

# South Florida History

M A G A Z I N E

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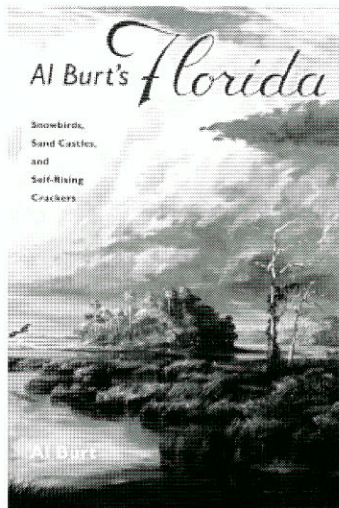
## FEATURES

- **The Park in the Glades**
- **Eating Out in Miami**
- **Artists of the Road**

BOCA RATON HISTORICAL SOCIETY • CLEWISTON MUSEUM • COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM  
FLORIDA HISTORY CENTER & MUSEUM • FORT MYERS HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
THE MUSEUM OF FLORIDA'S ART & CULTURE • THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF

Florida



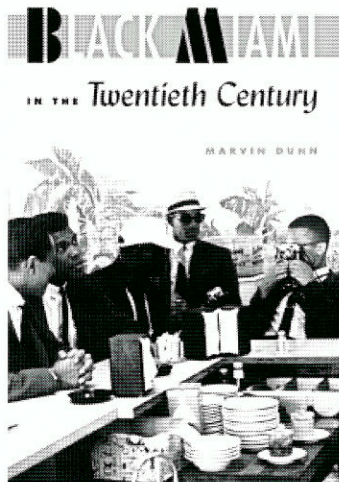
### Al Burt's Florida

*Snowbirds, Sandcastles,  
and Self-Rising Crackers*

Al Burt

"Some say that Floridians lack a sense of place—they won't after reading Al Burt."  
—Ann Henderson, executive director,  
Florida Humanities Council.

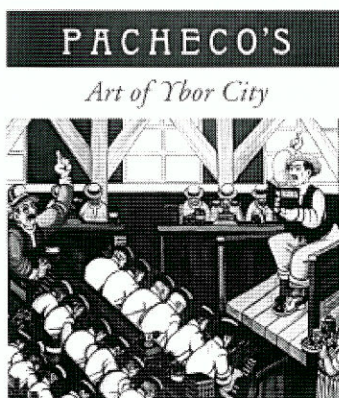
"For 23 years [Al Burt] wore out tire treads and shoe leather visiting all corners of [Florida]...capturing its characters like a butterfly-collector, and pinning them painlessly to newspaper pages. Here...are the sights and impressions of those journeys, recounted in a leisurely cadence, like the rocking of a front porch swing on a warm afternoon."—*The Miami Herald*  
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—*Tampa Tribune*

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*William Lyman Phillips  
in Florida*

Faith Reyher Jackson

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—R. Brinsley Burbidge, director,  
Fairchild Tropical Garden, Miami  
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### Jannus, an American Flier

Thomas Reilly

"*Jannus, an American Flier* recounts the life and exploits of one of the forgotten figures of early aviation, a colleague of Curtiss and Benoist who pioneered in military and commercial aviation but died early and was all but lost amid the high-speed developments of the industry. Reilly's account will appeal to aviation historians in particular and to the many general readers interested in the pioneer era of flight."—Louis S. Casey, curator,  
National Air and Space Museum,  
Smithsonian Institution  
Cloth, \$29.95

### Edison in Florida

*The Green Laboratory*

Olav Thulesius

"This is the first comprehensive history of Edison's life and work in Fort Myers, and Thulesius covers the subject well, highlighting little-known segments of Edison's speculation and experimentation, such as life units, X-rays, and hybridizing."  
—Leah Burt, former curator, Edison National Historic Site, West Orange, New Jersey  
Cloth, \$29.95

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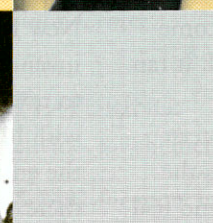
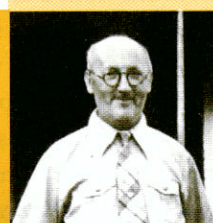
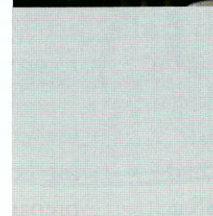
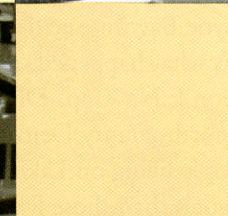
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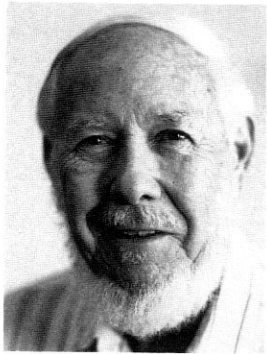
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By Stuart McIver



Let's go back a hundred years when political shenanigans were on a truly grand scale. Dade County was a lot bigger than

it is now, stretching all the way from the Upper Keys to Stuart. Population was another matter, probably not much over a thousand souls, hardly enough to stand up to the mosquitoes and the absence of air conditioning.

There was one more big difference. Miami, the biggest city in the area, was not the county seat. That honor belonged to a tiny settlement that no longer exists. In those days it was named Juno. Its glory was short lived, but incredibly it managed to wrest the seat of government away from Biscayne Bay for one decade.

Here's what happened. After the 1888 election E.N. "Cap" Dimick and other north-county Democrats noticed people living on Lake Worth cast more votes than those living along Biscayne Bay. So they wondered why the county seat resided in a rented room in Miami. Making matters even worse, the county's landlord, J.W. Ewan, the Duke of Dade, had decided to raise the rent—from \$5 a month to \$15.

The Lake Worth gang petitioned for a vote on moving the county seat, proposing for the new site a small lakeside village already designated as the southern terminus of a short-haul railroad. The railway would become known as the Celestial Railroad. It ran from Jupiter to Juno.

On February 19, 1889 voters turned out so enthusiastically in the lake country that it appeared Juno had won by a comfortable margin. Still,

the ballot certification would have to be done in Miami and Dimick and his faction feared there just might be trouble ahead on Biscayne Bay.

To play it safe, the Juno people brought with them three men who would be described today as "muscle." Leader of the sturdy, well-armed trio was Patrick Lennon, an Irishman run out of the British Isles for his efforts at running England out of Ireland. He was a member of the Fenians, an early ancestor of the IRA.

Since there were no roads between the lake and bay areas, the men walked some 70 miles down the beach, carrying the ballot boxes with them. When the votes were counted, Juno won handily, 107 to 80.

Miami, however, did not go quietly. Protests began to build at the very thought of the county seat leaving town. Heavy imbibing of Dutch Courage whiskey inflamed the Biscayners even farther and talk surfaced of keeping the capital city through force.

A.F. Quimby, newly elected county clerk from the lake, overheard the plans to arm a large number of Miamians. Resourcefully, he obtained from the Seminoles a canoe large enough to carry the county's heavy record books.

In the darkness, Quimby, a fellow-commissioner and the intimidating Lennon loaded up the canoe and prepared to leave. The problem was that they had no way of propelling the canoe except by poling. That meant they would have to stay close to shore within easy range of Miami firearms.

Fred Morse, a young real estate man descended from a distinguished New England family that included the inventor of the telegraph, volunteered to tow them out into deeper waters with his sharpie and deposit them at the entrance to Snake Creek. From there, they poled their way into the Everglades, turned right several miles

to the west and cruised on into the headwaters of the New River.

By late the following afternoon they arrived at the barrier island where the Fort Lauderdale House of Refuge stood. They unloaded the county books and relaxed with a cup of coffee. They could wait now for a sail boat to take them out the inlet and on up to the lake.

But they were not in the clear yet. From the south they saw three men walking toward the House of Refuge, walking fast. They had to be Miami toughs.

The lake boys moved the books to the attic, drew their weapons and braced themselves for a fight.

The invaders walked onto the front porch. Charles Coman, keeper of the house, talked to them through the unopened door, then burst into laughter.

The three Miami toughs turned out to be the rest of the lake country group.

The contract to build the county's first courthouse was awarded to a Lake Worth man for \$1,495. The southeast coast's leading newspaper, *The Tropical Sun*, moved to Juno and in no time, wrote attorney C.C. Chillingworth, the unincorporated village boasted "seven dwelling houses, two boarding houses, one newspaper building, one very small railroad station and a store building on the dock near the water's edge."

The trouble was that the rails which brought fleeting glory to the village took it away.

As part of his plan to extend his Florida East Coast Railway to Palm Beach, Henry M. Flagler, hotel and railroad tycoon, tried to buy the Celestial Railroad. The owners asked for too much money, so he built his own railroad west of town. It reached Palm Beach in 1894 and Miami in 1896.

When Flagler bypassed Juno,

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the town simply died.

Down on Biscayne Bay settlers incorporated the Magic City of Miami. In 1899 Miami took back the county seat. No town is likely to wrest it away again.

The Celestial Railroad went broke and had to auction off its rolling stock. The newspaper moved to West Palm Beach. Then in 1907 a forest fire swept into Juno, burning all that was left of the late, great county seat.

Its name lives on, however, in Juno Beach, a resort just to the north-east of the ghost town.

Cap Dimick wrestled the county seat away from Miami, then saw it head south again a decade later. Unlike Juno, however, Cap did not turn into a "ghost" politician. Palm Beach elected him its first mayor. Can you even imagine a Democrat winning an election on Palm Beach in the 1990s?

Correction:

We neglected to give credit to the photographer who prepared the photographs for the article "Show Horses Pranced in Early Coral Gables" by Leah La Plante (Spring/Summer 1997, Vol. 25 Nos. 1-2). He is Gerry Taksier of Pyramid Photographics.



New Staff Member:

Replacing former Editor Rebecca Eads will be Jamie Welch. He graduated from Creighton University with a degree in Journalism in 1992, and has worked as a journalist and graphics specialist in Nebraska, California and Santiago, Chile before relocating to South Florida.



Springtime

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, April 25-26, 1998

LOCATION:

Dade County Fair and Exposition Center  
 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

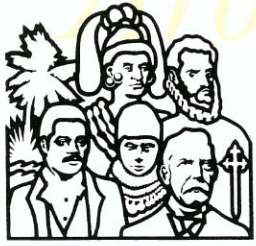
ADMISSION:

\$4 for adults  
 \$2 for children (ages 5-12)

FEATURING:

250 Crafts Exhibitors • Activities for children • Plant & Flower sale

Call (305) 375-1492 for more information.



**Historical Museum of Southern Florida**  
 Miami-Dade Cultural Center, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami,  
 (305) 375-1492 / [www.historical-museum.org](http://www.historical-museum.org)

**General Information:** Open Monday through Saturday,  
 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursdays until 9 p.m.; Sundays, 12 noon-5 p.m.  
 Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Adults \$4;  
 Children 6-12 \$2. Members Free.

## SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

### CHILDREN AT PLAY

**November 14, 1997-April 5, 1998**

Both children and adults will be enchanted by this playful look at historical pastimes and amusements. Covering the 1880s to the 1990s, the exhibit features two playhouses, grandmother's attic, and spaces for kids to play such classic games as marbles, stoopball, cat's cradle, hopscotch and four square. Older visitors will remember and younger visitors will marvel at the toys and games of yesteryear. The exhibit includes a look at the social and historical context which influenced the recreational pursuits of youngsters in the past.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### SPRINGTIME HARVEST FESTIVAL

**April 25 - 26, 1998, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

Dade County Fair & Exposition Center, Coral Way and SW 112th Ave. This annual favorite is a spin-off of the popular Harvest Festival, with added highlights including a spring plant and flower sale. A good time and hundreds of unique hand-made crafts await browsers and buyers at this fun family event. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children (5-12). Call (305) 375-1492 for more information.

