

# South Florida History

Volume 27 No. 3

Summer 1999, \$2.50



## **Under The Cantilever:** Constructing Miami Stadium

***SAILING BISCAYNE BAY***  
**Ford Expedition**

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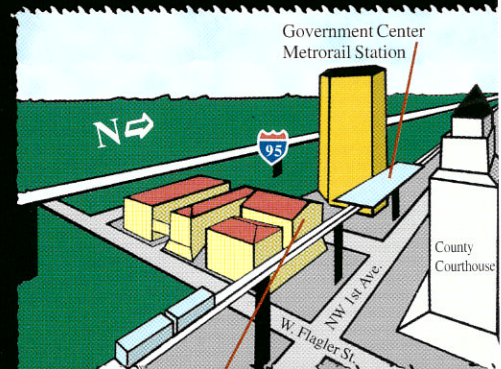


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**HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**



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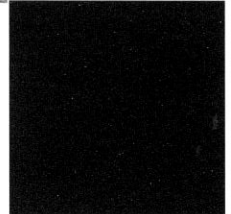
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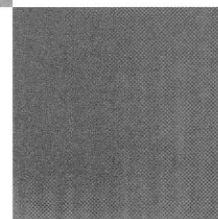
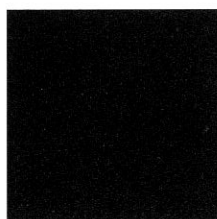
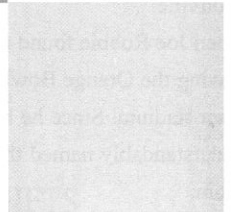
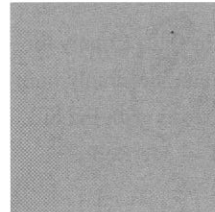
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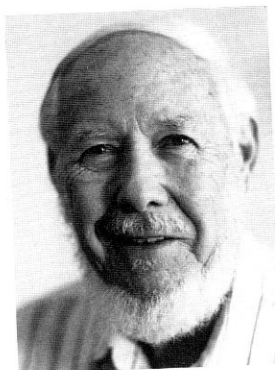
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# editor's notes



By Stuart McIver

The world of sports is everywhere. Turn on the tube and you'll find some kind of sporting event or you'll find a commercial, starring a sports celebrity trying to sell you something you don't want. Or need.

A city or a metropolitan area isn't considered big league unless it has at

least one major league sports franchise. Professional sports seems now to own our world, a world in which everything is for sale.

In this issue we're taking a tour of South Florida sports but we're stressing sports without a dollar sign. We'll look at the Bobby Maduro/Miami Stadium, yacht racing by men whose boats doubled as their family cars or trucks and camping, a purely amateur form of outdoor recreation.

And in this column we'll visit with a little known local hero from the 1936 Olympic Games in Hitler's Germany. But before we meet up with Les McNeece, we'll pay a tribute to the man who brought the big leagues to Florida.

Joe Robbie brought us the Miami Dolphins, who won the Super Bowl in 1973 to complete the only unbeaten, untied season in National Football League history. The Dolphins won the Super Bowl again the following year, unlike the baseball Marlins, whose World Series victory in 1997 was followed by a dismantling of the champions.

After Robbie introduced big league football into Miami, the state of Florida followed with big league basketball, soccer, ice hockey and baseball franchises all over the state, in Fort Lauderdale, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Orlando and Jacksonville.

When Joe Robbie found no government support in Dade County for improving the Orange Bowl or building a new stadium, he simply built his own stadium. Since he had not saddled the taxpayers with the bill, he understandably named the stadium after himself — Joe Robbie Stadium.

After his death the stadium was sold and with it the name of the man who brought big league sports to Florida. As a small token of respect for his achievement, I will dodge any temptation to mention the name the stadium now bears.

Now let's bound back to the night of August 12, 1936 and a baseball game played before a crowd of 125,000 spectators — the largest ever

to watch a baseball game anywhere. A 20-year-old infielder named Les McNeece was used to playing before crowds that numbered no more than a few hundred fans at friendly, down-home Westside Park in Fort Lauderdale, but this field was different.

One of the spectators that August evening was believed to have been Adolf Hitler, whose Germany was hosting the 1936 Olympics. The Berlin field was a poorly lit diamond on rough ground with none of the cozy fences that make home run hitters beam with joy. But that didn't bother Les. At 150 pounds he was not really a fence-busting slugger. What he had principally was speed.

McNeece's path to the Olympics was a roundabout one. His family left Hazelton, Indiana, for Florida in 1926, one day after the '26 hurricane struck the southeast coast. They lived first in Pompano, then moved to a

house on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale.

At Fort Lauderdale High School Les was a star — in basketball rather than baseball. Actually, his school had no baseball team so he played second base for the American Legion team and for the semi-pro Fort Lauderdale Tarpons in the East Coast League. Although he was paid \$2 a game by the Tarpons he maintained his amateur standing by having the team pay his father instead.

Les' big break came in 1935 when General Foods launched a major promotion for its star cereal, Wheaties. A squad of American amateurs, one from each state, would be recruited for tryouts in Chicago. Seventeen players from this group would tour Japan to play Japanese amateur teams.

Fort Lauderdale real estate agents got behind Les, the city's best baseball player, and backed him up through the purchase of Wheaties, since ballots took the form of box tops. Les got the second highest votes of any player in the country. Then in

the Chicago tryouts he won the starting shortstop job.

The following year U.S. Olympic officials announced they would field two American baseball teams for a demonstration game at the 1936 Olympics. The idea was to build support for making baseball a part of future Games.

McNeece's play in Japan earned him a spot as second baseman for the World Champions, who would play another American team called the U.S. Olympics. The Americans had two-and-a-half weeks in the Olympic Village to prepare for the big game.

On August 12, 1936 they took the field before some 125,000 spectators, most of whom knew nothing about the game. They sometimes cheered for infield pop-ups and remained silent for two-base hits.

*When Joe Robbie found no government support in Dade County for improving the Orange Bowl or building a new stadium, he simply built his own stadium.*



## *South Florida History*

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Published Quarterly by The Historical  
Association of Southern Florida  
Miami-Dade Cultural Center  
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e-mail: [publications@historical-museum.org](mailto:publications@historical-museum.org)  
Web Site: [www.historical-museum.org](http://www.historical-museum.org)  
ISSN: 10773819

**S**outh Florida History magazine is a journal of popular regional history published quarterly by the Historical Association of Southern Florida. Receipt of South Florida History Magazine is a privilege of membership in the Historical Association, the Fort Myers Historical Museum, the Collier County Museum, the Clewiston Museum, the Boca Raton Historical Society and the Florida History Center & Museum.

The Historical Association of Southern Florida is a nonprofit cultural, educational and humanistic institution dedicated to providing information about the history of southern Florida and the Caribbean, and to the collection and preservation of material relating to that history. Association programs and publications are made possible by membership dues, gifts from private sources and grants from federal, state and local agencies.

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This publication has been sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Arts Council; by the Miami-Dade County Commission; the Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council; and the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. The contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinion of the editors of *South Florida History* or the Florida Department of State, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of State.

Players heard phrases like "Was is das?" or more ominously "Sig heil!" They heard no Americanisms like "Kill the ump," which was a good thing since the umpire was the crowd-pleasing Tiny Parker, a colorful Miamian who hammed it up with his exuberant calls of balls and strikes.

Les played errorless ball in the early innings. He was still hitless, though, when he stepped to the plate in the last half of the seventh and final inning with the game tied, 5-5. McNeece, a left-handed hitter, faced right-hander Fred Heringer, Stanford University's star pitcher.

Les hit a pitch from Heringer into the gap between the left fielder and the center fielder. With no fence to stop what would otherwise have been a double the ball just kept rolling. And the speedy McNeece just kept running. When he crossed home plate with the winning run the outfielders still hadn't caught up with the ball.

"The German crowd was not quite sure what had happened," said Les, "but they knew it was something good so they applauded."

They applauded Les, too, when he returned home, the hero of the Olympic Games. And what happened to him in the years that followed?

Louisiana State University offered him an athletic scholarship not for baseball but for basketball. Les turned it down, preferring to try professional baseball. In the two years following his Olympic feat he signed low-paying contracts with the Brooklyn Dodgers and the St. Louis Cardinals organizations. Playing with Daytona Beach in the Florida League, he tore knee and ankle ligaments on a slide into second base. His baseball career was over.

McNeece came back home and on his twenty-second birthday married Wynona Gross of Hollywood. Until his retirement, he ran Wynona Cleaners, and his great day of glory faded away.

But Les couldn't stay out of baseball completely. "I coached Little League until I got fed up with the parents," he recalled.

In 1994 the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society rescued him from obscurity, featuring him in a museum exhibit celebrating the arrival of big league baseball in South Florida. Les supplied pictures and artifacts but never saw the exhibit. Plagued by heart and kidney problems, he died at 78, just before "Diamonds in the Sun" opened.

Still, the game goes on and we salute the best in Florida sports, amateur and professional.

-SFH



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# around the galleries

a closer look at the member museums... don't read this page without a pen and your favorite calendar!



## HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

Miami-Dade Cultural Center, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, Phone: 305-375-1492 Fax: 305-375-1609 E-mail: [www.historical-museum.org](http://www.historical-museum.org) Open Monday Through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Thursdays until 9 p.m.; Sundays, 12 noon - 5 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Adults \$5; Children 6-12 \$2. Members Free.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

#### **HISTORIC PURSUIT LIMO RALLY**

**Saturday, October 2, 1999**

Join the Historical Museum of Southern Florida's Tropees for their Fifth Annual Historic Pursuit Limo Rally, a Miami history Trivial Pursuit® Game/Scavenger Hunt/Progressive Cocktail Party combination. The object of the game is to have fun and raise funds for the Historical Museum of Southern Florida.

#### **SEVENTH ANNUAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM GOLF CLASSIC AND SILENT AUCTION**

**October 27, 1999**

Historic Biltmore Golf Course and Hotel, 1210 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables. The Historical Museum's Golf Classic is a "Best Ball" tournament benefiting educational programs. Call Pat Helms at (305) 375-1492.

#### **"LINKING THE FUTURE WITH THE PAST"**

##### **SILENT AUCTION**

**October 27, 1999**

Join us for a night of fun! Bid on fabulous and unique auction items, enjoy a scrumptious buffet dinner, open bar and entertainment. Walk away with one of many door prizes and one lucky winner will receive half of the money raised in the 50/50 Cash Drawing. For more information, contact Carolyn Gonzalez at (305) 375-1492.

