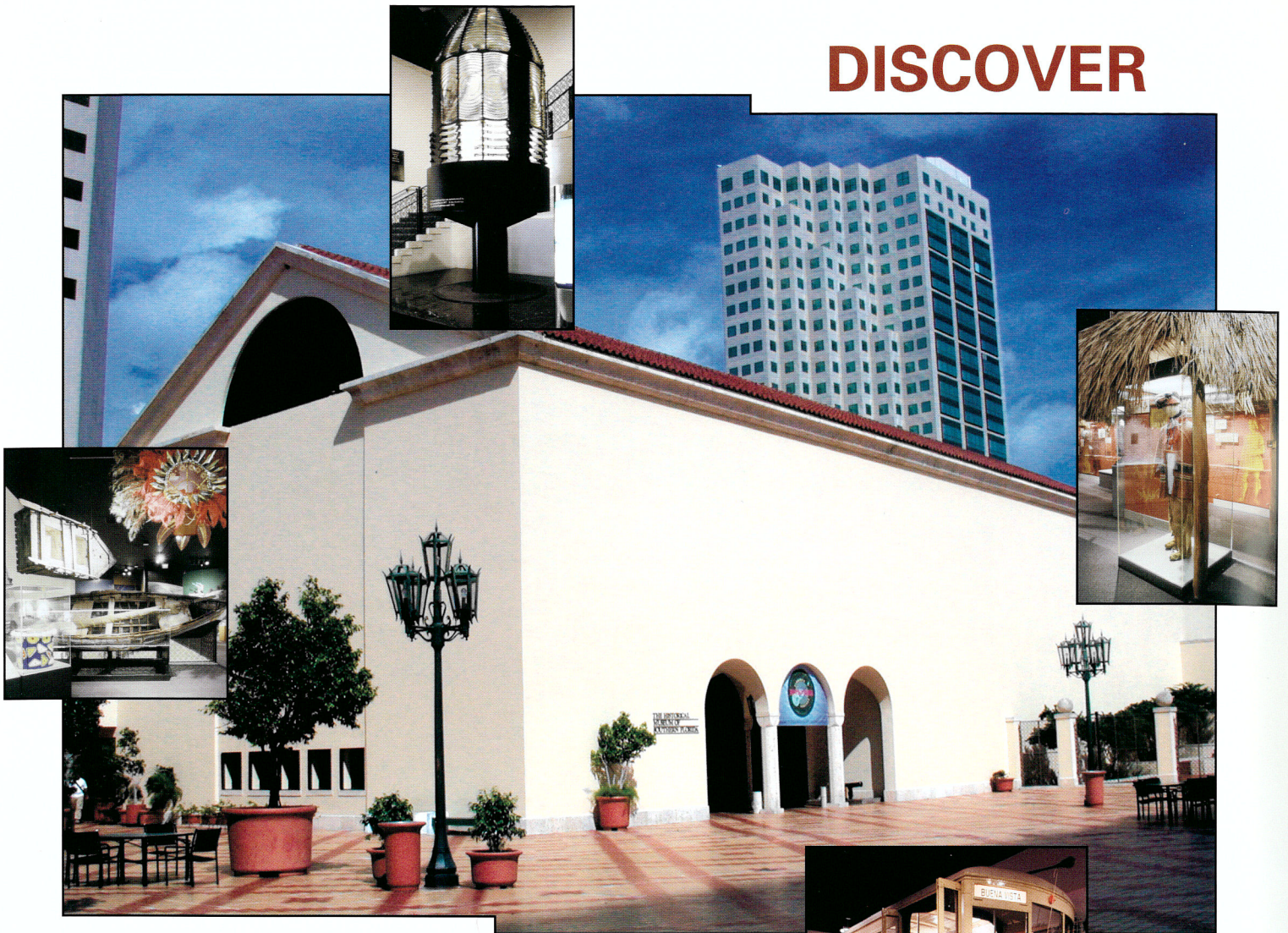


South Florida History

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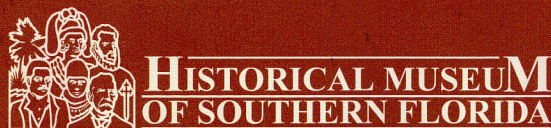
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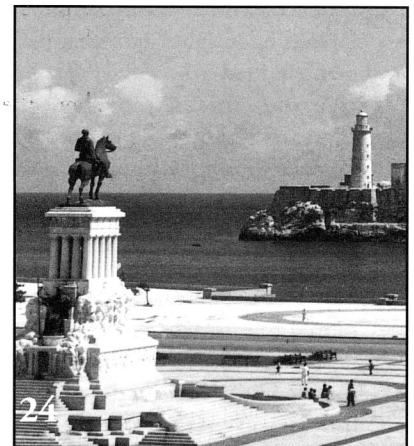
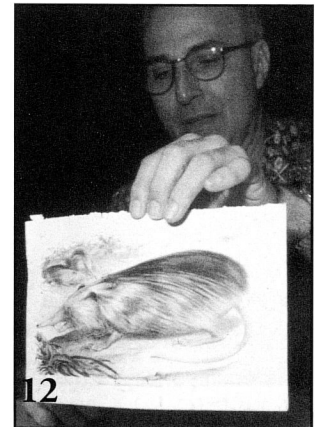
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Cover—Artwork from a postcard depicting a street colonnade in Havana. HASF 1999-335-21.

Editor's notes



Throughout the years, Cuba and its people have been an important element and influence on South Florida. As the museum's mission is to disseminate knowledge about South Florida and the Caribbean, the museum felt it appropriate to celebrate Cuba's 100 years of becoming a Republic.

With that in mind, the museum presents three exhibitions: *Illustrating Cuba's Flora & Fauna*; *La Habana: Civic Architecture 1902-1958*; *Path Breaker, Nation Builder: The Railroads of Cuba*; Family Fun Days and Third Thursday Evenings; all sharing a common theme, Cuba (see page 6 for a calendar listing). It was only natural that *South Florida History* join in this celebration.

While choosing a cover image that would depict Cuba, I came across a postcard I thought would be perfect, but due to copyright laws I couldn't use it. It read "[Cuba] so near yet so foreign." Instantly it became my mission to fill this issue with articles that would make Cuba a little less foreign to all of us.

Explore the behind-the-scenes world of private collector Emilio Cueto (pages 12). Learn why, what and how the collector of "all things Cuban" collects. And gain some interesting insights into what lies behind the collection of so many diverse articles in one man's home.

As you read on, learn about the influence railroads had on Cuba, both economically and socially, and the role that a few Americans played in their development (page 16). Discover how by affirming sugar as Cuba's single overriding industry, the railroad would set the course of Cuban history for the next 100 years.

From one man's home to railroads, on to urban spaces, explore how with the establishment of the Republic in 1902, Havana experienced an urban explosion (page 24). This explosion freed urban spaces and architecture from European historicism and moved toward North American modernity. Urban growth during the 20th century not only depended on the newly instituted republic, but even more on the urban inheritance that had developed from the end of the 18th century.

Please join the museum in celebrating Cuba.
Enjoy!

Sara Muñoz

Interested in submitting an article or book review for *South Florida History*?

Contact Sara Muñoz at
publications@historical-museum.org for a copy
of the *Style Guide for Writers*.

South Florida History

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EDUCATION

Footprint Expeditions



by Stacey de la Grana

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF) and Footprint Expeditions, Inc. discover the real roots of history.

This fall, HMSF and Footprint Expeditions, an eco-history tour company, will launch a new series

of tours. Specifically designed for HMSF, Footprints Expeditions tours will focus on the history of South Florida's environment. Participants get a closer look at the greener side of Miami and South Florida's most unique habitats and how they have changed as a result of natural events and human interaction.

Footprint Expeditions tours will uncover the history and mysteries of our extraordinary natural environment. Tours range from walks through Matheson Hammock, a pristine tropical hardwood hammock, kayaking through Everglade City's mangrove systems, to hikes in the Everglades for first-hand



Clockwise, left to right—Ibis at John Pennekamp State Park, Key Largo. Airboat tracks through sawgrass south of Tamiami Trail. Alligator guards pool, Shark Valley. Mangrove fringe, Everglades City. Above—Silver Argiope at John Pennekamp State Park, Key Largo.

observation of countless species of wildlife and endangered animals. Whether on foot, boat or bike, you will discover the region's distinctive wilderness and learn about the many rare and sensitive species of animals and plants that call it home.

Designed for both the novice and experienced adventurer, Footprint Expeditions tours will range from short day hikes to biking and kayaking trips. Along the

way, travelers may encounter a variety of tropical birds at eco-ponds and travel back in time to Everglades City

for a look at how early settlers adapted to these remote wetlands.



Or kayak through the mangrove system on the Turner River and enjoy a bicycle ride around Shark Valley. Investigate Big Cypress Preserve, home to the largest variety of orchids and bromeliads in all of North America. Learn about the history and culture of South Florida's Native American Indians and their relationship with the Everglades at the Miccosukee Indian Reservation.

Footprint Expeditions guides are specialists in botany, history and geography and take special care to deliver tours that are enlightening and inspiring. Guides combine history, ecology and folklore to help participants gain a heightened appreciation of our

precious environment.

A complete schedule of Footprint Expeditions tours will be available on the Historical Museum's website www.historical-museum.org. For a brochure or reservations, please call the museum at 305.375.1621. For more information on Footprint Expeditions, Inc., call 786.390.9737 or visit www.footprintexpeditions.com. Footprint Expeditions, Inc. will design tours for private groups and special events—*SFH*



Around the galleries

HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

Miami-Dade Cultural Center, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, 305.375.1492, www.historical-museum.org. The museum is open seven days a week, Monday–Saturday 10 am to 5 pm; Thursday 10 am to 9 pm; and Sunday noon to 5 pm. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Adults \$5; Children 6-12 \$2; members FREE. To become a member, call 305.375.1492.

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Illustrating Cuba's Flora and Fauna

September 6, 2002–January 19, 2003

The first exhibition of its kind, *Illustrating Cuba's Flora and Fauna* will highlight the richness of Cuba's natural history as shown in printed illustrations from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. New perspectives will be offered on the process of evolution, dispersion, loss and assimilation that lie at the root of Cuba's natural wealth and beauty. Illustrations are from the collection of guest curator Emilio Cueto.

La Habana: Civic Architecture 1902-1958

October 7, 2002–January 12, 2003

This exhibition features historical and contemporary photographs of the civic architecture of Havana, during Cuba's Republican period (1902-1958). Among the many buildings and public spaces examined are the Capitolio, Palacio Presidencial, Malecón and Paseo del Prado. The images are from the collection of guest curator Carlos Alberto Fleitas, an architect and photographer.

