNE BAY TRIVIA

By Bryan Henry

The oldest commercial activity in Biscayne Bay is the harvesting of sponges. High quality sponges have been harvested here since the middle of the 19th century.



The ridges which enclose Biscayne Bay were formed about 100,000 years ago when the seas were about 25 feet higher than at present.



In 1876, the U.S. Life Saving Service built the Biscayne Bay House of Refuge on Miami Beach near present-day 71st Street. It was destroyed in the 1926 hurricane and never rebuilt.



A 1976 study by the University of Miami found there are no less than 512 species of fish belonging to 95 different families in Biscayne Bay.



Biscayne National Park is a unique entity of 284 square miles of islands, water, and coral reefs.



Parrotfish, occurring throughout Biscayne Bay, are all born female, but some dominant ones change sex to male when they mature.



Key Biscayne, Virginia Key and Miami Beach all began as sandbars.

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# Flagler Sets His Sights On Biscayne Bay

by Joe Knetsch and Paul S. George

As a recent survey in *The Miami Herald* has indicated, no one has exercised a greater influence over the development of south-east Florida than Henry M. Flagler. Indeed, the modern era of the region began with the entry of the oil baron's Florida East Coast Railway in the mid-1890s. While Flagler's railroad entered Miami for the first time in April 1896, he was already planning, long before then, to develop a port on Biscayne Bay.

A turquoise jewel that stretches for 39 miles north and south and three to nine miles between land and ocean, Biscayne Bay acquired its name from the Spanish in the 16th century, when it was designated, for the Bay of Biscaya in northern Spain. Since then, this shallow but singularly beautiful body of water has enthralled those who have come in contact with it.

For Flagler, the beauty of Biscayne Bay was secondary to its prac-

tical importance. A man of broad vision and ample resources, Flagler planned a vast resort and shipping empire extending from the east coast of Florida into the Caribbean and south Atlantic Ocean. In this scheme Miami would host a port on Biscayne Bay for his ships, which would journey from there by way of a dredged deep-water channel with vacationers and trade items to points south.

At the outset of the 1890s, Henry Flagler was already planning to extend his railroad to Miami, which, at the time, consisted of a few families living along the stream for which the settlement is named (Dade County, which included all or part of five modern day counties, contained less than 1,000 persons in 1890).

In August 1892, Henry H. Harrison, an Army Corps of Engineers correspondent, notified the Corps that "The Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Halifax River Railroad [a Flagler-controlled railroad] is now building

to Rockledge, within 12 miles of Canaveral, and will be completed by January 1, 1893. It will be extended in time to Biscayne Bay." He continued: "The Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West Railway system terminates at Titusville, 25 miles from Canaveral. A charter has been granted to an allied company to build a railroad from Titusville to Cape Florida, with branches to Canaveral and New Smyrna." Although this report was meant to boost the development of a port at Cape Canaveral, it also indicates that Flagler intended to extend his railroad to Miami in the very near future.

In the middle of 1893, George Miles, who was responsible for the construction of a large portion of the Florida Coast Line Canal (the basis for a segment of today's Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway), wrote to A. P. Sawyer, a Boston associate, that he had returned from a trip to the Bahamas with Flagler and had discussed



the possibility with the latter of developing trade between these islands and Miami. Such discussion represented another indication of Flagler's intent to extend his railroad to Miami, and possibly to develop his shipping interests in conjunction with his hotel-developing program in the Bahamas.

Clearly, Biscayne Bay was an important destination for Flagler's railroad as early as 1892-1893, and plans for its extension to Miami were already well advanced by 1893.

**I**n the meantime, other parties were observing Biscayne Bay and the area with an eye toward assessing its potential. On February 18, 1895, Ma-

jor Thomas H. Handbury of the United States Army Corps of Engineers filed a preliminary report with the Corps entitled, "Entrance to Biscayne Bay." Handbury bragged that "The winter climate of Biscayne Bay is mild and salubrious and cannot be excelled by any to which our people resort for health-giving air and exercise during the winter months." He noted presciently that "As soon as better facilities are provided for reaching the locality, there is no doubt but it will become the most popular of our winter resorts, and the headquarters for pleasure cruisers from this country among the adjacent islands."

Major Handbury also observed the presence of a few homesteading

settlements along the bay where people were industriously clearing land and raising vegetables, bananas, coconuts, pineapples and a wide variety of citrus crops for northern markets. These products were shipped on light-craft sailboats to Key West and later taken by steamer to the wider markets of the north.

With the assistance of Frederick S. Morse, a resident of the Miami area and a future Flagler real estate agent, Handbury gathered vital statistics on the region for the year 1894. The major reported large quantities of pineapples, tomatoes, limes and alligator hides were shipped from Biscayne Bay and the surrounding area to market in 1894. Additionally,



other tropical fruits, coconuts, sponges, fish and assorted jellies were sent to northern markets from the bay area.

Clearly, the tiny population could not have provided the labor force for such productivity. Handbury does not mention where the labor supply came from, but traditionally the source was black Bahamian laborers who were recruited for the task.

The U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries also observed Biscayne Bay, in issuing "The Fish and Fisheries of the Coastal Waters of Florida." This study noted that the bay yielded more than 193,000 pounds of fish and related products in the year 1895. The report also indicated that the leading activities in the area were sponge fishing, controlled by vessels sailing out of Key West, and the capture of green turtles. In 1894 alone,

205 turtles weighing nearly 6,175 pounds, with a market value of \$708 (about \$19,000 in 1990 dollars), were shipped from the Bay.

In 1895, Colonel William P. Craighill, commanding officer of the Southeast Division of the Army Corps of Engineers, argued that "The information now available leads me to report, in the words of the law, that this locality is 'worthy of improvement by the General Government.'"

Thus, it appears that the Corps was ready to assume the task of improving Biscayne Bay for reasons of commerce—even if the area remained essentially unpopulated. But Henry Flagler, with assistance from Julia Tuttle, the "Mother of Miami," and others, would ultimately decide on the role of Biscayne Bay in his plans for developing the area.

Flagler and Tuttle negotiated an agreement in 1895 that the former would extend his Florida East Coast Railway to Miami and build a city around a magnificent tourist-oriented hotel in return for choice land from the latter, and additional property from the Brickell family, Indian traders and large landowners residing on the south bank of the Miami River near its mouth.

In February 1896, with the railroad still two months away from entering Miami, the Flagler organization was already cutting and dredging the first major channel through Biscayne Bay south to Cape Florida on the southern tip of Key Biscayne. At the same time, Flagler requested assistance from the federal government for a new port facility as the area's long-awaited growth was beginning.

Heeding Flagler's cry for help, the Army Corps of Engineers sent Assistant Engineer J.W. Sackett and O.N. Bie to survey and sound (measure the depth of the water) Biscayne Bay in order to determine the extent and direction of the dredging project and assess the possibility of reaching the depths desired by Flagler for a channel.

