

*Don't Forget Your History!*

## **HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**

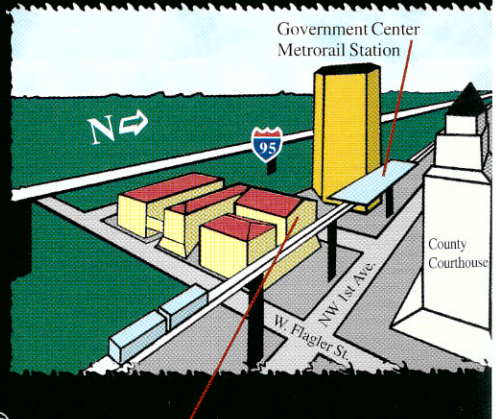


**THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA** brings history to life for each member of the family by offering an entertaining glimpse into the past of this world-renowned destination. Open 7 days a week — Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Thursday till 9 p.m.) and Sunday noon - 5 p.m.

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101 W. Flagler St., Miami 33130

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**HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**



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# editor's notes



**By Stuart McIver**

Whew! Sometimes Florida makes more history than we can stand. We've all heard the complaint from people who grew up in one of the original 13 colonies that we don't have any history. They point to old churches, courthouses and inns in place before the Revolutionary War. The fact is South Florida was developed rather late in the game, much of it since 1900.

Well, we've shown we know how to make up for it. In the year 2000 we've given the world the Elian story and now the final inning of the fourth election in which the candidate with the most popular votes failed to win the office of the presidency of the good old USA.

Let's go back now and look at the Florida connection to the election of 1824. Andrew Jackson, the Democratic candidate, held a commanding 10 percentage point lead in the popular vote over second-place John Quincy Adams. But Jackson failed to win an electoral majority. The election was thrown into the House of Representatives in accordance with the Twelfth Amendment. There Adams cut a deal with Henry Clay and captured the presidency.

Three years before the presidential election, Jackson had served as Florida's first governor. Back in 1821, Spain turned La Florida over to the upstart United States for just \$5 million, not even enough these days to get a sports arena named after you.

President James Monroe designated Jackson Florida's first territorial governor. The Tennessee planter had been the hero of the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812 against Great Britain. And during the First Seminole War, 1817-18, he had fought many battles in the Florida Panhandle.

Jackson was one of the few citizens of the young republic who knew their way around Florida. Actually, he was so well-acquainted with the territory's heat and bugs he didn't want the job and served only 11 weeks before heading back to Tennessee. Florida's first governor. And he couldn't stand the place.

Old Hickory's place in history, however, did not rest solely on the dubious honor of being the first presidential candidate to win the popular vote and still lose the election. Four years after losing to Adams, he faced him the second time around, winning with 56 percent of the popular vote to Adams' 44 percent and 178 electoral votes to his opponent's 83.

Jackson became the only Florida governor ever to make it to the White House. So far, only 10 of our 50 states have seen their peerless leader attain the honor of the presidency. Criticized by many for his harsh policies against the eastern Indians, Jackson,

nonetheless, is consistently ranked in presidential polls among the top ten best presidents in the country's history.

He was also a remarkably effective governor of Florida, considering how anxious he was to get out.

Moving right along, we arrive in the year 1876, the country's centennial year. It should have been a year of great rejoicing. It was, instead, a year of corruption and larceny on the grandest scale imaginable. Once again Florida was involved.

The Democratic candidate, Samuel Tilden, of Philadelphia, had gone to bed on election night, believing he had won the presidency. But a closer look at the results that night showed him one electoral vote short of victory, with three states still unreported. They were South Carolina, Louisiana—and Florida. All three of these southern states were under the control of northern Republicans, referred to in those days after the end of the Civil War as "carpetbaggers" or "scalawags."

A week after the election, all the votes in Florida had been counted—except for those in Dade County. Without Dade's votes the Florida tally could not be completed and without Florida the national election could not be certified.

Wrote Arva Moore Parks in her *Miami: the Magic City*: "As the nation waited for the Florida count, the national press was having a field day with Dade County's missing votes. Suddenly every major U.S. newspaper carried a story about the mysterious Southern county. One story called the area the 'kingdom of Dade,' another speculated on the Indian vote, while a third—not understanding the sudden interest—wrote, 'Where the hell is Dade?'"

Eventually, all three states submitted disputed totals. A Louisiana Democratic lead of 9,000 votes turned into a deficit of 4,000 after a number of deep-pocketed Republicans called on the canvassing board.

Both parties were players in the chicanery. A national electoral commission controlled by the Republicans voted along party lines to give all three states to Hayes. This enabled him to win the electoral race by one vote, despite trailing by three percent in the popular vote.

Behind it all was a shady deal involving both Democratic and Republican string-pullers. Southern Democrats dropped their protest of the stolen election. Northern Republicans withdrew federal troops that had occupied the South after the Civil War.

In the midst of total grand larceny, President Hayes stood out as a tower of incorruptibility. He did not, however, run for re-election.

You see, Florida has been right there in the midst of the action for a long time.

Let's move now to Miami's Bayshore Park in the winter of 1933. Franklin Delano Roosevelt had won the presidential election of 1932 by a popular and electoral vote landslide. No recounts necessary.

In mid-February he arrived in Miami following a fishing holiday in the Bahamas. His plan was to deliver a brief speech, then catch



## *South Florida History*

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the Florida East Coast Railway's Havana Special north for his inauguration on March 4, 1933.

The evening of February 15, 1933 a huge crowd gathered to greet the president-elect at the park. In that crowd lurked an unemployed bricklayer named Guiseppe Zangara. His goal that night was to assassinate Roosevelt.

Zangara carried a hammerless .32 caliber five-shot revolver and ten bullets which he had bought earlier in the day for eight dollars. He fired shot after shot at Roosevelt. Four people were hit that night, one, Anton Cermak, the mayor of Chicago, fatally.

None of the bullets hit the future president of the United States. FDR went on to steer the country through the worst depression the modern world has known and then through the most terrible war in history.

Let us leap forward one more time to the fall of 2000. No, not to the election. We are all sick of that. We'll go instead to one of Florida's true treasures, the esteemed Miami International Book Fair, and a superb speaker named David Gergen. From service in presidential administrations of both parties he brought a wide range of political experience.

In his speech, he quoted a historian who contended that the shape of the late, great twentieth century for good and bad was essentially the handiwork of six powerful leaders. Four of them poured forth terrible negative forces. They were Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedung—and probably the most evil man who ever walked the face of the earth, Hitler.

Against them stood two positive forces who proved more than a match for the four brutal dictators. They were Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

But Gergen's story did not end there. He pointed out that in the early 1930s an Englishman named Churchill was struck by a car while visiting New York. He could have been killed but we all know he wasn't.

In February 1933 an assassin fired at FDR in Miami. If he had hit the president-elect, the vice-president-elect, a non-

descript Texas political hack named John Nance Garner would have had to try to lift America out of economic chaos.

And try to think how World War II might have ended without Churchill and Roosevelt leading the Free World.

So, some of you wonder about how little has happened in Florida. Well, just stick around and keep your eyes open. You can start by turning to Arva Moore Parks' article on page 26 where you can read more on the 1876 election.

*Correction—On page 18, third column, fourth paragraph, of the Spring 2000 issue part of a sentence was cut out. Following is the corrected paragraph:*

George did not just sell a car, he also sold George King and often established long-standing friendships with his customers. Soon after going to work at Southland, one of their Chevrolet customers, Mrs. Effie Vining, came to the dealership because she had been told she needed major repair on her Chevy engine. A widow, she had no man to tend to such details and was at the mercy of service departments.

*We apologize for the mistake.*



# around the galleries



## **HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**

**Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami-Dade Cultural Center, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, 305.375.1492, 305.375.1609 fax, hasf@historical-museum.org, 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**

#### **Eighth Annual Miami International Map Fair**

*Saturday, February 3, 2001—9:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.*

*Sunday, February 4, 2001—noon–5:00 p.m.*

Antique map dealers and map experts from all over the world join this eighth annual event for hobbyists, collectors and dealers of antique maps. Browse through a marketplace of prominent dealers showing and selling their maps or bring in your own map for an expert opinion. Maps are available in all price ranges. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$2 for children (6-12) and free for children under 6 and museum members. Call 305.375.1492 for more information on the entire Map Fair weekend.

### **SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS**

#### **At the Crossroads: Afro-Cuban Orisha Arts in Miami**

*February 23, 2001–July 8, 2001*

In an effort to give the Orisha community the chance to present and interpret its arts to the general public, At the Crossroads highlights the work of more than 25 of Miami's leading Orisha artists, examining their careers and creative visions. The exhibit will also explore the history of the Afro-Cuban Orisha religion, Orisha philosophy and symbolism and local ceremonial practices.

#### **Follow that Dream: Florida's Rock & Roll Legends**

*July 26, 2001–January 20, 2002*

Follow that Dream explores what makes Florida's music scene so attractive to music lovers and musicians and what sets it apart from the rest of the country. The exhibit focuses on Florida's rock and roll and popular music from the 1950s to the present and examines gospel, blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, folk and country, the Latin sound and the roots of rock 'n' roll in Florida.

### **HISTORIC TOURS**

#### **Brickell Avenue Walking Tour**

*Saturday, February 10, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.*

Visit "Millionaire's Row," Petit Duoy, Vizcaya, and William

Jennings Bryan's home, Villa Serena. Explore two of the area's last sub-tropical hammocks, Simpson Park and Alice Wainwright Park. Meet at the southeast corner of S.E. 15th Rd. and Brickell Ave. in front of St. Jude's Church. \$10 for Members and \$15 for Non-members. No reservations required.

#### **North Beach Bike Tour**

*Sunday, February 18, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.*

On this seaside bike tour, explore Miami Modern (MiMo) and Art Deco architecture. See Richard Haas' famous mural and architect Morris Lapidus' Eden Roc and Fountainbleau Hotels. See the Biscayne House of Refuge, historic Altos del Mar, Temple Menorah, the Normandy Fountain, Indian Creek, Allison Island, La Gorce and Pinetree Drives. Meet at the metered parking lot No. 46, at 46th Street and Collins Avenue. \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. No reservations required.

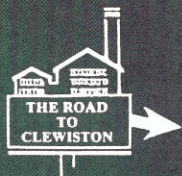
### **OVERNIGHT ADVENTURES**

#### **Cracker Cowboy Ranch and Seminole Inn Adventure**

*March 3 & 4, 2001*

Discover South Central Florida's cowboy culture and rare natural history on this journey north for a taste of real pioneer Florida. Visit Fort Pierce's Adams Ranch, one of the most influential and celebrated working ranches in North America, and learn about the history of ranching through presentations and award-winning natural history photography. Aboard wilderness buses, tour the ranch's surrounding virgin hardwood hammocks, search for rare and endangered native animals and plant species, and climb atop the chick-ee tree house for a view of the local spring. Enjoy a "cowboy" barbecue complete with a swamp cabbage demonstration and explore cowboy architecture on of the ranch's Cracker house. Next stop is charming Indiantown, home to one of Florida's most interesting bed and breakfasts, the Seminole Inn. Get a behind-the scenes tour of this historic inn and learn about the community's important role in Florida's ranching history. For more information and reservations call Michael Cushing at the Historical Museum: 305.375.1492 or Dragonfly Expeditions: 305.774.9019.

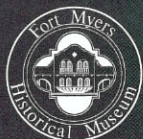




**Clewiston Museum, 112 South Commercial Street, Clewiston—863.983.2870.** The Clewiston Museum, founded in 1984, is a growing museum, collecting and displaying items, large and small, important and trivial, which reflect the past of Clewiston and its surrounding area. The Clewiston Museum is open 1–5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, with seasonal adjustments. No admission fee is charged; however, donations are encouraged.



**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.



**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.



**The Historical Society of Palm Beach County, 400 N. Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach, FL 33401—561.832.4164.** A nonprofit membership organization devoted to collecting and preserving archives and artifacts pertaining to the history of Palm Beach County and Florida. Make local history a part of your life and join as a member to help support this effort. You will enjoy lectures and special events, discounts on historical books and research fees. Office hours are Mon.–Fri. from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Research hours are by appointment Tues.–Thurs. from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Palm Beach Winter Antiques show, a major fund-raising event benefiting the Historical Society, will be held January 13th–16th, 2000.