Path Breaker, Nation Builder: The Railroads of Cuba

November 7, 2002–January 23, 2003

This exhibition will be a major contribution to public understanding of the impact of railroads on Cuban society and culture. The role of American investment in Cuban railroads will explore connections between the U.S. and Cuba.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Third Thursday Evenings

Third Thursdays, 6–8 pm FREE

Historical Museum of Southern Florida

Join the Historical Museum for artist-led workshops, panel discussions and more!

September 19—Zoological Artist in Residence (Spanish/English presentation)

Román Compañy, natural history illustrator and postage stamp designer, presents a short introduction to zoological illustration, followed by sketch time in the gallery.

October 17—*First Arrivals* Exhibition Re-Opening Celebration

Jorge Zamanillo, Curator of Object Collections, unveils the new installation exploring South Florida's archaeology, which highlights the Miami Circle and the Cutler Fossil sites.

Family Fun Days

Second Saturdays, 1–4 pm FREE

Historical Museum of Southern Florida

Through a variety of hands-on activities, participants uncover how and why the environment has changed over time and propose solutions to preserving it. For more information, call 305.375.1492.

September 14—Cuban Story Time

(Spanish/English presentation)

Join Cuban storyteller Olga Flora and puppeteer, Vicente Padilla for their presentation of *Estampas Cubanas*. Illustrate your own story using the museum's exhibition galleries for inspiration.

October 12—Botanical Collages

Tap into your creative side and make botanical collages with professional artist-in-residence Pamela Palma.

HISTORIC TOURS WITH DR. PAUL GEORGE

Gallery Walk

Thursday, September 26, 6 to 8 pm FREE

Explore 10,000 years of South Florida and Caribbean history with Dr. George in *Tropical Dreams*, the museum's permanent exhibition. Special presentation by folksinger Grant Livingston. Meet at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami.

Moon Over Miami River Boat Tour

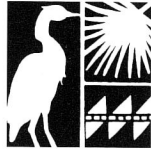
Sunday, October 20, 5 to 8 pm

Begin this leisurely journey along the river as the tropical sun sets and view the sites of a Tequesta village, Brickell mansion, the Miami Circle, slave plantations, WWII era boatyards, early tourist attractions and Flagler's Royal Palm Hotel. Return under the moon's magical glow for a view of Miami's dramatic skyline. Members \$32; Non-Members \$37. Advance reservations required.

Ghosts and Goblins Miami Cemetery Walking Tour

Sunday, October 27, 4 to 6 pm

Get into the spirit of Halloween on this haunt of the City of Miami Cemetery, the resting spot of Miami's early settlers. See the segregated Black, Catholic and Jewish sections and the final resting place for many Spanish-American War veterans. Meet at the cemetery entrance, NE 2nd Avenue and 18th Street, Miami. Parking is available at Temple Israel on the cemetery's north side. Members \$12; Non-Members \$17.



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 am–5 pm. Free.



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. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday, 10 am–4 pm.



CLEWISTON MUSEUM, 112 South Commercio 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 pm. Tuesday through Saturday, with seasonal adjustments. No admission fee is charged; however, donations are encouraged.



FORT MYERS HISTORICAL MUSEUM, 2300 Peck Street, Fort Myers—941.332.5955. Open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 am–4 pm. Closed Sundays and Mondays and most holidays. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$3 for children ages 3–12. Museum members are free.



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 am–5 pm and weekends 1–5 pm. Closed on Mondays. \$4 adults; \$3 seniors; \$2 children. The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is open Sunday–Wednesday, 10 am–4 pm (must be 48" tall to climb). For information: 405.747.8380. \$5. The Dubois Pioneer Home is open Sunday and Wednesday, 1–5 pm. \$2.



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, 139 North County Road, Suite 25, Palm Beach—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 am–5 pm. Research hours are by appointment Tues.–Thurs. from 10 am–3 pm.

The above institutions subscribe to South Florida History as a benefit for their members.

Three *Centuries* of Living



by Jodi Weitz

In the new exhibition *Three Centuries of Living*, photographer John Gillan successfully illustrates the compelling stories of nearly 30 centenarians. Without saying a word, Gillan's photographs capture the heart and soul of this rare group of individuals, who have lived 100 years or more.

Three Centuries of Living will be on display in the Historical Museum of Southern Florida's Theatre Gallery through September 29. The culmination of more than five years of work, *Three Centuries of Living* reveals a unique strength of character in each of its subjects. The exhibition's

title pays tribute to those centenarians whose lives have spanned the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

What's fascinating about these centenarians is that they are a capable and spirited group of individuals. Some play musical instruments, some exercise and some still go to work everyday.

Gillan, who photographed the subjects at their homes, places of business or doing whatever they love to do, worked in partnership with his wife, Theresa. As he snapped the photographs, she conducted the interviews.

"One thing that they all had in common was that they were well-loved by their families," Theresa said. "They were admired and respected by the people closest to them."

John noted that the vast majority of his subjects are either from Florida or reside there now. Many individuals shared a unique "Florida experience" during the documentary process, providing a one-of-a-kind history lesson.

For instance, Christopher Giannotti, 105, recalled when the Florida Turnpike opened from Miami to Fort Pierce. He packed a lunch, took the grandchildren out of school and drove the distance. Another of his memorable Florida experiences included a trip to the 1946 Orange Bowl to see Winston Churchill.

Top, left—Olga Seng at 100 years old. Right—Milton Garland at 103.





Above—Harold Stilson at 100. Right, clockwise—Martha James at 100, Jose “El Niño” Temprana at 100, Estelle Belford at 100, and Gilbert and Hill at 100.

Estelle Norvel, 101, remembers cooking feasts for up to 150 ranchers and family members in Ma’s Kitchen, which was located on her property in Fort Pierce. The group of mostly “cracker” men would dine outside.

Also highlighted in the exhibition is Harold Stilson, who continued to enjoy the Florida experience until he passed recently away at the age of 101. He made exercise a part of his daily routine and played 18 holes of golf three times a week. He shot his fifth hole-in-one at the age of 99.

It is remarkable stories like these that are told through John Gillan’s images in *Three Centuries of Living*. Gillan portrays the humanitarian, imaginative and feisty characteristics of his subjects in single pictures.

“These are accomplished people with lively attitudes,” John said.

Take Jose “El Niño” Temprana, for example. Originally from Cuba, El Niño, now 100, resides in Miami. He mows his own lawn, trims his trees and still takes pleasure in working with his hands. He

smokes a cigar every day, which he rolls himself, and enjoys a glass of wine with his dinner.

Or take Olga Seng, 100, who has called South Florida home for nearly 50 years. Back in her youth, she was a drummer in an all-girl band, The Harmony Girls. Female drummers were undoubtedly a rare find in the early 20th century.

Three Centuries of Living explores individuals from all walks of life. The project was inspired from Gillan’s own personal experience with his grandmother, who lived out-of-state. Gillan had wanted to bring his son to meet his grandmother (the boy’s great-grandmother), but the demands of everyday life forced him to postpone the trip several times. Finally, when Gillan was set to go, he received the unfortunate news that his grandmother had passed away.

From that experience, John learned “don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today” and began thinking about this project. After much research, which involved

*It’s nice to know
people other than myself think
so much of centenarians.*

*There is a lot to be learned
from our senior citizens.*

—Willard Scott, *NBC Today*,

June 24, 2002



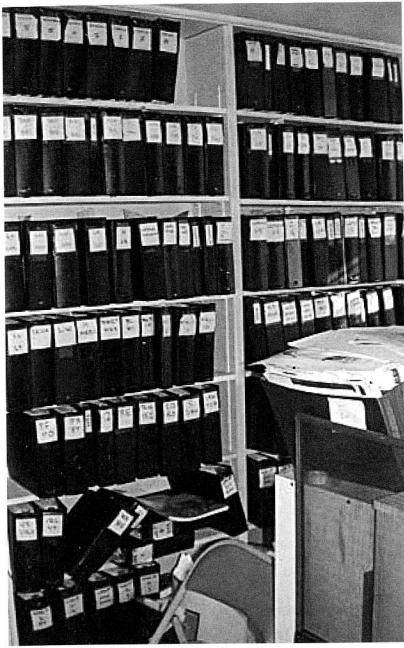
the arduous task of locating the subjects, interviewing and photographing began. More than five years later, *Three Centuries of Living* will make its debut at the Historical Museum. John and his wife Theresa hope to travel the exhibition to libraries, hospitals, schools and other museums, so that it can reach additional audiences throughout the state. There are also plans to produce a book.

Gillan, who resides in Fort Lauderdale, is internationally known for his outstanding achievements as an architectural and fine art photographer. His work utilizes a wide range of contemporary and primitive photographic techniques to create powerful

images. His work has been featured in numerous publications, including *Architectural Digest* and *Florida Architecture*. In 1994, Gillan was honored with the American Institute of Architects' Photographer of the Year Award in recognition of his landmark book *Places in Time: Historic Architecture and Landscapes of Miami*. For the past ten years, his work has been exhibited in galleries and museums around the world.

It is Gillan's hope that the inspirational stories told in *Three Centuries of Living* will "elevate the public's awareness of the dignity, grace and wisdom of an amazing generation."—*SFH*





Left—Just some of the binders holding research information at Emilio Cueto's home. Above—A small section of the collector's extensive book shelves. Right—Another information-packed corner of Emilio's home office.

Behind the scenes at the **Emilioteca**

COLLECTING THINGS HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS “AN INSTINCTIVE drive for most human beings” (Edward P. Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 1979). Most of us have “hoarded” things at one time or another, whether they be baseball cards, or clothes hangers accumulated through repeated visits to the dry cleaners! However, the collector “hoards” with a purpose in mind, usually to hold in one place a large number of pieces related to a common theme.

Museums are institutional collectors, and collect items that relate to a specified educational and scholarly goal. Private collectors, however, have no such limitations on what they choose to gather within their own homes. Unlike in the museum context, private collections are mainly held away from the public eye, hanging on the walls of a private house, or stored on shelves and in drawers where only the collector and the privileged few who visit him will have the opportunity to view them.

There are exceptions, of course. Some private collectors display their collections in buildings open to interested visitors, or

bequeath them to institutions on the condition that they be made available to the public. Private collectors may also loan items to museums for display over short periods of time. These privately owned pieces are a welcome supplement to institutional collections. Sometimes, a collector will lend an entire collection, to offer the public a rare peek at those things that are normally kept behind closed doors.

One such collector is Emilio Cueto, whom the Historical Museum has been fortunate to collaborate with on three Cuba-related exhibitions since 1994: *Mialhe's Colonial Cuba*, *Cuba in Old Maps*, and now *Illustrating Cuba's Flora and Fauna*, at the museum through January 19, 2003.