On the basis of an astounding 16,900 separate soundings, Sackett reported that it would be "impracticable" to create a channel deeper than 12 feet to Cape Florida. Sackett advised that if a deeper channel was desired, it should extend through Norris Cut, just a few miles east of mainland Miami, to the mouth of the Miami River rather than Cape Florida, as originally desired, because "of the great distance over which dredging would be required" to reach the latter.

Previous page: Henry Morrison Flagler on the docks of Key West, ca. 1912. (HASF 1981-116-1)

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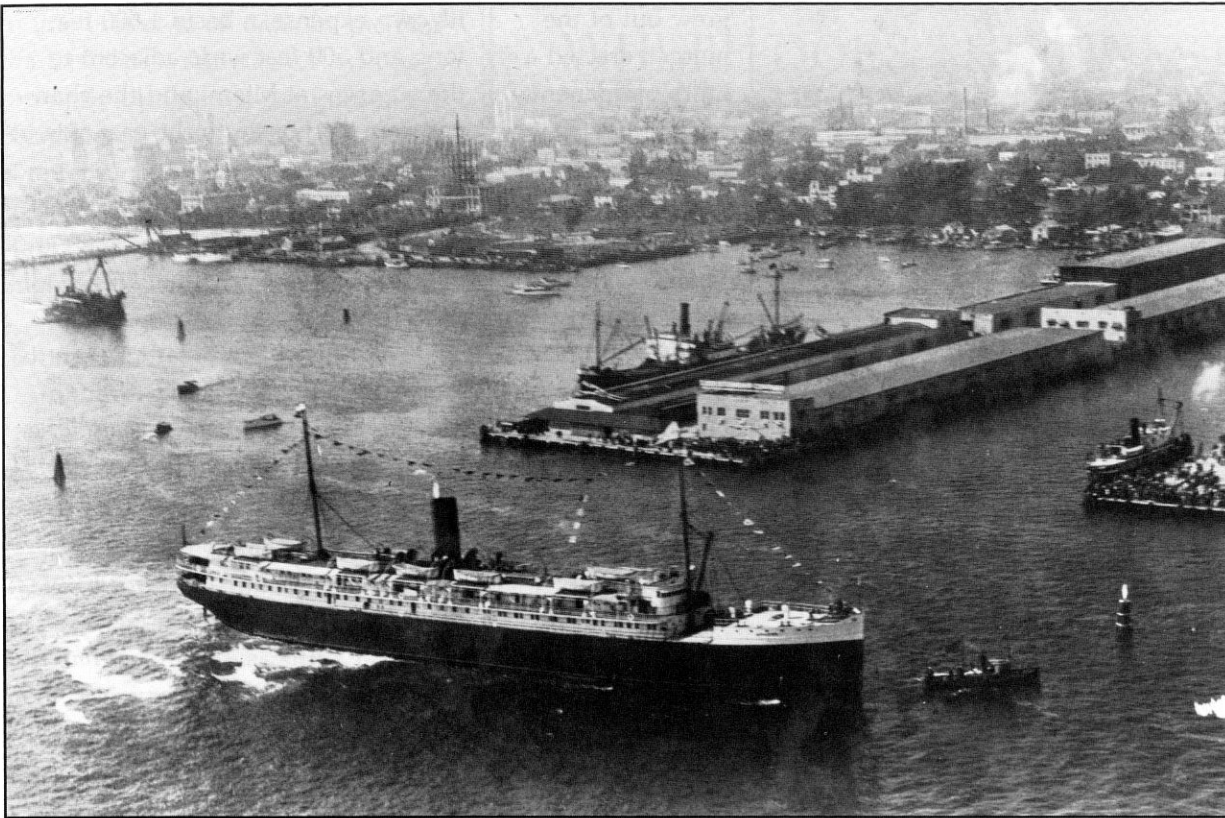
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Arrival of the first steamer through old Port of Miami on Biscayne Boulevard. (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-13793)

and the Bahamas, Cuba, and Key West. By then, a second and larger terminal dock was operating at the end of an FEC Railway spur on the bay near today's N.E. Sixth Street. This facility would serve as the nucleus of the first Port of Miami.

Even with this maritime progress, channel dredging remained problematic for the

In August 1896, Flagler wrote the Army Corps of Engineers, informing the agency that his organization had spent more than \$20,000 since February 1896, "and is still spending further sums in improvements in the bay. This work," Flagler continued, "has been confined to making deeper channels in the bay between Cape Florida and the railroad wharf, which wharf is in the river [a reference to the FEC Railway's Terminal Docks at the terminus of the FEC Railroad on the north bank of the stream], about half a mile from the bay."

Flagler described the size of the channel as encompassing a "medium depth of 9 feet at low water, with a width between banks of 90 feet." Further, "the south end of the canal or channel is 6 3/4 miles from Cape Florida, and at low tide... a vessel drawing 9 feet can come to the railway wharf in the Miami River and turn around in the basin now being excavated." Flagler informed the

Corps that "In two weeks we can bring the *City of Richmond*, a steamer 225 feet in length and 50 feet in beam, drawing 7 1/2 feet of water, to the railway dock in the Miami River. She is now running between Miami and Key West."

The Flagler interests began building a tourist hotel in the Bahamas in 1898 and shipping began almost immediately. Flagler had also contracted for the first newly constructed ship for his Florida East Coast Steamship Company, which he aptly named *Miami*. A large vessel, the *Miami* was 240 feet long with a deep draft. Because of the shallowness of the Bay, the *Miami* anchored in deep water off Cape Florida while a smaller vessel carried passengers and guests to the city and back to the *Miami*.

By the winter of 1899, the Florida East Coast Steamship company had placed three vessels in operation with regular runs between Miami, which was home port for the ships,

Flagler organization, prompting the federal government to intervene with an appropriation for completion of a portion of the channel. The Rivers and Harbors Act for 1899 provided for the railroad company to continue its dredging operations through the bay until it reached the dredging undertaken from the outer shoal inward by the Army Corps of Engineers.

In the following year, a report of the Corps questioned the selection of the channel route to Cape Florida by the Flagler interests, criticizing it for its length (more than 13,000 feet), and the perceived difficulty in maintaining it. The Corps, instead, favored construction of a channel through Norris Cut (which separated Virginia Key from the southern tip of Miami Beach) since it was a much shorter route to deep-water than the route to Cape Florida, thereby making it less costly to dredge.

The report also disputed the claim by the FEC Railway interests



Old port of Miami on Biscayne Boulevard. (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-13781)

that the trade of Latin America would soon be routed through Miami because of the expected, impending construction of an isthmian canal. The Corps maintained that "It may be stated at once that there is little foundation for this last contention since the depth proposed for Miami is too little for the general class of vessels that would use an isthmian canal."

Further, the report noted, the windward passage would be favored by most of the trading vessels, and the reputed advantage of Miami as the terminus of a major railroad line would soon be outdistanced by a similar terminus on the Gulf Coast. The Flagler organization was thus informed that Miami would not be the major shipping center that Flagler had envisioned for it.