## HISTORIC TOURS

### COCONUT GROVE WALKING TOUR

**April 4, 1998, 10:00 a.m.**

Known for its eclectic shops and open-air cafes, the Grove has become a shopping and movie mecca for both tourists and natives. Journey back to the time when it was "Cocoanut" Grove and the best entertainment was a picnic in the park. Explore the sites of early homesteader settlements, Peacock Inn, the Barnacle and "Millionaire's Row." Meet at the historic Pan American Airways headquarters, now Miami City Hall, 3500 Pan American Dr., Coconut Grove. Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$15.

### HISTORIC GESU CHURCH TOUR

**April 16, 1998, 4:00 p.m.**

Explore the only South Florida church to remain on its original site, established with the cooperation of Miami's first mayor on land provided by Henry Flagler. Revel in the structure's distinctive architecture, featuring a three story portico and stained glass windows by Franz Mayer. Authentic Roman statuary and the unique "rose window" are just some of the breathtaking sights to be seen on this Gesu Church tour. Meet in front of the church, 118 NE 2nd Street. FREE!

## HISTORIC BRUNCH & CORAL GABLES WALKING TOUR

**May 3, 1998, 11:00 a.m.**

Dr. George invites everyone to take a stroll through the Gables down Ponce de Leon Blvd., taking in several of the area's most noted historic landmarks. See and hear about La Palma Ristorante & Bar, the Colonnade, Coral Gables Elementary School, Place St. Michel and the sites of the former Coral Gables and Dream Theaters. Then tour a bit of the Miracle Mile and the Arts and Crafts section of Coral Gables. Afterwards, enjoy a refreshing brunch at the elegant La Palma Ristorante & Bar. Meet at the La Palma Ristorante & Bar, 116 Alhambra Circle, Coral Gables. Advance reservations and non-refundable payment required. Members: \$35; Non-Members: \$40. Call (305) 375-1625 early to reserve.

## SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR "CAMP MIAMI" CENTENNIAL & HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

**May 17, 1998, 11:00 a.m.**

For "history buffs," this is the ultimate tour! Observe the centennial of the Spanish-American War while visiting the site of "Camp Miami," a large area in the northern section of downtown Miami used during the conflict. Also see the site of the original Florida East Coast Railway train station, the majestic Miami News/Freedom Tower building, and the beautifully restored Gesu Catholic Church. You'll see the sites of other historic churches and appreciate a stunning array of architecturally distinctive structures along N.E. 1st Street (one of Miami's best-kept secrets). Then top off your tour with a visit to the Spanish-American War special exhibition at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. Meet at the Historical Museum, 101 W. Flagler Street, Miami. Members: \$10; Non-Members: \$15.

## SPECIAL EXHIBIT EVENTS

### FAMILY DAY

**April 4, 1998, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

Metro-Dade Cultural Center, 101 West Flagler Street, Downtown Miami. At the Historical Museum, kids can create their own craft item to take home, hear Caribbean folktales and learn about Caribbean toys and games. Also, experience the fully interactive *Children at Play* exhibit. Kids are admitted FREE with one paid adult admission (limit three children per adult).



**BOCA RATON  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Town Hall  
71 N. Federal Hwy.  
Boca Raton, Florida  
33432-3919  
(407) 395-6766**

**CELEBRATING 25 YEARS**

**General Information:** The Boca Raton Historical Society operates a Museum and Gift Shop at the old Town Hall, 71 North Federal Highway, Boca Raton. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

**EXHIBITS AND EVENTS**

**TOURS OF THE BOCA RATON RESORT & CLUB -Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m.**

Guided historical walking tour of Addison Mizner's original Cloister Inn. Tour participants may eat lunch in one of the club's private restaurants. \$5 per person, plus valet fee. Call for reservations.

**BOCA RATON CITY TOURS**

**Wednesdays, 9:15 a.m.**

Guided trolley tour of Boca Raton provides an interesting narrative of Boca Raton's development and evolution. \$7.50 per person, non-members and \$5 for BRHS members. Call for details.

**SUNTRUST SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL COOKING SERIES**

**April 17, 1998**

At the Train Depot. Bistro Zenith, Lucille's Bad-to-the-Bones Barbeque, and Splash Tropical Seafood Grill to provide cooking demonstrations, food and wine included, \$50 per person. A retro cocktail cash bar will offer martinis and Manhattans. Call for reservations.

**ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING**

**April 19, 1998**

At Town Hall, featuring speaker and reception.

**BOCA RATON HERITAGE DAY**

**May 17, 1998, Noon - 5:00 p.m.**

A community festival starting with a pioneer picnic at noon and culminating with jazz music on stage at Sanborn Square. Children's activities, community booths, city tours, entertainment, historic reenactors, lectures and historical displays at Town Hall, Sanborn Square, the Train Depot and the Children's Museum. Bring the family, a picnic lunch and enjoy an afternoon in historical downtown Boca Raton.



**FLORIDA HISTORY CENTER & MUSEUM  
Burt Reynolds Park, 805 North U.S. Highway 1, Jupiter  
(407) 747-6639**

**General Information:** The Florida History Center & Museum is open all year. Examine artifacts from early Florida inhabitants in the permanent museum collection and view the traveling exhibits. Open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and weekends 1-5 p.m. Closed on Mondays. \$4 adults; \$3 seniors; \$2 children. The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is open Sunday - Wednesday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (Must be 48" tall to climb.) For information: (405) 747-8380. \$5. The DuBois Pioneer Home is open Sunday and Wednesday, 1-5 p.m. \$2.



**FORT MYERS HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
2300 Peck Street, Fort Myers  
(941) 332-5955**

**General Information:** Open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 A.M.- 4 P.M. Closed Sundays and Mondays and most holidays. Admission is \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children ages 3-12. Museum members are free.



**COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM  
3301 Tamiami Trail East, Naples  
(941) 774-8476**

**General Information:** The Collier County Museum explores the people, places and everyday events that have shaped Collier County's heritage. The museum and four-acre historical park are open Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free.



**CLEWISTON MUSEUM  
112 S. Comercio St.  
Clewiston  
(941) 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. The Clewiston Museum is open 1-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, with seasonal adjustments. No admission fee is charged; however, donations are encouraged.



**THE MUSEUM  
OF FLORIDA'S ART AND CULTURE  
13300 U.S. Hwy. 98  
Sebring, FL 33870  
(941) 655-5454 • (941) 655-0392  
Fax (941) 655-3240  
<http://www.954.com/AARF/mofac>**

**General Information:** The Museum is temporarily located at the above address. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Group tours are by appointment. There is no admission charge. The Museum is devoted exclusively to the artists of Florida whose work is an interpretation of Florida's history, heritage or environment.

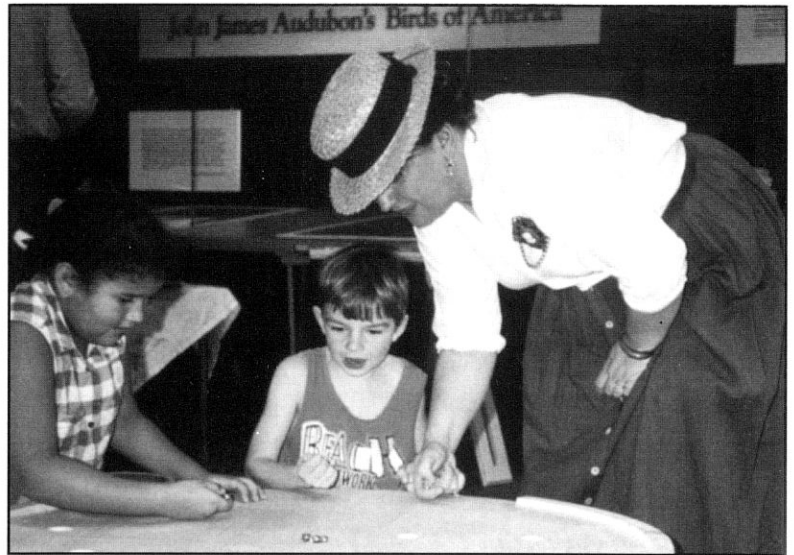
**EXHIBITS**

Works of art from the permanent collection of the Museum of Florida's Art and Culture are on display and open to the public at South Florida Community College. The work of abstract impressionist Peter Powell Roberts, formerly with the Ringling School of Art, is being displayed in the Media Center/Library Bldg. through March 1998. Brazilian artist Carlos Kis is being featured through April and May 1998. Major works from the Florida masters collection can be seen in the Rotunda of the Student Services Center in Bldg. B. The college is located between Avon Park and Sebring on Highway 27. Hours for the college are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Mon. - Wed., and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thurs. The Media Center is also open on Sunday from 2 - 6 p.m. Call (941) 382-6900 for directions and to verify hours.

CAUTION: CHILDREN  
(AND ADULTS) AT PLAY



The Historical Museum of Southern Florida's current exhibit, *Children at Play* (through April 5, 1998), has got everyone playing around the gallery. Organized by the Cincinnati Historical Society Museum, the exhibit is highly interactive and features street games children played from the 1880s up to the 1990s. Full scale recreations of playhouses, sidewalks, streets and a city stoop provide the perfect settings for games of hopscotch, marbles, stoopball, basketball and foursquare. Visitors will find sidewalk chalk, hula hoops, building blocks and Grandma's Attic, complete with dolls, toys and clothes for playing dress-up. In addition, the museum combined its unique collections objects with items loaned by community members for a display of both antique and recent toys and games including everything from clay marbles from the late 1800s to paper dolls from the 1920s to inline skates from the 1990s.



A costumed interpreter teaches some children how to play marbles.



Young musicians perform at the Classical Kids Concert.

The Historical Museum is holding monthly special events to celebrate *Children at Play*. Two of the latest events included a Classical Kids Concert held November 15 in conjunction with WTMI 93.1 FM. Keith Aleo, a percussionist from the Florida Philharmonic, popular WTMI radio announcer Lynn Farmer and the museum staff entertained visitors with interactive percussion demonstrations, prize giveaways and musical craft projects. At the Marbles Demonstration on January 11, glass blower Marci Davis showed fascinated museum-goers how marbles were made, while costumed historians from Past Tymes taught young participants how to play marbles and other traditional games.



Glass blower Marci Davis shows visitors how marbles are made.