**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.



## DEJA VIEW

### Home Movies in South Florida

by Steve Davidson

At the Historical Museum of Southern Florida through January 29, 2001

They were meant to be seen in the privacy of our homes, in our living rooms. Setting up the screen, the whirl of the projector, and families gathering around to view them—all are part of the ritual. The images flickered on the screen, showing our vacations, family outings, a day at the beach, and so much more. South Florida and home movies share a common anniversary; in 1996, both the city of Miami and motion picture film celebrated their centennial. Four years later, the city of Miami Beach reached a milestone—the 85th anniversary of its incorporation. Film and South Florida cities have been around for about the same time. Though these anniversary dates are coincidental, the impact of home movies and amateur footage on the development and growth of South Florida may not be.

Today, as in the past, our region lends itself to the camera's eye, always so photogenic. Many of the home movies shot by families—residents or visitors—of a day at the beach in December or January may have encouraged many to move to or visit South Florida. Whether this was the case or not, our contemporary history, culture, growth, development and family life have been documented in home movies and amateur footage.

The invention of relatively inexpensive cameras in the 1920s created a way of recording personal, family and community activity fundamentally different from the written word. For the social historian, the cultural and anthropological investigator, or the family historian, home movies have a greater significance in

that they often allow us to view more than the manifest content of the recorded images. Now those once private home movies, almost purposefully forgotten and technologically obsolete, have a new purpose in society. They are a twentieth century chronicle of everyday and of us. Their many meanings are personal and social documents—they are our historical records.

The home movies from the Wolfson Center's collection, particularly from 1910 through the 1950s, are unique not only because of their subject matter but also because the images are from a time relatively early in the history of this region. They have become even more important because they reveal life in southern Florida and the surrounding areas as never before seen.

They document the growth and development of this region as well as how people and families carried out their lives. These are families who came here on vacation or who settled in this region. Though all these films are silent, they speak volumes and are a testament to our history and culture. It is the ordinary images that stand out as so interesting—men wearing suits and ties to come to town, people sitting on porches, girls wearing saddle shoes and long skirts. There are scenes of people gathering downtown, or at the beach; cars, mostly black; and family life from the 1920s to the 1950s. There are also images of Cuba and Havana from the 1930s, a much more cosmopolitan city than Miami or Miami Beach, and a popular vacation spot for tourists. Together, these images show South Florida early in its history from a highly



personal point of view. Images range from the extraordinary hurricane of 1926 to the everyday happenings of children at school. Religious ceremonies, construction, skylines of Miami and Miami Beach to the Florida Everglades and the Miccosukkee Indians that lived there are included. Other home movies show Overtown and family life of the African-American community in Miami in the 1950s, which stands in marked contrast to the type of television coverage of the African-American community at the time. From tourism to nature, from ordinary families to politicians and famous personalities, the many facets and faces of this area are depicted.

The images reflect our families and our communities—in short, life in South Florida from the point of view of those who lived it.

At the Wolfson Center, home movies represent a growing and vital part of our collection. While our television collection is among the largest in the country, spanning over five decades and beginning in 1949, it only tells part of the story. The home movies and amateur footage allow us to trace this region's history almost forty years earlier, to around 1910. The home movies and amateur footage come from many families, and, as a result, provide many windows to the past.

Though the footage on view has come from many sources, together it provides a visual mosaic of our history and culture. Comprised of individual reels or collections that chronicle several decades we can see our history—South Florida's history—unfold.

Parents of the 1920s through the 1950s filming family events or outings in reality have documented life journeys and a record of daily life over time. The filmmaker who records the family at play, at the beach, at a picnic, at a birthday party, or at any of countless other events also records the realities of location, architecture, neighborhoods, clothing, social customs and relationships. The amateur filmmaker is a member of a family and a community, and the home movies often

show relationships between people, places and events, thus providing insight into personal, family and community life.

As an archive, the Wolfson Center collection includes home movies and ama-

few years, the Wolfson Center has received grants from the National Film Preservation Foundation, the American Film Institute/National Endowment for the Arts, and local funding from the



Courtesy of the Louis Wolfson II Media History Center.

teur footage on a variety of film formats including 35mm, 16mm, 8mm and Super 8. Each format requires specialized equipment and supplies, and the preservation and restoration is a long and arduous process. Each film may require hours of work, including inspection, cleaning, repair and identification. For access purposes, the films are ultimately transferred to videotape; however, the preservation process requires that new negatives and prints be made to insure the long-term stability of the images. Films donated to the Wolfson Center range in condition, but given South Florida's climate along with the age of the film, poor storage conditions over the decades often makes them impossible to restore. Even films in the best condition require extensive lab work. Over the past

Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs and the City of Miami Beach Cultural Arts Council to preserve and make more of these materials accessible.

The collaborative project of the Wolfson Center and the Historical Museum of Southern Florida entitled *Déjà View: Home Movies in South Florida* will make accessible rare and recently preserved home movies and amateur footage, most never before seen from the earliest days of this region's contemporary history through the 1950s, just as television was becoming a fixture in our homes, taking its place along with the movie camera, film projector and screen that many families had decades earlier. —SFH



# The Beauty and Value of Amateur Film

By Patricia R. Zimmermann, author of *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film and States of Emergency: Documentaries, Wars, Democracies*.

An excerpt from *Why We All Need Regional Archives to Collect Amateur Film* (written for the Wolfson Media Center, Miami, Florida).

The beauty of amateur film is that we actually can never—except for maybe the legendary Zapruder film of the John F. Kennedy assassination—determine its worth and fix it. Their value changes as history progresses, as communities change from development, immigration, hurricanes, gardens, and a host of other social and economic factors, and as the children and people in these precious films grow up, move away, change, die. In the hands of a brilliant researcher, or curator, or filmmaker, these amateur films can summon us to new ideas about our past, about the world, about the innumerable variations in visioning the world.

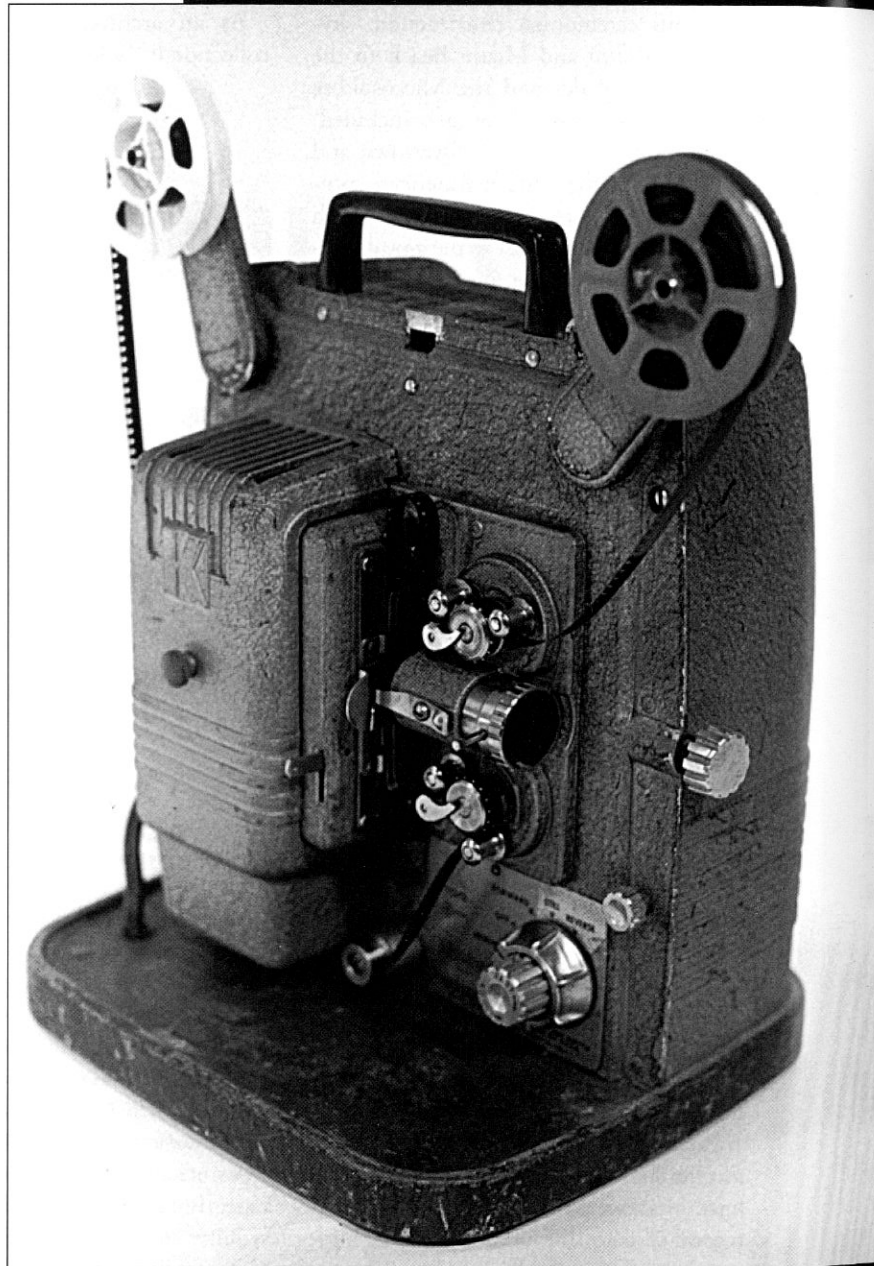
The value of amateur film, then, is that its value can never be determined: it is a document that is continually open for research and interpretation as the needs of the present for a history that anchors us in our world presses against memory and demands an image, or evidence, or imprint, or record to answer as yet unformulated questions. It is a document that opens up to the future as it holds the past.

Amateur film functions as a microhistory, that kind of history beyond the nation, its presidents, its wars, its policies. Instead, it charts the ambiguities and complexities that render everyday life remarkable in its unremarkable way.

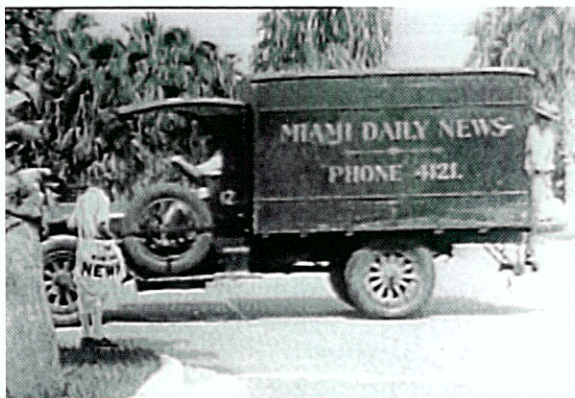
They reclaim for us, in this media saturated environment, a sense of where we have been as communities and insert us in that jagged messiness scholars dub history.

In this smooth cyber-age, where time and place appear not only to recede but to not matter at all, it may seem quite “retro” to even want to watch an image on film, much less preserve an old amateur film or home movie in a public archive.