We always emphasize, of course, the individual wonders of Emilio Cueto's collection, a varied and vibrant group of objects that has spawned these three large exhibits. It's easy to lose sight of the fact that these stunning prints would not hang together in one place were it not for the fervour and enthusiasm of a single

A conversation with Emilio Cueto

by Emma Heald

individual. What we see hanging in the Historical Museum's gallery is only a small portion of Emilio's total collection and barely scratches the surface of decades of research and learning.

After nearly eight years of collaboration, *South Florida History* thought it was time to delve into the "behind-the-scenes" world of Emilio Cueto, the collector of "all things Cuban." We asked him a few questions about why and how he collects and gained some interesting insights into what lies behind the collection of so many diverse articles in one man's home.

SFH: Why do you collect? Why do you collect the things that you collect?

EC: I collect because I like to be near and have unrestricted access to things of importance to me. I collect things on Cuba because my motto is '*Nada cubano me es ajeno*' (nothing Cuban is alien to me), a pun on '*Nada humano me es ajeno*' (nothing human is alien to me). I suppose that having been cut off physically from the island [collecting] was one way to assert my identity. I could attend no Cuban university so I had to learn things on my own and at my pace. Also, my family remained in Cuba, so I was naturally interested in following events there very closely.

SFH: When did you start collecting? Has what you've collected changed over the years?

EC: I suppose I started as soon as I came to the U.S. and started college. The 'what' has indeed changed. At first, it was only politics and history, related to my major (political science). Slowly other topics crept in. Eventually, I concentrated on prints and maps.

SFH: Can you give your collection a 'title'?

EC: There is no real title, although once my friend Rolando, now deceased, called my house 'La Emilioteca,' a name I love and that many friends know.

SFH: How many pieces do you have in your collection?

EC: I have no idea! I have over 10,000 books and periodicals. Thousands of stamps. Several hundred maps; several hundred prints; hundreds of ceramic, metal, and glass objects; dozens of menus; hundreds of records and sheet music; hundreds of tobacco labels; dozens of posters and stereographic views; and probably over a million clippings from newspapers, journals, etc. I also clip from old books,

encyclopedias and yearbooks, and I keep only the relevant parts. A heresy to librarians, I know!

SFH: Do you have a record-keeping system?

EC: I have a record keeping system which tries to resemble a bibliography (most of my holdings are books and periodicals), although it is not as exact. It originated in the need to have a list so I could avoid duplication at the time of purchase, particularly while traveling. In other words, I would travel, see a book, and then not be able to remember whether I had it or not (especially if it was a newspaper, a periodical, or something not that important). Either I bought it, and risked spending money on a duplicate, or let the opportunity pass by.

I have one 'list' for books and prints (the most important one), one for maps, one for sheet music, one for records and CDs, one for movie posters and VHS, one for tobacco labels, and one for stereograph views. I update it every day. At first I had a printed version, which ended up being mammoth, and I travelled everywhere with it. Then I got a Palm Pilot, which saved my life! I travel with my 'collection' at all times, which allows me to make [purchasing] decisions on the spot.

SFH: Does your collection have parameters?

EC: Since 'nothing Cuban is alien to me,' it has had no parameters except four:

Original art is very expensive, and for the most part is outside my budget.

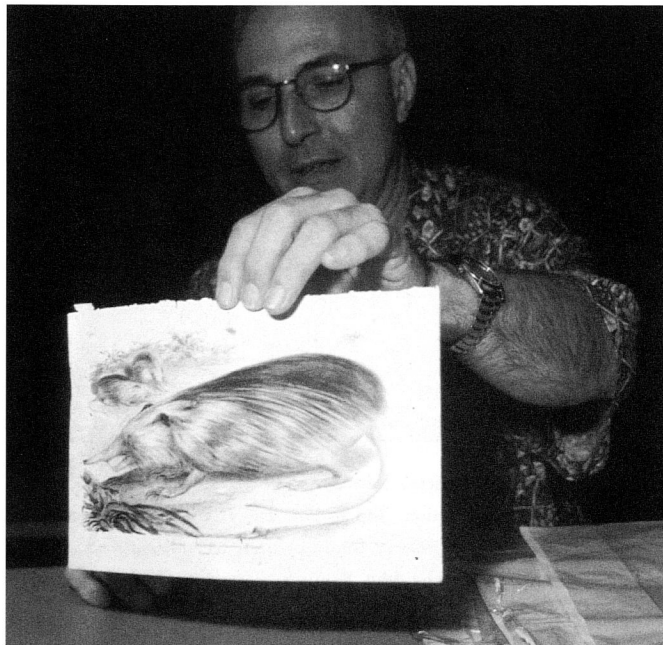
Manuscripts are not something I understand and besides,

provenance is not always easy to ascertain. I do not buy things stolen from museums, etc., and many manuscripts come that way.

Photographs are a unique area where I have little expertise. I usually avoid those.

Postcards. I have a good number, but this is an area of collecting all by itself. I have seen truly great collections. Mine is not even a collection per se as I have the cards filed by topic with the rest of my filings.

Recently, however, I set the 21st century as the outer limit. No more fiction unless it is something truly unique. No more travel or guide books, ditto. Of course, if an important history book comes along explaining a period which is deficient in my collection I will get it, but I am running out of space, time, energy and money. I think those are best spent filling in gaps than going forward. I am passing the torch.



Emilio Cueto at the Historical Museum displaying a lithograph of the *almiqui* by Frédéric Mialhe from Felipe Poe's *Memorias sobre la historia natural de la isla de Cuba*, 1851.

SFH: What was the first piece in your collection?

EC: I can't remember the first piece. Surely some book on Cuban politics purchased when I was at college. Perhaps Draper or Dubois. I can remember the first important map, though: A colleague [John Donovan] from the law firm I was working with gave it to me upon graduation from law school in 1974. John got the map in New York. Being a lawyer, he requested a 'Certificate of Authenticity.' On the certificate, which I keep, it stated that the map was an original 'Mercator' dated 1595. I was so excited that I went to the Paris National Library (I was living in Paris at the time) to learn more. What I learned was that it was not actually from 1595, but 1606 (only a few years difference, but a change of century!). Moreover, I learned that it was not really by Mercator (who would have been dead by then) but by Hondius, who took over the Mercator business. I suppose that discovery made me skeptical of authority, and curious to learn more. It was certainly a beginning!

SFH: Will your collection ever be 'complete' or 'finished'?

EC: No collection is ever complete, although there are degrees of completion. Some areas are more 'complete' than others. For example, since I am 'contemporaneous' with the Cuban revolution, I have excellent holdings on that subject. The "Republican" period has greater gaps. I also have gaps in books in oriental or central European languages.

SFH: Do you have a 'vision' for your collection?

EC: If by vision you mean 'what do I want to do with it', and 'where will it go after I am gone', the answer is definitely yes. It has several elements:

I want it to go to Cuba. I am aware that there are many fine collections in the U.S., particularly Miami, which could certainly use it. And Miami has a rightful claim to Cuban history and materials. However, I cannot forget that even if Cuba does not 'end' inside the island, it certainly begins there. I want my 11 million compatriots inside the island to have access to my lifetime effort. This would only be possible if it is inside the island. I want it to be in the hands of a non-governmental institution. I have learned to admire the role of 'Civil Society'

and I believe that too much power concentrated in one institution is not good. Spreading resources is spreading power.

I feel great loyalty and gratitude to the Jesuits, who were my first teachers and friends. And for a while I thought my collection would end up in their (my) High School [the Colegio de Belén]. However, the level of my collection has surpassed a high school level. It really should be in a university. So, if the Jesuits open a university in Cuba someday, that is where it will go. If they don't, but the Church does (and I am sure the Jesuits will be teachers

there), then the happiest day of my life will be when I entrust my collection to the Catholic University of Cuba. I even know the name I want for the collection: 'Felix Varela.' Varela (a priest and hopeful saint) was also a man who, like me, was forced to live in exile. I think the message will be clear to Cubans: people who left for exile did not turn their backs on their homeland.

SFH: Do you have a favorite piece in your collection?

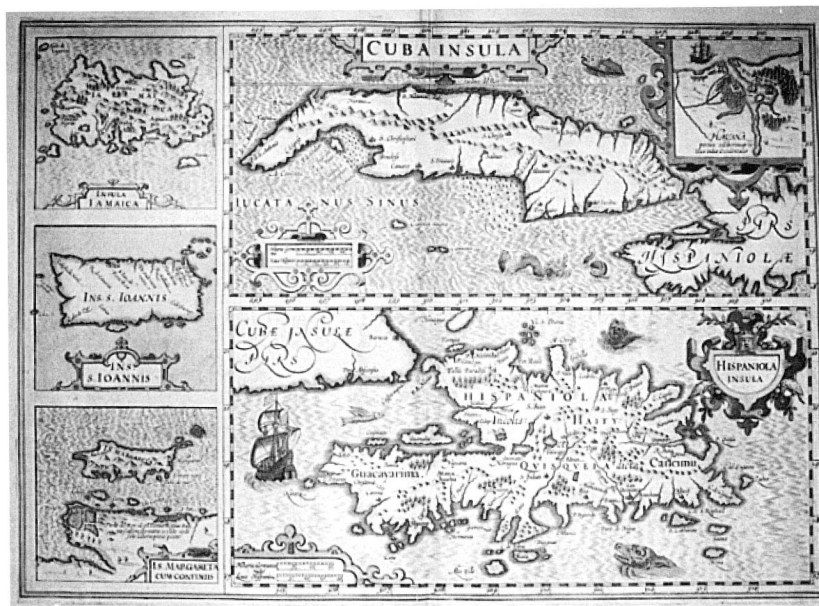
EC: I have MANY favorites. I suppose rarity is one element. Another may be significance of sorts. Price is truly irrelevant.

I will give you five examples:

An English powder horn of around 1767 with crude maps of Havana and Matanzas.

A Dutch ceramic plate with a Mialhe view. I discovered it in New York, and this piece allowed me to establish that the Dutch had placed Cuban views in their porcelain, a claim never made before.

I found the plate when I was walking in New York with a friend and spotted a store with the curious name of 'Cheese and Antiques' (it still exists, although it moved to a different location). I was so taken by the name that I went in, and I found the juxtaposition of food and art so odd that I decided to look at the stuff. I then spotted the plate, and announced to my friend that it was a Cuban view; I already owned the original print. The next day I called the Dutch consulate in New York to find out more about the factory that made the plate, and eventually I traveled to Amsterdam where I met a dealer who, over the years, has found a few others for me.