## HARVEST FESTIVAL VISITORS

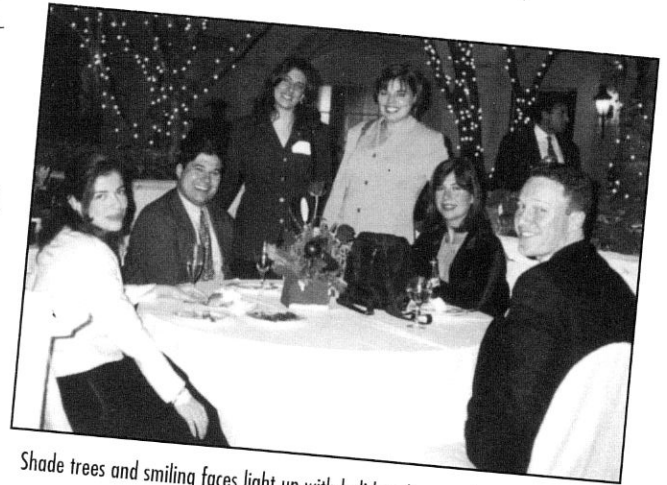
### REAP REWARDS



The weekend weather was cloudy, but the outlook was good for Harvest Festival visitors. Heavy rains never showed, but nearly 20,000 South Floridians did for the Historical Museum's annual historical and crafts event held this past fall on November 22 and 23. Those who arrived were treated to an exceptional selection of handmade quilts, crafts, antiques and plants from among the over 400 vendors who participated. Living history reenactments recreated the daily lives of Spanish Indians, colonial settlers, and soldiers from the 18th century up to World War II. Live performances of traditional Cuban, Irish, Venezuelan, Trinidadian and Afro-Caribbean music entertained festival attendees and

enhanced the mood for diners enjoying the Harvest fare. For those who missed the 1997 Harvest Festival - or for those who simply can't get enough of the Harvest Festival - the annual Springtime Festival will be held April 25 and 26. A special thank you to all of those who made the success of the Harvest Festival possible: our hundreds of volunteers, American Airlines, Dog Masters, The Miami Herald, Norwegian Cruise Lines, U.S. Sugar Corporation, the Trustees of the Historical Association, the Tropees, the Harvest Committee,

Twenty Little Working Girls, Florida Power & Light, SunTrust Bank, Shutts & Bowen, NationsBank, Keith Mack LLP, FEDCO, CAL FED, U.S. Coast Guard, Withers/Suddath Relocation Systems, Southwest High School History Society, Miami High School, Miami Springs Senior High School, Henry H. Filer Middle School T.S.A., Golden Press, FOP Lodge #20 and Norman Brothers.



*Shade trees and smiling faces light up with holiday cheer at the Scrooge party.*

## TALES OF CHRISTMAS PAST



The Tropees annual Scrooge Holiday Party rang in the season on December 9 at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Hotel in Coral Gables. Guests enjoyed complimentary champagne, hors d'oeuvres, live entertainment, a cash bar and took home an eclectic array of door prizes provided by the following sponsors: Indian Creek Hotel, 7 Star Limousine Service Inc., Paul at Camelot House of Beauty, Details at Home, Giancarlo Jewelry & Design, Hannah & Her Scissors Hair Art Studio, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Nita Flowers & Gift Baskets, Fritz Skate Shop II, Garden Botanika, Confection Connection, Educating Hands,

Crabtree & Evelyn, City Theater, and the Florida Philharmonic. One lucky winner, Jeff Norkin, took home the Grand Door Prize, two round-trip tickets to London courtesy of Virgin Atlantic Airways. Ebenezer Scrooge made an appearance and regaled partygoers with tales of holidays in Victorian England. The 50/50 Scrooge Raffle provided

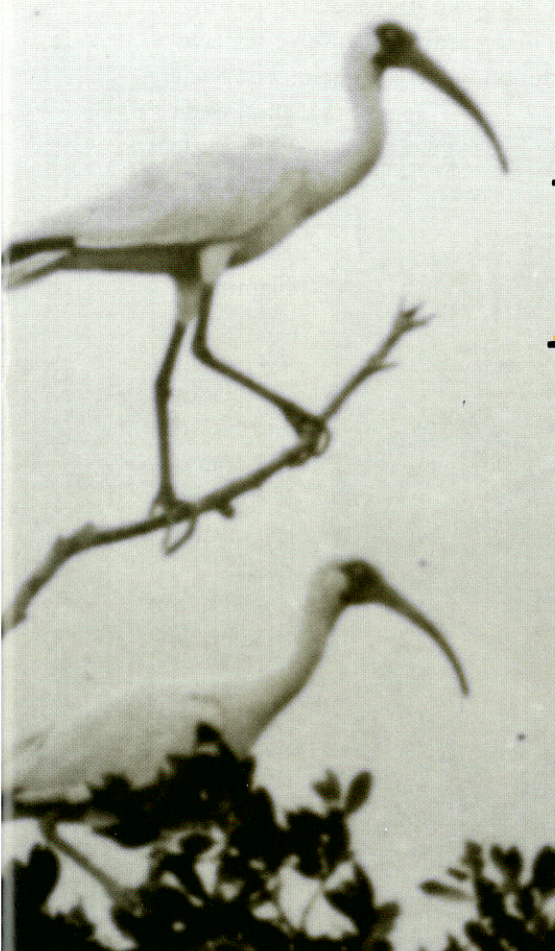
both the Historical Museum and a lucky winner, Maria J. Beguiristain, with the welcome holiday gift of additional funds for the upcoming year. A merry time was had by all, with special thanks to our event sponsors, the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Amazon Printing, Golden Press, Curbside Florist, and Party Time DJ.



*Jeff Norkin, winner of the Trip for 2 to London, with Nancy Hale from Virgin Atlantic Airways and Tropee chairman, Alfredo Gonzalez.*

A flock of ibis, one of the many bird species the creators of Everglades National Park sought to protect.  
(HASF 653-50)





# Birth of Everglades National Park

By Cesar A. Becerra

The creation of Everglades National Park is a story of people moved by high ideals, honesty and a desire to preserve a unique ecosystem for future generations, pitted against greed, cruelty, procrastination and self-aggrandizement. The story begins with the murder of Guy Bradley, a 35-year-old warden of the National Audubon Society. Millinery fashions of the late 19th century encouraged poachers to kill egrets for their breeding plumage. By the late 1800s the value of bird plumes per ounce was more than the price of gold. This created a “plume rush” at the breeding grounds and a crisis developed with the depletion of the bird population. The National Audubon Society coordinated a campaign to correct the false stories of the millinery industry that hat plumes were taken from live birds which were later released unharmed.

The brutal facts were that millions of birds were slaughtered each year and the young left to die of starvation in their nests. By 1900 many of the Florida birds were disappearing. The State, lacking funds to hire wardens to enforce the laws, turned to the National Audubon Society for help. The Society

employed four wardens to guard the rookeries. Based at Flamingo, these wardens roamed the 'glades and Florida Bay waters, keeping an eye out for illegal hunters. Guy Bradley, who lived in Flamingo, was one of the men hired by the Society to become a warden of the area. On the evening of July 8,



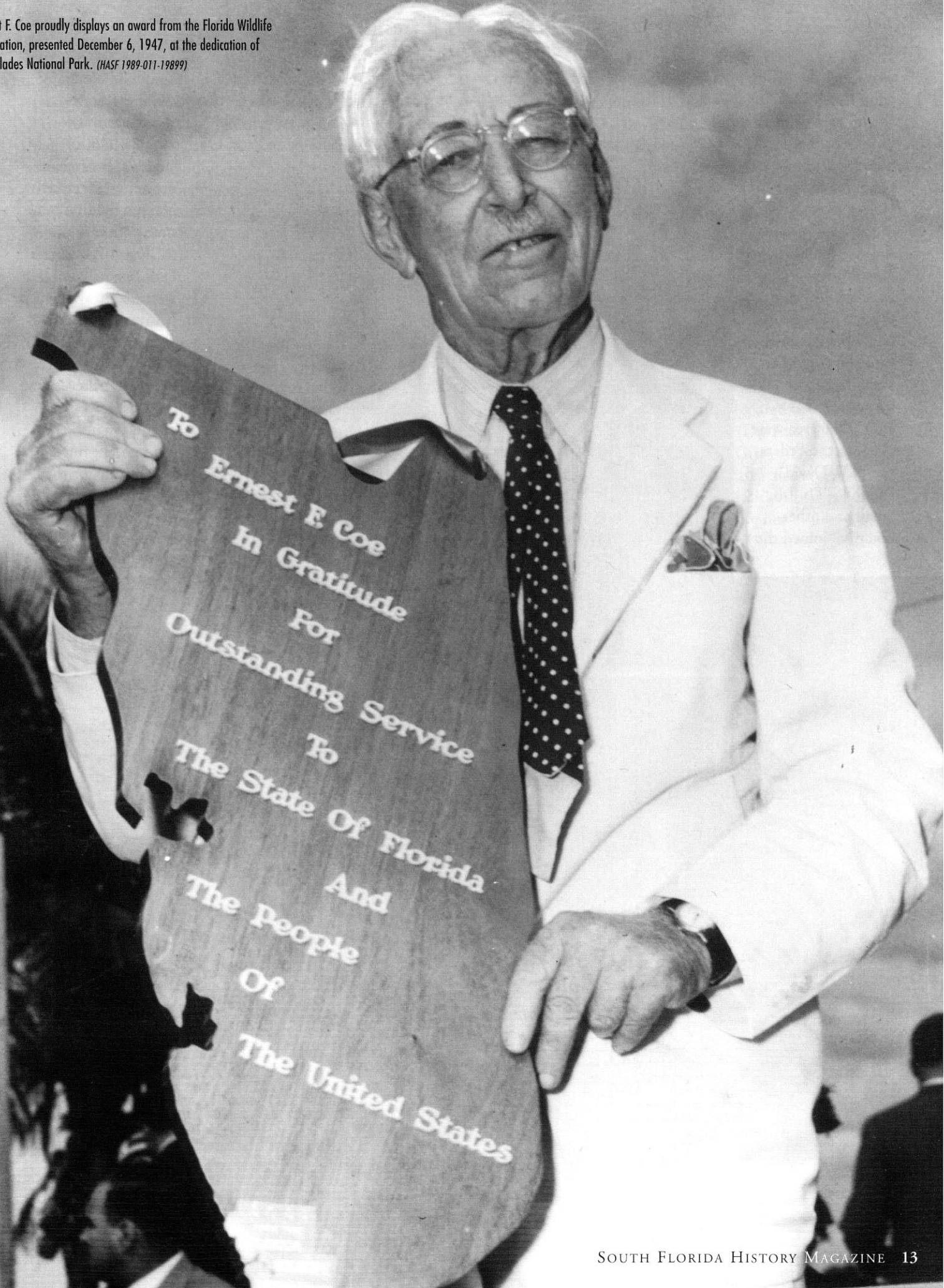
Feb. 11, 1930, Municipal Airport Grounds, Miami, Florida. National Park Official group and guests. (HASF 1977-26-9)

Dr. David Fairchild is the sixth from the left standing next to Congresswomen Ruth Bryan Owen. Fairchild was president of the Tropic Everglades Park Association. Ernest F. Coe, eighth from the left, was chairman.

1905 Bradley heard shots at a nearby key. He kissed his wife goodbye and then headed out toward the rookery to investigate. He never returned. His body was left adrift in his skiff while gunman Walter Smith sailed to Key West to turn himself in for the murder of Guy Bradley. Bradley's death made him a martyr and created nationwide indignation at the overharvesting of bird plumes. Laws were created which strengthened bird protection and helped bring the significance of the Everglades to the American people.

The Everglades aroused interest in the minds of many as the South Florida area was developed. Florida was a frontier and to her "ballads" came some of the people shunned elsewhere. Fiercely independent, they accepted regulation by no one. At the same time, individuals and groups who saw a "dollar yield per acre" pushed for a variety of drainage schemes. In the midst of the rush to vanquish and subdue Florida, conservation-minded groups began to speak up in favor of leaving a portion of the marsh-like bird paradise in its natural state. One of the most interesting areas in Everglades National Park is the Royal Palm area, known as Paradise Key. For many years it had attracted those who knew the beauty of the area. The

Ernest F. Coe proudly displays an award from the Florida Wildlife Federation, presented December 6, 1947, at the dedication of Everglades National Park. (HASF 1989-011-19899)



year 1905 marked the first enthusiastic awareness of Paradise Key by J.E. Ingraham, who laid out the city of Miami and represented the interests of Henry Flagler, builder of the East Coast Railroad. Ingraham began an outspoken campaign for the preservation of the hammock which gained the attention of Mrs. Mary Barr Munroe of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, who suggested that Paradise Key could be preserved as a park if the area were given to the Federation. Dr. David Fairchild, Dr. J.K. Small and other botanists joined the

effort to preserve Paradise Key. Flagler's railroad company donated its land, which was combined with the State-owned land to make up the 1,920 acres of what was to become Royal Palm State Park. On Nov. 23, 1916 the

largest conservation project in the state became the first state park in Florida: Royal Palm State Park. As early as 1916, Mrs. W. S. Jennings, president of the Federation and administrator of the park, believed the area possessed national significance. She gained a worthy ally for the battle to create a national park in Ernest F. Coe.