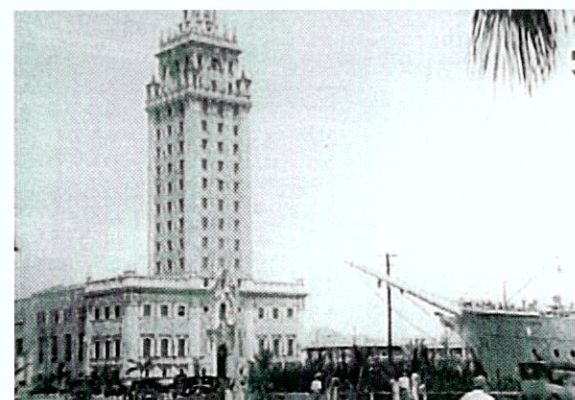
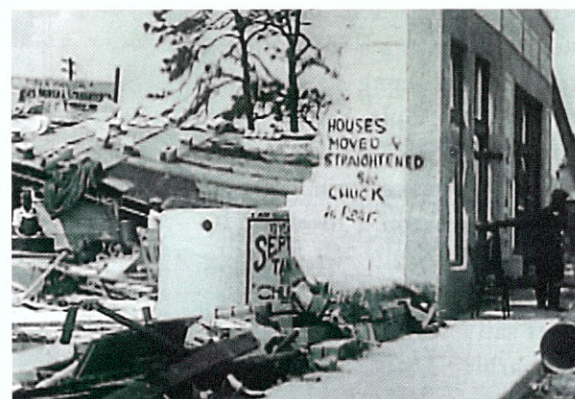
To lose these regional histories, and the amateur films that transport their traces into the world, is to forfeit our future, because we will have erased our past. —SFH





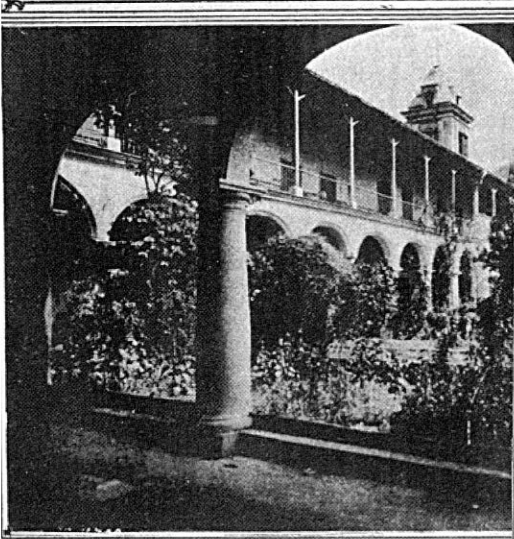


Stills from home movies, courtesy of the Louis Wolfson II Media History Center. Clockwise from top left—Miami Daily News, early 1920s. The Roman Pools Casino on Collins Ave. and 23 St., Miami Beach, 1920s. 1926 hurricane aftermath in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Miami News building (now the Freedom Tower), early 1920s. The Roman Pool Casino's sign on Collins Ave. and 23 St., Miami Beach, 1920s.





# C U B THE LOVELIEST LAND HUMAN EYES HAVE EV



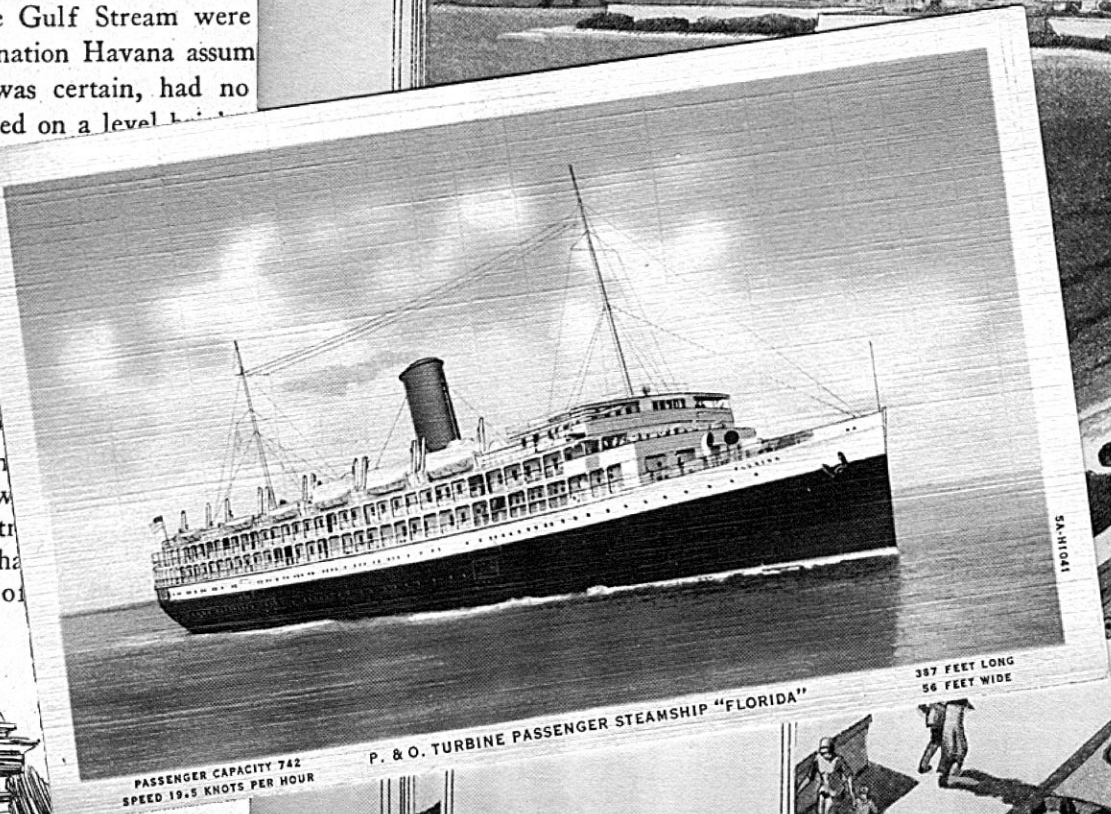
This, in brief outline, is the poetic vision offered by that part of the city known as the Gulf Stream which has been described by the great Hergesheimer, in his famous book, "S" as follows:

"When I turned, looking back, Cuba lay behind the line of the sea. The Gulf Stream of the steamer, foam hissed with a shimmering miniature rainbows hung shimmering soft clouds of the Gulf Stream were

"In my imagination Havana assumed a vision that, I was certain, had no parallel. It was a city created on a level of beauty for the reward of the etherealized spirit who had set sail on a sea of white marble and gold was waiting

When

Alluring and the new Havana he sees the new with all the attractions and beauties that great capitals of



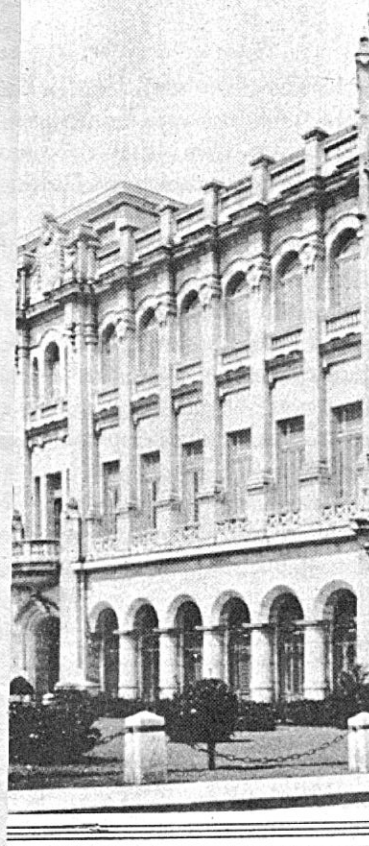
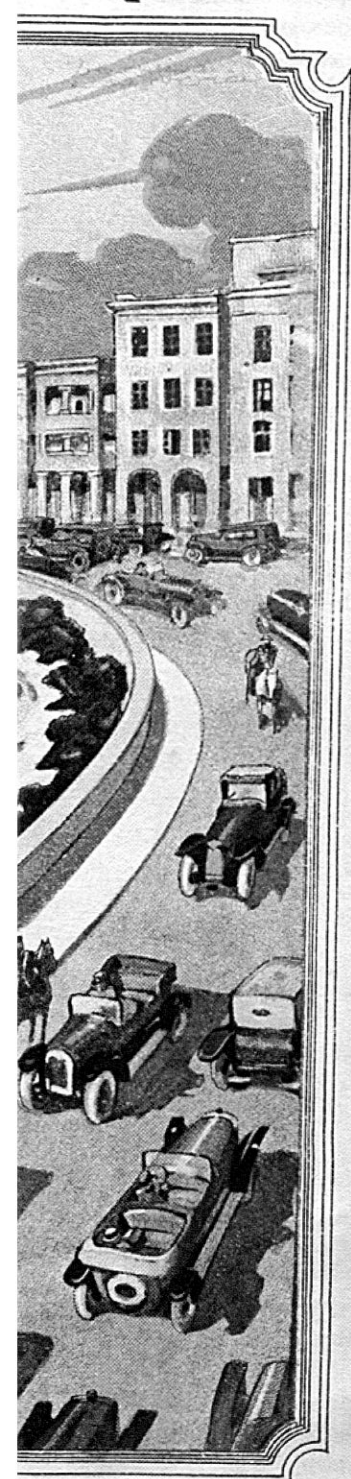
Postcard of the P & Q Passenger Steamship *Florida*. HASF 1989-171-2. Cover and page from a pamphlet that belongs to the Historical Museum's collection.





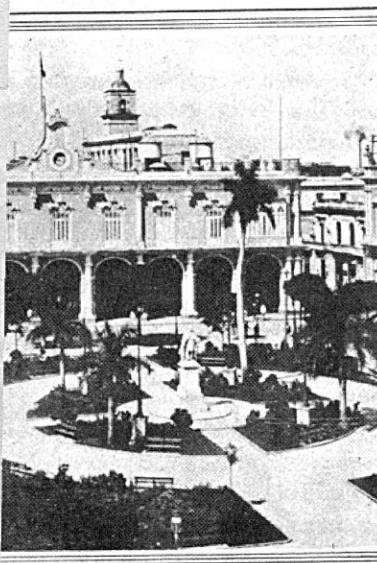
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and beautiful residential district  
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the capital not of a colony but  
merican republics, has grown  
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the Spanish Captain-General, Govern  
as the City Hall (Ayuntamiento).

# LA HABANA AYER

## December, 1941

by Nell Colcord Weidenbach

*Batista is in power. Pearl Harbor is in the headlines.*

*We have reservations on the S.S. Florida, scheduled to leave Miami immediately after Christmas, 1941, for a long-awaited vacation in Havana. Surprisingly, the State Department has not cancelled the sailing, so we merrily ship out, ignoring the U-boats in the Atlantic and the black-out curtains on shipboard.*

*In those long-ago days, Havana was the glamorous destination for tourists who couldn't—or wouldn't—make it all the way to Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro. It was a fascinating and friendly foreign port, close enough for repeat visits, weekends, and with assorted goodies unavailable stateside—such as casinos, bolita tickets, lotteries, black bean soup and especially duty-free shopping.*

*These memories of two youthful small-town sisters, as excerpted here from carefully-preserved diaries, recall the local color of the Cuban capital as it was skimmed off the top by the typical tourist. As is true of every foreign country, the "tourist world" is not necessarily the "real world" for the varying levels of locals. But this is a memory, not a political treatise.*



**Dec. 27, 1941**

The *S.S. Florida* usually sails with some 576 passengers aboard. Tonight there are only 125.

All the lights on the ship are out or else have heavy curtains over them. It seems that all boats travel under black-out now as a precaution. Even so, we can clearly see silhouettes crossing the



General view of the National Hotel. Havana, Cuba. HASF 1989-011-4329.

path of the moon. Maybe friendly fellow-travellers? Maybe not! (In just a matter of weeks, the whole Florida coastline would be blacked-out.)

We enjoy a light dinner, more than adequate for queasy appetites. A five-piece orchestra plays on deck. Finally we go to our tiny stateroom. After a few heat-drenching hours, the night air changes abruptly into wool blanket weather.

At 7:00 a.m., the cloud-like outlines of Cuba are just becoming visible, so we are up on deck again to watch Havana looming ahead. A truly beautiful skyline. Morro Castle. A bevy of young Cuban boys swimming out to meet us, diving for the coins that passengers are throwing overboard.

The feeble hinges on our luggage survive the chute in the Customs Building. We hail a huge ancient touring-car taxi to guide us to our hotel. The driver tries his best to persuade us to go to El Nacional, but we insist on the small downtown hotel recommended by our guidebook...Do all taxi-drivers here drive half-turned around, talking and gesturing as they go?

Our hotel is not impressive; nor is it expensive. A second-floor front room with a balcony opening out onto El Prado. In one direction we see the magnificent Capitol building. Down at the other end of the tree-centered Prado, the waters of the harbor are clearly visible.