Flagler apparently remained undaunted by the report as he continued to prepare Miami for a role as a major maritime center. In 1900, Flagler merged his shipping company with that of Henry B. Plant, a railroad magnate and his west coast counterpart as a developer. The Peninsular and Occidental (P&O) Steamship Company, the new entity that

lieutenant, to secure federal assistance for dredging a deep-water port. Parrott appeared before the U.S. House and Senate Rivers and Harbors Committees and announced Flagler's plan but informed the lawmakers that it was contingent

upon the federal government cutting a channel through a narrow strip of land north of Norris Cut to connect with Flagler's channel. The location of the cut would enable ships to move at a convenient angle in and out of the port. Flagler selected this route because the offshore waters (specifically, the three fathom, or 18-foot depth line) were deepest near shore. Congress agreed to appropriate \$300,000 for the project, "provided that the Florida East Coast Railway Company should construct, at

grew out of the merger, erected a more permanent port on bayfront property, thus paving the way for the first Port of Miami, owned by Flagler interests between today's N.E. Sixth and Ninth Streets.

Calling on his vast network of contacts, Flagler instructed J.R. Parrott, his top

its own expense, a basin 1,600 feet long and 500 feet wide adjacent to the wharves at Miami and the channel from said basin to the east side of the bay."

When this dredging project was completed in 1905, Government Cut, as the deep-water channel was called, stretched across a width of 900 feet. This channel, rather than the Flagler channel extending through the Bay to Cape Florida, became the key shipping lane on Biscayne Bay.

However, the railroad company failed to construct the turn basin as called for in the agreement. Accordingly, the channel was, for some time,



1980: "New" port of Miami. (HASF Miami News Collection 1989-011-13806)

limited in its operations.

In 1912, the already strained relations between the Army Corps of Engineers and the FEC Railway Co. deteriorated further. In that year, the Rivers and Harbors Act provided for additional deepening of the channel to 20 feet, and proposed to deepen the turn basin to 18 feet.

The federal government attached a rider to the act stating that no work would commence on the project until "the Secretary of War is satisfied that the portion of the work contemplated



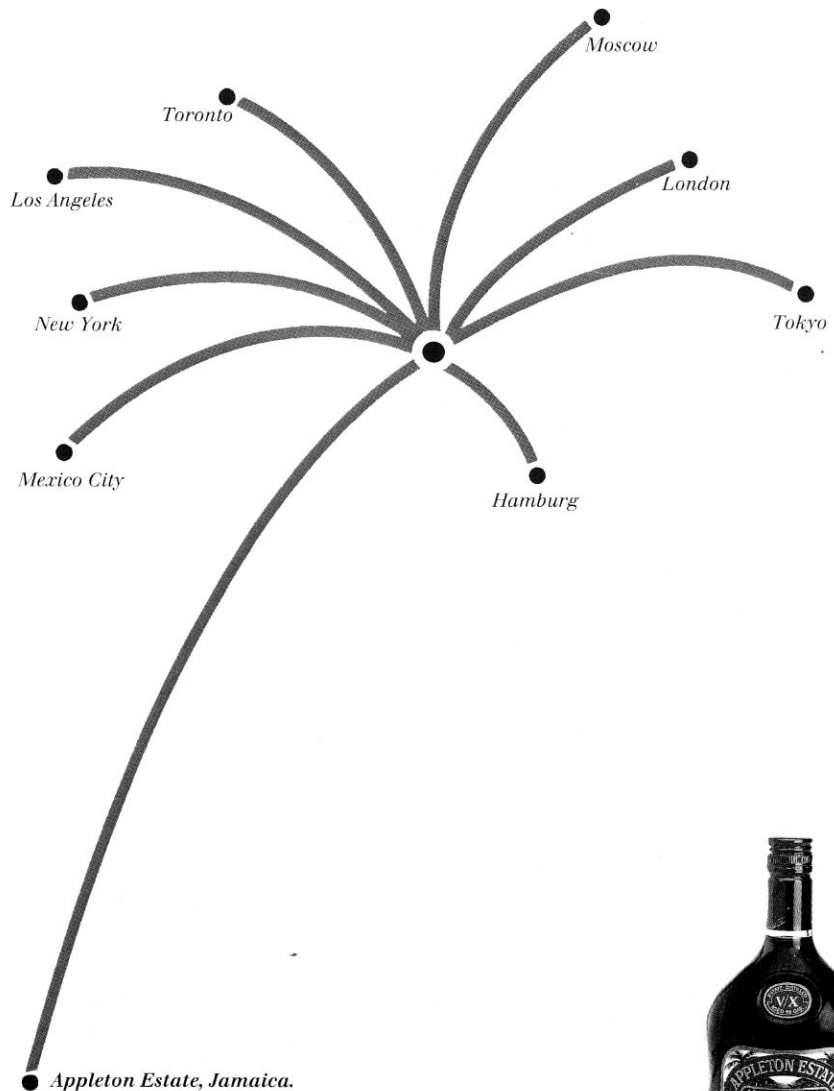
in this project to be done by the Florida East Coast Railway Co. will be promptly completed, nor until the Secretary of War is satisfied that suitable terminal facilities will be provided as contemplated by paragraph eight of the report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors."

Finally, the federal government sued the FEC Railway Co. in the U.S. District Court in Jacksonville in 1914 "to enforce the completion of its contract to excavate the channel across the bay." The government lost its case, relieving the Flagler interests of their obligation here. However, local cooperation, in the form of suitable terminal facilities, was still a requirement of the project; therefore, another entity would have to replace the railroad company if the channel and harbor facilities were to be completed. In timely fashion, the City of Miami entered the breach, agreeing to build the ship terminals, channels, and piers earlier promised by the railroad. A bond issue secured the funding for the city's part of the project. Eventually the first Port of Miami extended as far north as Northeast Twelfth Street.

Though Flagler did not live to see the completion of the Port of Miami on the city's bayfront (he died in 1913), the great developer's foresight and flexibility, as evidenced by his abandonment of the problematical Cape Florida channel for Government Cut, helped pave the way for its development.

Yet, the critical role played by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Miami in the development and growth of the Port of Miami cannot not be underestimated. Today's bustling Port of Miami continues to reap the benefits of the vision and accomplishments of each of these parties involved in its creation. ♦