Charlie Brookfield, on the left, and another visitor at Guy Bradley's grave in Cape Sable. (HASF 1968-1-37)



The most persistent advocate of having the Everglades set aside as a national park, Ernest Coe fought for the Park through five governors of Florida and three presidents and their administrations before his goal was realized. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, author and preservation activist, writes of Coe: "He was certainly the prophet, and unmistakably the founder, but what more he was is hard to define. Ernest F. Coe, the six-foot-tall, spare, courtly gentleman without whose startling vision, slow-burning passion, steely endurance, and indomitable will, there would be no Everglades National Park today. And probably no Everglades." Ernest Coe came to Miami in 1925 as a landscape architect and was introduced to the Everglades on a trip to the Royal Palm State Park with ornithologist, Harold H. Bailey. Coe immediately saw the beauty of the tropical wilderness and spent a great deal of time there. The more he came to understand the unique ecosystem of the 'Glades, the more his enthusiasm grew, the more determined he became that he must devote his time, energy and resources to making his dream of an Everglades National Park a reality.

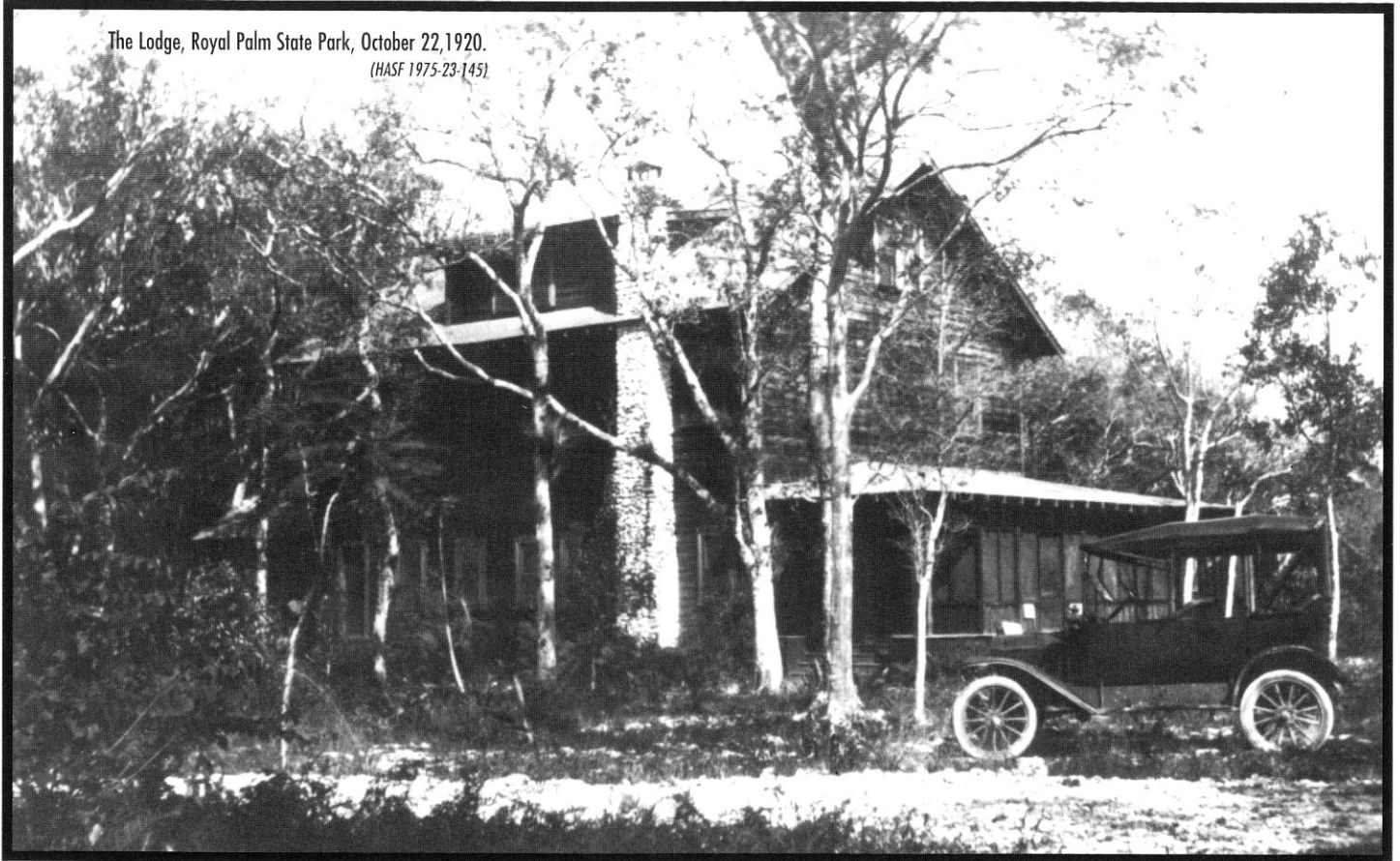
In 1928 Coe and a group of other Floridians formed the Tropic Everglades Park Association, dedicated to the

purpose of having Royal Palm State Park recognized as an area of national significance. Others who joined in the movement were Dr. David Fairchild, a well-known botanist; Tom Pancoast, a developer of Miami Beach; and a forester, Dr. John C. Gifford of the University of Miami. After months of surveying, photographing, letter-writing and talking to groups, Coe presented a plan to the Federal Government in 1929, recommending the Everglades for inclusion in the National Park Service.

His well-prepared and enthusiastically-presented plan was favorably received and on Feb. 11, 1930, a group of senators from the Everglades National Park Commission arrived in the Everglades for a three-day tour. The commission examined the southern edge of the Everglades by automobile, motor boat, small boat, blimp and airplane. Their trip concluded with a lunch prepared by Marjory Stoneman Douglas at the Kampong (Dr. Fairchild's Indonesian-style home) in Coconut Grove. The senators agreed on the unusual beauty of the area and accepted the concept of a national park on the condition that the land would be a gift since federal funds were not available to purchase the land.

Board Members of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs. Mrs. Mary Barr Munroe is sixth from the left, with her face turned away. Charles A. Mosier, the man on the left, was the first custodian of Royal Palm State Park. His wife Hetty, stands in front of the door and his son, Charles, is to her right, in front. Mrs. W.S. Jennings, President of the Federation of Women's Clubs is the first on the left, second row. (Photo courtesy of the Florida State Archives)

The Lodge, Royal Palm State Park, October 22, 1920.  
(HASF 1975-23-145)



On May 30, 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Act of Congress authorizing the establishment of a national park provided that private and state-owned property was donated to the Federal Government. Earning the money for the park would take another thirteen years. Now the real test of Ernest Coe's inspiration and determination began. Heading the Tropic Everglades Park Association, Coe set out to win local friends and financial support for his work. He wanted two million acres of the Everglades region to be inside the park boundaries, which were to include Big Cypress, the Keys and much of the offshore reef territory. Coe's many letters went out in all directions. He dedicated his life and his finances toward saving the unique ecosystem of Everglades as a national park. However, Coe stepped on many toes as game hunters, bird shooters, commercial orchid merchants, fishermen, tourist manipulators, oil developers and real estate promoters saw that the park would

mean curtailment or the end of their personal pleasure and employment.

John D. Pennekamp, Editor of *The Miami Herald*, joined the forces in favor of having the Everglades become part of the National Park Service by providing continuous publicity in his newspaper. Not only did the newspaper support the park plan, but Pennekamp made many speeches to service clubs and other groups throughout Florida. His dynamism and resourcefulness were a great help to the Park Commission of which he was a member. Florida Power and Light furnished a most able and cooperative attorney, Mr. Will M. Preston, and the Herald's publisher, John Knight, financed luncheons, travel expenses and the creation of a three-dimensional replica of the proposed park which was displayed at five fairs and expositions. Finally, some of the potentially hostile forces were made to realize that the park would increase, rather than decrease, the value of their lands and the abundance of game.



During the Second World War, state funds accumulated, unspendable during the crisis. In 1945, Gov. Millard F. Caldwell reactivated the Everglades National Park Commission, which had gone out of existence during the war. The Commission, headed by August Burghard of Ft. Lauderdale, was able to get \$2 million from the State of Florida to purchase private lands to add to the state's holdings in the 'Glades area. This was the largest sum of money ever given by any single state for the establishment of a national park. However, it was not enough money to purchase all of the land which Coe had wanted in the park, and so Senator Spessard Holland, former governor of Florida and longtime supporter of the Everglades National Park idea, urged that a compromise on the original concept of the area would increase the chances of establishing a park. After establishment, it was felt, more lands could be added as the funds became available and local resistance subsided. Senator Holland set new boundaries that

excluded 4,000 private land owners whose property was in litigation.

The acreage within the new park boundaries included 385,693 acres of land and 461,482 acres of water. Coe was unwilling to compromise and accept a plan for a park containing less than the two million acres he felt should be included. Coe resigned from the project. He watched from the sidelines as a diminished area of the Everglades became a national park. Today, much of the area Coe had wanted in the original park has also become park lands. It includes Big Cypress National Preserve, Biscayne National Park and John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. On June 20, 1947, Everglades National Park became part of the National Park Service when President Harry S. Truman signed, in Washington, D.C., the bill that realized the dream. Seven thousand people joined President Truman at Everglades City for the celebration and dedication of Everglades National Park on Dec. 6, 1947. Preceding the dedication of the Park, the

United States Postal Service issued an official Everglades National Park three-cent postage stamp to commemorate the event.

Daniel B. Beard was named the first superintendent of the park by Secretary of the Interior, Julius Krug. Beard's background as a naturalist, businessman and administrator made this appointment an assurance of a firm and progressive park administration. He created the park as we know it today. As Beard said: "The Park is a wet and lonely wilderness, and so it must remain forever."

Cesar A. Becerra is a local historian who has been documenting the life and times of South Florida for nearly a decade. He and his wife, Maud Dillingham, were honored last year by the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs with the Angel Heart Award for their promotion of a "better understanding of the Florida Everglades."

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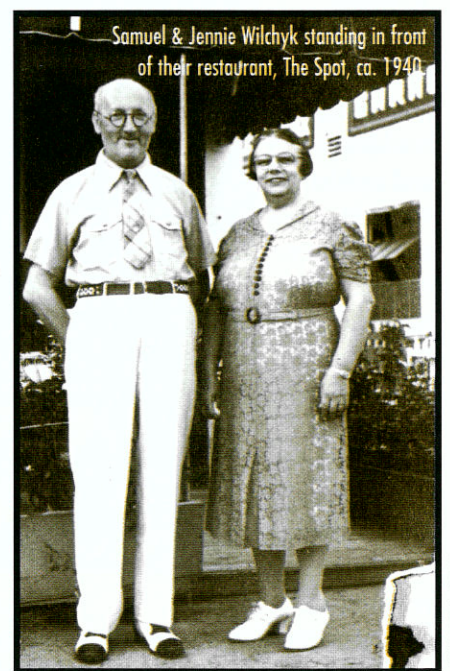
(\*Did we mention that we meant the '26 hurricane?)