Above—The first map in Emilio Cueto's collection, by Mercator-Hondius, 1606. Left—Cuban postage stamps from Emilio's collection. Top to bottom—Hibiscus rosa sinensis, designed by Román Compañy, 1977. *Naturaleza muerta*, from a painting by Amelia Pelaez, 1967. *La familia Enrique de Lara*, from a painting by Jean Baptiste Vermay, 1968. *Heliconius charithonius ramsdeni*, designed by Carlos Echenagustá, 1982.

A 1964 Russian operetta about 'Cuba My Love.' It exemplifies strong, multi-faceted ties during a peculiar moment in Cuban history never to be repeated.

The New York Times newspaper run throughout 1898, the year of Cuba's War of Independence.

A collection of Cuban fiction inspired by Cuba (e.g. Graham Greene's *Our Man In Havana*). [The collection] is truly unique. Other things have COST more, but this is more VALUABLE, because it is pioneering.

SFH: What are your collecting methods and sources?

EC: There is nothing secret about my collecting methods: book dealers, book fairs, more book dealers and more book fairs. Flea markets. Leaving my name everywhere. Asking for and reading catalogs, which is hard work! Traveling everywhere and spending lots of time in book shows and book shops. Recently, the Internet (both book dealer sites and auctions) has been very useful. Unfortunately I haven't inherited anything, although many friends make me gifts from time to time. Some friends clip papers and mail them to me.

SFH: Is there a single piece that you yearn after and hunt for, but still haven't found?

EC: There is much more than a single piece that I look for. Some are out there, e.g. some maps, but I cannot afford them. Some may never show up. I'd love to have, for example, [the writer] Cecilia Valdes in Chinese. I once read she was translated into Chinese, and I even sent a friend who volunteered to fetch it! Not that I read Chinese, but I think that would be 'cool' to have. I have been looking for a Hungarian book published in 1861, for many years; it contains a Cuban print.

SFH: Let's talk a little about the exhibition that opens at the museum in September: *Illustrating Cuba's Flora and Fauna*. How did you research the material for the exhibition, and when did you start?

EC: I started collecting 'Flora and Fauna' at least 25 years ago. I remember getting some of the La Sagra [Ramón de la Sagra, 19th century scientist] materials from London in the early 1980s, and I got the Parra [rare book by Antonio Parra, 1787] in 1983, also in London. With my friend Anne, a Parisian friend, going through the French stores, I located most of the French birds for the exhibition by walking the streets of Paris year after year.

SFH: So when did you first start to see this material as a cohesive 'collection' in itself?

EC: For a long time I had the 'trees' but not the 'forest.' When I finished the research for *Cuba in Old Maps* at HMSF I then conceived this exhibition. There are a few reasons for that: no one had ever done anything like it before; I was sure there was a story to tell; I had enough pieces to attempt a coherent exhibition; and I thought it would be great fun! It turned out to be far more work than I ever anticipated.

SFH: How have your ideas about the 'Flora and Fauna' collection changed as you've gone through the research process?

EC: My ideas kept changing all along, because I had no pre-conceived ideas, only individual pieces. I was amazed at the limited role Spain had played. I had suspected it, but now I could document it. I also came to look at Parra with even more respect than before. Now I know how pioneer and magnificent [his work] was. I also learned to see the work of Englishmen and the French in a different perspective. I have also learned a lot about the process of loss and accumulation of Cuba's flora and fauna, and it made me think very hard about the definition of what is a 'Cuban' species.

SFH: What will happen to the 'Flora and Fauna' collection once the exhibition is over?

EC: Well, I hope it may travel somewhere so that other people in other cities may enjoy it. Afterwards, it will go back to my house, into the folders. I don't have enough walls to keep everything up, of course!

Emma Heald is the Registrar at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida and is the project manager for Illustrating Cuba's Flora & Fauna.





by Luis V. Dominguez

Few people realize the influence of railroads on Cuba—or the role that a few Americans played in their development. On December 1, 1902, passenger trains left Santa Clara and Santiago de Cuba's railway terminals. For the first time, all of Cuba was linked together. The Cuba Railroad had commenced operations. Almost instantly, eastern Cuba became a hotbed of U.S.—and Cuban—investment for the production of sugar and its byproducts. Urban centers such as Antilla, San Luis and Alto Cedro would spring from thick jungle. War-ravaged, impoverished, desolate small communities such as Victoria de

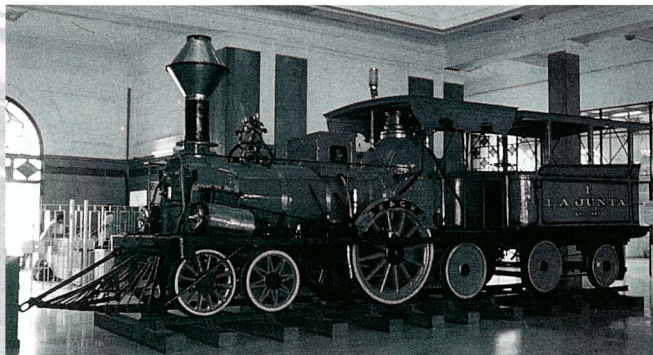
Path Breakers, Nation Builders

Las Tunas and Holguin would become major urban centers. By affirming sugar as Cuba's single overriding industry, the railroad set the course of Cuban history for the next 100 years. Cuba's best hope for modernization, its erstwhile wealth, as well as many of the social and political ills, derived from sugar's highly cyclical nature. And, railroads have remained the backbone of the sugar industry to this day. As such, it is ironic that the Cuban Revolution that was supposed to eradicate dependence on sugar only confirmed its preeminent economic role—and the importance of the railroads. Even now, Cuba has one of the highest rail densities (miles of rail line per square mile of territory) in the world.

This year, Cuba's authorities have announced their intent to close down some 70 sugar mills. Beyond the economic impact of this massive change, a vast portion of a rich American legacy may disappear. Cuba's railroads are, in fact, an important, living part of American history. Simply stated, a huge concentration of historic American railroad equipment in working condition has survived into the 21st century—in Cuba. The Historical Museum of Southern Florida and Cuban National Heritage—a Miami-based nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Cuba's culture and the arts—have chosen to honor this legacy by presenting from November 7 through January 23 an exhibit on how Cuba's railroads came into being. The exhibit will span 120 years of history—from 1837 to 1957. Most of what will be presented has never been shown before.

The Iron Road that Cruger Built

Not much is known about Alfred Cruger. We know simply that he hailed from New York City and that he was shot to death, perhaps in a crime of passion, in Matanzas, the seat of the Matanzas Railroad, the second Cuban railroad he had built. There are no portraits of him, but we do know that on November 27, 1837, the first railroad in the Hispanic world commenced operations—ten years before the first railroad in Spain!—and was saved from failure by Cruger's decisiveness. Championed by the Count of Villanueva, Cuban landowner José Antonio Saco, and Cuba's *La Junta de Fomento*, or Royal Commission for Development, guaranteed by the Spanish



La Junta, a Norris engine secured by Alfred Cruger for the Matanzas Railroad in the 1930s, is on display in Havana's Terminal Station. It is considered one of the greatest pieces of American railroad history (Wildy Photo).

Governor Tacón, worthy of a soap opera, caused numerous delays and resulted in a far steeper and curvier rail line than anticipated when the engines were ordered, and the engines were a disaster anyway. "Too many cooks spoil the broth" could not be truer to this story, especially with inexperienced cooks. The *Junta*, though composed of bright progressives, was utterly inexperienced in railroad matters. Furthermore, its London agent ignored information sent to him by Cruger. The eight engines purchased by the *Junta*, designed by the prestigious Stephenson, were configured for speed rather than stop-go, take-curves traffic. They slipped, lost steam, jumped the rails, broke pressure regulators and drive linkages, and burned steam tubes. The first four

were built by the shops of railway pioneer Braithwaite, and the next four by those of Rennie, the architect of London bridge. The trouble was, the Rennies built great bridges and fair steamboat engines but were a documented failure as railroad engine builders. Braithwaite's engines had design defects of their own, noted in Cruger's scathing reports.

The *Junta's* decision to name Cruger the Iron Road's chief engineer and later its general manager saved the day. Cruger

immediately went to the United States and negotiated for new engines with builders Norris, Ketchum & Grosvenor, with Rogers, and with a watchmaker turned engine builder by the name of Matthias Baldwin. He also brought to Cuba a young engineer from America's Camden & Amboy, whose name is recorded as Ezra Kitchell Dod. The experience that Dod brought

ers: The Railroads of Cuba

crown, financed in London, equipped with British engines and built by American engineers Benjamin Wright and Alfred Cruger, the *Camino de Hierro* (Iron Road) connected the harbor of Havana with the fertile lands south of the city. In just a few decades, the United States replaced Spain as colonial Cuba's main trade partner, American ideals of democracy inflamed Cubans' hearts, and three decades of insurrection culminated in the Spanish-American War.

What few people know is that the Iron Road almost died within a few months of its start. The British engines that were sent to Cuba were woefully unsuited to their intended applications. Why? A political intrigue between the progressive Count of Villanueva and the autocratic and possibly corrupt Lieutenant

to Cuba proved invaluable, for the Camden & Amboy arguably was the most technically competent American railroad of the 1830s under the leadership of the best two chief engineers of the era. Its shops could build complete engines and were responsible for many innovations. The American engines that Cruger bought and Dod prepared were a smashing success. A Norris engine secured by Cruger just a few years later for the Matanzas Railroad is displayed in Havana's Terminal Station. It is considered one of the greatest pieces of American railroad history in the world.

The newly privatized Iron Road was renamed *Caminos de Hierro de la Habana* or Iron Roads of Havana, the plural underscoring the intent to build many roads into Havana harbor. Eventually, British creditors took control of the Iron Roads and acquired or merged

with other short lines to build the company named United Railways of Havana and Regla Warehouses. By the time of the Spanish-American War, it and the Cuban Central Railways, another British venture, owned most of the public railroads in the west. By 1920, United Railways had acquired the Cuban Central and all the remaining public railroads in the west except for the picturesque Cuban Hershey Railroad. The United Railways' name lived up to its heritage, for just its eclectic steam engine roster had as many steam engine classes as the Swiss federal railways.