## WHERE DOES THE FINEST RUM IN THE WORLD COME FROM?



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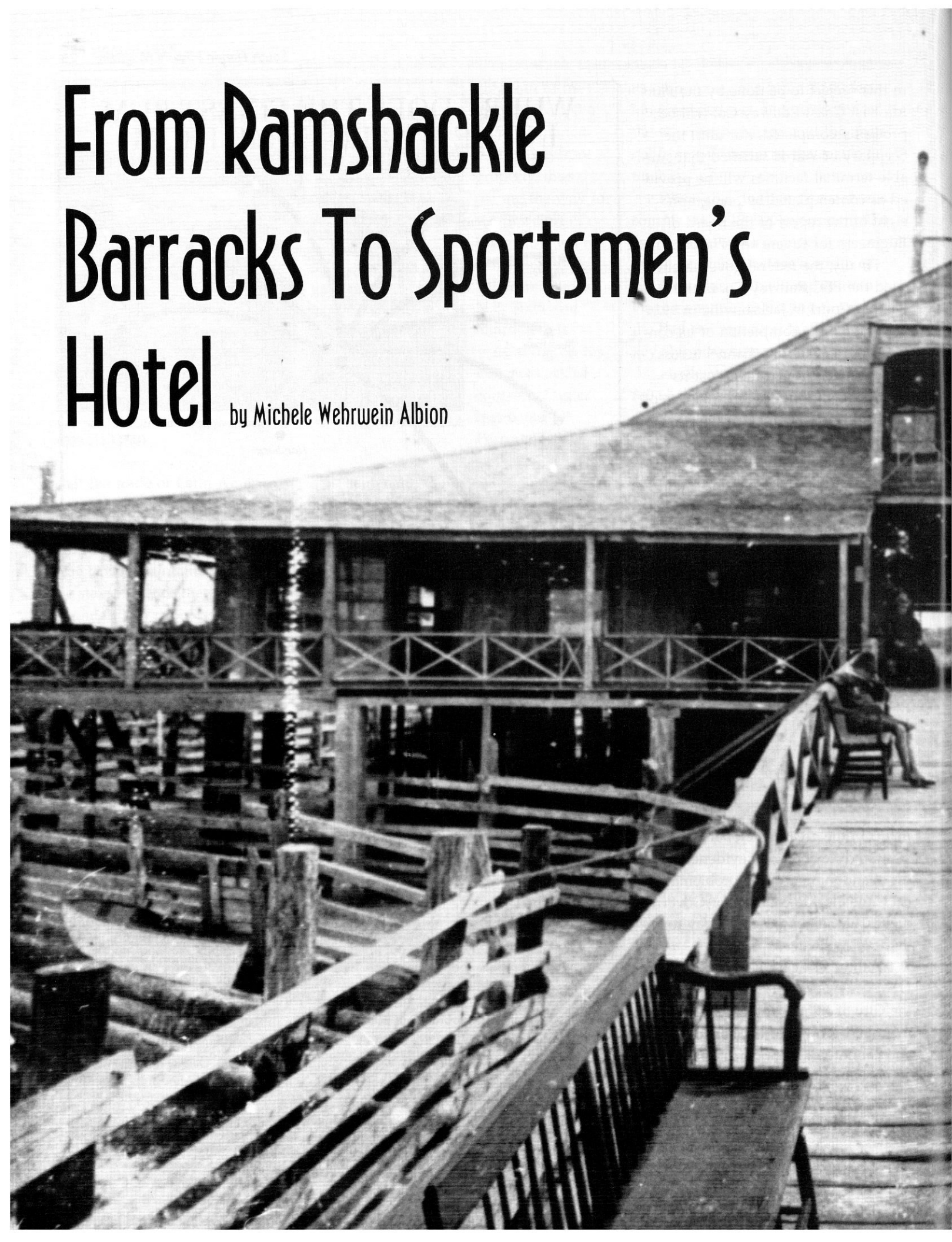


A native of Michigan, Joe Knetsch moved to South Florida in 1969 and lived in Fort Myers and Broward County before moving to Tallahassee. As historian with the Bureau of Survey and Mapping, Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Natural Resources, Knetsch has conducted extensive research in the history of state-owned lands. He holds a doctorate in history from Florida State University and a master's from Florida Atlantic University. He is a frequent contributor to *South Florida History Magazine*.

Paul S. George has been a teacher, author and student of his hometown's history for two decades. He obtained his doctorate in history from Florida State University and is currently assistant professor in Social Sciences at the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade Community College. One of Miami's most popular historians, hundreds know Dr. George from his historic neighborhood walking tours and boat tours conducted throughout the year. He lives in Miami with his wife, Laura, and two sons.

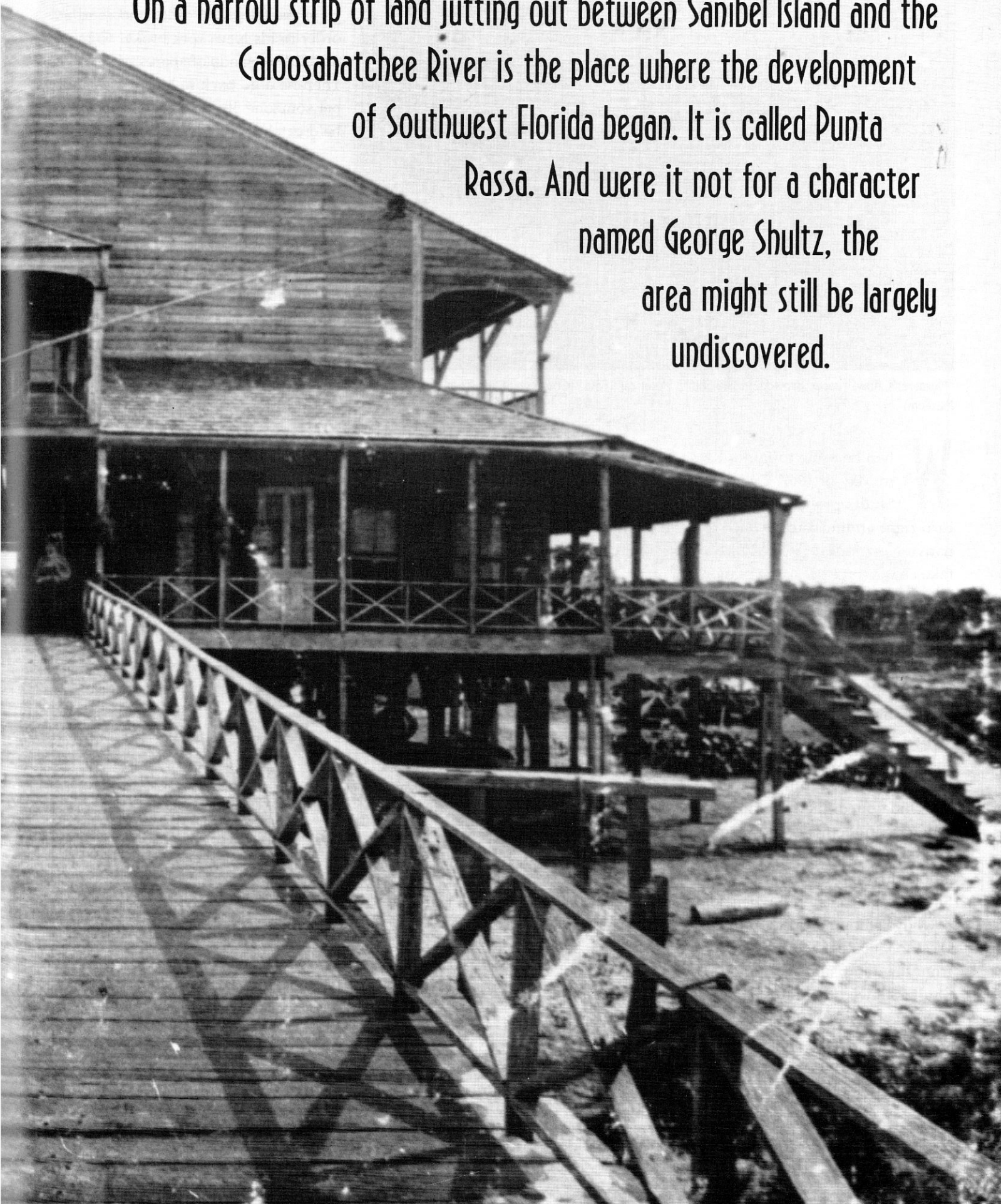
# From Ramshackle Barracks To Sportsmen's Hotel

by Michele Wehrwein Albion





On a narrow strip of land jutting out between Sanibel Island and the Caloosahatchee River is the place where the development of Southwest Florida began. It is called Punta Rassa. And were it not for a character named George Shultz, the area might still be largely undiscovered.