#### **HARVEST FESTIVAL**

**November 20-21, 1999, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition Center, Coral Way and SW 112 Avenue. If you've started shopping for that perfect holiday gift, you might want to stop by the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Harvest Festival presented by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. More than 400 craft artists will display items ranging from wood crafts to toys and miniatures, quilts and much more. Admission: \$6 for adults, \$2 for children (5-12).

#### **MIAMI: THE GATEWAY CITY**

**Fall, 1999**

Call for information about this wonderful schedule of lectures and concerts dealing with cultural diversity. 305-375-1492

### SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

#### **CUBA IN OLD MAPS**

**Now - September 19, 1999**

With the generous support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, *The Miami Herald* & *El Nuevo Herald* and AT&T, the museum presents this special exhibition of antique Cuban maps. Cuba in Old Maps will be the first exhibition of its kind in the United States devoted solely to the mapping of Cuba.

#### **MYTHS AND DREAMS: EXPLORING THE CULTURAL LEGACIES OF FLORIDA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**October - January 2000**

The milestone of beginning a new millennium affords us the opportunity to contemplate our past and consider our future. Visitors will be able to compare and contrast a variety of American experiences as they explore the question, "What do we Americans share as our common heritage?" Focusing primarily on Florida, Yucatan and the Caribbean, *Myths and Dreams* will explore the broad range of cultures and foreign influences that comprise American culture in Florida.

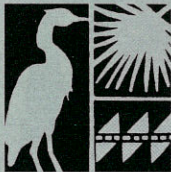
#### **GATEWAY OF THE AMERICAS**

Preview the work-in-progress multimedia addition to the museum's permanent exhibit, *Tropical Dreams: A People's History of Southern Florida*. Using computers and audio and video components, explore the last fifty years of southern Florida's development, a burst of activity that produced more changes in the area than any other time period since its settlement.

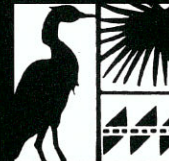




**Fort Myers Historical Museum 2300 Peck Street, Fort Myers (941) 332- 5955.** Open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed Sundays and Mondays and most holidays. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$3 for children ages 3-12. Museum members are free.



**Collier County Museum**  
3301 Tamiami Trail East,  
Naples (941) 774-8476. 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 South Commercio Street, Clewiston (941) 983-2870.** 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.



**Boca Raton Historical Society Town Hall, 71 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton (561) 395-6766.**

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.



**Florida History Center & Museum Burt Reynolds Park, 805 North U.S. Highway 1, Jupiter (561) 747-6639.** 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 p.m. - 5 p.m. \$2.



# recent happenings

at the historical museum of southern florida

## ANNUAL MEETING 1999

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The 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting was held Thursday, April 29, 1999, with the election of officers followed by an award ceremony, an enchanting presentation on Indian tourism in South Florida and a tour of the *Coral Gables: The City Beautiful* exhibit.

The election of Historical Association of Southern Florida Officers and Trustees was conducted, with a speech by Robert B. Battle, and awards were given to distinguished members of the Association, parting board members, and Museum employees Randy F. Nimnicht, Becky Smith and Dawn Hugh, given for lengths of service of 25 and 15 years. Then Patsy West, Director of the Seminole/ Miccosukee Photographic Archives in Fort Lauderdale, gave an enchanting talk about her extremely popular new book, *The Enduring Seminoles: From Alligator Wrestling to Ecotourism*. The large crowd of attendees then headed to the lobby for a delicious lunch, and followed by a tour of the fascinating exhibit *Coral Gables: The City Beautiful*, was given by Dr. Paul S. George and Samuel D. LaRoue, Jr.

The Nominating Committee of the Historical Association of Southern Florida announced the 1999-2000 Slate of Officers and Trustees: **Chair of the Board**, Anna Price, Ph.D.; **First Vice Chair**, William Ho; **Second Vice Chair**, Linda Lubitz; **Secretary**, Edward A. Swakon; **Treasurer**, Richard A. Wood; **Past Chair**, Robert B. Battle; **To Be Elected**, Angela R. Bellamy, Neil A. Burell, Edward H. Davis, Jr., James Leshaw, Samuel D. LaRoue, Jr., Raul Masvidal, Lewis F. Murphy, Dorothy Norton, Marie Pappas, Michael Patti, Lorraine Punancy-Stewart, Dr. Michael Rosenberg, Kathleen M. Shaw, Nancy B. White; **Continuing to Serve**, Andrew Albury, Benjamin Bohlmann, Jaime J. Conesa, Deborah S. Klem, Dr. Edmund I. Parnes, Scott A. Poulin, Dinizulu Gene S. Tinnie, Eric Williams; **Nominating Committee**, William Ho, Chair; Anna Price, Ph.D., Deborah S. Klem, Phyllis Shapiro, Dr. Paul S. George. A special thanks to the Trustees rotating off: Emilio F. Alvarez, Stuart Block, Thomas Daniel, Thomas Paligraf, Lourdes Vicedo, Nancy White and Judy Wiggins. -SFH

Past Chair, Robert B. Battle, congratulates new Chair of the Board, Anna Price, Ph.D.



Patsy West and Randy Nimnicht teach guests how to pronounce Miami "historically."





## ANTIQUE MAPS OF CUBA

• • • •

**N**ow through September 19th at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF) are a rare collection of antique Cuban maps spanning four centuries. The exhibit *Cuba in Old Maps* is the first exhibition of its kind in the United States devoted solely to the mapping of Cuba. Scholar and Cuban map collector Emilio Cueto will guest curate this special exhibit

*Cuba in Old Maps* will be accompanied by a comprehensive illustrated catalogue. Both the exhibit and the accompanying catalogue will feature a chronological and thematic presentation of the finest examples, from a variety of materials and sources, of four centuries of international Cuban cartography.

"The catalogue will give the most comprehensive analysis of Cuban maps ever prepared," Cueto said.

*Cuba in Old Maps* is a unique way to explore the history of Cuba and its relationship to the rest of the world. The maps will explore

how both natives and outsiders viewed Cuba over the centuries, revealing academic, artistic, geographic, military and socio-political influences.

According to Cueto, the exhibition will be divided into three main sections: Cuba, Havana and the Countryside/Provincial Cities.

HMSF's presentation of *Cuba in Old Maps* will promote new scholarship in Cuban studies and will serve to both strengthen and broaden the public's knowledge and appreciation of a country which has had such a strong impact on the nation, and the South Florida community in particular.

*Cuba in Old Maps* is produced by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida and is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Arts Council; and with the support of the Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, members of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and The Miami Herald. **-SFH**

## GATEWAY PROGRAM SERIES FEATURES DIVERSITY

**M**iami: *The Gateway City* program series opened this Spring with rave reviews from the local media. The Spring 1999 season, which ran from March 13—June 12, was the first of a series of three seasons, and showcased panel discussions, musical concerts, fiction readings and other unique events focusing on Miami's environment and cultural diversity. The series will continue in the Fall of 1999 and Spring 2000, and is coordinated by Dr. Stephen Stuenkel, Folklife Curator at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF).

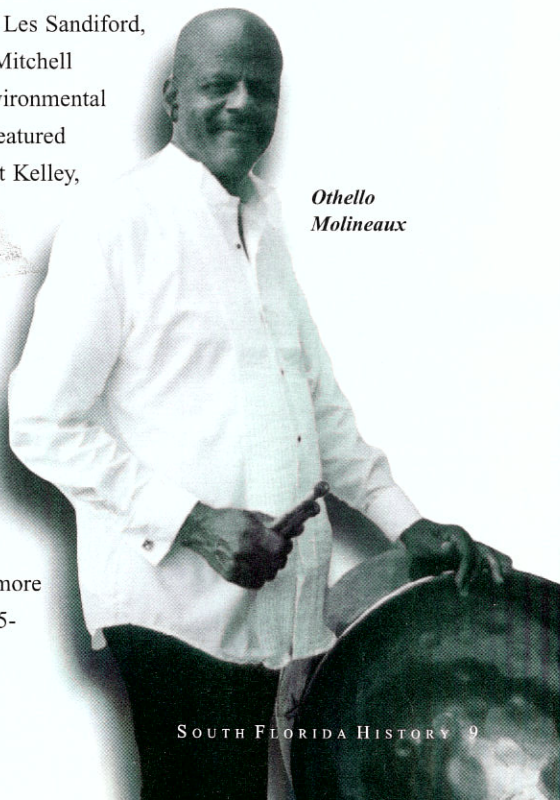
Stuenkel, recognized in "The Best of Miami" issue of the weekly *Miami New Times* as "Best Promoter of Cultural Diversity," asked the question: How can we draw on our diverse cultural resources to forge a greater sense of community here in South Florida? HMSF's goal is to serve as a central forum for dialogue about current issues facing the city and as a space for related artistic presentations. A total of twelve programs will be held at the museum, six of which are featuring panel discussions on the topics of migration, environment, urban planning, ethnic relations, the media and the arts. Five additional programs are devoted to musical performances, fiction and poetry readings, and experimental arts. A final program, in May 2000, will be a festival on the theme of "Making Miami Home."

On Saturday, March 13, "Coming to Miami," a panel discussion on the topic of migration was held, which included panelists Marleine Bastien, Cheryl Devall, Lisandro Perez, Alex Stepic and Gregory

Bush. On Saturday, April 10, "Steel Drums for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," a steel pan making demonstration was given by Michael Kernehan, and the Othello Molineaux Quartet performed. On Saturday, April 17, the "Pre-Millennium Pan African Book Jam," moderated by HMSF Board Member Dinizulu Gene Tinnie, was held at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. On May 8 "Literary Perspectives on Miami" included fiction and poetry readings with writers Adrian Castro, Joanne Hyppolite, Les Sandiford, Ana Veciana-Suarez and Mitchell Kaplan. On June 12, "Environmental Issues in South Florida" featured panelists Bob Carr, Robert Kelley, Jean Evoy and Sam Poole.