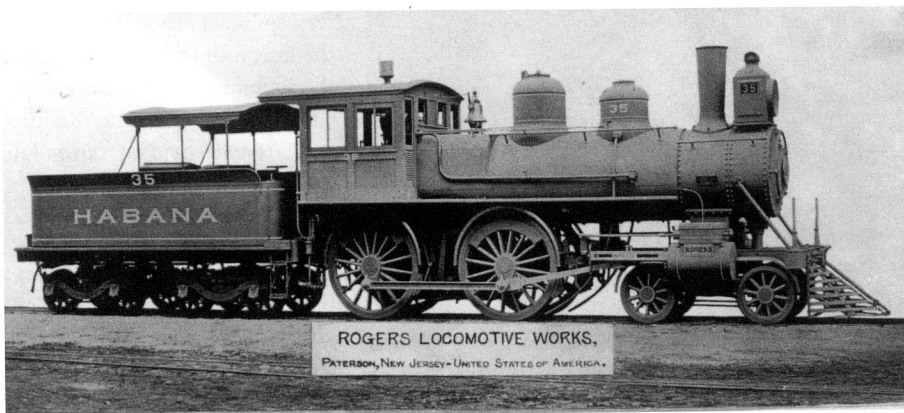
Automobile and truck traffic and unfavorable rate structures eroded the United Railways' business. Its attempts to cope with highway competition included the purchase of self propelled rail cars from

The Nation Builder that Van Horne Crafted

A railroad map of Cuba shows an odd pattern. Whereas the island is laid mostly east to west, its western railroads run mainly north to south. Why? Because the western railroads were built piecemeal as short lines to bring sugar production from various regions to ports. But to the east, the pattern is mainly east-west. This is because the Cuba RR was launched as a national development project, to tie together the island's eastern and western halves. No two rail systems could be more unlike. One happened, the other was designed, and the latter could not have been built by a greater genius.

Sir William Van Horne (1836-1915) was born in Joliet, Illinois. After being fired from his first railroad job, he rose quickly through the ranks, developing a reputation for rescuing, growing and superbly managing troubled railroads such as the famed Alton Road—and for working days on end without sleep. When Canada decided to build its transcontinental railroad, Van Horne was recommended by his Canadian-born archrival, J. Hall, builder of the Great Northern Railroad. In a great twist of irony, when Hill lobbied Canada's Parliament to use the Great Northern's mountain passes, Van Horne stood his ground firmly, arguing that Canada had to have its own route without being held hostage by a non-Canadian railroad, and that he could build through the Canadian Rockies. He did, and he would go on to manage the railroad until retirement. He was knighted by the British crown and inscribed in Canada's Hall of Heroes for his deeds on behalf of Canada. To put things in context, railroads were to 19th century societies what the internet is to us. So prominent was Van Horne in those days that some of his personal correspondence to associates voices reluctance to travel overseas with Canadian or U.S. statesmen out of concern that they might be overshadowed.

Retired from the Canadian Pacific, Van Horne soon grew restless. On a 1900 trip to Cuba to see the Havana Electric Company in which he was an investor, Van Horne learned of the American occupation government's concern that there should be a rail link connecting the eastern and western parts of the island. Not only did Cuba not have such a link, but the Spanish crown, fearful of a repeat of the Haitian revolution, did all it could to keep eastern Cuba isolated from the rest of the country. North-south across a narrow part of eastern Cuba, it built *La Trocha*, a band of fortifications linked by a military railroad. But there was what seemed like an impossible



Top—Passenger service engine built in 1894 by Rogers Locomotive Company for a subsidiary of United Railways of Havana (ALCO Historic Photos). Above—Rhode Island Locomotive Company passenger service engine built in 1901. This engine may have hauled the Cuba Railroad's first scheduled passenger trains (ALCO Historic Photos).

truck maker Mack and from the Electro Motive Company, and many years later some Baldwin diesel engines. In 1954, the company sold its assets to the Cuban state, which continued to operate the railroad as *Ferrocarriles Occidentales* (Western Railways). The state-owned company purchased a number of the Budd Company's Rail Diesel Cars as well as German-made diesel electric rail cars. Some of the latter are still found on the former Hershey Railroad line east of Havana. Several years into the current regime in Cuba, all public railroads were merged into a single enterprise, *Ferrocarriles de Cuba* (FFCC).

obstacle to building an east-west rail link. Provisions of the so-called Foraker amendment forbade Americans from purchasing property on the island during the American occupation.

The Cuba Company Archives of the University of Maryland's Hornbake Library document in correspondence and photos what ensued. Van Horne struck on an idea and maneuvered through the legal obstacles. In essence, he negotiated an agreement with both the U.S. government and the newly elected Cuban Congress whereby *La Compañía Cubana* would build the railroad with funding provided by the Cuba Company. If the former were to complete the railroad within a specified period of time, the latter would have the right to purchase the assets of *La Compañía Cubana*; otherwise the assets would be bid out. Although Cuban land could not be purchased by Americans, there was nothing in the Foraker amendment to stop individuals and municipal and provincial governments from ceding land for the right of way. All of this required diplomacy and careful navigation through the halls of power in Havana and Washington. Although some have cast the first Cuban Congress as a puppet of the United States and Van Horne as an instrument of U.S. intervention, the documentary evidence is inconsistent with that thesis. Van Horne's personal correspondence shows that the process was far from smooth or predictable. He fumed over what he saw as Lieutenant Governor Wood's intransigence, lack of human skills with the Cuban Congress, and disdain for Cubans. He worried that Horatio Rubens, Van Horne's liaison in Cuba, was despised by Wood as a stooge of Cuban interests and that the whole venture was regarded by the most nationalistic Cubans as just another incursion into Cuba's sovereignty.

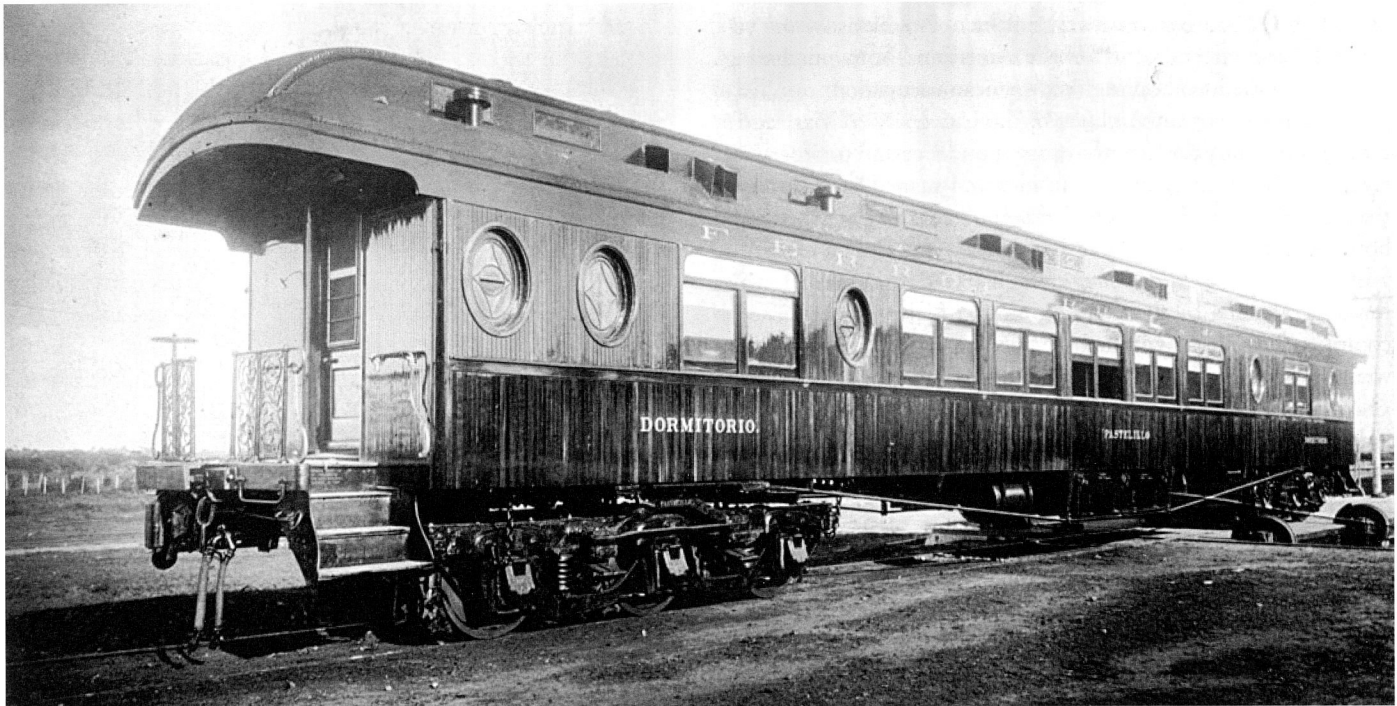
However, the same man who once was ostracized and distrusted by Canadians, in time came to be seen as a champion of Cuba's best interests. In a situation that was ripe for abuse, he built Cuba's only genuine Class I railroad. The railroad was like a bloodline to a dying patient. The party of civil engineers that set forth on horseback from Santa Clara in the Winter of 1900-1901 to scout the line eastwards found desolation and utter poverty, caught in impressive photographic imagery: *La Trocha's* rail line lay in ruins, overrun by tropical vegetation; the central square of Victoria de Las Tunas was reduced to rubble; the streets of Bayamo, cradle of Cuba's insurrection of 1895, were in ruins; the "hotel" in Holguín where the party overnights was not much more than a lean-to; Santiago de Cuba was a dusty, rundown place overrun by displaced rural poor.

To finance and add credibility to what was essentially a high risk venture, Van Horne recruited investors such as Berwind and Rockefeller—and his archrival J. Hill. They were experienced railroad people who were already rich and were not looking for a quick profit. Railroad construction engineers and foremen were brought from the United States, although the workforce was Cuban unless a position could not be filled locally. The bridges were pre-fabricated in the United States and barged into the harbors of Cienfuegos and Santiago, delivered in sequence so that two construction groups, one working eastward and the other westward, could complete the railroad on a timely basis. Despite



Top—Van Horne at age 39. Above—Bayamo, cradle of Cuban independence. Street scene, 1901 (Cuba Company Archives, University of Maryland).

strikes in New York that delayed the delivery of bridges and other material, the railroad was up and running in 18 months. Correspondence shows Van Horne being personally involved in every aspect: advising Mr. Drury, chief construction engineer at Santa Clara, on the choice of a path through mountains to the east; reprimanding a crew chief for providing inadequate food and quarters for the workers; pressing his Executive Assistant Percival Farquhar to get suppliers to deliver on time; and corresponding with descendants of Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, *El Lugareño*, a 19th century visionary who had advocated both emancipation



Sleeper car built by the American Car & Foundry for the Cuban Railroad (Cuba Company Archives, University of Maryland).

from Spain and the wisdom of a central railroad. His descendants helped Van Horne mobilize civic support for the railroad.