# From Barbecue Shacks to the Mayfair Grill

By Geraldine H. Williams

When Miami started a major spurt of growth in the post-depression days of the late 1930s, tourists found few hotels and even fewer places to eat. Boarding houses, fish shacks near the bay, and barbecue joints on the outskirts of Miami, were the best locals could offer. As the Biltmore Hotel and other *grande dame* resorts came into reality, the elite who began wintering here were taken care of, but South Floridians, like the rest of America at that time, didn't eat out on a regular basis as we now do.



(HASF 1994-679-3)

*As Miami moved from a farm and fishing community to a cosmopolitan area, with people leaving the north to escape the cold weather and seek jobs, a more diverse ethnic population began to take root; bringing their cuisine with them.*

class experience. As Miami moved from a farm and fishing community to a cosmopolitan area, with people leaving the north to escape the cold weather and seek jobs, a more diverse ethnic population began to take root; bringing their cuisine with them. Much like what has happened to Miami in the last few decades with Cuban and Caribbean influences affecting the culinary tastes of South Florida, back in the '30s Miamians saw traditional southern cooking begin to change to meet the tastes of the expanding community.

My grandparents were part of this change when they came to Miami in 1936, escaping the depression and its effect on them in New York. Sam and Jennie Wilchyk opened a small open-air restaurant, christened The Spot, on Flagler Street,

close to what is now LeJeune Road. My mother, Zada Wilchyk Williams, managed the restaurant, acting as hostess, bookkeeper and cashier while my grandmother did the cooking. They began with a menu of traditional food, complete with a fried chicken dinner selling for 35¢. As the restaurant

became successful, my grandmother began cooking more of her own food, including stuffed cabbage, beef brisket and

The decades that followed saw not only a boom in the Miami area, but a change in lifestyle that included dining out as a regular part of the middle

chicken soup with homemade noodles. Jennie Wilchyk's cooking gained many admirers, including the judges and attorneys of the downtown legal set, the racing crowd on their way to Hialeah, and local families. Mother would regale my brother and me with stories of Eddie Arcaro and the jockeys eating too much, judges staying past their lunch hours and missing court starting times and the WW II goings-on of German infiltrators and submarines off the Florida coast. How much was true, I'll never know, but the pictures are still around. (The Historical Museum of Southern Florida has the Wilchyk-Williams family album containing pictures of The Spot restaurant with my grandparents, Samuel and Jennie Wilchyk, standing out in front.) When my grandmother died in the late 1960s, I never forgot how deeply touched my mother was by the The Spot's head waitress sending flowers to the funeral to let her know Jennie Wilchyk was still remembered.

Growing up in Miami in the 1940s and '50s, I do remember certain restaurants with almost religious fervor. As families didn't dine out unless it was a special occasion, those Sunday or Friday or Saturday evenings that we did go out were rare times to be treasured. Daddy would put on his best suit and mother, in full makeup, would don her nicest dress. We would have to take a bath and wear whatever mother told us to put on. We had to keep clean until we got in the car and were on our way to the restaurant. If we did not mind our parents, our bottoms got a good

spanking, so we knew to be on our best behavior. One time my brother "pitched a fit" in a restaurant and when mother's lifted eyebrow and saying his full name didn't do the trick, my father got up and took his son by the collar out to the '36 Chevy. There he stayed until we finished our dinner.

Choosing where to eat by the late '40s had become a difficult choice as so many good neighborhood delis and family-run



Zada Wilchyk Williams, the author's mother, is seated on the right with The Spot's first waitress. (HASF 1994-674-2)

restaurants were now flourishing. On Coral Way, the European bakeries and Jewish delicatessens were fat-rich palaces to eat in or take goodies home. As soon as you entered, the sights and smells were enough to add two pounds without eating a thing. There was a small restaurant near Riverside Elementary that served very plain, old fashioned, family-style meals. As soon as you sat down, the waiter set out a gigantic fresh relish tray loaded with crisp celery, carrots, green onions, radishes, etc. Next to it would be placed a basket of homemade rolls that was a meal within itself. The food was German, delicious and plentiful.

Downtown, one block east and to the rear of the old Olympia Theatre, was the justly famous Seven Seas restaurant with its wall of giant aquarium tanks, featuring a colorful array of tropical fish that you could enjoy watching during your meal. Their seafood and steaks were wonderful, but for the best seafood in Miami, our family always went to the two story building on the Miami River near Flagler Street that housed

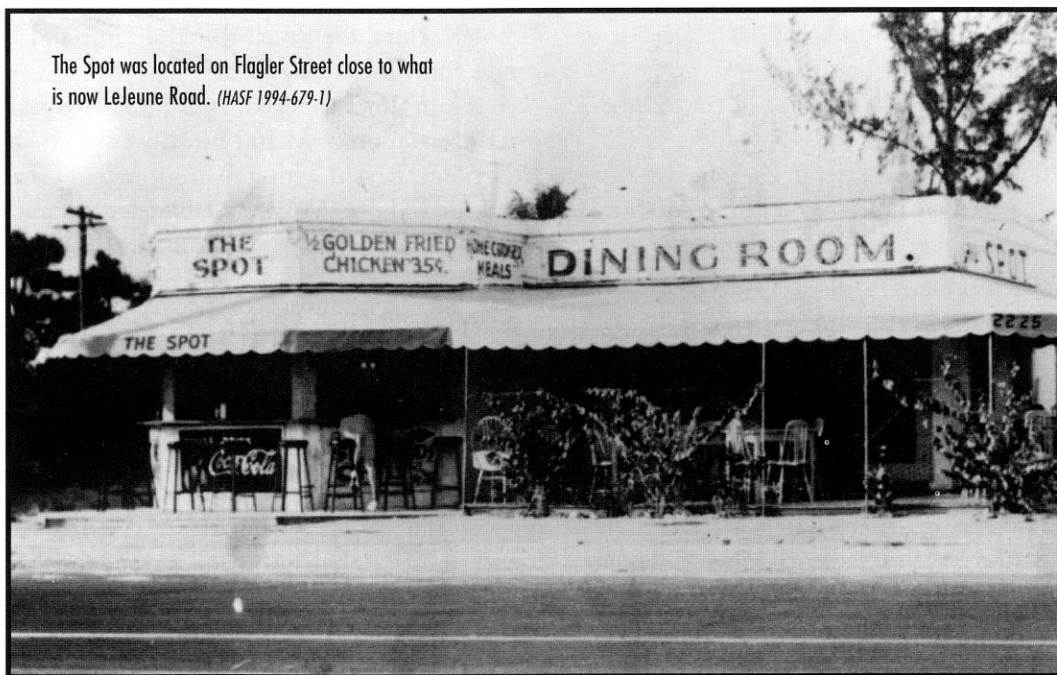
Capt. Tom's. This is where we would always take out-of-town relatives for a "real Floridian meal." You could sit inside its lacquered pine walls with mounted sailfish or go outside on the balcony that ran the length of the restaurant parallel to the river. That's

where we would sit, watching boats make their way up the river against the setting sun and enjoying the evening breeze.

First, the waiters would always bring a basket of homemade breads that included the first bran muffins I ever ate. I always thought they tasted strange, but enjoyed them with lots of ice cold butter slathered

on each mouthful. We listened with great care while the waiter told us what the fresh fish of the day was. You knew they were fresh as they had just come off the boats docking at Bayfront Park piers. Fresh cut french fries and homemade coleslaw were guaranteed. You were never disappointed with dinner at Capt. Tom's.

When Sorrento's and the Red Diamond restaurants came into Miami, rituals began at these Italian restaurants that were as much a part of the Miami scene as were the Orange Bowl and tourists. Eating the antipasto at Sorrento's, watching silk-suited, sunglassesed men walk quietly and ominously through the restaurant, back to the private rooms for their meals, made for great dining. The marinara sauce on the large shrimp and garlic bread, so sweet and crusty you would beg for more, made this S.W. 8th Street restaurant justly famous. The Red Diamond on Le Jeune Road became our high school "heavy date" rendezvous with the best made-from-scratch pizza anywhere. For the way those poor



The Spot was located on Flagler Street close to what is now LeJeune Road. (HASF 1994-679-1)

waitresses put up with us each football weekend, they should all be nominated for sainthood! We ordered one large pizza with twelve plates and then stayed forever; never ordering more, splitting the bill twelve ways and still trying to leave a decent tip.

Also part of the high school scene was McCrory's downtown five and dime with

their famous cole slaw-covered hot dogs. These all-beef, 25¢ delights and 5¢ Cokes were the mainstay diet of every friend who spent the day in downtown “shopping,” like teenagers now spend hours in the local mall. We always spent our last 25¢ in the Four for 25¢ picture booth after having carefully evaluated every nail polish and lipstick color in the cosmetic

slabs of beef and pork were thrown on a grill for final cooking before being served. I remember sitting at wooden picnic tables with a loaf of white bread still in the wrapper, salt in the Morton’s salt dispenser, iced tea served in pitchers and plastic glasses stacked on each table. The barbecue would be set down on each table in huge slabs with a plate of corn on the cob, and the overhead slow moving fans would keep you just cool enough on a summer afternoon to eat your fill.

For those who craved fancier dining, nothing could compete with Patricia Murphy’s orchid-strewn, pink table-clothed, candlelit restaurant in Ft. Lauderdale. This was the place for Sunday brunch after church or bridal luncheons. It was all too divine and too expensive, but it did have its run for years.

It was during this same time that Miami Beach changed dramatically. As credit cards came into common use, the beach was no longer just for the wealthy to come down and winter for weeks and months at a time. Now everyone could come for long weekends, conventions and summer vacations. The segregation laws fell with civil rights legislation in the ‘60s and great entertainers like Sammy Davis Jr. and Harry Belafonte no longer had to suffer the indignity of staying at the segregated motel on 79th Street and be driven over to the hotel to perform each evening. Now everyone’s money was welcome at the strip of hotels. Later, the Beach would decline and Bal Harbour would come into being.

Again times changed, and in the ‘80s and ‘90s the Art Deco section of Miami Beach was saved and revived. Now South Beach, with its European and Caribbean flavor, is alive and well. Coral Gables and Miami have forever changed into a Cuban and Latin American oriented community, with both its vigor and problems. The imported cuisine has spawned a new array of hotels, restaurants and cultural events. Coconut Grove has five star hotels, the old Biltmore Resort in Coral Gables is still with us and chic international restaurants are prospering. Today, multi-lingual cellular phone conversations go on over bottled water drinks with a twist of lime, but a few holdouts of old fashioned Southern, Jewish and Italian cooking can still be found in the city. Miami is still a wonderful place to find great food.



Geraldine H. Williams is a native Miamian and a registered art therapist. She graduated from the University of Georgia with a master’s degree in art education and currently teaches at Hungerford Elementary School in Eatonville, Florida. She is the author of several books on history and art therapy.

section. Our mothers had equal delight in going to lunch in the tearooms at Richard’s and Burdines.

The rare privilege of being out of school (Riverside or Ada Merritt) and going with my dressed-up mother to lunch at one of these tearooms, where models meandered in and through the tables showing the latest clothes, made me feel very grown up. The waitresses all had fancy cotton handkerchiefs pinned to their uniform bodice in corsage fashion behind their name tag and, as I remember, were very serious and gracious. No one called my mother “honey” or was too busy to bring an extra patty of ice cold butter on a lace doily. It was all very genteel, Old South and ladies only. Men and women weren’t doing business lunches nor were “yuppies” drinking bottled water or white wine and “shmoozing” with each other.