The Fall 1999 season includes two panel discussions, a Caribbean percussion concert & jam session and experimental/ multimedia arts performances, all at the museum. The calendar for the Fall 1999 will be available in August. For more information, call (305) 375-1492. **-SFH**

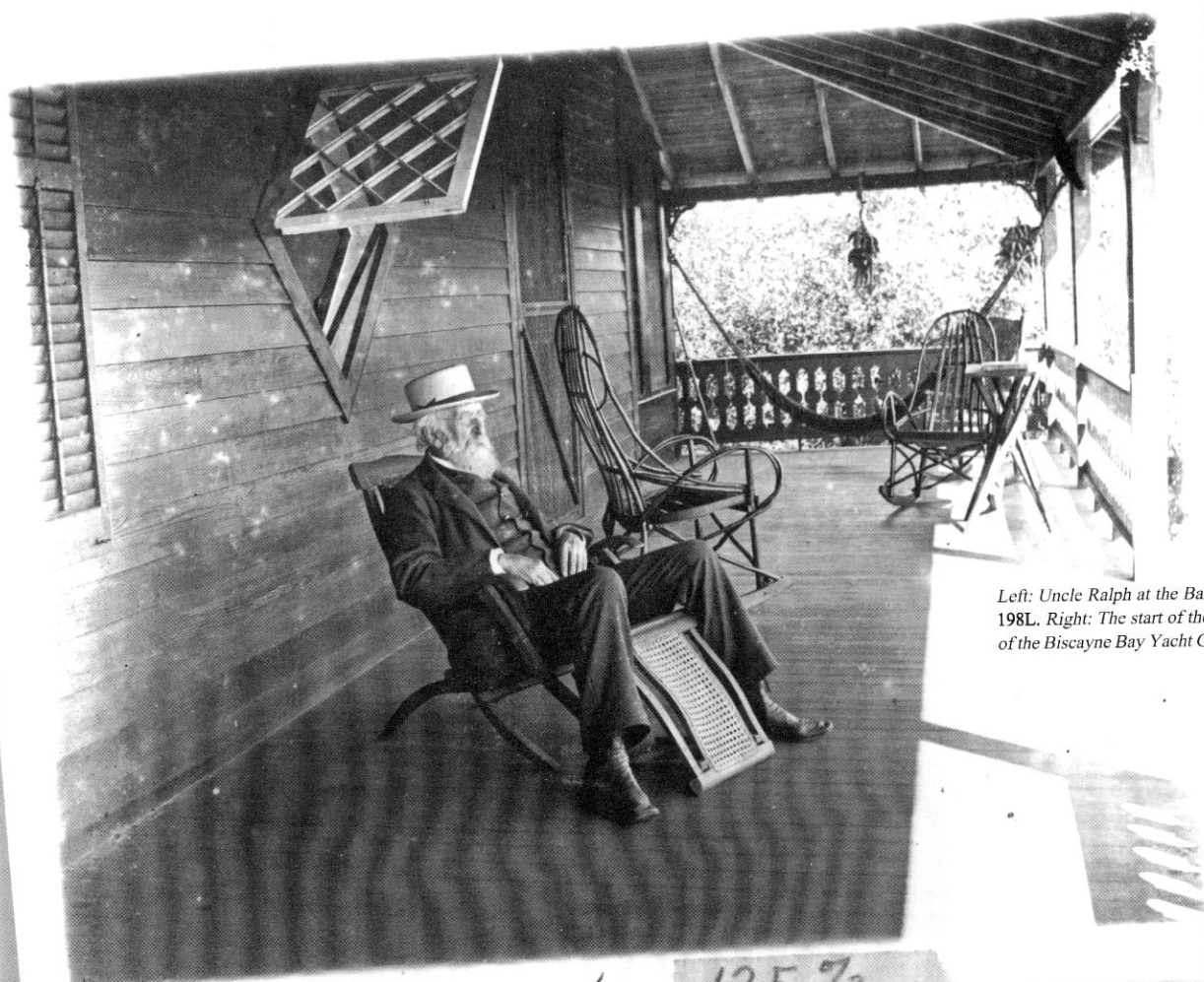
**Othello  
Molineaux**





# BOATS ON

By the end of the 1880s Biscayne Bay sported boats-a-plenty. Kirk Munroe, America's most popular author of boys' books, noted with approval the wide variety of sailboats anchored in front of almost every home in Coconut Grove.



Left: Uncle Ralph at the Barnacle. Hasf 198L. Right: The start of the first boat race of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club. Hasf 367E.



# BISCAYNE

## Bay

A boat that particularly interested him was *Ada*. In earlier times it had been the flagship of a New York yacht club. Now it was, as he wrote "a boat of all work" for its owner, Bill Brickell, who ran a trading post at the mouth of the Miami River.

What, the sportsman Munroe wondered in the winter of 1887, would *Ada* do in a race? Maybe it was time to see if there were enough sailors on the bay to warrant a regatta. Munroe was a true trail-blazer. During his days in New York the Wisconsin native founded the American Canoe Association, the New York Bicycle Club and the League of American Wheelmen with some 100,000 bike-riding members. In Coconut Grove he started South Florida's

first yachting club and brought the area its first tennis court and its first baseball team. He and his remarkable wife, Mary Barr Munroe, helped establish the Florida Audubon Society, Miami's first Boy Scout troop and Coconut Grove's first library. Along the way he found time to write 35 books.

One week before Washington's Birthday, always a big holiday in those days, Kirk Munroe called a meeting of four enthusiastic sailors, including Ralph Middleton Munroe, his close friend but no relation. The meeting was held at Kirk's home, which bore the strange name Scrububs. The word came from the fumbling attempt of a young boy trying to pronounce "suburbs."

BY STUART MCIVER







Fifteen boats entered the first regatta ever held on Biscayne Bay, so many that the regatta committee decided to hold the event in three classes. Six dinghies formed a small boat class, six more comprised an under-35-foot class and the final three the 35-feet-and-over category.

Bill Brickell's sloop *Ada*, from Staten Island, was scheduled to compete against two sharpies, *Pelican*, owned by two brothers, Tom and Ed Hine, and *Amy*, owned by Frederick S. Morse, a direct descendant of Samuel Morse, progenitor of one of America's most famous families.

Ralph Munroe, Biscayne Bay's premier boat designer and builder, entered his 28-foot sharpie, *Egret*, against a field consisting mostly of other sharpies plus Dick Carney's fast cat rig, *Maggie*. Kirk Munroe's *Alligator* was primed to sail in the small boat class, along with John Addison's *Edna*.

Shortly after sunrise other boats loaded with spectators sailed onto the bay to watch the area's first boat race, many of them in front of Charles

Top: Bill Brickell. **Hasf 62-24-114.**  
Left: The Sharpie Egret as she sails to Bear Cut. **Hasf 79-78-45.** Below: Biscayne Bay Yacht Club at the Barnacle boathouse. **Hasf x-98.**





Peacock's Bay View House, the hotel where the races would start and end. And where the big post-race party would be held.

The small boat course was a four-mile test to stakes at Bear Cut and back. The larger boats sailed around the Cape Florida channel buoy, then to Bear Cut and finally a return to Peacock's hotel.

The winners would be determined at the finish line by two esteemed judges and timekeepers, Charles Peacock himself and Alfred Munroe, Ralph's aged uncle, a man so revered that most of Coconut Grove called him Uncle Ralph. Unfortunately, no records survive of the times of the winners, or the order of finish, but the identity is known of the three boats and skippers who sailed first across the finish line in the inaugural Biscayne Bay yachting regatta.

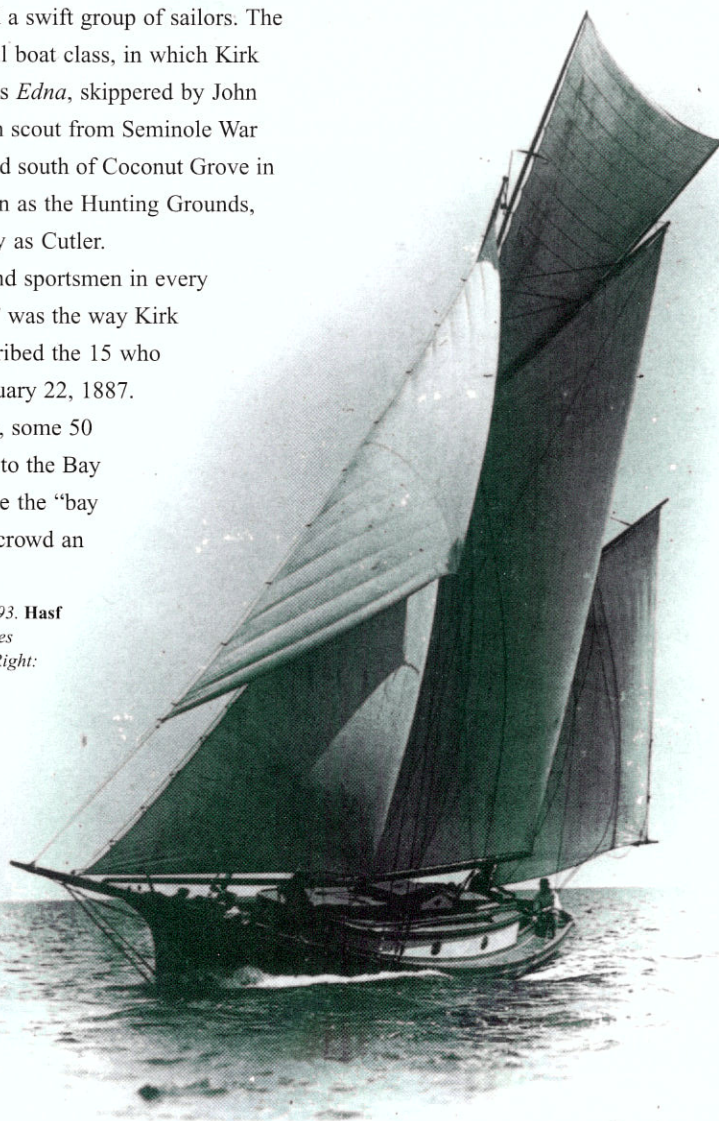
The big winner was the boat that had caught Kirk Munroe's eye. Bill Brickell sailed his Staten Island sloop *Ada* first across the line. In Second Class Captain Dick Carney's *Maggie* finished ahead of Ralph Munroe and a swift group of sailors. The winner in the small boat class, in which Kirk Munroe sailed, was *Edna*, skippered by John Addison, an Indian scout from Seminole War days. Addison lived south of Coconut Grove in an area known then as the Hunting Grounds, better known today as Cutler.

"...real sailors and sportsmen in every sense of the word" was the way Kirk Munroe later described the 15 who competed on February 22, 1887.

After the regatta, some 50 partiers moved up to the Bay View House, where the "bay view" offered the crowd an

eastward vista of the race course itself and in the distance the Cape Florida Lighthouse, darkened in 1887 after the Fowey Rocks Light Station began operation.

Charles Peacock, born in London, probably served the festive group his famous fish chowder. Chowder would later become a trademark of the Washington's Birthday celebration held each year by the yacht club that was born that day. After the race Kirk and Ralph formed the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, which remains today the oldest organization on the southeast Florida mainland. **-SFH**



Top: Kirk Munroe in 1893. **Hasf 138D.** Far Right: Charles Peacock. **Hasf 87D-1.** Right: The sharpie Micco. **Hasf 81D.**



# *the* Under Cantilever: Opening Night at Miami Stadium

by William E. Brown, Jr.

and Rolando Llanes



February 3, 1965.  
Hasf 189-011-15467.