The legacy of Van Horne's vast Canadian Pacific experience has endured to the present. Van Horne chose the American Locomotive Company as the supplier of most of the motive power and the American Car & Foundry for freight and passenger equipment. These went on to be the leading suppliers to all of Cuba's mainline railroads. Van Horne's personal handwriting appears on the blueprints for passenger cars. Starting from Canadian Pacific designs, passenger cars were to be built of red mahogany outside and white oak and pine inside, to the same standards as Canadian Pacific designs. Soon the United Railways and the Cuban Central would feel pressured to upgrade their fleets to keep up with their eastern rival. In 1915, shortly before Van Horne's death, the Cuba Railroad was set to order a large batch of a new class of steam engines that would be used indistinctly for passenger and freight duties. Van Horne disagreed with both the staff of the American Locomotive Company and the Cuba RR's chief engineer Wigham on their configuration, arguing—as had Cruger in 1837!—that the nature of the track and climate called for a different design. At Van Horne's insistence, a small batch of engines with three different configurations was acquired in 1915. The following year, 35 engines with running numbers 212-246, were ordered. He was proved right. It was Van Horne's configuration that was adopted. Interestingly, some of these engines have reportedly carried in sugar service to the present.

The Cuba Company was not limited to railroad ventures. It built and owned a number of large sugar mills, all named with a "J": Jatibonico, Jaronú, Jobabo, Jobo. One historian charged that Van Horne and the Cuba Company were the architects of Cuba's

over-reliance on sugar. This is not true. Van Horne envisioned, much as with the U.S. and transcontinental railroads—and similar ventures in Argentina and elsewhere—encouraging European immigrants to buy land adjacent to the rail line for a diversity of exportable products for industrial nations. The Cuba Company itself experimented with ventures in cocoa, tobacco and rubber businesses. The Cuba Company Archives contain a letter signed by Van Horne, declining an offer from the Cuba Colonization Company of Detroit for huge tracts at a price that was a multiple of what the Cuba Company was selling to farmers.

In reality, the problem was Cuba's land tenure laws, inherited from Spain, which left farmland largely untaxed, thus encouraging large holdings or *latifundios* of idle or sparsely used land. Van Horne repeatedly tried but failed to persuade either the United States or the Cuban Congress to change those laws. In 1924, on the day when Cuba's Central Highway was inaugurated, the conservative newspaper *Diario de la Marina* ran a series on Van Horne that echoed his concerns. It asserted that this fateful event set the course for a pattern of over-reliance on sugar, displacement of small land holders and rural impoverishment. And it showed Van Horne as the champion of a different vision.

Despite that failed dream, the railroad was a resounding success. To facilitate commerce, the port of Antilla was built. It boasted not only a modern cargo terminal but facilities for handling North American and European tourists who would be transported to destinations in sleeper equipment that rivaled the best in the United States. The shops in the company's headquarters in Camagüey were on a par with the best in North America and could repair or build any equipment. Thus, they performed contract work for many sugar mills. The Cuba Company also

built, restored and upgraded tourist properties such as Hotel Casa Granda in Santiago and Hotel Camagüey that rivaled the best in Havana. These hotels continue to operate to this day.

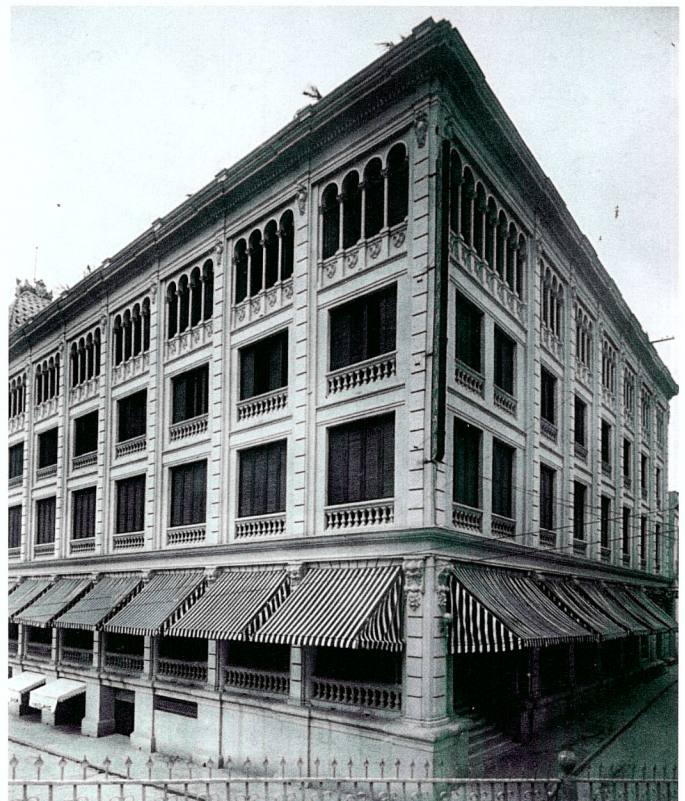
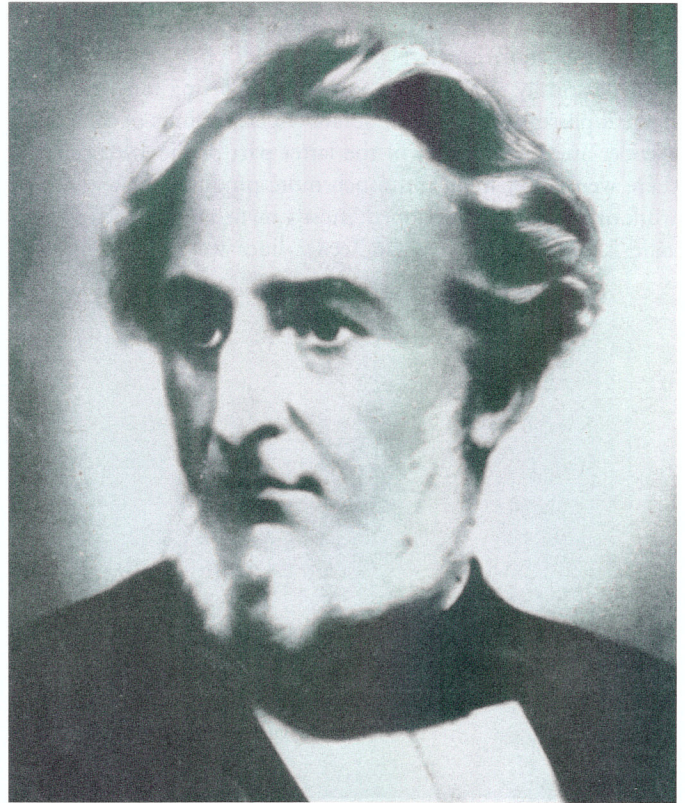
Construction of the Central Highway brought serious competition, but more so in central and western Cuba. In the east, the rails continued to rule. However, another railroad had proven to be a serious competitor. The Cuba Northern Railways had a colorful history. It was built by the clever Colonel Tarafa, a wealthy veteran of the wars against Spain. For a pittance he had acquired the dilapidated right of way of the *La Trocha* military railway. He then set about building a fine railroad along the northern coast of eastern Cuba, the epicenter of U.S. sugar investments. In 1924, it was merged with the Cuba Railroad, which now was renamed the Consolidated Railroads of Cuba. True to its original charter, its parent, the Cuba Company, diversified into interurban bus transportation, highway freight transport, rental of rail equipment and other activities. It also acquired a large number of the famous “Mikado” or “McArthur” steam engines, the heaviest equipment owned by a Cuban Railroad.

In 1950, with assistance from the Cuban government and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Cuba Railroad undertook a dieselization drive. Engines were acquired once again from the American Locomotive Company, as well as from General Motors and from the Budd Company. The latter’s silvery Rail Diesel Cars or RDC’s have survived to this day as demotored trailers. In 1957, the railroad received Fiat rail diesel cars that were considered among the most modern in the world. In 1959, the new Cuban government’s unwillingness to guarantee the Cuba Railroad’s debts led to dissolution of the company. Its legacy lives on.

The Cuba Railroad pioneered the hiring and promotion of indigenous Latin Americans to top management positions. It also was among the first firms in Latin America to employ IBM sorters—the precursors of the computer age—for administrative record keeping. Technical personnel were flown overseas to attend training seminars. While not immune to strikes, labor conflicts were relatively minor and a position with the railroad was a motive of pride. As a retired chief instructor of the Cuba Railroad stated, his eyes gleaming with pride: “You were honored for your rank. I remember walking into a meeting and top management of the company standing up in respect.”

The Sugar Industry that Railroads Enabled—And the Railroads that Sugar Built

In round numbers, half of pre-Marxist Cuba’s mileage was owned by the public railroads, and of this, about half was owned by the Cuba Railroad and the other half by United Railways (and a small amount by the Hershey Railroad of Cuba). Why was so much mileage in the hands of private railroads? One reason is that the sugar business is extensive rather than intensive. Vast extensions of land are needed to produce cane, and this cane has to be transported from some distance into the mills. In the beginning, when sugar mills were small operations, cane could be transported directly by oxen carts. With the advent of stationary



Top—Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, “El Lugareño,” early 19th century champion of the idea of a rail link between eastern and western Cuba. Above—Hotel Casa Granda, Santiago, 1920 (Cuba Company Archives, University of Maryland).

steam engines, and especially steam locomotives, mills could process a lot more cane.

By drastically reducing the cost of transporting cane, railroads made it possible for a mill to obtain larger amounts of cane from a wider area. As a result, in the latter part of the 19th century there were fewer mills and much more production. A vast network of feeder lines developed, mostly owned by the mills. Since cane is bulky for its weight, feeder lines were mostly narrow

and exported a variety of byproducts as well as sugar. Initially the large operators relied on public railroads. However, the new mills in eastern Cuba soon began to build their own rail lines and port facilities. Since raw sugar, molasses and other byproducts were heavy, the mills' lines to harbors typically were standard gauge rather than narrow gauge.

The public railroads, as regulated common carriers, vehemently objected to their loss of business to private lines that were largely unaccountable. On the other hand, sugar companies complained about what they cast as unreasonable freight and port tariffs and poor service by the public railroads. This became a major political issue that was resolved by the so-called Tarafa Law. Col. Tarafa's role as sponsor of the law was controversial. His avowed concern for the health of Cuba's common carrier railroads has to be weighed against the obvious conflict of interest from his ownership of the Cuba Northern Railways! A final outcome was that a number of mill-owned railroads did have a good bit of standard gauge. Some of the big sugar companies had extensive rail networks, and some of these also operated as public carriers on a limited basis. The Cuba Cane Sugar Company had as many as seven railroad districts, managed by the former Superintendent of Railroads.