"Murderer's Row," upper Barracks in the Shultz Hotel ca. 1880s. (Courtesy of the Fort Myers Historic Museum)

When he came to Punta Rassa in May of 1867, George Shultz probably wanted to turn right around and go back to his native New Jersey. He was hired to take charge of a telegraph station for the International Ocean Telegraph Company. But what a station! The great barn-like structure was Fort Delaney, a Union supply fort from the Civil War. It was ramshackle, marred by fires the soldiers had started inside the building, and riddled with bullet holes which allowed mosquitoes full entrance.

Undaunted, the telegrapher plugged up the holes and made it livable. The idea of converting it into a hotel had not yet occurred to Shultz. That transpired when some cowboys shipping cattle from Key West to Cuba begged him for refuge from the damp and mosquitoes. Shultz allowed them to sleep on the barracks floor or in hammocks slung between the beams. Soon he was inundated with travelers coming to and from Fort Myers.

Six years after his arrival, Shultz married Josephine Smith of Jersey

City, New Jersey. She helped him establish the fort as a hotel by catering to guests and by supplying her home cooking, which was soon locally famous.

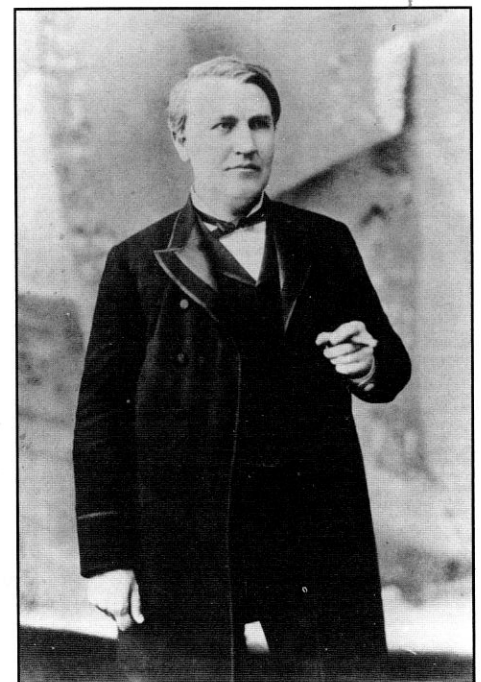
By the 1880s, Shultz received different kinds of visitors. Some were famous individuals and industrialists attracted to the area because of its solitude and fine fishing. One of the first was Walt McDougald, a famous writer and cartoonist. Others followed, attracted by the rustic, unpainted hotel with its crude rooms furnished with tin wash bowls and china slop jars. They even liked the clientele, who were so coarse and rowdy that their tier of rooms was called "Murderer's Row."

But the industrialists were not entirely roughing it. By the mid-1880s, Josephine Shultz hired a French cook to cater to their more sophisticated guests. Charles helped the businessmen keep in touch with the work-a-day world as his telegraph allowed them instant access to the New York stock market. According to Karl Grismer, "It was a common sight to see a man in overalls

and jumper, and shod in canvas shoes, go to the telegraph office and send an order to his New York broker to buy or sell thousands of shares of stock. Then he'd go back to his cronies and bet someone 50 cents or 50 dollars he'd catch the biggest fish that day."

Shultz' biggest fish came in March of 1885 and his name was Thomas Alva Edison. The inventor came down by schooner from St. Augustine looking for a respite from the damp and cold of St. Augustine. He found it in the primitive hotel. He and Shultz had much in common and immediately hit it off. They both had lived in New Jersey, were about the same age, and loved telegraphy.

The day after Edison arrived, the two smoked cigars together on the veranda. It was then that Shultz told Edison about the village of Fort Myers, a few miles up the Caloosahatchee. His description of the frontier hamlet intrigued the inventor. In the next two days, Edison visited Fort Myers and immediately fell in love with the town. The inventor



Thomas A. Edison with cigar. (Courtesy of the Edison & Ford Estates)

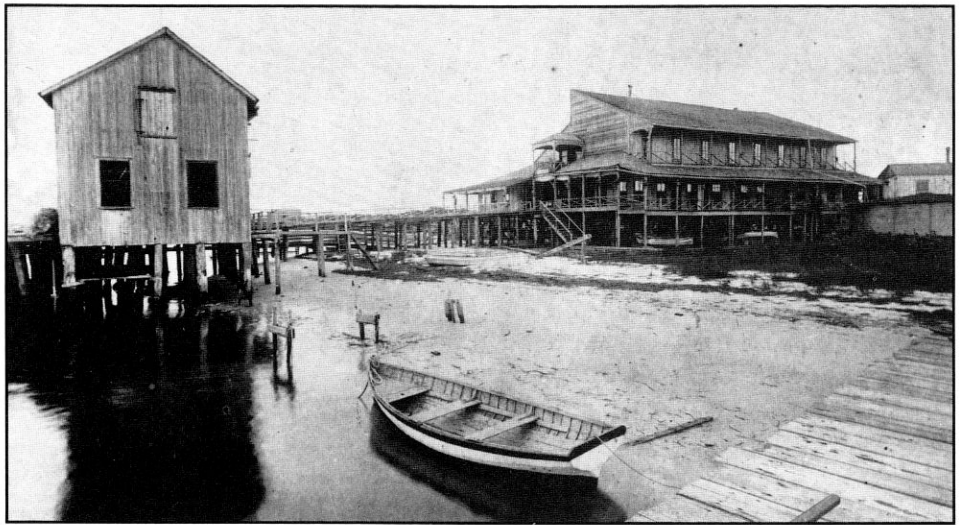


purchased 13 acres of land for his winter home and planned to bring his bride to Fort Myers for their honeymoon the next season. He would return almost every year until his death in October of 1931.