**O**n a warm summer evening, August 31, 1949, a record crowd of 13,007 gathered in Miami to watch the hometown Sun Sox of the Florida International League (FIL) defeat the visiting Havana Cubans, 6 to 1. Sun Sox pitcher Vicente Lopez performed brilliantly, shutting down the mighty Cubans for eight innings. The crowd was unusually large for a game of little consequence, as Havana sat comfortably atop the FIL standings and Miami floundered in second place. It was much more than an ordinary baseball game that brought thousands of spectators together that steamy Miami evening. Miamians gathered to celebrate opening night at Miami Stadium, the newest star on South Florida's architectural landscape.





That evening, baseball fans entered a state-of-the-art sports palace of monumental proportions; new in every sense of the word and ready to take its place as one of the premiere sports facilities in the country. The new ballpark made an immediate and lasting impression on everyone who attended the game. The majestic sweep of the cantilevered roof and the splendid glitter of neon lights proudly stamped Miami's unique signature on modern minor league ballparks. At 7:45 p.m., a group of invited guests and stadium officials gathered around home plate facing the overflow crowd. Keith Phillips, Sun Sox director and Mayor of Coral Gables, introduced the assembled guests which included Major League Baseball Commissioner "Happy" Chandler; umpiring legend Bill Klem; Dodger farm director Fresco Thompson; Cuban Consul General Manuel Velasquez; Cuban Senator and brother of the president, Francisco Prio-Socarras; Florida Congressman George Smathers; and stadium architects Joseph and William Holman.

Commissioner Chandler delivered the opening address, commenting that he knew of "no more beautiful park anywhere..."

In addition to the long list of dignitaries in attendance that night, Miami fans met the owner of this shiny jewel on the Miami landscape. In a surprising announcement, Jose Braulio Aleman, a seventeen-year old Cuban student at the University of Miami assumed ownership of Miami Stadium and the Miami Sun Sox. As Aleman shook hands with invited guests in the panoramic pressbox, the question must have been on the lips of thousands of fans, "Who is this young man, and where did he come from?" In a brief statement, Aleman, Jr. offered the use of the stadium to the city of Miami and its citizens, a gesture enthusiastically appreciated by Miami Mayor Robert Floyd in his own short address. Aleman also paid homage to the foresight of the Seminole Indians and to the spirit of South Florida pioneer Carl Fisher. He also recognized the contributions of local city and county commissioners by acknowledging their steadfast cooperation. *Miami Herald* reporter Jimmy Burns commented in his





newspaper column, "The fans looked upon a playing field, which from the stands appeared as smooth as a golf green. The white sand of the base paths and the pitcher's mound offered a striking contrast."

The 1950's brought the beloved Brooklyn Dodgers to Miami Stadium for spring training exhibition games that attracted the biggest crowds in the ballpark's history. Heroes of baseball's golden era such as Jackie Robinson, Gil Hodges, Pee Wee Reese and Roy Campanella thrilled local fans and faced such notable foes as Joe DiMaggio's Yankees and Ted Williams' Red Sox. The late 1950's marked the return of professional baseball to Miami Stadium. The minor league Miami Marlins began play in 1956 and in 1959 the Baltimore Orioles started a 30-year tradition of spring training baseball at Miami Stadium.

Remarkably, Miami Stadium was in playing condition just eight months after ground breaking in December 1948, a testament to the will, determination and deep pockets of the ownership group, Miami Stadium Inc. The financial force behind this company was Jose Aleman Sr., the former Minister of Education in Cuba, father of young Jose Aleman and a controversial figure in Cuban and South Florida politics. The elder Aleman, who died in 1950, lived long enough to see his son installed as owner and president of Miami Stadium and the Miami Sun Sox. The baseball future for Miami appeared bright to many residents.

The Nashville, Tennessee firm of Marr Holman designed Miami Stadium. One of the firm's most well-known buildings is the Belle Meade Theatre in Nashville, built in 1936. The Belle Meade is one of sixty-one theatres designed by the firm and serves as an early indicator of Miami Stadium's theatrical qualities. Published drawings indicated an expansive pressbox, perched high atop the cantilevered roof. An eighty-foot-tall elevator tower provided access to the pressbox as well as an entrance to the home team clubhouse and offices. A forty-five-foot-tall steel frame sign that spelled out "MIAMI STADIUM" capped the tower. The building's name was also prominently displayed across the entry facade, a

**Jose Aleman.**  
*Hasf 1995-277-9752.*



**Miami Marlins.**  
*Hasf Miami News Collection.*







three-story, 120-foot-wide x 30-feet-high “box,” hovering above five separate entry vestibules. Subsequent drawings revealed that the marquee’s 10 foot high letters would be lit by neon tubes; an element that would quickly become one of the stadium’s most memorable features and is a direct descendant of the Belle Meade’s luminous marquee.

During the early stages of construction, architects periodically revised and updated the drawings as adjustments were made to the stadium’s design. Construction of the building, however, went on without interruption. According to one account, more than 730 workers were employed during the stadium’s construction. To expedite the work, Taylor Construction, the general contractors, used modern concrete pumping machines to move concrete to remote areas of the stadium. The stadium’s famed cantilevered trusses were pre-fabricated in Birmingham, Alabama and transported to the site by train. Once on site, the 15 trusses were laid out and assembled on the future playing field before being hoisted by large cranes to their permanent location atop poured concrete piers.

One of the crane operators on the project was M.G. Shears, fresh out of the U.S. Navy and an experienced bridge builder. For Shears, the engineering of Miami Stadium’s roof was similar in nature to that found in steel bridges. Shears recalls an elaborate system of movable rails

devised to move his crane on the grandstand’s mid-level cross aisle. This enabled the crane operators to pluck the steel members from the field below and place them on concrete perches. Shears speculates that the trusses, each weighing approximately eight tons, were significantly overdesigned either in anticipation of the

stadium’s massive light standards or the eventual addition of an upper deck. The latter option was never a consideration given the nature of the trusses’ configuration. Expansion was considered in the design of the stadium, however, the proposal was to add seats along the periphery of the outfield wall.

During the final phase of the stadium’s construction, the monumental and glorious scale of the building took shape. Previously, the stadium’s most impressive features were its exterior marquee entry facade and the elaborate concrete ramps that comprised part of the stadium’s internal circulation system. The poured-in-place ramps floated and criss-crossed above the main concourse in a spectacular dance

of concrete. The eight-story tower was equally impressive as it rose from the former circus grounds site.

The installation of the stadium’s cantilevered roof trusses signaled that Marr Holman’s refined design reached its pinnacle. By mid-August, only two weeks prior to opening night, Miamians who

***more than  
730 workers  
were  
employed  
during the  
stadium’s  
construction***



visited the construction site gazed upon the trusses' impressive reach; an exposed metallic shell that would soon provide shelter to two thirds of the stadium's 9,500 seats, all without the aid of columns. The absence of columns, thus allowing fans unobstructed views of the entire field, marked a new watershed for baseball stadium design. The stadium's cantilevered roof, visible from great distances, rose above the surrounding residential neighborhood like a huge, iron paw.

Even in its raw concrete state, Miami Stadium conveyed a sense of architectural sophistication unparalleled by any minor league ballpark built to date. Miami Stadium's stunning modern design stood as a formidable rival to the neo-classical splendor of major league baseball monuments such as Comiskey Park (Chicago), Shibe Park (Philadelphia) and Ebbets Field (Brooklyn). This was the first significant baseball-only ballpark built since Yankee Stadium (1923) and the first one to explore the architectural language of International Style modernism at such a grand scale. By late summer 1949, Miami witnessed the birth of an architectural and engineering masterpiece.

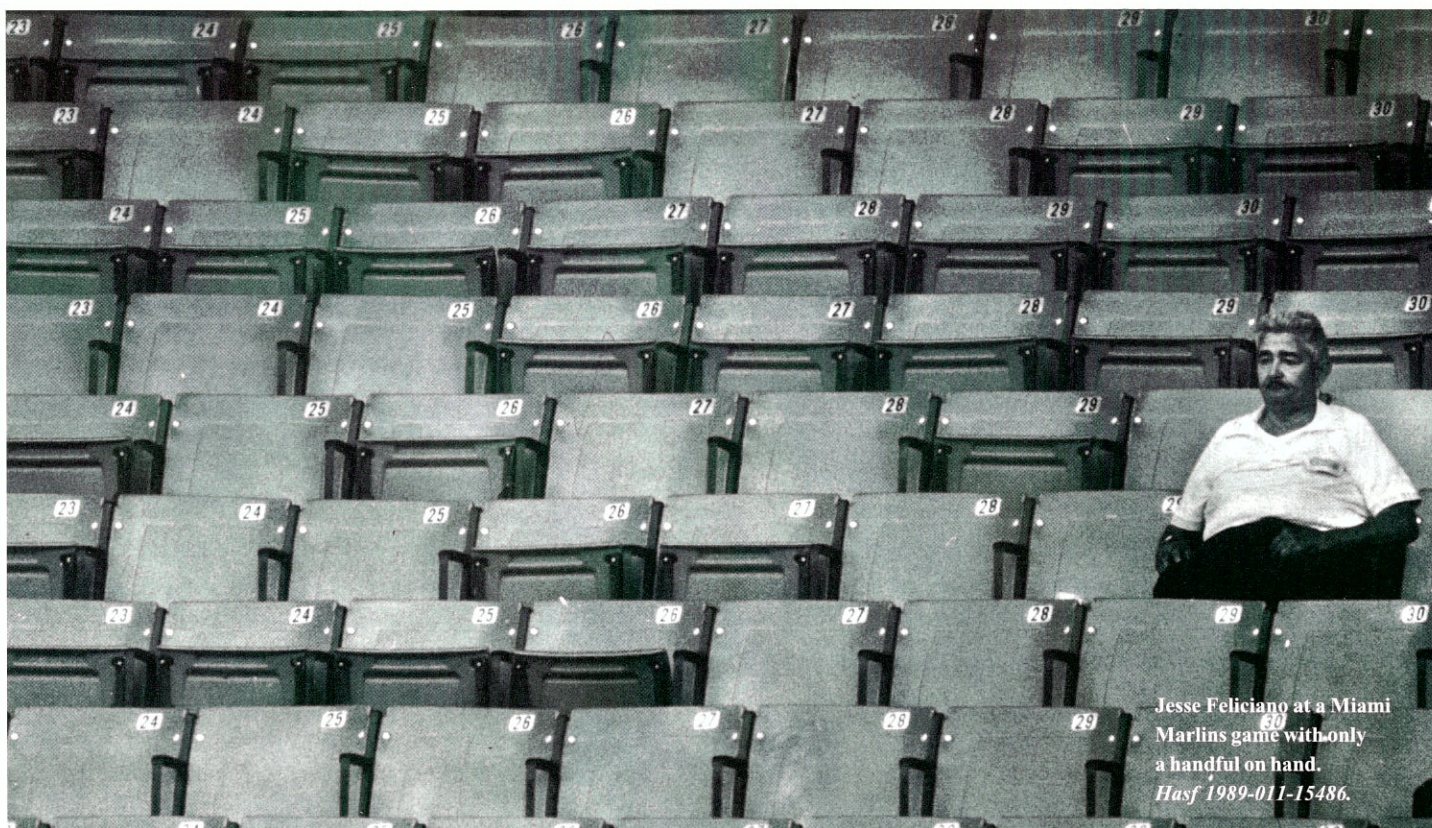
Elaborate plans for the opening night festivities met several unforeseen obstacles. On August 6th, dedication plans were amended after a devastating earthquake ravaged the country of Ecuador. Organizers of Miami Stadium's ceremonies revised the schedule of events and arranged