Many of the sugar companies that started operations in the early part of the 20th century were strictly Anglo-American investments, such as those of the United Fruit Company. However, there were also U.S. Hispanic investments. Carl Van Ness, Curator of the University of Florida's Braga Brothers Collection, has documented some of these. The Rionda family and its descendants, including the Braga family, became partners in the sugar business with C. Czarnikow, Ltd., a London-based sugar trading house and with a number of U.S. based sugar refiners. They were also major investors in Cuba Cane Sugar Company, which operated a number of sugar mills. One of these was the Manatí Sugar Mill, an enormous

operation fed by network of *colonos* (cane growers) ranging over an area as large as Miami-Dade county. The mill's rail yards, engine and car shops were comparable in size to those of any public railroad. So extensive were the equipment needs of the sugar mills that Cuba had become the seventh largest export market for U.S. steam engine builders.

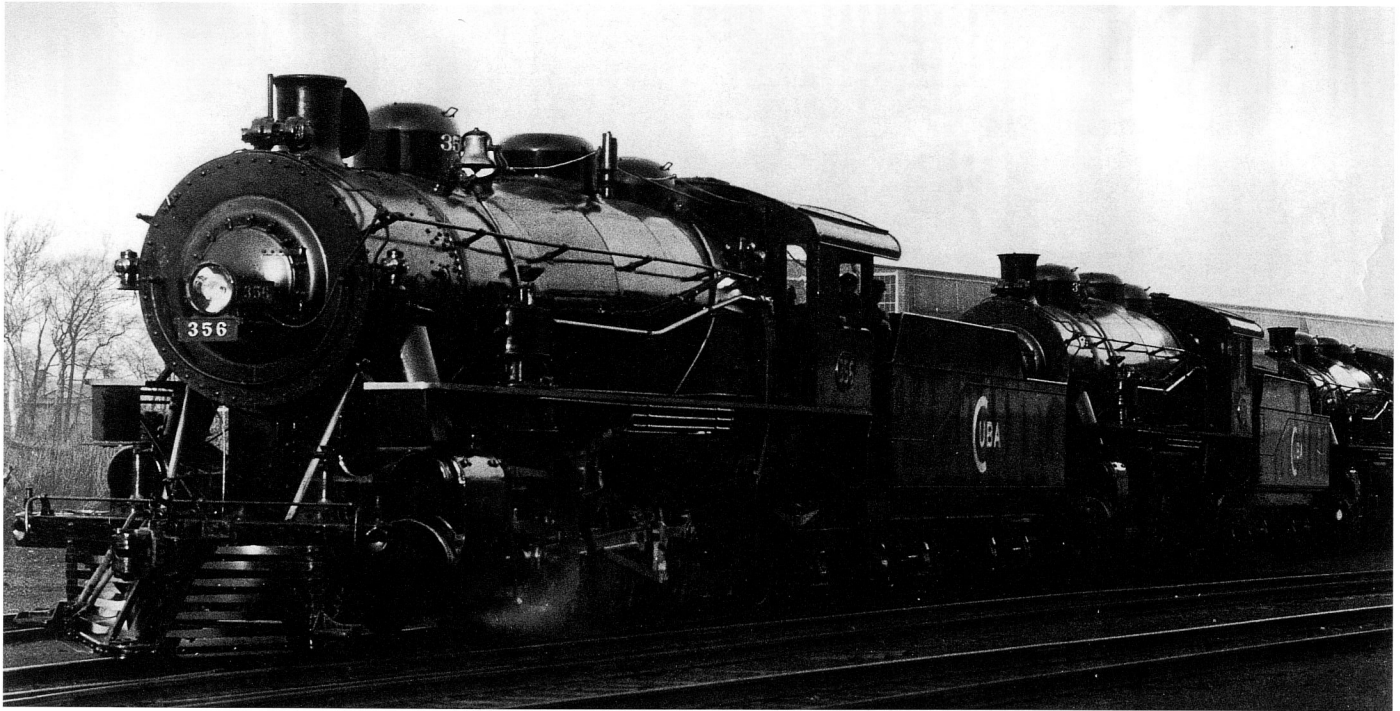
The Baldwin Locomotive Company, which became the leading supplier of the sugar industry, published Spanish language sales



Top—Consolidated Railroads' Budd Rail Diesel Cars leave Havana for Santiago, June 1957 (William D. Middleton). Above—Manatí sugar mill with raw sugar house in foreground, 1920. (Braga Brothers Collection, University of Florida).

gauge. They employed light rail and relatively small engines. Cane was transported to the mills in specialized equipment, a sort of flat car with stakes. These evolved into more complex designs with two or more holding bins and either side or end doors. Typically, cane cars were unloaded by tilting.

With the beginning of the Cuban republic in 1902, a wave of U.S. investment in sugar production ensued, mainly in eastern Cuba. The new sugar mills were much larger. Some produced



“Mikado” freight service engines leave the factory for shipment to Cuba in 1935 (H.L. Broadbelt Collection, RR Museum of Pennsylvania). One of these engines is still in active service in the sugar industry.

catalogs just for the sugar trade; in one of these it claimed to have delivered more than 1,000 engines to Cuban mills. Though many of these were small engines, this is a far greater number than the combined engines rosters of the Cuba Railroad and the United Railways of Havana.

A number of changes in U.S. sugar quotas and prices, upheavals in the world sugar market and the Great Depression brought a stop to mill and sugar railroad construction, and a gradual devolution of the industry to Cuban ownership. But it is significant that to this date, more than 200 steam engines and innumerable cane cars produced in the early part of the 20th century have continued to operate. While the highly cyclical and seasonal nature of the industry and the unfortunate accumulation of land ownership brought many social ills, sugar and the railroads also contributed to a fairly high degree of industrialization, to the creation of a significant cadre of managers, scientists and professionals, and to one of the most open economies of the region in the first half of the 20th century. Many of their descendants helped build South Florida’s internationally focused economy.

Epilogue

None of this is to say that the Cuba Railroad was perfect or that the Count of Villanueva, Saco, Tarafa, *El Lugareño*, Van Horne, Cruger, or Dod were saints. Human institutions and the humans that run them are flawed in some way. Nations are built by drawing on the positive legacy of their forbearers and the lessons of their triumphs and failures. On balance and looking at the broad course of Cuban-American history, all of us,

regardless of ancestry or ideology, can take pride and feel more than a bit of gratitude to the Cubans and the Americans who used their best talents to build enterprises that gave a neighboring nation the opportunity to create a better society for all. The dream remains.

In commemoration of this dream, from November 7 through January 23, the Historical Museum of Southern Florida will feature an exhibit of pictures, artifacts, documents, maps and blueprints in honor of Cuban and American men and women who, through their ingenuity and faith, helped to build the Cuban nation. In addition to the Cuba Company Archives of the University of Maryland’s Hornbake Library, there will be a wealth of material on the sugar industry contributed by the Braga Brothers Collection of the University of Florida’s Smathers Library. These will be complemented with photographic material from a number of sources, including images of Cuban railroads captured by William D. Middleton, one of the most respected railroad authors and photographers. And there will be an exhibit of what is believed to be the only collection of scale models of historically significant U.S.-made railroad equipment sold to Cuban railroads.—*SFH*

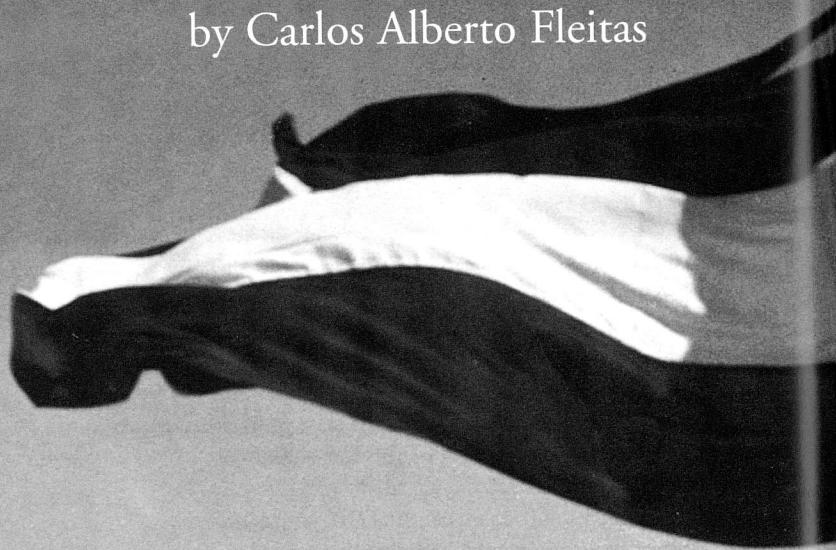
Luis V. Dominguez is Professor of International Business at Florida Atlantic University, where he specializes in topics related to developing nations and Latin America. He was born in Cuba and grew up in the United States. He credits his father’s one-time position as chief dispatcher of United Railways of Havana for his interest in railroad history. Dominguez may be contacted at lvdomingu@atbi.com. The author would like to thank Manuel Diaz Ceballos for information on Cuba’s first railroads.


1902-1958

Havana

URBAN SPACES

by Carlos Alberto Fleitas






With the coming of the Republic, Havana entered a new century stripped of colonial customs and influenced by the search for a new social order. Over five Republican decades her inhabitants coexisted within the urban fabric, which became ever more monumental. Assisted by four centuries of impressive colonial heritage, the period's urban explosion was driven by a world view that freed its urban spaces and architecture from eclectic European historicism and moved them toward pragmatic North American modernity. Thanks to new immigration laws, passed following the establishment of the Republic in 1902, the population of the capital went from 250,000 inhabitants in 1900 to half a million in 1930. Even so, urban growth during the 20th century depended not just on the newly instituted republic, supported by the American occupation of 1899-1902, a period that brought the construction of transportation and sanitation infrastructure, schools, clubs, hotels, hospitals, as well as new building techniques, but even more on the urban inheritance that had developed from the end of the 18th century.

The economic growth of the second half of the 18th century, guided by the brief domination of the English, made clear to the criollo inhabitants the restraint that had been imposed by the Spanish crown during the development of the island. During this period the generators of domestic financial capital sought new places to invest their earnings from tobacco and sugar. This encouraged the breaking up of country estates which went from being rural to urban, and caused the outer city limits to extend. The inhabitants of Havana began to live with a feeling of modernity during this time, which gave greater shape to the development of urban spaces in the era of General Tacón at the beginning of the 19th century. Changes to the urban visage were not limited to the physical expansion of the city, nor to the construction of numerous outstanding buildings, but also included an ambitious assessment program for public spaces. As part of the process of urban compression and expansion, well-off groups within the city began leaving the city centre. As a result, the city centre moved from the port to the area that is today occupied by the Paseo del Prado, passing the city walls that were now militarily obsolete and which would begin to be demolished in 1863. This expanding zone, which grew in population during the second half of the 19th century, is where a flood of urban innovations were introduced, including gas-powered street lighting (1848), the telegraph (1851-1855), animal-drawn public transport (1862), the Albear aqueduct (1874-1893), telephone service (1881), electric lighting (1890) and the improvement of the transport system thanks to the introduction of the automobile (1898) and the electric tram (1901).