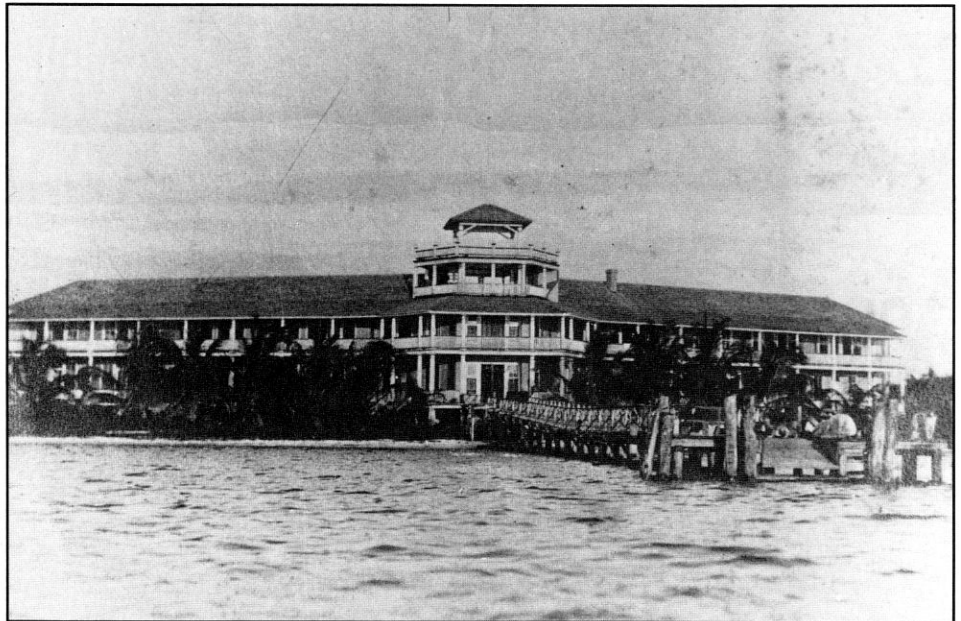
A few days after Edison's visit, a New York sportsman staying at the hotel caught a number of tarpon weighing from 93 to 117 pounds with a bamboo rod. W.H. Wood's feat was picked up by numerous magazines including *Forest and Stream*. Shultz knew an opportunity when he saw it. He renamed his hotel the Tarpon House and made \$2,000 worth of improvements, including the addition of a billiard room.

Unfortunately, his investment seemed to be ill-fated. In 1906 disaster struck and the hotel burned to the ground. All was lost. Devastated, but not defeated, Shultz formed a stock company for reconstruction at the urging of some wealthy patrons. His old friend Edison helped by purchasing 10 shares for a total investment of \$500. Shultz was honored. He wrote, "Thank Mr. Edison for me and I sincerely hope that we will have the pleasure of himself and family with us next winter."

The new hotel re-opened January 15, 1908, and was more accommodating to families like Edison's. While the southern section was designated for rough single men, the northern wing was entirely for families. All 50 of the guest rooms faced water and



Tarpon House, formerly the Shultz Hotel, ca. 1885. (Courtesy of the Fort Myers Historic Museum)



The new Shultz Hotel after being renovated from fire damage, ca. 1910. (Courtesy of the Fort Myers Historic Museum)

the center of the building contained a two story "rotunda of reception." The *Fort Myers News-Press* described the new Shultz Hotel as "the most fa-

mous resort in America."

The celebrated inn survived a severe hurricane in 1910, but the luck did not continue. On October 16,

1913, the Shultz hotel burned to the ground a second time. Shultz, who by this time was almost deaf, did not hear the alarm until it was almost too late. He barely had time to flee in his underwear.

Shultz, at age 70, did not have the energy to rebuild his famous hotel. He lived in Fort Myers until his death in 1921. But the Shultz name is preserved in the history of the region. Had it not been for him, it is doubtful that so many famous individuals would have popularized the southwest coast. ♦

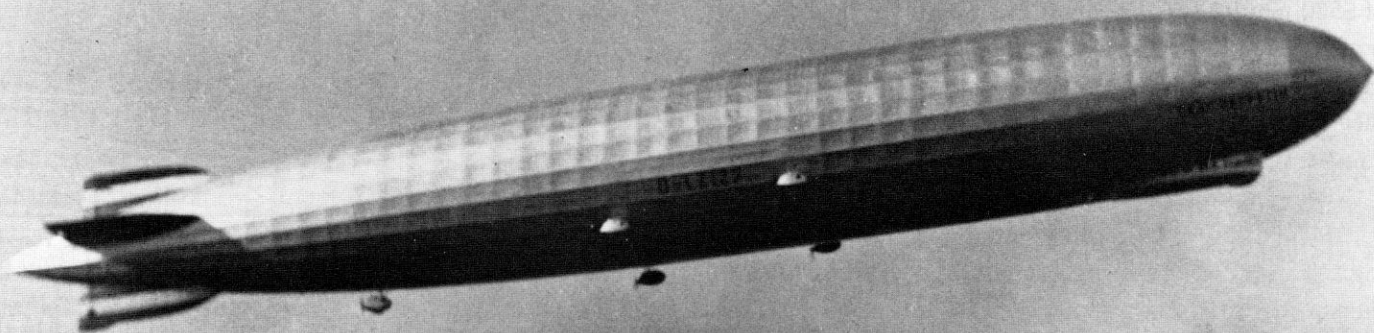


Michele Albion is the Curator of the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers. She writes a monthly history column for the *Fort Myers News-Press*. She holds an undergraduate degree in American History from the University of Maine and a Masters in Museum Studies with a History concentration from The George Washington University. She and her husband Jim live in Fort Myers.

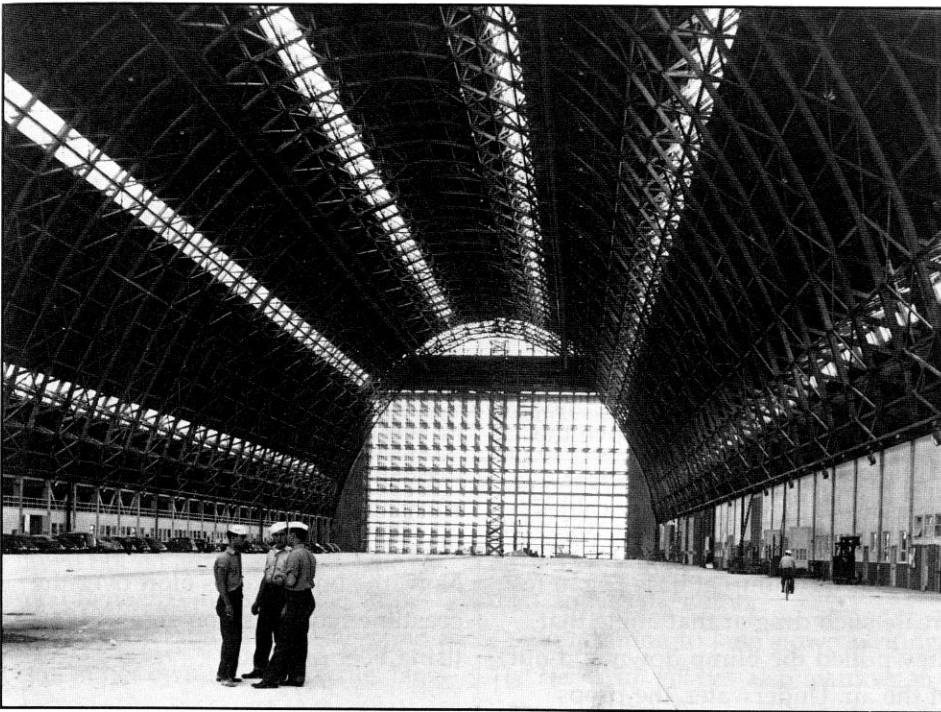
# *When* **Blimps** *were* **Warships**

by **Rose Connett-Richards**

**It was midnight on the 18th of July, 1943 when Blimp K-74 spotted it. Moonlight and phosphorescence in the sub-tropical waters 75 miles east of Key West outlined the sleek torpedo shape so it looked like a sleeping whale on the surface. But it was far more lethal.**