We have a private bath, double bed, dresser, closet, bed-stand, desk, and telephone all for \$2.50 per night for the two of us. There is no air-conditioning and because of the warm weather, the hotel doesn't even bother to provide top sheets, bedspreads,

or blankets—but who cares? We can sleep with the windows wide open and listen to the lilting street sounds.

Our game plan is simple and unwittingly naive: With the aid of our huge street map and our trusty guide book, we will create our own tour. Each morning, we will branch out in a new direction, beginning with the central sights.

We are having lunch this first day in La Flor de Consulado. The waiter can't speak English and the menu is in Spanish. We like the sound of *toranja natural*, which turns out to be very cold grapefruit cut in half. Then *arroz amarilliente con mullejos de polo*, a huge stack of highly seasoned yellow rice cooked with chicken livers and gizzards. The grapefruit costs 6¢ each; rice 10¢; bread 3¢; totaling a mere 19¢ apiece.

We walk down to the General Máximo Gómez Monument, along the Malecón by the ocean, through the playground and the Plaza de Armas. We see the Castillo de Fuerza and the President's Palace. A guide takes us through the City Hall, even into the Mayor's private reception room. While there, I stole a piece of *el alcalde's* stationery!

Our return walk leads through the narrowest street in Havana. Then a quick stop at a Chinese ice cream shop for a big cup of helado de chocolate.

Already we are asking ourselves, "What is this seemingly absent-minded compulsion of *los señores* to take macho note of every passing female?" Their heads turn; they interrupt their business discussion briefly to murmur a compliment; and yet their attitude suggests a chivalrous duty more than a lecherous leer. Meaningless or not, we decide to keep tally: *la morena* (my sister, the brunette) versus *la rubia* (me, the blonde.) In this raven-tressed town, will gentlemen prefer blondes?

We have had a quick rest and are heading in the opposite direction along El Prado. Up the 56 steps of the Capitol, a peek into the National Law Library, through Central Park, past numerous hotels and a seemingly endless array of shops. For supper, we munch on ham

sandwiches, washed down by tall milk shakes in the Salon Miami.

The sights from our hotel balcony are like a never-ending, ever-changing movie: swarms of people enjoying themselves



The General Máximo Gómez Monument, Havana, Cuba. HASF 1991-402-1.



along El Prado, street vendors, fireworks down by the Capitol, a float with an orchestra and singers going by, and the background cacophony of honking horns. The scene was an indelible audio-visual of a perpetual carnival in the tropics that lingers in the memory to this day.

### **Dec. 28, 1941**

We are dawdling over breakfast at Charley Sing's Restaurant. (It seems that dawdling is automatic here, so we expect to spend hours over our meals. After all, there is always *mañana*...) *Café con leche*, French bread toasted, and chilled grapefruit total 20¢...Will prices here always be a fraction of the stateside options, even compared to the post-Depression costs to which we are accustomed?

Along Tejadilla Street to the big market—just like the markets of Mexico; it smells the same, too. A potpourri of spicy foods, live chickens, flowers, dust, crowds of people...

We are at the Colón Cathedral. People are gathering for Mass, and we join them. The church is very old and very beautiful—high domes, soft colors, a beautiful altar and a magnificent organ.

We walk down to the Malecón, enjoying the surf dashing over the wall...Every city should have a waterfront promenade like this.

At the Agriculture Building, we say, "If the cops weren't here, we'd barge in." Then one of the "cops" comes over and offers to escort us through his building. He tells us about the beautiful Cuban woods, the minerals, plants, animals, etc., of which there were rooms full of specimens...Maybe we learned more high school Spanish than we realized!

Dinnertime at El Temple, overlooking the waterfront. Our guidebook recommended the place for its red snapper steak and for its view of the schooners coming into the harbor. And it is as good as its billing. Along with the snapper we have potatoes, peas, endives, parsley, Cuban bread, iced coffee, and a thimbleful of wine, all for 40¢.

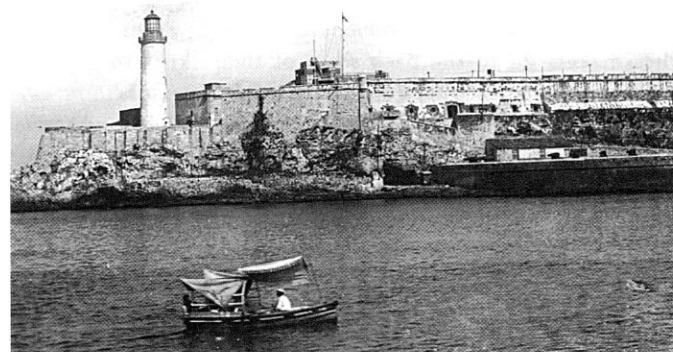
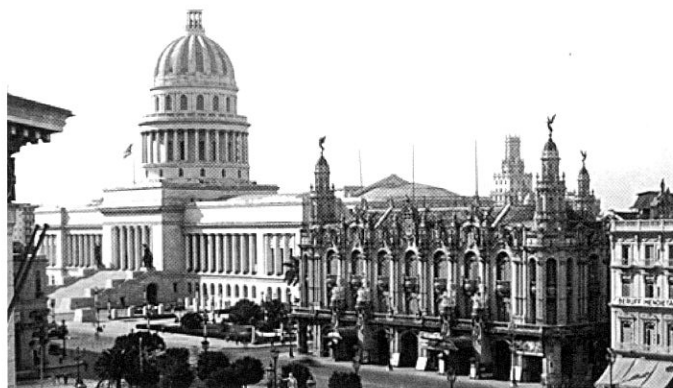
It is a beautiful meal and the proprietor is wreathed in smiles because I ask to take a picture of the plates before we start eating. For another 30¢, we have a native orchestra playing music of our choice, and singing, too: "*La Paloma*," "*Amor*," "*Cielito Lindo*," "*Amapola*"—two delightful hours! We have even made friends with the cat. As a clincher, we show the man that his restaurant is highly praised in our guidebook, especially his pargos—more smiles.

En route to our hotel, we stop at the wharf to make tentative arrangements for a ride to Morro Castle *mañana*. Then on to the Student Memorial. Some purchases from street vendors. Coca Colas from Charley Sing's Bar. And so another day goes into the memories.

### **Dec. 29, 1941**

Breakfast at Nanking's. We splurge on hot cakes, chilled grapefruit, and *café con leche*.

At the waterfront, our "maybe guide" announces that all is in readiness for our ride to Morro Castle. His boat is very small, and the sea is very choppy. Twenty minutes later we approach the wharf of El Morro. The water is bouncing the boat so badly that



Top to bottom—Havana Capitolio Building and the Gallego's Club. HASF 1993-477-7.  
Columbus Cathedral. HASF 1997-508-3. Malecón Avenue. HASF 1993-477-8.  
Morro Castle. HASF 81-142-92.





Student Memorial. Havana, Cuba. HASF 1980-093-2.

we have to jump ashore when the crest of a wave lifts the boat to the level of the landing.

Up the cobblestone hill to the Castle—very old, now used as an army training camp. We see the torture room and solitary confinement cells, complete with life-size wax figures in gruesome poses. We see the cadets' recreation room, kitchen, dormitories, etc. We climb the parapet and look out over the harbor. And, of course, we stop in the souvenir shop...Is there a historic site in the whole world that isn't cheapened by souvenir-hawkers?

Back on El Prado, we laze away the afternoon, first at the Amphitheater listening to the Army Band concert; then some casual shopping. Some mementos made of the beautiful two-color native wood (bookends, a pair of vases, and an ashtray all in *maracas* motif; total, \$5.50). A lovely black lace *mantilla*—as if I could hope to match these local *señoras* who begin the day fully-coiffed and dressed to the nines for serious shopping. (What do their dressmakers do to the back seam of their skirts to get that intriguing effect?)

The evening was a mini-tour, beginning at Tío Sam's for a quickie, then a native restaurant for *tortillas con papas* and *flan*, and a *café solo* shop for after-dinner coffee. The agenda included Dirty Dick's and the Jack and Betty Barrellita. (Were we sight-seeing or slumming? We will never know.)

#### Dec. 30, 1941

We have fortified ourselves with a ham and egg breakfast at Charley Sing's and we are now haggling briefly with a cabby about taking us to El Bosque (the forest) de la Habana, about an hour's ride from town.

We hurriedly change into riding clothes. Judging by the reactions, females must not customarily appear in public in jodhpurs. Oh my, a thousand pardons; but how else can one ride a horse?

El Bosque is a densely-wooded place full of hills, trails, rocks and rivers. We rent two rather ancient horses and the services of a 14-year-old guide—and off we go. When we return in mid-afternoon, the delightful experience is preserved for posterity as our waiting cabby takes our pictures with our young guide. We pay our \$3 bill. Oh dear! We became confused with the local money and inadvertently gave the lad two \$1's and a \$5 instead of three \$1's, a major mistake considering the economy of the times.

We continue our cabby-guided tour through the beautiful Colón Cemetery, which is the only cemetery in Havana except for the Chinese Cemetery in El Bosque. We were told that each fam-



The Prado. Havana, Cuba. HASF 1998-563-2.

ily purchases a very small section of the cemetery, large enough for two graves and a bone urn. After a body has been buried about five years, the bones are transferred to the bone urn, making room for the next body. While there, I spend 10¢ for a dozen and a half beautiful roses in the nearby flower market.

We stop at the Bacardi Distillery, where a guide shows us through the different rooms. Their famous frozen daiquiris are treats on the house, as are samples of *crema de cocoa* and other powerful vintages of one's choice. Then back to the Malecón, our "home."

#### Dec. 31, 1941

Good old Charley Sing's again for breakfast. With his familiar American food to stabilize our stomachs, we dare to



experiment later in the day with the highly-seasoned local cuisine.

Most of the day is a map-in-hand walk along the unfamiliar streets. We went to the market for a pair of native shoes at 5¢ a pair, similar to the Hawaiian “come-alongs,” but made very simply of wood soles and a strip of inner tube. Another carnival bazaar-market for some fun costume jewelry.

Then a New Year’s Eve tour like nothing two provincial sisters had ever seen on the mainland! El Bohío is an imitation native thatched hut. El Kursaal is a very pleasant cabaret on the waterfront.

We see very little similarity between the rhumbas, congas, and pasé dobles that we are looking at here and the Stateside versions. One is “hot.” The other is not. Two dancers exiled from Europe are doing an exotic interpretation of the “Toreador Song” from Carmen, and we are trying to decide if they are wearing tutus or just skin.

#### Jan. 1, 1942

Help! Help! At mid-day, we casually drop by the shipping office to check on our upcoming sailing time and they give us the stunning news that the United States government has taken over the S.S. *Florida* for use as a hospital ship in the war zone. There is now no boat on the Miami run!

To solve the problem of getting all of us back to the United States, the S.S. *Cuba* has been taken off the Key West run to handle the traffic. Unfortunately, the *Cuba* holds only 300 people. Sailings are jammed, and we don’t know when we will be home!

Maybe a good meal at Charley Sing’s will make us feel better...No appetite...We have learned very quickly that there is nothing on earth to ease the pain of being trapped away from your homeland, not even an exotic holiday in a foreign port.

Back to the shipping office for possible last-minute cancellations. Ah, a friend! The agent who had helped us with our arrangements in the Miami office recognizes us. “Two little lambs who have lost their way?” So he quickly responds to our plight, informing the Havana agent, “I have already placed their names on tonight’s sailing.”

“*Gracias, señor! Mil Gracias!*” And never mind that our vacation is being cut short. Being only 90 miles away from

home might as well be on the moon, because stranded by any other name is still stranded.

Los caballeros along El Prado were treated to the rare sight of two females running pellmell—no time now for the routine male accolades, “*Tan bonita!*”... “*Sabrosísima!*”... “*Encantadora!*” We are packed and in a cab enroute to the pier with no thought of a final tally on la morena versus la rubia.

It is sundown. We are on board our ship watching the skyline of Havana recede into a memory. By the time we clear El Morro, the seas are tumultuous. “The worst crossing within recent years,” the crew informs us later.