for the ballpark to serve as a collection site for earthquake relief supplies. As a result, Miami Stadium assumed a significant posture as a community service facility, a role the stadium would periodically fulfill throughout its 50-year history. In that time, Miami Stadium would serve as a point of reference where citizens would come together, not only to enjoy baseball, but also to share in their civic responsibilities.

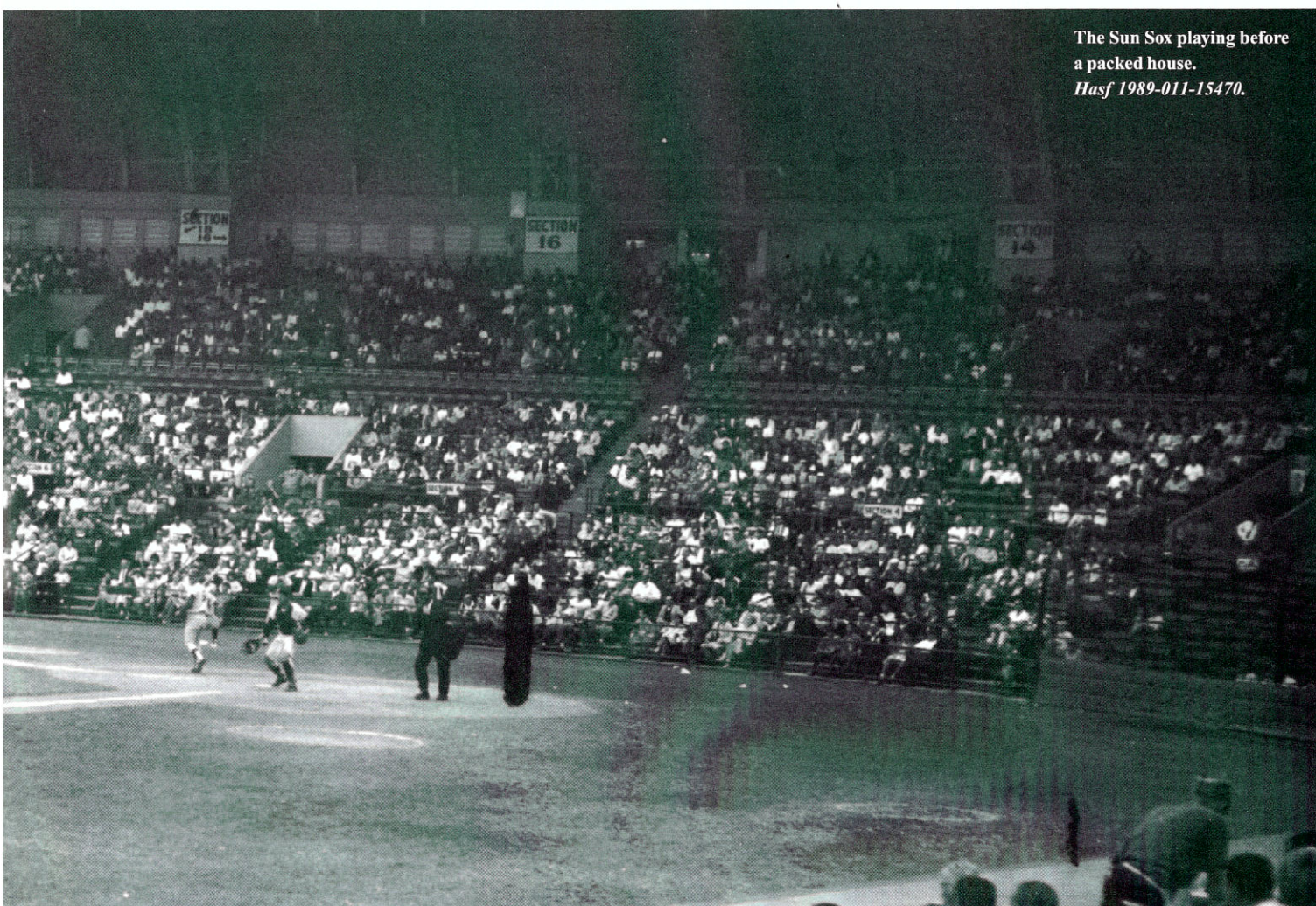
News of an eminent hurricane strike on South Florida also raised the level of anxiety on the part of those preparing for the stadium's opening. The storm touched land in the West Palm Beach area with deadly and destructive consequences. The stadium, just four days from the inaugural game, was spared an almost certain setback. On the very evening the storm battered Florida's east coast, opening night organizers conducted a dress rehearsal at the stadium. Lights, facilities and accommodations were reviewed. As a result, organizers realized that certain items would not be ready for the grand opening. The cantilevered roof was not fully enclosed and only a portion of the stadium's elaborate lighting system was operational. In addition, the clubhouses were incomplete, prompting the Sun Sox players to dress at nearby Miami Field. The visiting Havana Cubans had to don uniforms at their hotel.







Jesse Feliciano at a Miami Marlins game with only a handful on hand.  
*Hasf 1989-011-15486.*



The Sun Sox playing before a packed house.  
*Hasf 1989-011-15470.*



Nevertheless, enthusiasm was high on the evening of August 30, when Dr. Ralph Ferguson and the Miami Chamber of Commerce hosted a dinner to honor the invited guests. Ferguson announced that all tickets for opening night had been sold and team officials were contemplating selling an additional 2,000 standing-room-only passes. The evening included a sneak preview of the new stadium's features, undoubtedly aimed at the likes of Major League Commissioner "Happy" Chandler and other visiting baseball dignitaries. "We want to convince Hurth (president of the Southern Association) that Miami is a great baseball town," claimed H.B. Taber, a close associate of the Aleman family, in an obvious pitch to the assembled baseball brass.

The stadium's features far exceeded anything previously available to South Florida baseball fans and, in many ways, rivaled those present in major league parks around the nation. State of the art clubhouses and lounges provided plush comfort for players and guests alike. The umpires enjoyed their own dressing room and lounge. Sixteen ticket windows facilitated access into the stadium. A generous concourse and an elaborate ramp system distributed spectators throughout the building's many levels. The on-field dimensions were consistent with those found throughout professional baseball: 330 feet down the lines and 400 feet to the wall in centerfield. One feature introduced at Miami Stadium and not often found in ballparks to date was the "warning track," a ten-foot strip of marl along the edge of the outfield wall designed to alert fielders of the impending concrete obstacle. An eighty-five foot long electronic scoreboard glittered in right field; a sight undoubtedly foreign to even the most well traveled baseball fan.

The use of lighting, both as a utilitarian and as a decorative feature added to the stadium's unique nature. In addition to the previously mentioned use of neon in the theatre-like entry façade and electronic scoreboard, the stadium's eight light towers were equally ambitious achievements. The outfield wall was lined with four, 140-foot high steel towers; four others were perched atop the cantilevered roof trusses. This arrangement left one with a certain level of respect and admiration for the stadium's structural engineers. The imposing light standards were designed to withstand 200-mph winds, a criterion consistent with even today's strict hurricane requirements. Baseball officials realized decades ago that night baseball games, held out of the sun's scorching blaze, were necessary to attract fans. Perhaps one of the most memorable and often talked about features of Miami Stadium's pioneering homage to electricity was the neon foul poles that brightly marked the corners of the outfield. This visual feast for the eyes prompted one awe-struck fan to comment to his wife upon entering the stadium, "Gawd Martha...Neon!"

Fan comfort was also of paramount concern to the stadium's designers. Over seven acres of parking were provided behind the left field fence with additional spaces found along adjacent streets. The

bleachers' 5,000 seats were accessible from separate entrances, one in left field and the other in right. Fourteen concession stands throughout the stadium provided ample opportunity for fans to buy refreshments with minimal waiting time. A series of concession stands along the stadium's upper concourse allowed spectators to stand in line and not miss any of the on-field action. Consistent with the day's segregation laws, black patrons were provided with separate parking, seating, restroom and concession facilities. In an ironic twist, white fans tasted a similar brand of segregation when the Miami Giants of the Negro Leagues played host to the Indianapolis Clowns at the stadium on October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 1949. During that series, one half of the stadium's seats were reserved for whites. A crowd of 4,000 saw the Clowns defeat the Giants, 5-1, in the first game of the series.

The press was also well provided for by the stadium's architects. The pressbox was precariously perched 80 feet above field level along the inner lip of the cantilevered roof and provided newshounds with a panoramic view of the diamond. The pressbox included 13

separate booths for writers and broadcasters, and a spacious lounge with a kitchen and bar. The latter was an extremely popular feature, serving to entertain the press before and after events. Two generously sized private boxes served as bookends for the lengthy stretch of booths. Visitors to the pressbox and lounge used a stair and elevator tower which, by virtue of its location, provided spectacular views of the city's downtown just two miles away.

The revelry of the dramatic opening night ceremonies died out quickly, however, and Miami Stadium has enjoyed a disjointed and disappointing history. The young Jose Aleman soon grew disenchanted with operating a stadium and ball club, as the economic downturns in minor league

baseball paralleled local fan apathy throughout the 1950s. Aleman's political interests and poor business decisions led him to sell the 2.2 million dollar property to the City of Miami for \$ 850,000 in 1953. As landlords, the City of Miami proved no better at maintaining the property.