One of the Richmond Airbase hangars, ca. 1942. (HASF 1981-99-41)

**D**uring World War II from atop the Huntington and other tall buildings in downtown Miami, burning ships torpedoed in the Gulfstream to the east were often visible. Like wolf packs, German submarines prowled the Atlantic ready to knock off boats carrying material to supply the Allied war effort in Europe. To counter that threat, the U.S. used Goodyear blimps to send information to headquarters of subs spotted, the location of ships that had been sunk or that were navigational hazards and occasionally of survivors.

The bases were strung from Brazil to New Jersey with Richmond Airbase south of Miami the local station. According to Miamian John McIntyre who flew over 3,000 hours from bases in Brazil, Panama, British Guiana (now Guyana), Miami and New Jersey, to name a few, the 14- to 16-hour flights were 99% tedium and 1% adrenalin rush. But he missed the terror of that summer night in July of

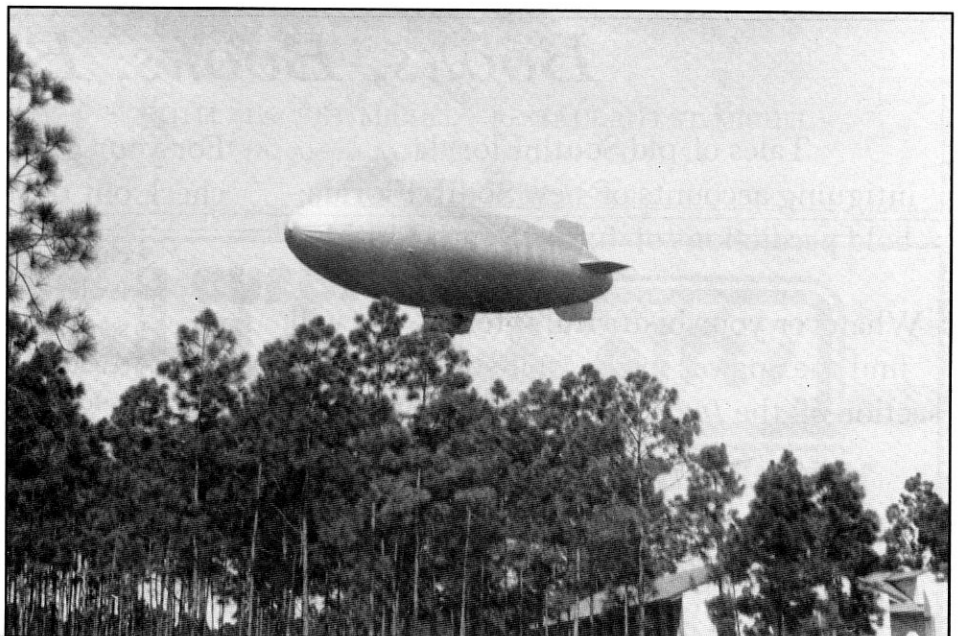
1943. At the last moment another aviation machinists mate switched with McIntyre. It was to be his final flight.

Subs of that era had to surface for oxygen to charge their batteries and when the blimp spotted the wallowing U-boat it signaled, "Identify yourself!" The rude reply was a burst of gunfire. Though lethally punc-

tured with helium escaping from dozens of holes, the blimp crew returned fire as they settled toward the waves. The gunner handling the 50 mm machine gun in the forward cabin was a pro, having just returned from the campaign in North Africa. The rest of the crew gave it their best with rifles and handguns.

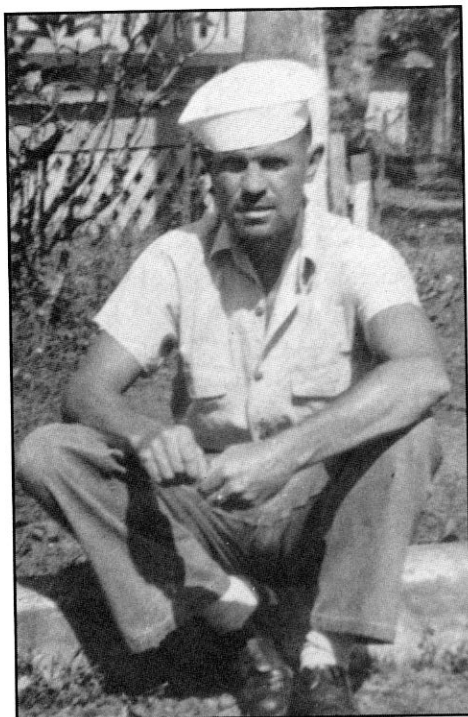
When the cabin hit the water the 10-man crew dived out and hung together in their Mae Wests—all except the mechanic who'd replaced McIntyre. Inexplicably, "He made no attempt to save himself and drowned," his crewmates would report later. Having been in constant contact with Richmond Base which received their SOS, the remaining crewmen were rescued the next morning by a destroyer.

The sub was nowhere to be seen. It was learned after the war that she had to limp back to Germany on the surface because she was so badly shot up. In fact the U-boat captain commended the marksmanship of the crew in a post-war article.



Blimp over Richmond Airbase, south of Miami, in 1942. The base was destroyed in the hurricane of 1945. (Courtesy of Rose Connett-Richards)

Opposite: Graph Zeppelin floating over Miami skyline, ca. 1933. (HASF Romer Collection 1985-64-1)



Aviation Machinist's Mate John McIntyre at the Isle of Pines, Cuba Base, ca. 1942. McIntyre, now 92, resides in Miami. (Courtesy of Rose Connett-Richards)

Questions come to mind about the incident. There were always pre-flight briefings of marine activity and a protocol to follow. So why did Lt. Grills, pilot in command, ask a sub for I.D. given the enemy activity in the Atlantic? He evidently had valid reasons, for after an investigation, he

was commended for his actions. Fifty-one years later the details are fuzzy in McIntyre's mind and he was not aboard, so the answers remain stored in dusty files in some warehouse.

McIntyre does recall another flight on a May day in 1944 that could have ended in disaster. They were in the Atlantic east of Fort Pierce when the pilot dropped down to approximately 25 feet above the wave tops to check a suspicious sighting. The two long wire cables hanging down that were used for mooring the blimp at base began to create such drag at that angle that they pulled the blimp down and out of the air. Underwater, the props stopped turning and the ocean rushed into the cabin.