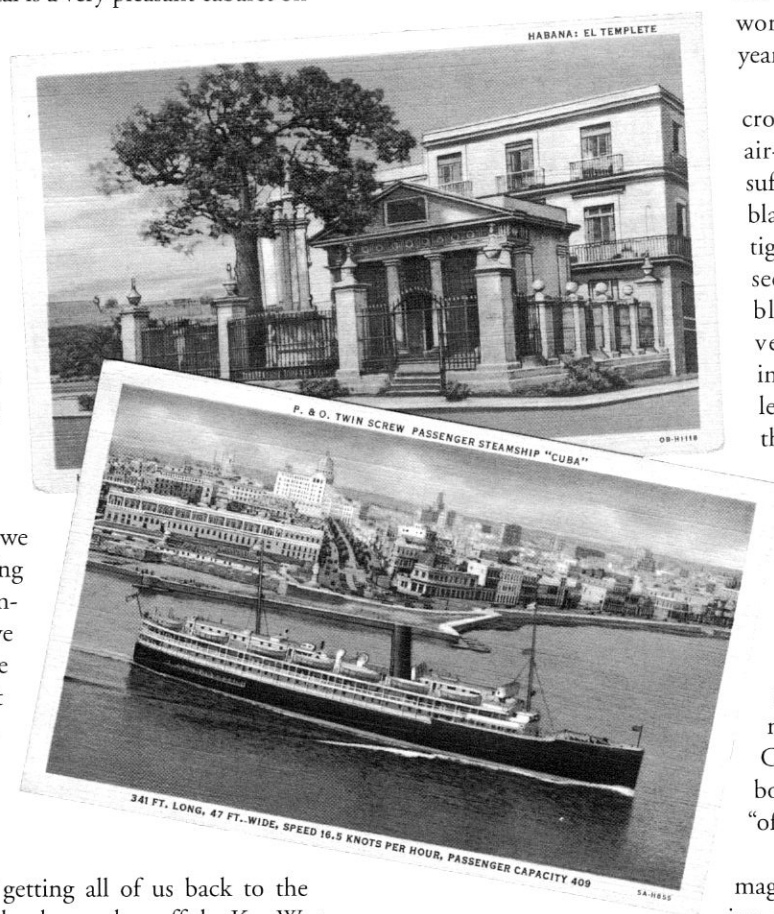
The wildly-rocking ship is crowded and the small un-air-conditioned staterooms are suffocatingly hot. Because of the black-out, the portholes are all tightly closed and the entire ship seems to be swathed in black-out curtains. The universal mal-de-mer is threatening. Back up on deck in the violent breezes, our eyes focus on the horizon, the only relatively stable spot in sight. We spend the night topside, shivering, but without nausea.

Dawn finally comes. The seas calm down. And we see the familiar skyline of Miami rising out of the ocean. We dock at 8:00 a.m. It is almost noon before we clear Customs—minus a cherished bottle of perfume that someone “officially” confiscated.

We have returned from the magic of Havana to a world rushing headlong into the horrors of war. It was a brief interlude between

the world that was and the world that is about to be.

We promise ourselves: “Havana *mañana!*”  
Will *mañana* ever come? —SFH



Columbus Memorial Chapel (*El Temple*). HASF 81-142-112.

P. & Q. Twin Screw Passenger Steamship—S.S. *Cuba*. HASF 1989-171-3.



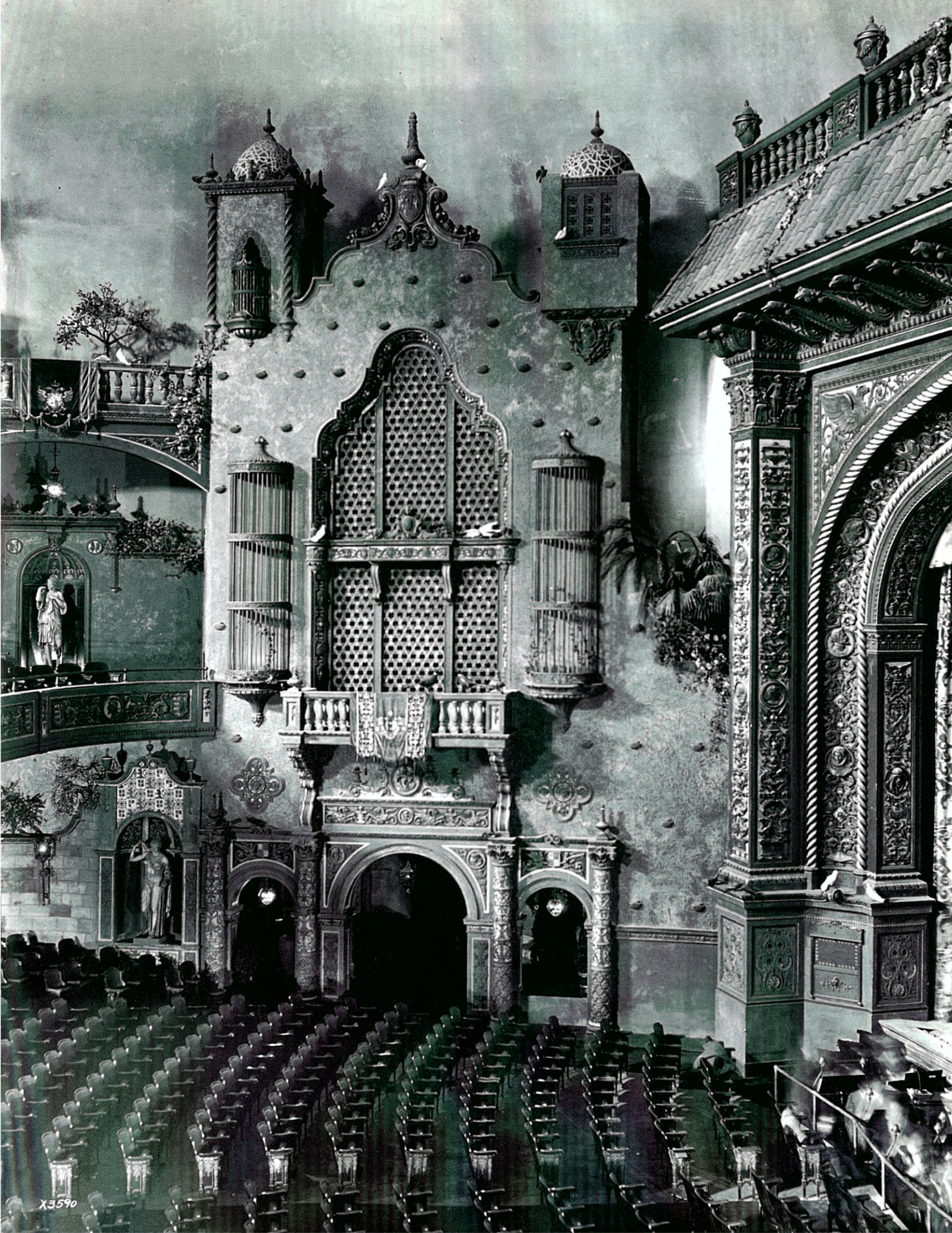
# *Gusman now Olympia then*

*by Geraldine H. Williams*



Above—Olympia Theatre. June 12, 1936. HASF 394-10-2. Right—Interior of the Olympia Theatre. HASF 84-130-35.







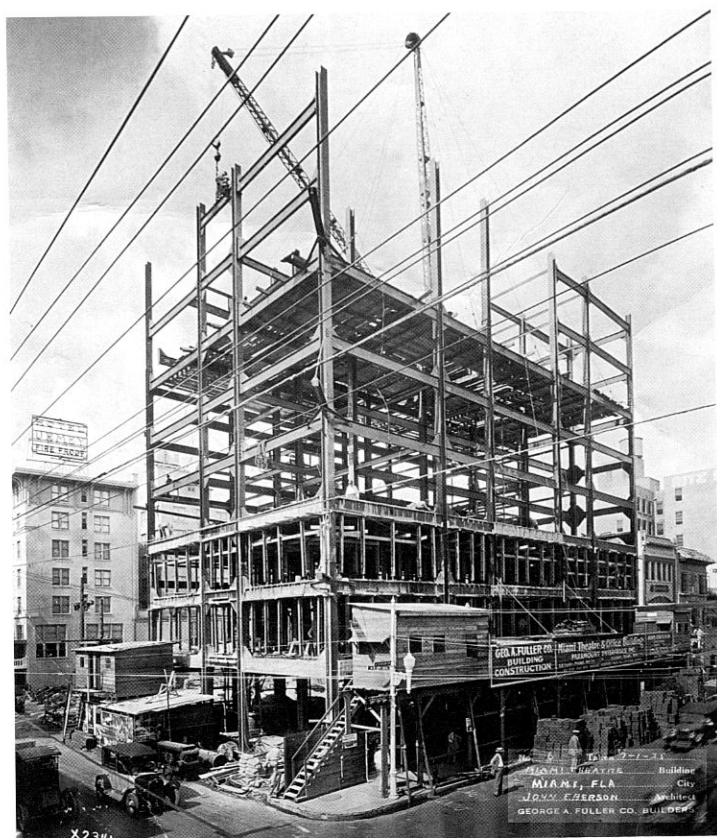
For those of us lucky enough to have been to New York or Europe and to have seen restored theatres there, we know that saving the *Olympia Gusman* should be a priority for the city and its citizens. Perhaps so many people who now live here and run the government never had the pleasure of seeing such beauty or having such pride in this historic building. It would be a tremendous loss in our new century if Miami fails to save this gem of a theatre for future generations.

The last time you decided to go to the movies, did you carefully pick out the right outfit so you would look your best?

When you got to the theatre, did you find yourself growing silent with awe at the beautiful marble and bronze entry way?

Did you feel very special walking along velvet-roped aisles on plush, oriental-patterned carpets as you were shown to your seats?

As you waited for the movie to start, did you gasp at the beauty of the interior of the theatre? NO?

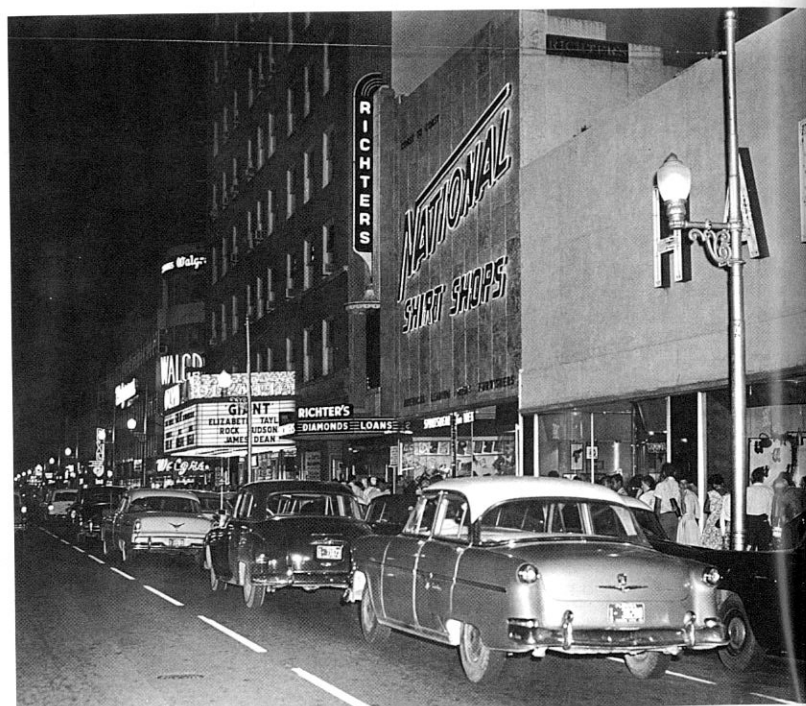


The massive steel frame takes shape at the corner of SE 2nd Avenue, Flagler Street in 1925. HASF 84-130-6.