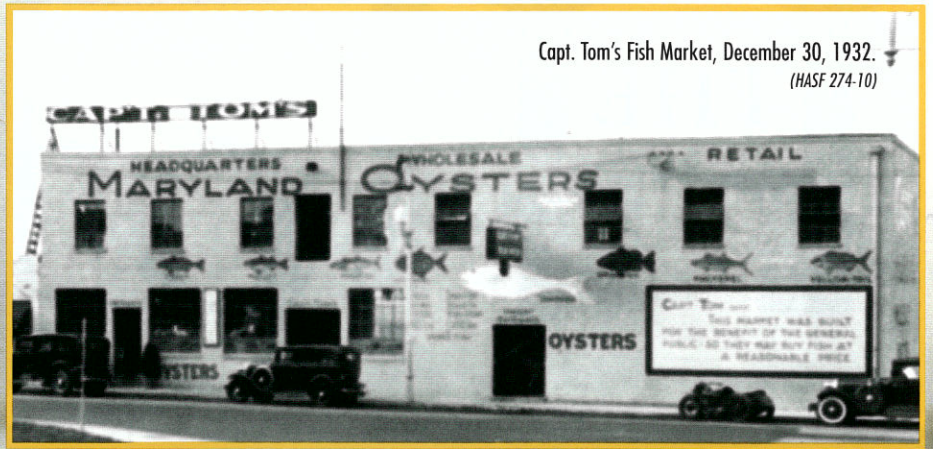
Later when Jordan Marsh was built, their tearoom, with its large windows facing the bay and garden room atmosphere, became the place for ladies to lunch. By then the lunch scene had changed and I was going there as a young woman with my friends. The scene was now martini lunches and “yuppies” having white wine and Lobster Newburg. Business lunches were very much the thing and men were dining there because the place had the best fresh-made hamburgers and fries since Jack’s Drive-In, down on Flagler Street near the Orange Bowl, had closed a few years prior.

On the outskirts of Dade County, going north on the old Dixie Highway, was a screened-in shack that provided the best barbecue. It bubbled away in giant pots until the

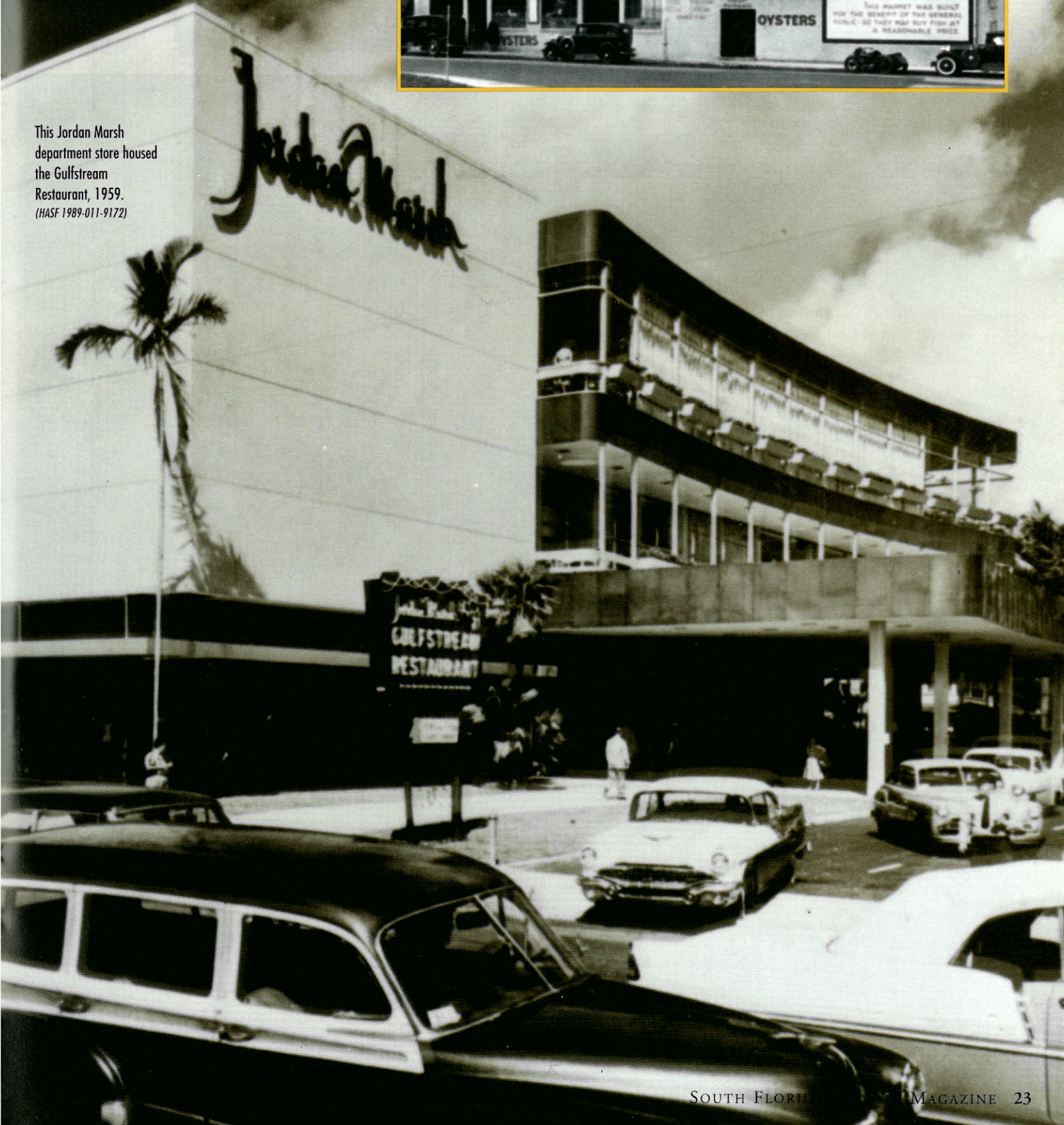


Woolworth's  
soda fountain,  
November 18, 1935.  
(HASF 380-10-1)

Capt. Tom's Fish Market, December 30, 1932.  
(HASF 274-10)

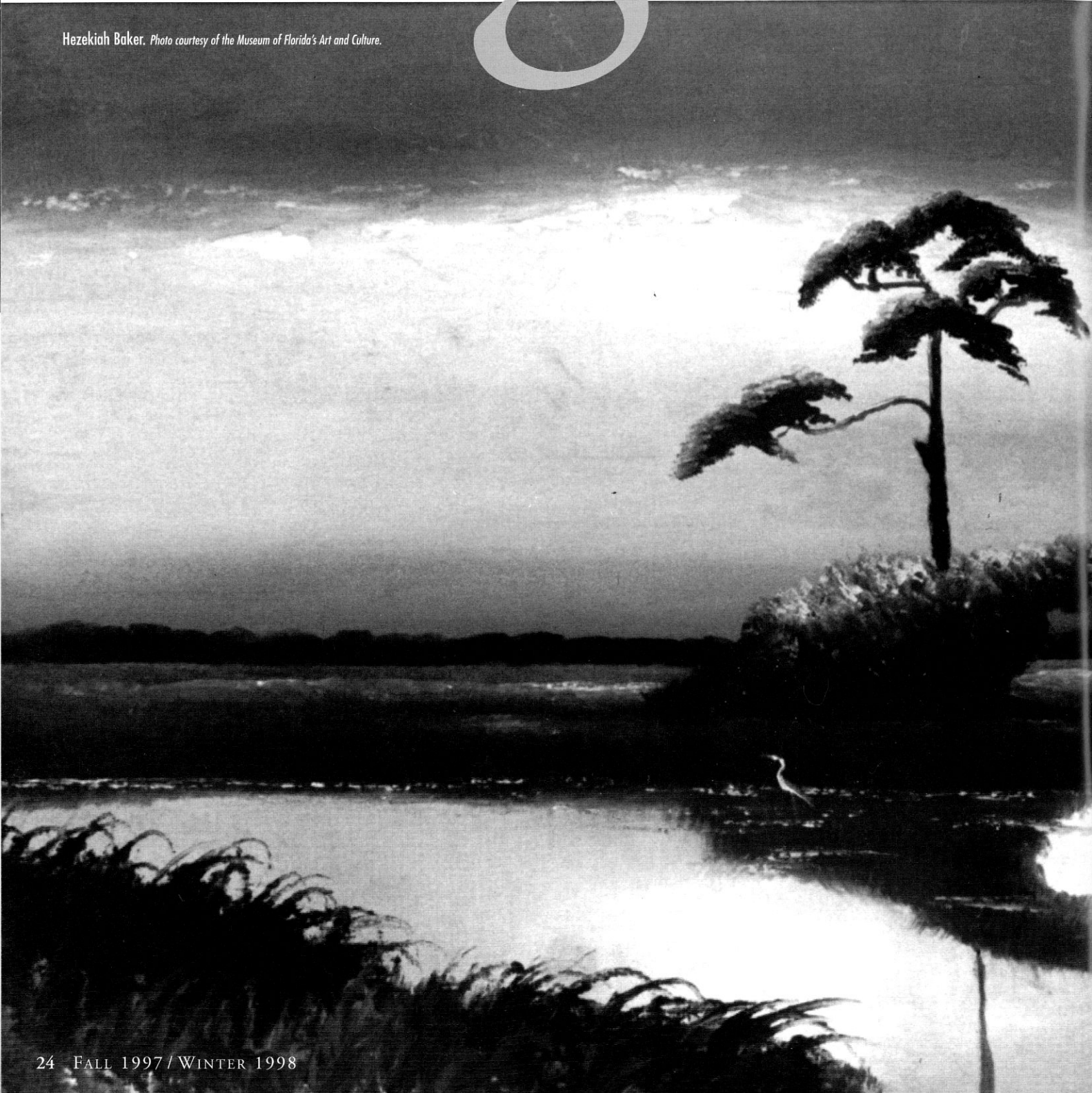


This Jordan Marsh department store housed the Gulfstream Restaurant, 1959.  
(HASF 1989-011-9172)



# THE Highway

Hezekiah Baker. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Florida's Art and Culture.





# aymen

BY JIM FITCH

Two world wars, a national depression and the land boom demanded Florida's attention in the first half of the twentieth century. Culturally, things began to pick up around 1950. That date marks the beginning of a series of events that ultimately led to the development of a well defined art movement that has grown to become the Indian River School.

It was about this time, mid 1950s and early 1960s, that the law of supply and demand began to kick in. Many native Floridians were reaping the benefits of their own and their ancestors' hard work. They had discretionary income and an inherited sense of belonging to a place and a culture that were uniquely their own. It was only natural that they would seek out art they could relate to. Alas, there was precious little of it to be had.

There were, however, some enterprising young men who had also inherited opportunities from their fathers and mothers, mostly in the form of education. Their parents had worked hard in the sawmills, turpentine camps, fields and kitchens to lay a foundation for their families. An opportunity sprang from the growing demand for regional art and presented itself to a few of these young black men on Florida's East coast.

Thus was born a movement a school and a black, self-taught tradition that I recognize as the beginning of Florida's resident, regional art tradition. Within that movement, which could be called the Indian River School, was a sub-group that I have labeled the Highwaymen. It was this sub-group that was responsible for feeding the demand for regional art all across Central Florida.

The dean of Florida landscape painters, the man who must receive the credit for founding the Indian River School and serving as mentor to a group of black artists that are a unique part of that school, the Highwaymen, was A. E. "Beanie" Backus of Ft. Pierce.

Humanitarianism, coupled with a predilection for the Bohemian lifestyle, made Beanie's studio, knowledge and advice available to any number of aspiring young artists. First in line to receive Beanie's attention was



*What evolved from that experience was a formularized method of painting Florida landscapes and a sales technique that earned the artists the title of Highwaymen—so called because their marketing and sales strategy consisted of carrying their paintings in the back of a car and peddling them up and down the highway.*



Alfred Hair.