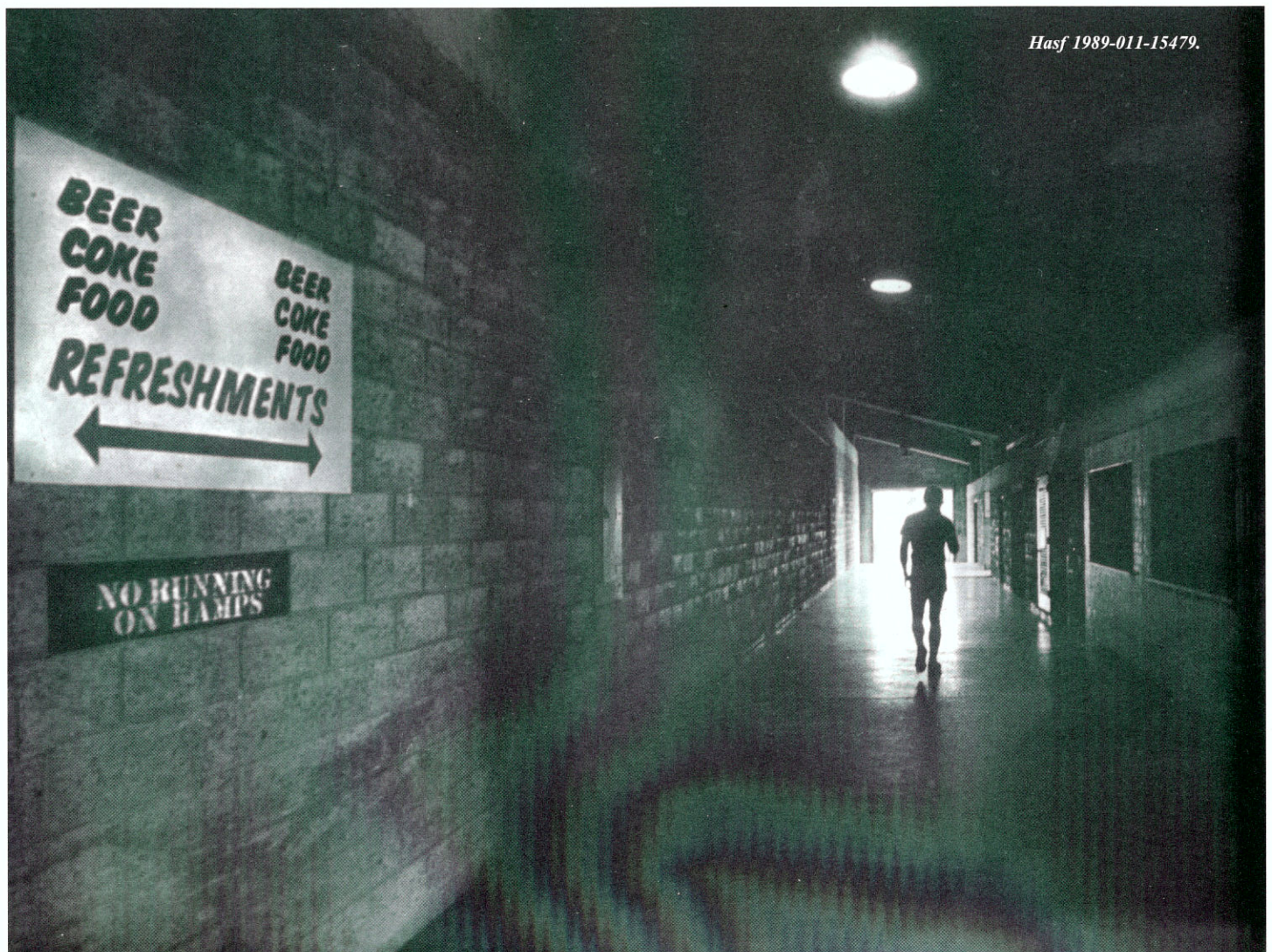
Throughout these years Miami Stadium served as host to such diverse events as the ice capades, rodeos, boxing matches, roller derby, rock concerts and high school football games. The lack of stable ownership for teams, the overall poor quality of minor league baseball, and the dwindling fortunes of the local neighborhood all contributed to the Stadium's continued degradation. The renaming of the facility in 1987, as Bobby Maduro-Miami Stadium, in recognition of the accomplishments of Bobby Maduro, a noted Cuban baseball official, did not revitalize operations. The loss of the Orioles, damage by Hurricane Andrew and the recent sale of the stadium to private developers may signal the death for this... *please turn to page 28.*

***Miami  
Stadium  
has  
enjoyed a  
disjointed...  
history***





Isey and Beulah Bandrimer, April 6, 1985.  
*Hasf 1989-011-15481.*



*Hasf 1989-011-15479.*



# Camping with Tom, Henry & John

*The group gathers together for a meal. Left to Right: unidentified, Mina Edison, Thomas Edison, John Burroughs, Clara Ford, unidentified and Henry Ford. Photo courtesy of The Edison Home.*



**by Michele Wehrwein Albion**





**D**uring the 1920s, the big three, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and John Burroughs, embarked on a number of well publicized camping trips throughout the eastern seaboard. Interest in these trips has been revived on stage and in print. On Broadway, *Camping with Tom and Henry* has played to large crowds. A book entitled, *There to Breathe the Beauty*, revealed the intimate details of quiet times shared by these famous men. But the original camping trip, which inspired all others, has remained largely unknown until now.





*Top: "No hunting was done as the season had been closed," yet Henry Ford posed here with the fowl evidence.*

*Right: Thomas Edison enjoys a quick nap in Mina's arms. Below: John Burroughs, Henry Ford and Thomas Edison in a Ford.*

**Photos courtesy of The Edison Home.**



During the winter of 1914, Thomas Edison planned his annual retreat in Fort Myers with a mind for something different. Like other years, he would travel to his beautiful home on the Caloosahatchee River with his wife Mina, daughter Madeline, and sons Charles and Theodore. But this year he would invite two very special friends; famed automobile manufacturer Henry Ford and distinguished naturalist John Burroughs.

On Monday, February 23, 1914 the private rail car carrying the famous guests came to a stop outside the Fort Myers Atlantic Coast Line train station. They were greeted by a crowd of two thousand, in a town of about the same number, who had spent over an hour in hot sun waiting for the tardy train.

To the lively music of a local band, the famous men and their families descended onto the platform. They smiled and waved to the assembled crowd. After a few minutes of warm greetings from the mayor and other distinguished citizens, they piled into a line of Ford vehicles. Henry Ford had contracted a Ford dealership in Tampa to provide Model Ts for the visit. They were driven through the town of Fort Myers in something of a parade, which ended at the Edison home on McGregor Boulevard.

Upon arrival at the Edison estate the Edisons, Fords and John Burroughs were asked by the locals to remain close to McGregor Boulevard. Snaking down the dirt road in front of





*Top: Standing: Edsel Ford, Charles Edison, Madeline Edison and unidentified. Sitting: Thomas Edison, Mina Edison, Lucy Bogue and Clara Ford. Below: The Ford vehicles await the trip on McGregor Boulevard. Photos courtesy of The Edison Home.*



the Edison home was an automobile parade. In previous weeks, a call was put out for all local Ford owners. At a time when automobile ownership was still rare, they formed a motorcade thirty-one cars long with decorated Fords. For the local residents it was a clear demonstration of the importance of their winter guests.

In an interview with the *Fort Myers Press*, Burroughs expressed his admiration of Edison's

lush bower: "I never thought I was coming into such a tropical country as this. Fort Myers reminds me of Honolulu and Jamaica. It is one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen. I am sure my stay here is going to be one of the most pleasant experiences of my life."

Edison and his famous companions shared a sense of adventure. All wanted to fish, and see the natural habitat of Florida. Burroughs in

particular wished to see the teeming life of the Everglades and "hear a panther growl." In order to have a true Florida experience, the party set out on an adventure on February 28. With much ado, the party gathered together food, tents, cots, and various other amenities for a camping expedition to the Everglades.



On the morning of their departure, five Model T. Fords assembled on McGregor Boulevard. With their luggage, the motorists emerged: Thomas, Mina, Madeline, Charles and Theodore Edison; Henry, Clara and Edsel Ford; John Burroughs, and Lucy Bogue, a friend of Mina Edison's. They were accompanied by Frank Carson, Len Hibble and Sam Thompson, local men who served as guides.

The families split up with the big three, Edison, Ford and Burroughs in the lead car. They drove some sixty miles on dirt roads and areas without benefit of roadways. Even though it was the dry season, the Everglades were wet with standing water. They were sometimes in water up to their axles. After a considerable drive, they arrived at Rocky Lake, near present day LaBelle.

All pitched in as tents were unfolded and set up in the pine wood. In the days that followed, the families enjoyed the pleasures and challenges of the great outdoors. They reveled in the wildlife, catching sight of deer and wild turkeys. Despite a later assertion in the newspaper that "no hunting was done as the season had been closed," Henry Ford brought back some fowl to the table on at least one occasion.

Meals took place in the open, at a makeshift table. Although the party was supposed to be roughing it, Ford brought along a few luxuries. Instead of brackish water or even bringing bottled water from Fort Myers, he supplied bottles of Poland Spring water, all the way from Poland Springs, Maine.

It was in the quiet moments that Edison, Ford and Burroughs reveled in later years. In the evening, all gathered around the campfire to share stories. Free from business concerns, responsibilities and constant nagging from the press, they could be entirely themselves. It was this freedom which sparked the deep and lasting friendships among the men.

After a few days, the party gathered up their supplies and began the sixty mile trip back to Fort Myers. The camaraderie experienced in Florida's natural splendor inspired Edison, Ford and Burroughs to new adventures. Before leaving for the north, they cruised among the Lee County islands and vowed more extended adventures in the future.

Over the next few years Edison, Ford and Burroughs repeated their camping trips with outings throughout the eastern seaboard and some of the Midwest. But the spark which lit the torch of fellowship was created in our own southwest Florida. **-SFH**

*Gathered around the campfire. Standing: Edsel Ford and unidentified. Middle: Thomas Edison, Mina Edison, Lucy Bogue and John Burroughs. Henry Ford is second from the right in the front row. Photo courtesy of The Edison Home.*





# book review

***The Pacesetter: The Untold Story of Carl G. Fisher, Creator of the Indy 500, Miami Beach & The Lincoln Highway.* By Jerry M. Fisher. Fort Bragg: Lost Coast Press, 1998. Xi, 446 pp.**

**Acknowledgments, preface, table of contents, afterward, notes, bibliography, index \$29.95 hardcover.**

Review by Dr. Paul George

Carl Graham Fisher was not only the most important figure in the early development of Miami Beach, but he was also a man of immense accomplishments outside of the famed resort community. Brash, impulsive, and generous with his friends and causes, this cutting edge entrepreneur counted among other accomplishments the creation of the Indianapolis Speedway and its classic 500 race, the Lincoln Highway, the country's first coast-to-coast road, and the Dixie Highway, an important north-south thoroughfare. Jerry Fisher, a devoted cousin of Carl Fisher, has spent ten years preparing *The Pacesetter: The Untold Story of Carl G. Fisher, Creator of the Indy 500, Miami Beach & the Lincoln Highway* in order to bring his story to a wider audience.