Our usual experience these days is to check the schedule for the dozens of cineplexes around the city and after seeing what choices are available at the movie complex nearest you, you jump in a car, get to the overcrowded, noisy mall, and make your way to the line to get in to your choice of movie for the evening. Once inside, you stand in line again for \$3.50 popcorn and a \$2.50 small carbonated drink and then hurry down grey- and mauve-colored halls and find the tacky plastic sign over the door that shows the movie you just paid \$6.50 to see.

Then you find a not-too-comfortable seat, listen to the sounds of the movie coming from the theater next door, and after too-loud previews of three or four movies and a commercial for the concession stand's overpriced treats, the movie starts.

That's what is now called "going to the movies." It wasn't always that way in Miami or most large cities back in the 1920s through the 1950s. It was an event to be relished and appreciated. The best part of going to the movies was not so much what was showing but entering a palace so grand and so elegant, you



Traffic jam and block-long lines for the screening of *GIANT* with Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean. HASF 1999-385-266.

knew you were privileged just being there. Seeing a movie was a small part of a much larger experience.

When the major movie studios were just beginning the legend of Hollywood in the 1920s, they realized that they needed theatres throughout the country to show their movies and so they became the major builders of these early palaces.

In Miami, Paramount Enterprises hired John Eberson in 1925 to build the Olympia Theatre for \$1.5 million. What is now known as the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts (itself badly in need of repair and refurbishment) was once a movie-vaudeville palace that contained an "Italian garden, a



Persian court, a Spanish patio, or a mystic Egyptian temple yard...where friendly stars twinkled and wisps of clouds drifted."

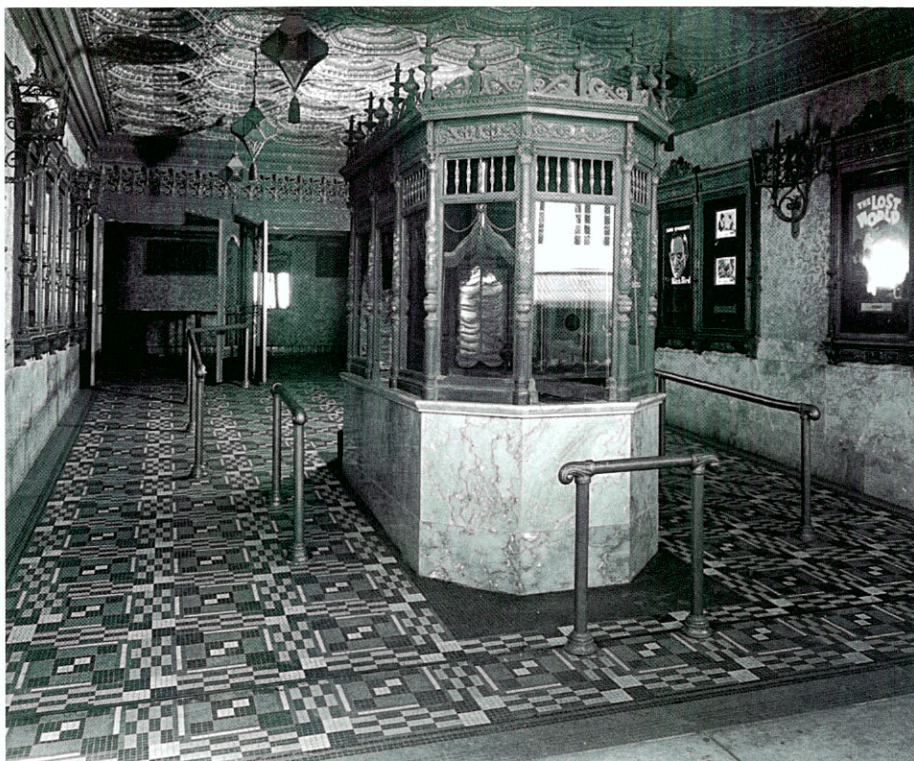
On the corner of East Second Avenue and Flagler Street now stands a crumbling, water-stained, tattered shell of the glorious building that once hosted live performances of stars like Rudy Vallee, Rosemary Clooney and Elvis Presley. The first showings of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind*, along with all the classics we have come to love, made the Olympia Theatre a premier landmark\* that the Friends of Gusman are now working so hard to save for future generations.

Let me take you back to the mid-1940s. Whenever my parents decided that there was enough extra money that we could afford to go to the Olympia downtown, my brother and I had to bathe, put on a nice outfit, and stay clean until mother and dad were ready to drive us downtown in our Plymouth.

We had lived in the southwestern part of Miami all our lives. Grandparents on my father's side had farmed the land since the 1900s where Tropical Racetrack was later built. My grandparents on my mother's side had moved to Miami in 1936. To my brother and me, Miami was our neighborhood of Irish, German, Italian and Jewish neighbors. Downtown was for shopping, and we always dressed up on those rare occasions mother took us with her. Our neighborhood theatre was the Tower on Southwest Eighth Street, but THE theatre was the Olympia.

Once we made the trip downtown and Daddy found a parking space, we would usually approach the theatre from the west, walking along Flagler Street on the right side, where I always looked forward to the window of the jewelry store that had a small, pink quartz elephant turning on a pedestal. It was decorated with jewels that glittered under the lights, and I always associated this sight with going into the dazzling Olympia lobby with its pink marbled foyer, guarded on either side with heavy brass stanchions holding deep red velvet ropes that led to the box office.

Daddy would purchase the tickets and we would walk through heavy bronze doors into the cool luxury of the lobby.



Above—Ticket Booth HASF 84-130-30. Below—Interior of the theatre. HASF 84-130-33.











Immediately, the golden glow from electric light wall sconces and the carved mahogany tables and chairs lining the walls told you the hot tropical world outside the doors was to be left behind, because now you were in a very special place.

There was no pushing and shoving, no popcorn dropped on the plush oriental-patterned carpets, and no loud voices cursing and hollering for children. There were only hushed tones as if one was in church or a wealthy person's palace. I remember going to the bathroom for the first time there—I was in awe of the silk-covered chaise lounge and mirrored powder room. It was as beautiful as the homes I had seen on the movie screen where Ginger Rogers or Betty Grable wore their ostrich feather-trimmed chiffon negligees while getting ready for their dates.

The uniformed attendants stood guard at each of the entrances to the seating areas, and with their flashlights, they led you down the aisle to a row that had seats still empty. This was the best time to gaze at the night sky on the ceiling with the tiny, glittering lights arranged in astrological patterns just like the real sky. Soft cobwebbed clouds seem to drift by while you listened to the trickle of water coming from the fountains on either side of the front of the theatre's gardens.

Small citrus trees and flowering bushes created an unbelievable tropical paradise in front of you, encasing the orchestra pit in beauty only seen by the average movie-goer in travel books or on the movie screen.

The real magic began while you were gazing up at the carved sculpture on the balcony, seeing statues and cupids adding to the glamour of the architect's genius in creating a genuine feeling of being transported to a foreign land. The lights dimmed in the house, and slowly a full orchestra arose right in front of you, led by a slick-haired conductor in a tuxedo.

It was time to begin. Usually, there was an animal act on stage, or jugglers. Sometimes a beautiful adagio act with a couple in eveningwear would recreate a Ginger Rogers/Fred Astaire dance.

We would watch with awe and applaud with gusto. This was entertainment! Then the conductor and the orchestra would take a final bow, and as they descended and the spotlight went out, the heavy blue velvet curtain would slowly part to reveal the movie screen.

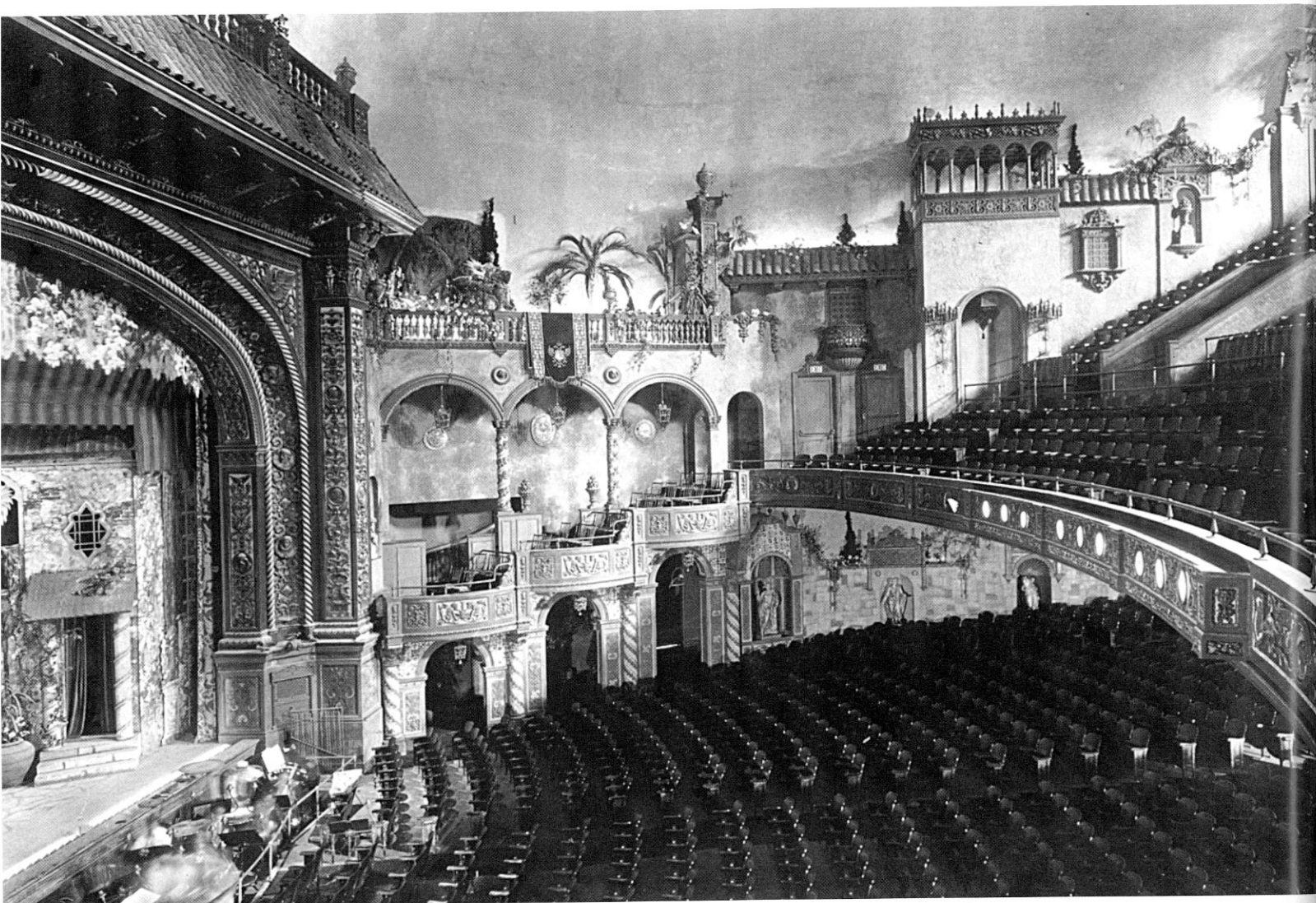
First there would be the Movietone black-and-white newsreel with the rooster cock-a-doodle-doing and the turning movie projector facing us would show short news clips of the latest on the Marshall Plan in Europe, President Truman in Key West or signing a bill, some catastrophic event somewhere overseas that a movie camera caught, and finally something frivolous like a shot of the latest French fashions or some royal personage marrying.



Left—The enchanting ladies room with its silk-covered chairs and mirrored powder room.

HASF 84-130-38. Above—Mac MacDonald's Harmonicares and the Manhattan Rockettes were among the hundreds of acts that kept the crowds coming to the theatre. HASF 1999-385-168, HASF 1999-385-31.





Above—The auditorium simulates an Italian walled garden with a moonlit sky painted on the ceiling. HASF 1989-011-20245.

Then came a cartoon, perhaps a sing-along with the bouncing ball, a couple of previews of technicolor movies soon to be coming, and then the movie. Three hours later, the lights would come up and we knew our magical time was over.