*Photo courtesy of the Museum of Florida's Art and Culture.*

Alfred Hair. Backus took a special interest in Alfred. He became the first, if not the only, young black man to study seriously and take lessons from him. I am not sure how long Alfred remained under Beanie's tutelage. I do know that at some time he set up what amounted to an assembly line operation in Fort Pierce, turning out mass-produced Florida landscapes. Alfred, with his entrepreneurial spirit fully engaged, employed sky painters, tree painters, frame makers and salespeople who were all black artists who had been influenced in one way or another by Beanie Backus. Alfred signed the paintings. It is doubtful if it will ever be possible to determine which paintings are really his and which ones merely came from his workshop.

The early paintings were done on Upsom board and framed with carpenter's moulding purchased at a builders supply. The standard size

was 24x36 and the going rate was \$25-35, or whatever the market would bear.

What evolved from that experience was a formularized method of painting Florida landscapes and a sales technique that earned the artists the title of Highwaymen—so called because their marketing and sales strategy consisted of carrying their paintings in the back of a car and peddling them up and down the highway.

Alfred Hair died in his early thirties from a gunshot wound he sustained as an innocent bystander in a barroom fight. After Hair's untimely death, some artists who had been in his employ and others that had been influenced by his success, went their own ways. Not all of these black artists were satisfied to paint by formula. Some went on to improve their skills and ability. Consequently, we have two distinct styles represented among the

Highwaymen: the formularized, freely executed, sometimes carelessly rendered interpretations of the landscape, and the more sophisticated attempts that mimic Backus's work.

The first style represents a more original interpretation. It has some of the elements of "primitive" art, although not every one can agree what that is, and it can resemble genuine folk art, meaning it is free of artifice and undue influence from the academic art community. It might be considered less perfect realistically, but more powerful emotionally. It is also difficult to identify the artists who best represent either style because there is some of each in all.

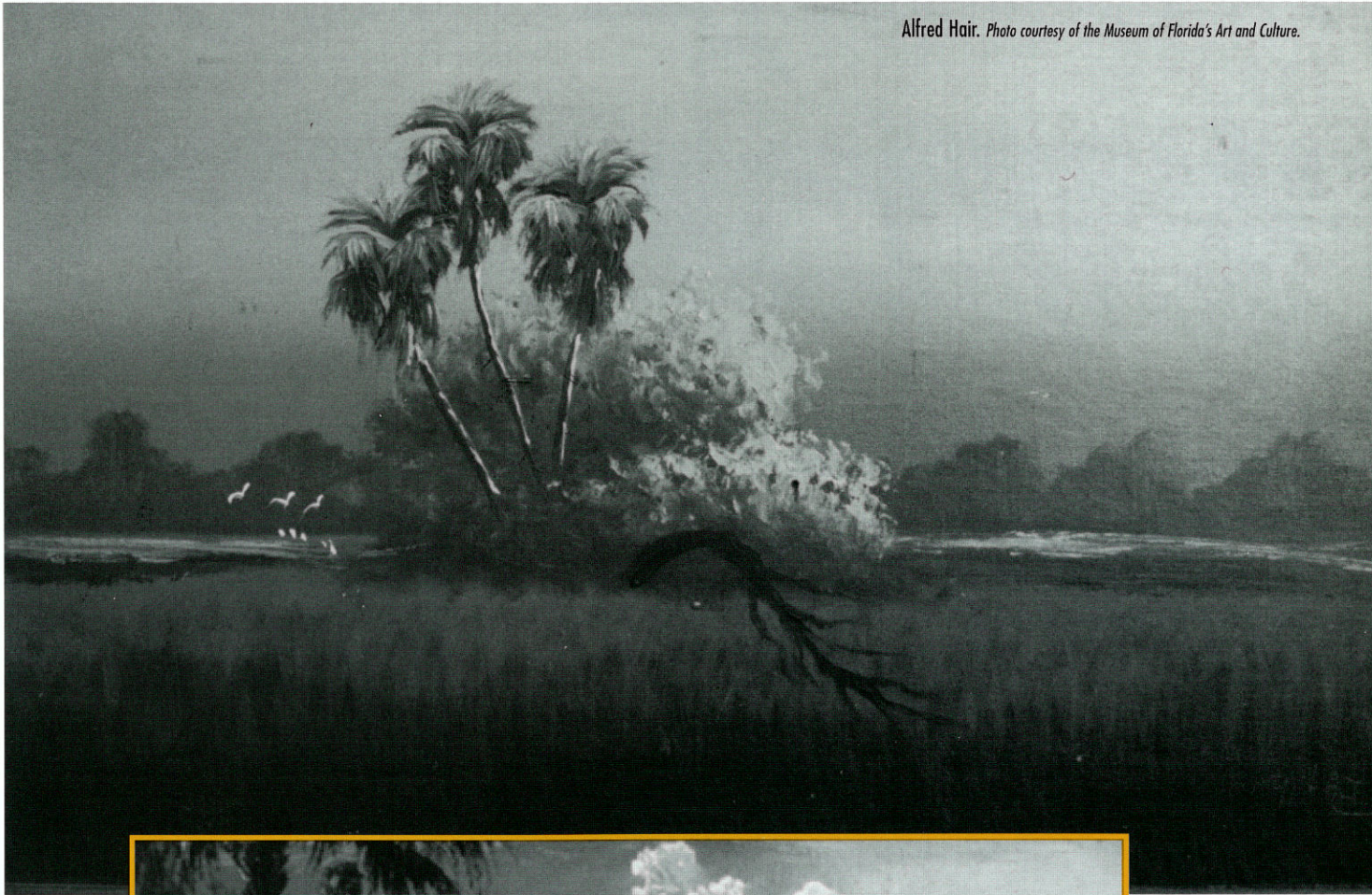
In addition to Hair, some of the other noteworthy black artists who were definitely a part of the Indian River School, if not of the Highwaymen, are: Roy McLendon, Livingston Roberts (a.k.a. "Castro"), Curtis Arnett, Hezekiah Baker, George and Ellis (deceased) Buckner, J. Daniels, Charles Walker and Mary Alice Carroll.

The Indian River School, no longer dominated by black artists, has grown to include some very fine painters with flourishing careers. The continuation of Florida's resident, regional art tradition is taking place in the studios of Florida's artists even now. The Florida Masters Collection of the Museum of Florida's Art and Culture contains works by the Highwaymen and is committed to "the rest of the story." The collection can be viewed in the Rotunda of the Student Services Center in Building B at South Florida Community

College. The college is located between Avon Park and Sebring on Highway 27.

The Museum of Florida's Art and Culture (MoFAC) has produced a thirty-minute video about the Highwaymen to provide a reliable reference for collectors, art historians and anyone interested in Florida's art history and heritage. The Museum's permanent collection of work by the Highwaymen is used in the video as a point of reference for the identification of the styles, techniques and charac-

Alfred Hair. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Florida's Art and Culture.



Ellis Buckner. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Florida's Art and Culture.



Alfred Hair. Photo courtesy of Stuart M. McIver.

teristics of each of the artists. The video costs \$39.95 (which includes sales tax and shipping).

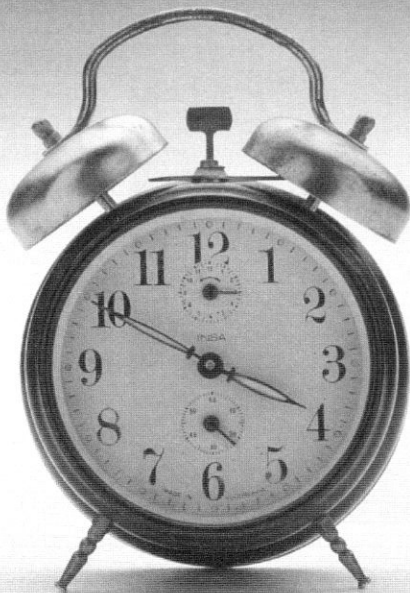
To order *The Highwaymen* contact MoFAC at (941) 655-0392 or (941) 655-5454.

Portions of this article were reprinted from "The Highwaymen

Revisited" in *Antiques & Art Around Florida* (Winter/Spring 1997) and "In Search of a Tradition" and "The Highwaymen" in *Art & Artists of Florida* (Winter 1994 and Spring/Summer 1994).



Jim Fitch is the Executive Director of the Museum Of Florida's Art And Culture. You may contact him at 13300 US 98, Sebring, FL 33870. Phone 941/655-0392. Fax 941/655-3240. Visit the Museum on the internet at: <http://www.954.com/AARF/mofac>.



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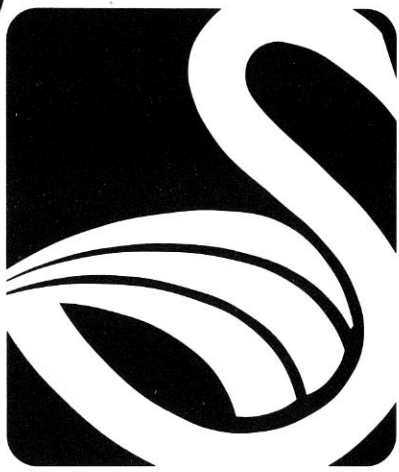
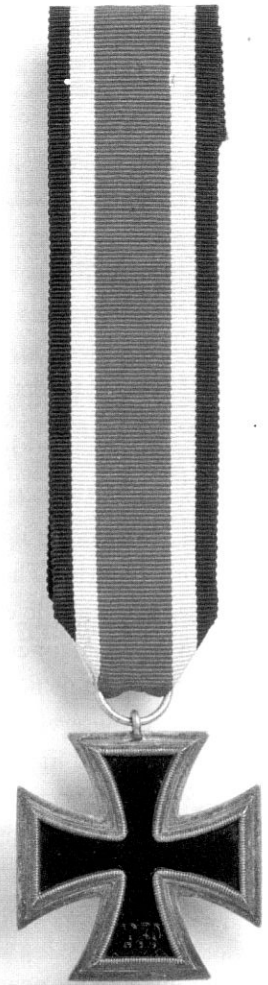
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THE NEWS OF HENDRY COUNTY: 1922-1931

By Ailsa B. Dewing, \$18.00.

Review by Joe Knetsch

Local history is the mainstay of history on all levels. Everyone has to start somewhere and that somewhere is "home." The source of much of our knowledge of "home" comes from the local newspaper, supplemented by the usual diaries, journals, letters, autobiographies, etc. In her recent volume, *The News of Hendry County: 1922-1931*, Ailsa Dewing has provided us with a synopsis of the local news of Hendry County, Florida. The value of Ms. Dewing's work is in the compact and more convenient manner in which the historically significant news of Hendry County is preserved.

Having worked in the files of the *Hendry County News*, available at the LaBelle Heritage Museum, and seeing the very fragile nature of its surviving numbers, I can appreciate Ms. Dewing's effort at preserving this important resource. This newspaper is one of the few sources of information on Hendry County and its development. Starting with its predecessor, the *Caloosahatchee Current*, the material made available by Ms. Dewing's book gives a very quick and handy reference to the events that shaped LaBelle and the surrounding communities. Like all communities, LaBelle has had its share of characters and villains, none of which are hidden from view in the local press. Notables, like Hendry County's one-armed sheriff, H. L. Delaney, the colorful attorney H. A. Rider, and a whole host of others, come to life in the pages of these newspapers, as edited by Ms. Dewing. There is even the story of how Alice Bailey's little dog helped to save the town from total destruction when its barking aroused its owner to the fire

engulfing the Royal Palm Hotel. All of these people, creatures and events are wonderfully preserved by Ms. Dewing's careful editing.