Born in 1874, Carl Fisher dropped out of school at age 12 to support his divorced mother and two younger brothers. While he was still a teenager, Fisher operated a highly successful bicycle repair shop at the height of the high wheeled bicycle fad. A few years later, following the appearance of the automobile, Fisher became the owner of one of the first car dealerships in the nation. To promote his business, this super-salesman used imaginative, dangerous stunts, such as flying over Indianapolis in a Stoddard-Dayton automobile attached to a hot air balloon.

Fisher and James Allison organized Prest-O-Lite in the early 1900s, which produced the major component in automobile headlights. The partners sold the business in 1913 to Union Carbide for nine million dollars.

By then, Fisher had constructed an automobile raceway, partly as a testing ground for upgrading the performances of American automobiles, which lagged far behind their European counterparts. From this effort emerged both the Indianapolis Speedway and the 500 race. Carl's next venture was construction of the hard-surfaced Lincoln Highway, a

multimillion dollar effort that took one decade to complete. Later, Fisher would begin work on the Dixie Highway, which wound its way from the upper Midwest to the edge of the Florida peninsula.

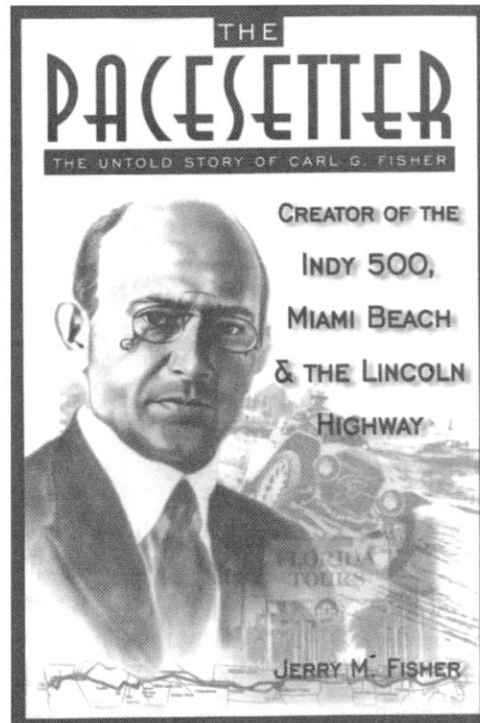
During that era, Fisher married fifteen-year-old Jane Watts, who

was twenty years his junior. Early in their marriage the Fishers discovered sparkling, subtropical Miami, and quickly embraced it as their new home. Soon the restless Fisher was immersed in the gargantuan task of transforming a swampy barrier peninsula lying east of Miami into the posh community of Miami Beach. Jerry Fisher devotes more attention to Carl's activities on Miami Beach than to any other topic since Carl was inimitably tied to it until his death. This topic will be of great interest to most readers because it provides an illuminating exploration of Fisher's huge financial investment, his innovative promotional techniques, the dynamics of the great Florida land boom, the developer's antics during Prohibition, and his efforts to rid Miami Beach of Al Capone, a resident of Palm Island.

The boom went bust in 1926, which also marked the beginning of a sharp decline in the personal and professional fortunes of Carl Fisher. Carl and Jane, a magnetic, effervescent couple in the first decade of their marriage, lost a baby son in 1921, from which their relationship never recovered. In 1926, they divorced;

soon after, each remarried. In the meantime, Carl's drinking problem was spinning out of control. Exacerbating his difficulties was Fisher's impulsive plunge into a new development at Montauk Point on Long Island, a project three times the size of his Miami Beach holdings. The financial drain of Montauk Point, as well as the weakening real estate activity on Miami Beach, would, by the 1930s, deplete Fisher's fortune, estimated in the previous decade at twenty-five million dollars.

*Review continued on page 29.*



***“The boom went bust in 1926, which also marked the beginning of a sharp decline in the personal and professional fortunes of Carl Fisher.”***



# book review

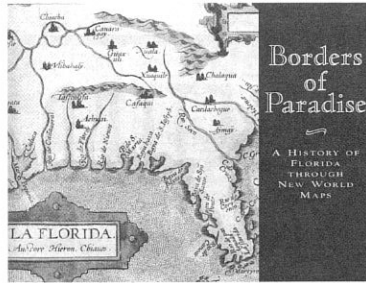
**A History of Florida Through New World Maps: Borders of Paradise. Edited by Dana Ste. Claire. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. 64 legal sized pp. \$12.95 paper.**

## Review by Charles W. Arnade

This publication, 64 legal-sized pages, exquisitely printed on fine glossy paper, is a bit deceiving. It deals with only 16 historical maps ranging from 1540 to 1846. The number of maps that would justify the title runs into the dozens.

What selection criteria were used for these 16 pages? They are from old atlases, geography treatises, and history books that are available in the Museum of Arts and Sciences of Daytona Beach, originally printed in an in-house publication. The editor of the book is a staff member at the museum. There is no doubt that these maps — some separated from the tomes, others still as an integral part — are most valuable and are quite pertinent and useful for early Florida history. It is to the credit of the Daytona Museum that it has these rare publications and maps. We are told this is because of benefactors who collected and purchased them, Kenneth Worchester Dow and Mary Mohan Dow. Both have also been generous in their donations to the St. Augustine Restoration project.

The short, 12-page summary of early Florida history until statehood in 1845 and one page entitled "New World Mapping," plus summaries and notes for each of the 16 maps, the glossary, suggested readings, and what is called a "complete bibliography" are all authored by Peter A. Cowdrey, Jr. He is from Tallahassee, a staff member of the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Museum of Florida History.



***"No doubt this publication of 16 maps is a first step to make early Florida historical maps easily available."***

The summary history has the undeserved title "A History of Paradise." In my opinion neither the Spanish, the English, nor the early Americans during the territorial period considered Florida a "Paradise," but rather a place of much hardship. Certainly the pages by Cowdrey are competent, factual, easy to read and

understand. The historical summary is elementary but the summaries and notes for each of the maps are scholarly and present a good addition to comprehending early Florida history and cartography. Besides the 16 maps there are some well selected illustrations. It all makes a balanced and rather artistic large booklet that can serve multiple purposes, including a coffee table display.

The central core, the 16 maps, are useful visual additions to Florida history. Many of these maps would be important in a more complete selection illustrating the Spanish and English periods (1513-1821). Such a collection would come to over 50 maps, going back to the famous Cosa map (of the days Columbus) which can be used to show that the Cabots had seen the Florida shores before Ponce de Leon's first contact. Many other later maps are also pivotal. No doubt this publication of 16 maps is a first step to make early Florida historical maps easily available. The dates of the 16 maps are: 1540, 1561, 1598; 1606, 1651, 1653; undated (early 18<sup>th</sup> century), 1720, 1763, 1764, 1778, 1780, 1780; 1864.

In sum, this is a fine large booklet beautifully printed and with a simple understandable text. But its title is somewhat misleading.

**-SFH**

## ***Under the Cantilever...***

***continued from page 20.***

once grand and glorious baseball palace. It currently sits in tatters, bereft of any metal or copper furnishings, missing lights and glass fixtures, a ravaged hulk of concrete and steel.

As Miami Stadium approaches its fiftieth birthday, there is one last opportunity to recognize the sporting and civic role this stadium holds in the South Florida community. Ultimately, the issue of the building's physical preservation will be decided by a series of economic and political factors. The preservation and dissemination of the many personal stories contained within the crumbling walls

of the facility, however, are far more certain. The authors are currently at work on a book that details the fascinating and largely unknown history behind the construction, ownership and management of Miami Stadium. In addition, in collaboration with documentary filmmaker John Graham, the authors are preparing a film that chronicles this fascinating story. This work will combine the use of historical footage of events and contemporary interviews with major and minor league ball players, local residents and city officials. The written and visual history of Miami Stadium will survive. **-SFH**



# book review

**MAGNIFICENT MILE: A History of Hillsboro Beach. By Carmen Racine McGarry. RitAmelia Press. 248 pages.**

## Review by Stuart McIver

In April the town of Hillsboro Beach celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of its incorporation. Fittingly, the little town now has a history to go with its anniversary and what Historian Carmen Racine McGarry has revealed in her book shows a busy past that goes back far beyond 1939.

At the southern tip of the town of Hillsboro Beach stands the Hillsboro Lighthouse, the oldest structure in Broward County, dating back to 1907. Near where the lighthouse was built a famous Florida tragedy occurred — the death of the Barefoot Mailman in 1885. His statue, long a landmark in the little town, occupies a prime location in front of Town Hall and a picture of it adorns the cover of the book.

A September, 1835, hurricane wrecked the Spanish ship, *Gil Blas*, near Hillsboro Inlet. Among the nearby settlers who tried to salvage its cargo of sugar and cigars was William Cooley. While they were salvaging the ship, Seminoles attacked New River Settlement and killed Cooley's family in a massacre that marked the end of the area's first large colony.

***“...a famous restaurant and at one time illegal gambling casino, drew heavily on Hillsboro residents and visitors though it is located just across the Intracoastal Waterway from Hillsboro Beach.”***

A big boost for Hillsboro Beach came in the boom years of the 1920s when it was still called Pompano. The Lake Placid School was moved from Coconut Grove to land just north of the inlet. After many financial setbacks, Herbert Malcolm, who ran the school, converted it from an educational institution into an exclusive winter resort. The Hillsboro Club remains to this day one of Florida's most exclusive enclaves.

Much of Hillsboro's history is interlocked with the development of North Broward County, especially the cities of Deerfield Beach, Pompano Beach and Lighthouse Point. For example, Cap's Place, a famous restaurant and at one time illegal gambling casino, drew heavily on Hillsboro residents and visitors though it is located just across the Intracoastal Waterway from Hillsboro Beach.