You were never in a rush to leave, but rather you lingered to get a last glimpse of the twinkling ceiling, the cascading water fountain lit by amber and green or blue lights, and the fine craftsmanship of the bas relief work on every plaster surface so you'd always remember what palaces in Europe and Spain must look like.

But leave we would, and if daddy was in a good mood, maybe we'd stop at Puritan's Dairy store on the way home for one of their luscious hot fudge sundaes with hot roasted almonds. If not there, then maybe we'd go to the Howard Johnson's farther down Flagler Street near our home to get a quart of pistachio or chocolate ice cream to be enjoyed on the front steps after we got home and replayed our wonderful visit to the Olympia Theatre in our minds. —SFH

# Linking<sup>the</sup> Future with the Past

## Silent Auction

*The Historical Museum would like to express its thanks & appreciation to the following auction donors for their generosity & assistance in making this event a success:*

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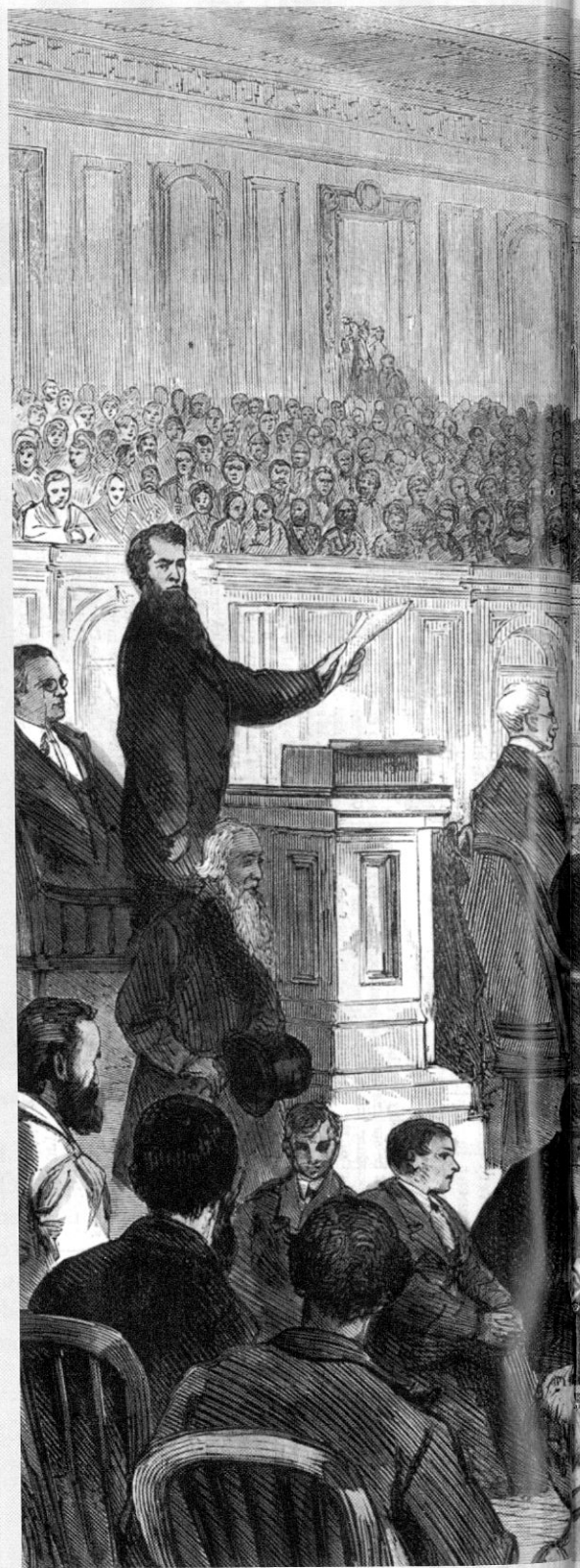
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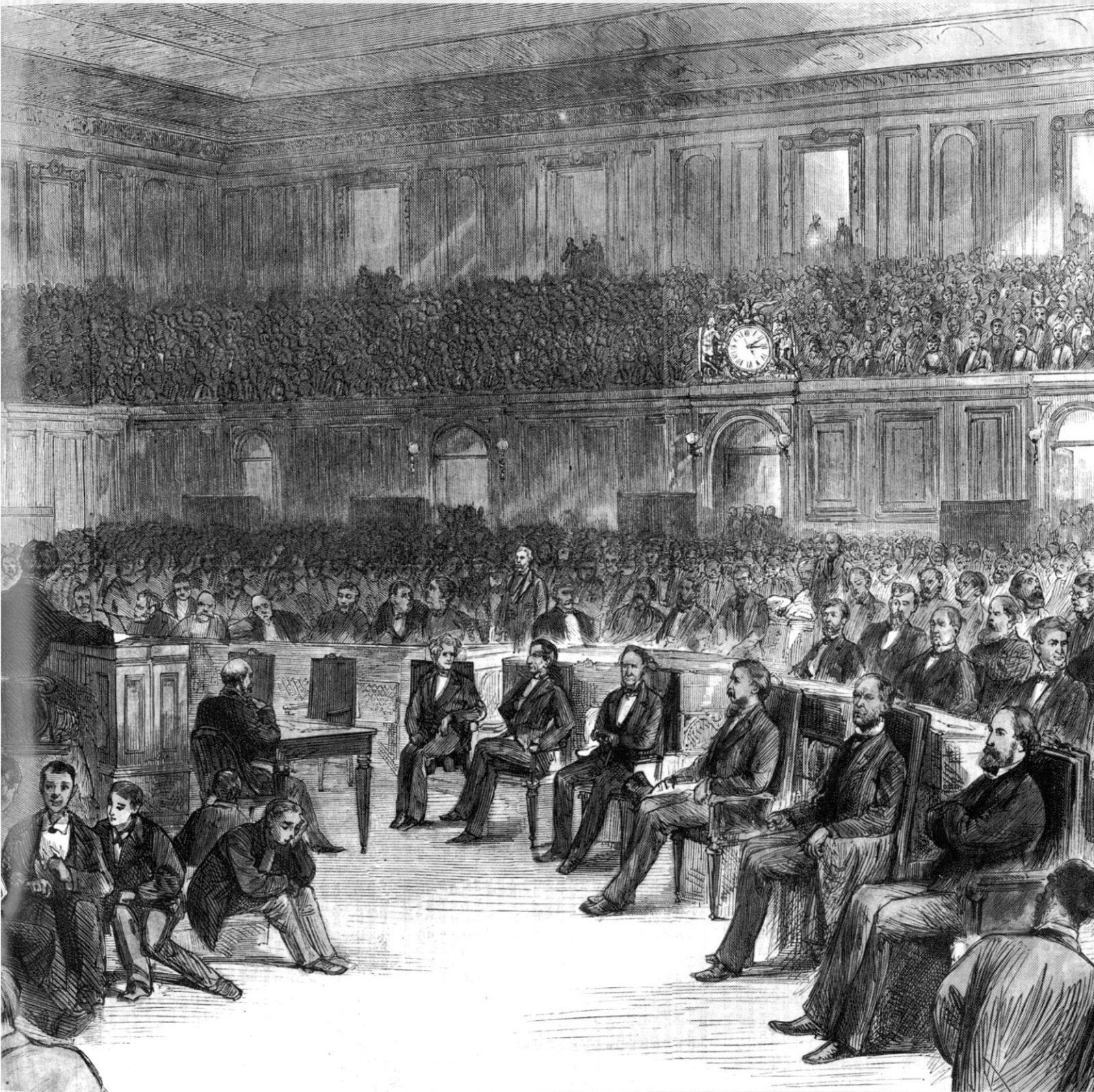
# FLORIDA

*keeps the  
Nation  
waiting in  
PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTION...  
of 1876*

*Florida has delayed and decided the results of a presidential election before. This story, written by Arva Moore Parks, tells how Dade County held the nation in suspense—in 1876.*







"Counting the electoral vote: David Dudley Field objects to the vote of Florida." Hand-colored print from a sketch by Theodore R. Davis. *Harper's Weekly*, February 17, 1877. Samuel J. Tilden (Democrat) and Rutherford B. Hayes (Republican) presidential election. From the collections of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. No. 1993-234-1.



As November arrived, the people in Dade County looked forward with some excitement to the upcoming election on November 7. Although the rest of the nation was involved in the heated contest for President of the United States between Democrat, Samuel J. Tilden and Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes, the residents of Dade County showed more interest in their local affairs...

In November, 1876, there were seventy-three registered voters in Dade County, the largest number ever registered. It was decided that for the first time three precincts would be opened in the county, which included among others the present counties of Broward and Palm Beach. One was at Jupiter, which had almost no residents except the lighthouse keepers. The second precinct was at Lake Worth, which by 1876 had over ten men of voting age. The third precinct was at the home of Michael Sears, which had been used as the voting precinct since the election of 1870. In this election E. T. Sturtevant, T. W. Faulkner and W. H. Jenkins were made inspectors of the "Sears Precinct." On November 7 all the voters were coaxed, threatened and promised in all manner of ways as never before to come to the polls. But even with this, only 55 voted on election day.

The election was passing off quietly at the Sears Precinct as one eyewitness recalled, until three voters, all sailors of foreign birth who had registered previously with no incident and had obtained their "declaration of intention" to become citizens of the United States, were challenged by the inspectors. It was customary in those days to allow those with "declarations" to vote. An inspector, who acknowledged that he had the required declarations in his possession at the clerk's office at Biscayne (Miami Shores), allegedly offered to produce them if the voters cast their vote as the inspector requested. This statement nearly caused bloodshed which was only averted by dispatching the lighthouse boat to Biscayne to get the required papers. When the time for the closing of the polls neared, the boat was sighted offshore. The men, who had waited all day, again prevailed and the polls remained

open until the boat arrived and the men voted. Immediately after they voted the polls were closed. This incident, however, was just the beginning. As the count began, witnessed by several bystanders, fifteen or twenty ballots blew, fell or were knocked to the floor. Several of the bystanders picked up the ballots, returned them to the table and the count continued. When the count from the three precincts was completed, Stewart had received 34 and Varnum 18; Brown 27, and Gleason 24. Incidentally, but of little interest to most of Dade's voters, the Tilden electors had received 28 and Hayes 27.

The excitement caused by the election was soon forgotten, and everyone went back to their normal life. But the election was by no means over. Before the official canvass on November 17, William H. Gleason, as usual, decided to contest the election. By doing this, the count from Dade County was not sent on to Tallahassee until the controversy was settled. This delay unwittingly thrust Dade County into the forefront of the disputed election of Tilden and Hayes. Dade's notoriety was so sudden and its whereabouts so

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***"Results still uncertain.***

***A solid South except Louisiana,  
Florida, and South Carolina."***

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unknown, that one reporter asked: "Where in the hell is Dade?"

Unknown to most of the electors in Dade County, the Presidential election was as heated and controversial as their own. Samuel Tilden, like Stewart and Brown, had gone to sleep on election night believing that he had been elected. The next day, the *New York Tribune* headlined: "Tilden Elected."

Then an incredible thing happened. John C. Reid of the *New York Times* did some arithmetic. It appeared that Tilden had 184 electoral votes and needed only

one more for election. Hayes had only 166 electoral votes and was trailing Tilden in the popular count by several hundred thousand. But the three states not in, Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana, from which Tilden needed his one more vote, were the three states still under carpetbag control. So the same day the *Tribune* announced Tilden's victory, the *Times* declared: "Results still uncertain. A solid South except Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina."

Before long, national interest was focused on Florida, where, on November 27, the official tally was begun by the state canvassing board. It had ten days to determine the results of the election because Florida's four presidential electors were required by law to cast their votes on December 6. As the chairman read each county return, each was challenged by one side or the other. On the first reading it appeared that Hayes had a slim forty-three vote majority. But there was another important factor—Dade County's returns were missing!

On November 29, 1876, Dade County made the front page of the national press. The *Times* reported: "It should be noted that all the thickly populated counties where there is civilization and protection to life gave Republican majorities. Democratic majorities came from the sparsely settled, half-civilized and lawless southern counties...Dade County cannot change the result a dozen votes one way or the other. There are only forty or fifty voters in the county and the Republican majority in 1874 for Congressman was 13."