The crew stampeded to get out the back door. There were no life rafts, but in the chaos the chief pilot, Lieutenant Newman, kept his cool and ordered their ballast to be jettisoned. That turned things around. They were carrying 4,000 pounds of water stored in anti-submarine bomb cases. With water draining out of the cabin the blimp slowly lifted while

mechanic John McIntyre raced to get the engines going again. Then they were finally free and a lot wiser. Newman was grounded for a short period of time.

The U.S. continued blimp training for awhile after the war ended. McIntyre was sent to California briefly. Greater forces than the U.S. government closed down Richmond Airbase. In 1945 a hurricane zeroed in, wiping out the enormous hangars that stored the bulky aircraft, destroying 25 or more blimps stored in them along with a number of planes. Now, the only blimps aloft over the coastline have flashing signs advertising beer or tires. ♦

Rose Connett-Richards was born in Miami, her parents having moved here around the turn of the century. She grew up in Cutler, next door to the Deering estate, where she and her sister often explored the mangroves and the natural environment in their little boat. Now retired, she worked as a freelance writer for many years and continues to write about her favorite topics: the history and natural history of southern Florida.

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# Book Review: The Hell With Politics

By Ellen Kanner

**THE HELL WITH POLITICS: THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF JANE WOOD RENO**, edited by George Hurchalla, Peachtree Publishers, 178 pages, \$18.95.

As a South Florida native, I grew up with certain advantages — the Atlantic Ocean, which was right here and all mine to swim in year 'round, the mystical beauty of the Everglades, and another local institution, lesser known but no less wondrous, Jane Wood Reno, the mother of the Attorney General of the United States and a pistol in her own right. Or write. Jane, a former reporter for *The Miami Herald* and *the Miami News*, loved words.

When Janet Reno became Attorney General in 1993, a fistful of apocryphal and not-so-apocryphal stories emerged about Jane — she wrestled alligators (semi-true), she was an honorary Indian princess (true), she built the Reno family house brick by brick (also true), she could spout poetry at the drop of a hat (undeniable).

But Jane should speak for herself. She always did. Those who were not as fortunate as I to know her can treat themselves to the next best thing, *The Hell With Politics: The Life and Writings of Jane Wood Reno*. Lovingly edited by her grandson George Hurchalla, *The Hell With Politics* comprises some of Jane's best stories, the hurricane of 1935, going undercover "driving a borrowed Cadillac, wearing a phony diamond ring," to buy black market babies, following the route of the barefoot mailman up Florida's east coast.

Jane moved here from Georgia with her family in 1925 and lived here till she died in 1992. She was forever a fierce pioneer spirit who found in South Florida a home both

literal and spiritual. Despite its rapid and chaotic growth, it remained unique, wild and appealing to her.

It comes across in her rich and vivid prose. Jane describes diving into Suwannee River's chilly blue springs and emerging "light, with years washed off you, and the hot summer sun of Florida benign on your back." Compared to contemporary minimalist journalism, such writing is anachronistic. It's passionate and expansive, but then, so was the author.

In addition to Jane's own writing, *The Hell With Politics* also features an interview with Jane conducted in 1971 by the Historical Museum's Marcia Kanner. The oral history, part of a University of Florida project on Florida Indians, explains how Jane

got to be an honorary Miccosukee.

"I went to Washington with them, and I got drunk with them, and I went to Green Corn Dances with them, and I went to Snake Dances with them, and I wrote a lot about them. So they decided to make me a princess, which I think was about 1957 — there weren't any princesses in the Seminoles, the Miccosukee!"

Jane's grandson concludes the book with a brief biography about Jane, but as was always the case, no one can do Jane like Jane. The strength of *The Hell With Politics* is the subject itself, Jane Wood Reno, who combined her love of words and South Florida, to spin local tales as eloquent and engaging as the author, herself. ♦

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# A Review of Florida Books

By Stuart McIver

**PANIC IN PARADISE: FLORIDA'S BANKING CRASH OF 1926.** By Raymond B. Vickers. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press. 312 pages. \$34.95.

By bringing formerly sealed bank records from Florida's 1920s boom-and-bust period out into the sunshine, Raymond B. Vickers has given us a rare look at banking practices during the state's wildest speculative binge.

The result is a disturbing book. His contention is that virtually every bank failure during the period involved insider abuse, conspiracy to defraud or both. In other words, according to the thrust of this book, the biggest bank robbers of the Roaring 20s were not the good old Ashley Gang but rather people generally regarded as "pillars of society" — the bankers themselves.

The book is not easy to read, partly because the deals that Vickers traces are complicated and partly because his conclusions are troubling. Still, the book is an important contribution to the history of the boom. Vickers, who holds a doctorate in economic history, points out that the abuses of the 20s surfaced again during the S & L fiasco. He calls for full disclosure for the industry and its regulators.

**FREEDOM RIVER** by Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Valiant Press, hardcover, \$19.95, paperback, \$14.95.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas' 1953 young adult novel, *Freedom River*, has been re-issued by Valiant Press of Miami. Set in the Everglades in the 1840s, the story follows the adventures of three boys, a black slave, a Miccosukee and a young white abolitionist. The book also features 28

black and white drawings by the gifted artist, Jack Amoroso. (Available at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida Store or by ordering: (305) 375-1492.)

**TWENTY FLORIDA PIRATES** by Kevin M. McCarthy; paintings by William L. Trotter. Pineapple Press, softcover, \$17.95.

Kevin McCarthy's latest book introduces us to another group of Florida scoundrels, the pirates who have plagued these waters since the sixteenth century. Of particular interest to South Florida readers are Black Caesar, who used the Upper Keys as a base; Jose Gaspar, better known as Gasparilla, a non-existent pirate whose legends live on along Florida's west coast; Horace Alderman, rumrunner who was hanged in 1929 in Fort Lauderdale, and the early 19th century pirates of the Florida Keys. (Available at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida Store or by ordering: (305) 375-1492.)

**FLORIDA PATHFINDERS**, edited by Lewis N. Wynne and James J. Horgan. Saint Leo College Press. Paperback, \$15.95.

South Floridians will find a number of intriguing characters in this latest volume from the Saint Leo College Press. Miami's Paul S. George writes about the pioneering merchant, William M. Burdine. Emily Adams Perry introduces us to one of Florida's first women architects, Marian Isadore Manley, who was active in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and the Florida Keys. The Fort Myers area is well covered in Joe Akerman's story on cattle baron Jacob Summerlin and Patti Bartlett's account of the Cyrus Teed's founding

of the Utopian community, Koreshan in the late nineteenth century.

**YBOR CITY CHRONICLES: A MEMOIR.** By Ferdie Pacheco. Gainesville: University of Florida \$24.95. 301 pages.

In his more than three decades in Miami, Ferdie Pacheco has established himself as a physician ministering to the needs of Overtown and Little Havana and as a celebrity in the world of prize fighting. For 14 years he was Muhammad Ali's personal physician and he's still active as a TV boxing analyst. The latest book by this remarkable man covers his boyhood years in the Tampa community of Ybor City. It is a funny and illuminating piece of Floridiana a half century ago. ♦

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