Historian McGarry, who is also a town commissioner, has done an excellent job of tracing Hillsboro's past. She has presented the town's story in a readable fashion that features the personal lives of the people who made its history happen. **-SFH**

## Carl Fisher...

***continued from page 27.***

Even as Fisher's health and financial well-being declined, the weary entrepreneur continued to involve himself in new business ventures, but with little success, while also continuing to assist with his limited resources, family and friends. Fisher died on Miami Beach primarily from alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver. Fisher was sixty-five years of age, and, at the time, he was living in a modest home dramatically different from the great homes he had erected during his halcyon days.

Jerry Fisher has relied heavily on *Fabulous Hoosier*, a biography of Carl Fisher written by Jane Fisher in 1947, as well as Polly Redford's *Billion Dollar Sandbar*, the first full historical treatment of Miami Beach, published in 1970. The author has also mined the rich Carl Fisher manuscript collection in the research library of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida with its voluminous collection of Fisher correspondence. Jerry Fisher's narrative is engrossing, focused, anecdotal, and fast-paced — just like its subject. Fisher has written candidly of Carl's alcoholism, philandering, and troubling attitude toward Jews. Regarding the last point, Fisher extended open-arms to

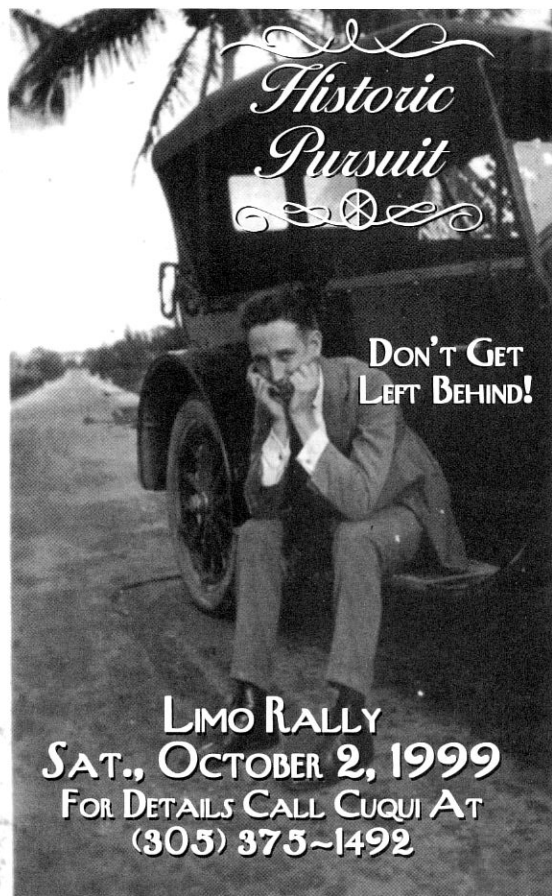
Jews of money and standing, but expressed something akin to disdain for those Jews who did not fit into that category.

Although Jerry Fisher has erred on several minor historical points, this splendid work will advance significantly the

author's goal of bringing Carl Fisher the recognition he so richly deserves. Like Henry Flagler before him, Carl Fisher was a larger than life figure who embraced the Miami area in its infancy, thereby changing forever its fortunes and its character. **-SFH**

***“The author has also mined the rich Carl Fisher manuscript collection in the research library of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida with its voluminous collection of Fisher correspondence.”***





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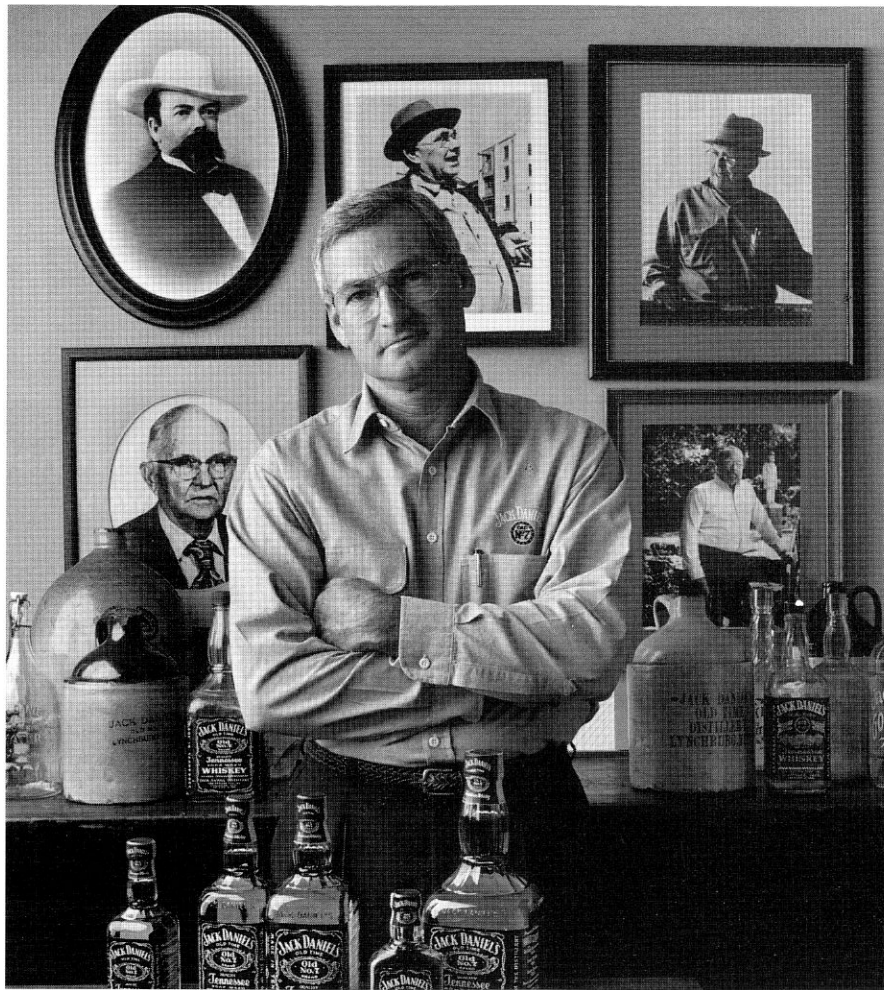
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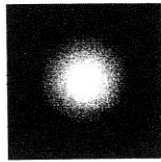
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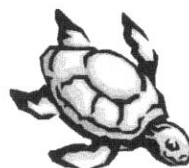
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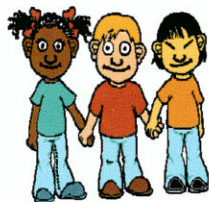
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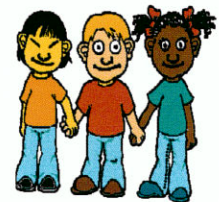


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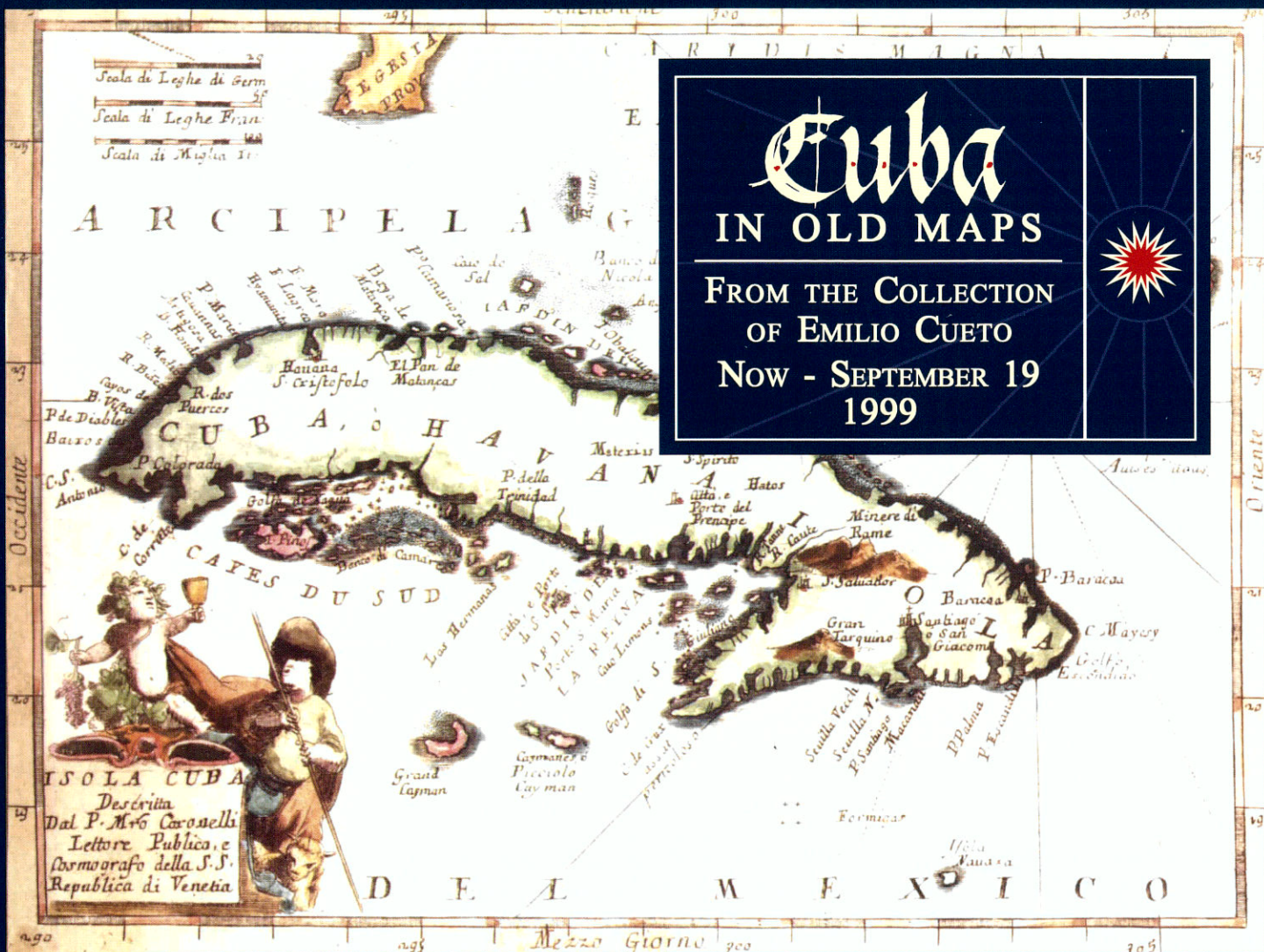


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*Cuba In Old Maps* was produced by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. Sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Arts Council and Division of Historical Resources, and with the support of the Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, members of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, and the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation, AT&T and the *Miami Herald* & *El Nuevo Herald*.

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