During the next few days the newspapers were filled with the arguments, accusations and counter-accusations of fraud and intimidation brought before the board in Tallahassee by several of the more populous counties. But there was notice given to the fact that Dade's returns were still missing. This was holding up the final tally and adding to the rumors.

On December 2 it was reported in the *Times*: "The returns from Dade County are expected tonight. There are several hundred Indians in that county who are



legal voters but whether they voted at the last election is unknown.”

If, in fact, Dade had several hundred voters the whole election would change overnight. Of course, the Indians were not registered voters in 1876, but this type of speculation was common.

In the midst of all of this, no one in Dade, except perhaps Gleason, was cognizant of the strange set of events that was surrounding the presidential election, or that the nation was awaiting their vote. The county canvassers in Dade met to hear Gleason's case. Gleason alleged that irregularities and illegal voting took place at the Sears Precinct. One irregularity listed was that Simeon Frow voted after dark. The second was that A. F. Bracklin and R. H. Thompson were foreigners by birth and did not present their naturalization papers. Third, Gleason alleged that between the time the ballots fell to the floor and were returned, several were changed. Following these allegations were eight pages of depositions by various individuals supporting Gleason's claims. This testimony indicates that Gleason had the Republican tickets printed while the Democratic tickets were handwritten.

The final result was that the board of canvassers, David Brown, William J. Smith, and W. H. Laneheart, threw out the entire Sears Precinct. With the Sears Precinct out, the result of the election gave Gleason 7, Brown 4, and Stewart 6, Varnum 5. (Stewart died on his return to Lake Worth.) The Hayes electors were victorious over Tilden 8 to 5. On Friday, December 2, Gleason finally brought the

returns to Tallahassee. He had managed to not only elect himself, but also deliver Dade County for the Republicans.

By this time, however, because of mass shifting of votes the day before and assorted chicanery, it was becoming more and

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more apparent that Hayes would be declared the winner in Florida. Therefore, the long-awaited returns from Dade County could not change the course of the election. They did, however, offer a comic relief to the whole debacle. The Secretary of State announced to the crowded room: “Dade County—Hayes 9, Tilden 5.” The heretofore grim proceedings broke up in laughter.

Fourteen votes had held up the count from Florida and had brought about an

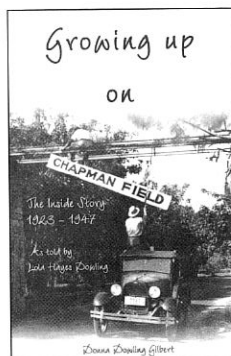
untold amount of rumor and wild speculation by the national press. But most of all, Dade County had received national attention. The following day the *New York Times* chose Dade County to write what they considered to be the epitaph for the whole election. “The Last Straw for the Democratic Camel, Dade Comes in with a Republican Majority.” The *Tribune* added: “The returns from the only remaining county, the far off ‘Kingdom of Dade,’ have come and have been opened. Hayes received 9 and Tilden 5.” The national election controversy was not over—only Dade's part in it. Florida ended up sending three different sets of electors to the Congressional Electoral Commission. The nation did not know who was elected President until the evening before the inauguration, when Tilden, in an effort to unite the nation conceded the election to Hayes even though he had grounds to continue the fight. Hayes brought political Reconstruction to an end and restored home rule to the last three Southern States under carpetbag control—Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. —SFH

Excerpt from “Miami in 1876,” by Arva Moore Parks. In *Tequesta*, vol. XXXV, 1975. Copyright 1976 by the Historical Association of Southern Florida.



# book review

**GROWING UP ON CHAPMAN FIELD: THE INSIDE STORY 1923-1947**  
by Donna Dowling Gilbert. Hallmark Press, Inc. Miami, FL. 85 pages. \$9.95



by Raymond G. McGuire, Ph.D.

War made this place. The War to End All Wars needed pilots desperately, but with victory in Europe, nature was allowed to regain its control over Chapman Field, and major development for the last 77 years has been forestalled with the creation of a federal plant garden and a county nature preserve. Chapman Field originally encompassed 850 acres between Biscayne Bay and what would become SW 67th

Avenue, bounded now by SW 144th Street and Old Cutler Road in South Miami-Dade. Named for Victor Chapman, the first U.S. flier to be killed in France in World War I, the air base offered gunnery training to military pilots before it was deactivated just a few months after the war's end. In 1923, Dr. David Fairchild was able to acquire a portion of the property and moved the U.S. Department of Agriculture's plant introduction garden from its seven acres on Brickell Avenue to this more expansive location.

In *Growing up on Chapman Field*, Donna Dowling Gilbert has written down the memories of her mother, Lola Hayes Dowling, whose father worked for the USDA and lived with his family in the garden for 24 years. Clifford "Shorty" Hayes had come to the garden in 1923 to propagate the seeds and cuttings that Fairchild and other plant explorers sent to Miami from around the world. Lola was just four years old at that time, and this memorial relates her life from the time she was a child through the years America was in a second World War, when the girl had matured into a young woman serving the war effort. The horticulture station recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in Miami, and as a plant scientist with an interest in the history of this place, I was fascinated by Lola's story. I'm sure others will be as well.

With her parents and three sisters, Lola Hayes shared the wilds of palmetto and pine scrub with a few other gardeners, snakes, raccoons, possums, a rare panther, and hordes of insects. Her family was secure, however, inside a home converted from an old army mess hall, with electricity and indoor plumbing at a time when many in Miami still used outhouses. In seven chapters, she relates her life with specific references to the people and places around her, from Miami and Coconut Grove through Cutler and Perrine, including grocery shopping in Stang's Market at Highway 1 and Sunset Drive and watching movies at the Riviera Theater in South Miami. The old air base was her playground as a child, though, and as it was transformed into a tropical garden under the hand of David Fairchild, Lola, through the years, blossomed as well. As a child, she would lead land crabs as pets with a string tied to the larger claw. As a teen, she hosted parties for her classmates from Ponce de Leon High School at Chapman Field where no noise could escape to disturb the neighbors. Picnics at Chicken Key and swimming at Cutler Public Beach and Tahiti Beach in Coral Gables made the time away from school exciting. But the tropical storms could be terribly frightening with few people nearby, especially the memorable hurricanes of 1926 and 1945.

Little history is available about the WWII years at Chapman Field, when a small airfield used by military reservists throughout the 1930s was taken over by the Embry-Riddle Corp. to train pilots for war. Lola Hayes, however, was a civilian employee at the flight school, and her story includes tales of the men stationed there.

This small book is a treasure trove of information on the lives of people in this part of the county off the beaten path. The 85 pages fervently express the joy of a girl learning about the expanding world around her as she becomes a young woman in South Florida. Donna Gilbert hints that more of her mother's stories are to follow, and I eagerly anticipate the next.



Need an EDITOR????

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## MIAMI U.S.A.

by Helen Muir. Expanded edition. Gainesville : University Press of Florida, 2000. 355 pages. \$24.95 hardback.



by Rebecca A. Smith

When I first started work at the Historical Museum 26 years ago, Dr. Thelma Peters recommended that I read a variety of *Tequesta* articles and some books, first and foremost, *Miami U. S. A.* I followed her advice and began my personal reading program with this book. I loved it, for it was, and is, a "good read."

Now, after a long absence from bookstores, this classic is once again in

print and easy to find.

*Miami U. S. A.* tells the story of the Miami region from 1875 to 2000, beginning with the frontier settlers and settlements around Biscayne Bay and ending with the complex controversies surrounding Elian Gonzalez. Each era is brought to life with anecdotes and stories about the people living here and important historical events and trends.

The author, Helen Muir, has lived in Coconut Grove since 1934. She places her love of the Grove and Miami within the narrative, which breathes a sense of story-telling into the narrative that is missing from other, more formal histories of the area. Polished writing and an unpretentious style also draw the reader into the story. Scholarship, however, has not been neglected; significant events and trends are objectively presented. Muir has written other books, but *Miami U. S. A.* is her masterpiece.

*Miami U. S. A.* was first published in 1953, and remained in print for many years. Then, in 1990, a second, coffee table edi-

tion brought the story up to 1990 and added a section of beautiful, contemporary photographs by Masud and Najam Quraishy. This handsome volume, unfortunately, was priced beyond most readers' budgets, was too large and heavy to take to the beach or bed, and soon went out of print. For almost a decade, the book could only be found in libraries and, occasionally, at antiquarian bookstores.

Now, this third edition, without the photographs, brings the story up-to-date, in an affordable, easy-to-transport format. It is the 16th volume in the Florida History and Culture Series, a growing series of books of special interest to Floridiana readers and collectors. (Other titles include *The Enduring Seminoles*, by former HMSF curator Patsy West, and *The Everglades*, by David McCally.) It has the special honor of being the first in the series to be an expansion and revision of a previously published classic. As University Press of Florida is the largest Floridian publisher, *Miami U. S. A.* will probably remain in print for many years to come. I hope the publisher will reprint this edition as a paperback in the future.

For years I have recommended three books to readers beginning to learn about Miami-Dade history: *Miami U. S. A.*, by Helen Muir; *Miami: the Magic City*, by Arva Moore Parks; and *From Wilderness to Metropolis*, by Ivan Rodriguez and Margot Ammidown. Now, this book is even better than it used to be. With so much new material in this edition, it is a good time for those already familiar with South Florida history to re-read *Miami U. S. A.* as well.



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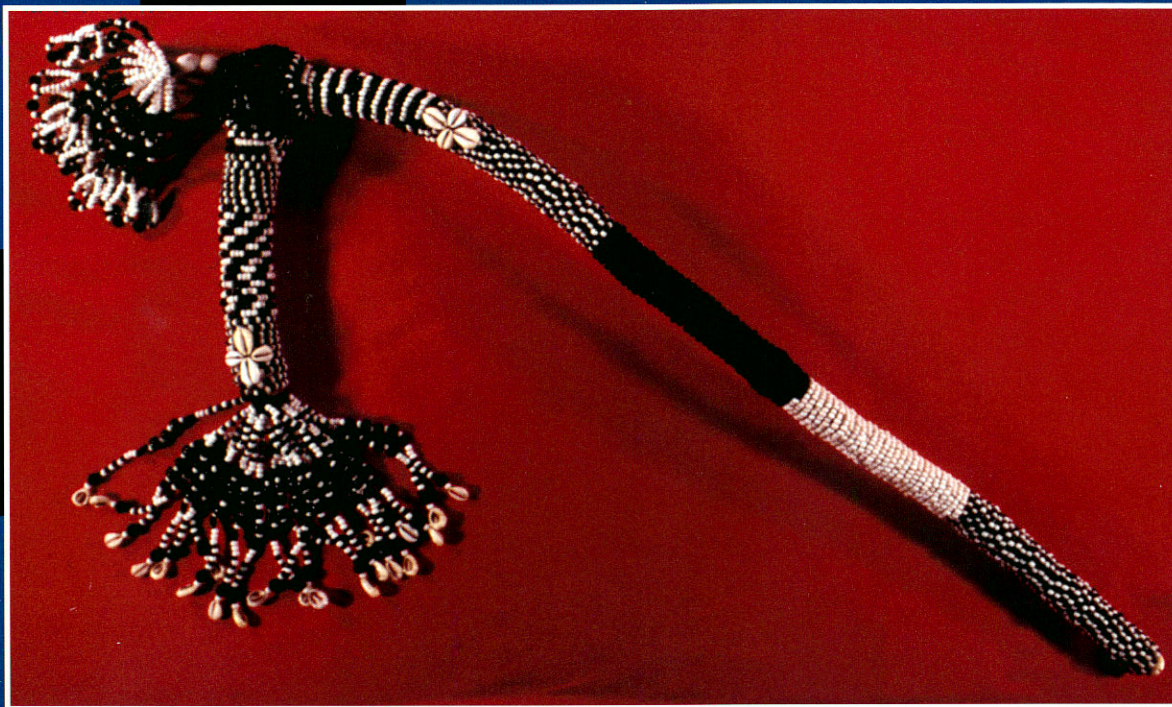
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