There is tragedy in these papers too. The hurricanes of 1926 and 1928 are recounted here, as are the all too frequent floods of LaBelle and the surrounding area. The tension-filled murder and the trial of the killers of Henry Patterson, an Afro-American who met his demise at the hands of a mob, is followed through with courage by the local newspaper, whose editor faced many personal threats. The impact of the Great Depression and its effect on a small rural community is clearly demonstrated to generations whose collective memory has forgotten the hardships of this national economic disaster. The triumphs and the tragedies of Hendry County reflect what was going on around the country, and especially in the smaller communities of Florida.

Ms. Dewing's work is not narrative history in the usual sense. It is, simply and basically, a synopsis of the events recorded in the local press of Hendry County. However, her accu-

rate and telling synopsis is extremely valuable and timely. As the loss of the *Suwannee County Democrat* clearly demonstrates, the need to preserve the local reportage in order to comprehend the past is important, indeed vital, to the recreation of our history locally, statewide or nationally. That Ms. Dewing has persevered in her effort, and is planning a second volume, is highly commendable and rewarding. For anyone doing research in the history of South Florida, this work is a must for the bookshelf. It also opens the world of the past to a new generation which, in the course of a few more years, may not have the actual papers to read. Ailsa Dewing's book is a readable and commendable effort, one this reviewer would like to see duplicated elsewhere.

Ailsa B. Dewing's book, *The News of Hendry County: 1922-1931*, may be ordered by writing: Hendry County News, P.O.B. 2968, LaBelle, Florida 33975-2968. The cost is \$18.00 plus postage.



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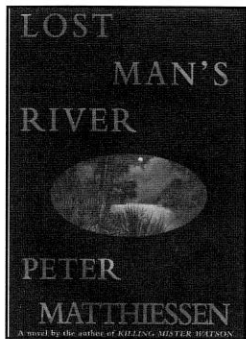
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**LOST MAN'S RIVER**

By Peter Matthiessen. Random House. 539 pages. \$26.95.

Review by Stuart McIver



Edgar “Bloody” Watson, gunned down by a citizens’ posse on Chokoloskee Island in 1910, has a powerful hold on the distinguished

American novelist, Peter Matthiessen.

In the second novel in his Watson trilogy, *Lost Man’s River*, he takes us back again into the Ten Thousand Islands through the eyes of Edgar J. Watson’s son. Lucius Watson searches for the truth about his father. Will he find the father he loved and looked up to, the most successful planter on the southwest coast? Or the outlaw murderer, rumored to have killed some 50 men and women? Or a little of both?

This long, rambling book, however, is far more than the story of a son’s quest for the truth about a complex father. Among the rich themes that Matthiessen explores are the environmental degradation of the Everglades, the Big Cypress Swamp and the islands, the birth and abuses of Big Sugar, the struggles of pioneers against the takeover of their lands by Everglades National Park and the ever present racial strife within a primitive southern society.

Watson came to northern Florida from South Carolina, but soon fled west to escape prosecution for murder. In Oklahoma, he killed the famous female outlaw, Belle Starr, then returned to Florida, settling this time at Chatham Bend in the 10,000 Islands. There the carnage continued.

Rumors of bodies, too many bodies, brought the final confrontation in October, 1910. On Watson’s

last trip to Chokoloskee, he beached his boat and stared at some 20 gun barrels.

But exactly who, Lucius wanted to know, had fired the first shot, the fatal bullet that opened a hole in his father’s forehead? And which of the other islanders had poured 33 bullets into his body?

Lucius sought to write a biography to stress his father’s achievements as the most successful planter in the islands. After all, the murders were just rumors. Weren’t they?

Watson had his defenders. Said Speck Daniels, a scuzzy gator poacher: “... Never killed a livin soul who didn’t need some killin.”

Lucius’ quest took him to sleazy corporate board rooms in Miami and to Golden Years Estates, a thinly disguised swipe at Golden Gate Estates, Gulf American Land Company’s environmentally destructive development near Naples.

But most of his search led into the wild and primitive Florida where Watson lived and died. It led into the Everglades and into the low-life Gator Hook Bar on the Loop Road just off Tamiami Trail on the northern edge of today’s Everglades National Park.

Dedicated in 1947, Everglades National Park takes a beating in *Lost Man’s River*. Again the words of Speck Daniels:

“Because Parks is diggin all them ditches and canals, lettin the fresh water out and the salt water in, and they will end up ruinin the spawning grounds of one of the great fisheries of the whole world!...They are destroyin the rightful property of the common people. Give ‘em two dollars an acre, take it or don’t, for two century’s worth of clearin and improvement. Parks burnt their fish houses, hundred-foot dock and all — that hurt, you know, to

see all that hard work wasted.”

Many Watson descendants opposed the park’s plan to burn down his great house at Chatham Bend, the most historically significant structure in the land the park acquired. Some wanted it preserved because it was their home as children. Some saw it as a possible tourist attraction. The magnificent old house, built of Dade County pine, remains a powerful symbol of menace throughout the book.

Matthiessen has been fascinated with Watson for two decades. *Killing Mr. Watson* (1990) unfolded the stormy events that climaxed with his lynching near Smallwood’s Trading Post. Told from the point of view of the islanders, this gripping book still stands out as one of our best Florida novels.

Less tightly focused, *Lost Man’s River* is a difficult book to read — but well worth the effort despite its length. The author gives us marvelous insights into how our South Florida world has evolved. It is, however, a dark picture he paints and there is no darker symbol of Florida’s pioneer past than Ed Watson himself.



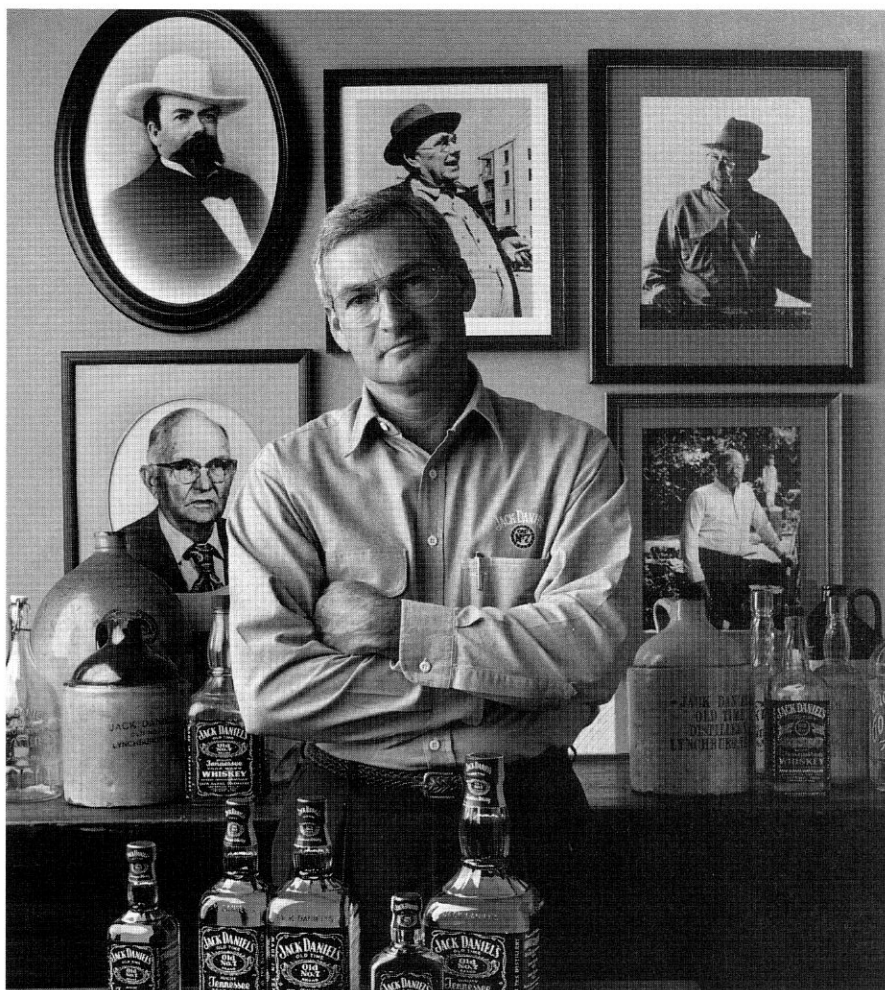
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Clockwise from top left, that's Jack Daniel, Jess Motlow, Lem Tolley, Frank Bobo and Jess Gamble. (Jimmy's in the middle.)

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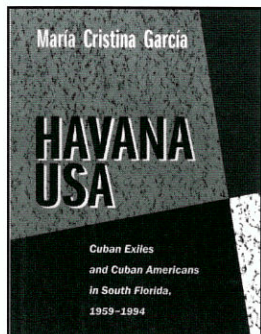
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# Book Reviews

**HAVANA USA: CUBAN EXILES AND CUBAN AMERICANS IN SOUTH FLORIDA, 1959-1994**  
 by María Cristina García. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 290 pages. \$35.00.

Review by Dr. Paul S. George



First came the literati followed by the sociologists, political scientists and demographers. They came to Greater Miami to study its

huge, vibrant Cuban-American community. Now a historian has focused her considerable skills on the story of this community. María Cristina García, in *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* has produced, in this reviewer's opinion, the finest study to date of the émigrés who have, in a relatively brief period of time, transformed their adopted community as radically as any other group of newcomers at other times and in other places in American history.

It seems so long ago, but it has been just forty years since Miami possessed in abundance those characteristics typical of a Deep South city. Additionally, it hosted a significant Jewish population, a vast seasonal tourist element, and, as the author notes, nearly 30,000 Cubans from earlier migrations, which makes it easy to understand why the first exiles from the Castro regime sought out the Magic City as their "temporary" home. Ironically, this temporary stay has not only lasted beyond the lifetimes of many of the first arrivals, but they, along with those who came later, have, in the author's estimation, assimilated structurally as few other immigrant groups in America have done in so short a period of time. At the same time, these exiles forged a uniquely bicultural identity, produc-

ing, in the process, a "Cuban-American culture."

While Professor García's explanation of the most important events and developments (highlighted by three distinct waves of migration) in the first thirty-five years since Fidel Castro's assumption of rule over Cuba may be familiar to many of us, her analysis and insights shed new light here. Especially edifying is García's explanation of the early efforts of the émigrés to "maintain a sense of Cubanidad" (Cubanness or Cuban identity). Reinforcing Cubanidad became an obsession for many émigrés, especially in the early years and decades of their exile. This effort took the shape of a variety of cultural activities and institutions that sought to "rally, inform, and entertain the community."

The 1970s, however, witnessed the emergence of a Cuban-American identity, as the realization by exiles that their stay might become one of an extended or permanent nature sunk in. Such a prospect had many important ramifications, especially in the economic and political realm. Clearly, it led to a vast increase in the number of Cubans who became American citizens.

The author provides sharp insights into those issues that have divided Miami's multicultural community and have led to simmering tensions and, on occasion, even violence within and without the "enclave." The debate over naturalization, the perception and reality of the Mariel Cubans, the divisive issue of dialog with representatives of the Castro government, and the desperate, dangerous tactics of anti-Castro Cubans in Miami, especially in the mid-1970s, are discussed here.

A final section of the book treats the topic of Cuban writers and scholars in exile. For many writers, "defining their relationship to the United States is as important as defining their ties to Cuba." The author explores the vexing situation of Cuban-American women writers, as well as the literature exploring and panning the community's excessive nostalgia for *la Cuba de Ayer* (the Cuba of yesterday) and the impassioned nature of exile politics.

Exhaustively researched, deeply analytical, contextually enlightening and elegantly written, María Cristina García's *Havana USA* will serve as a benchmark for the historical study of Miami's Cuban-American community for many years to come.



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