The 20th century offered those living in the new Republican society progressive economic recovery, along with sustained population growth, which together provided the stimulus for a proliferation of new urban projects. Particularly important were the creation of the Malecón, the rebuilding of the Paseo del Prado, and the competition to design the Plaza Cívica. These projects supported an eclectic and monumental period, guided by the desire for modernization.



Entry to the bay of Havana, ca. 1940s.




Above—Bronze detail from a lamppost on the Paseo del Prado.
Right—Paseo del Prado, ca.1929.

The Alameda de Isabel II, or Paseo de Extramuros, begun in 1772 under the regime of the Marqués de la Torre, would become one of the main meeting and relaxation spots for Havana society of the time. It was not until 1904, two years after the establishment of the Republic, that it was named the Paseo de Martí by the municipal government. The Paseo initially consisted of a simple boulevard created for animal-drawn traffic. In 1834, under the government of General Tacón, the Paseo was remodeled, and acquired greater status through improvements in street furniture, public lighting and paving. Through the urban improvement plan implemented by the North American government of occupation in 1898, the Paseo was rebuilt, and given new trees and furnishings. During the project to expand and beautify Havana under the government of Gerardo Machado, the French landscaper Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier was invited by Carlos Miguel de Céspedes, the Minister for Public Works, to redesign the linear park. Forestier was accompanied by French architect Jean Labatut, who designed the obelisk for the José Martí monument in the Plaza Cívica some 33 years later. Forestier and Labatut were assisted by a team of Frenchmen and Cubans, including Raúl Otero. The redesign of the park complemented the construction of the Capitol, and both were inaugurated on May 20, 1929.





Malecón 1901-1958



From the moment it was founded, Havana, limited to the east by the bay, would gear its continuous growth towards the West, until reaching its other natural boundary, the Almendares river. The Malecón, or Avenida del Golfo, was created by the engineers of an occupying government, and early on displayed its scenic riches as the face of the illustrious city it still surrounds today, rather than showing only its functional purpose. From its creation the Malecón has guarded the city, which lies along the shore. The original stretch was built as planned by the North American engineers Mead and Whitney. The monumental form of the Malecón presents us with a unique urban space due to its scale and its importance as a retaining boundary, although it was originally designed to be accompanied by colonial style lighting, and tree-lined along the opposing sidewalk. Nevertheless, you can feel the magnitude of a complex structural work even within the final simple design. Conceived nearly a century before by the military engineer Francisco de Albear, the Malecón was only one project among a series of avenues, and its high cost and construction complexity destined it to progress without much notice. Initially the Malecón was to extend westward along a short stretch from the Castillo de la Punta, reinforcing the importance given the project by Leonard Wood, who maintained that the value of future governments would be measured by their efforts to extend the construction. The Malecón would be defined by the design of the original stretch, and prepared for later extensions which would all be based on that original design. The Malecón was built as far as the limit created by the Almendares river, with significant urban spaces along its path.

Skyview of the Avenida del Puerto, under construction, ca.1926.

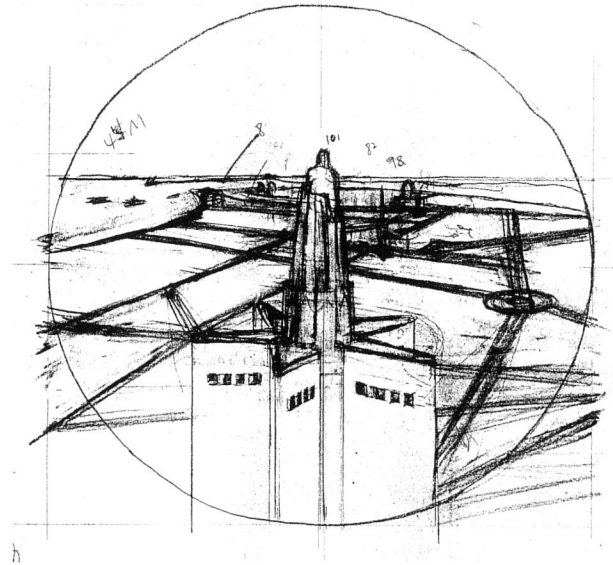
Plaza Cívica 1937-1960

The Plaza Cívica area completes the northern development of the city to the east of the Almendares river. From the moment of Forestier's first visit to the Cuban capital in 1925, the Loma de los Catalanes was officially recognized as the new physical high point of what would be the Great Havana of the future. This site was selected by the Central Pro-Monument Committee (La Comisión Central Pro-Monumento), which was created in 1937 under the presidency of Federico Laredo Bru. Presidential Decree 2850, issued by Committee Secretary Dr. Roberto A. Netto on September 9, 1937, ratified the committee's authorization to study the bidding documents as well as the form, method and process for the bidding competition. The new construction would be placed in the new civic square that was planned for the so-called "Hermitage Plain." This decree set out the bidding guidelines for the Interamerican Competition to erect a monument to Martí. Forty-seven artists from different countries participated in the competition. The bidding was significant in that it was a contest divided into three parts: the Plaza, the Monument, and Sculpture. The first contest was declared void as no proposal was presented that fit with the government's vision of the magnitude and splendor required for the space. From that point on, various competitions were held, until finally in 1942 the first prize was awarded to the work proposed by Juan José Sicre and Aquiles Maza. Even so, a lengthy period of inactivity followed. It was not until 1952 that a committee was finally formed, in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of José Martí's birth, to modify and implement the winning project. Different architectural approaches were created from the original winning proposals. Juan José Sicre's sculpture, as proposed in the winning project from 1942, was chosen. It measured 18 meters high, and was created on-site completely by hand. The monument chosen was an obelisk designed by Jean Labatut, in the form of a pyramid with a star-shaped base. It rose to 139 meters above sea level. Labatut's proposal had won second place in the 1942 contest. The design and construction of the plaza itself suffered because none of the winning proposals were chosen. The project was undertaken without adequate urban planning studies, and without imposing design parameters on the buildings that would surround the plaza. The top of the obelisk possesses a viewpoint from which you can take in a truly spectacular civic vista. One can see the brilliance of the urban connections, intertwined through the years and interrupted and altered by human hands. Every citizen who visits the highest point of the city, the Plaza Cívica, can follow a forested line, the Paseo del Prado, with his eye, eventually reaching the retaining boundary of the city, the Malecón, which runs into the Caribbean Sea. —SFH

Learn more about Havana's architecture during Cuba's Republican period. Visit the Historical Museum's upcoming exhibition *La Habana: Civic Architecture 1902-1958* on display from October 7, 2002 through January 12, 2003.

All photographs courtesy of Fleitas Cuban Collection.

Carlos Alberto Fleitas, an architect at Spillis Candela DMJM, is committed to the preservation of the Cuban architectural heritage; he has a proactive role within the community.



Above—Diagram for the contest proposal for the José Martí monument drawn by Jean Labatut, ca. 1940. Right—José Martí monument on the Plaza Cívica, under construction, 1953.



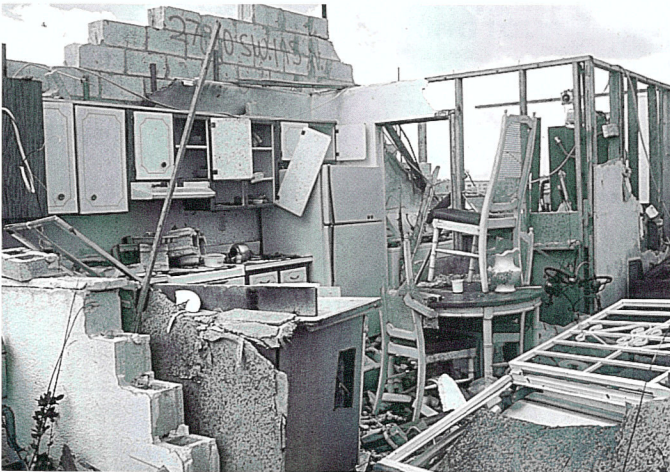
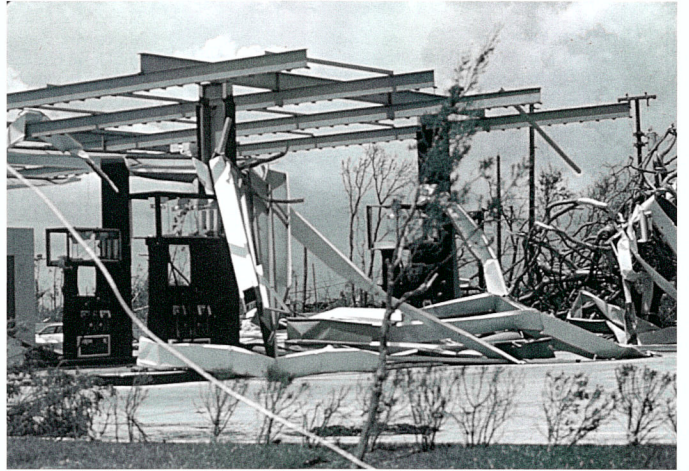
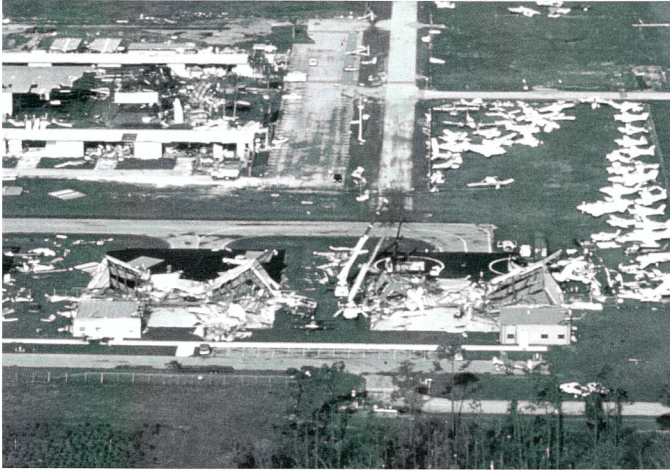
History in the Making



Above and right—Photographs of Hurricane Andrew devastation provided by photographer Masud Quraishy. HASF 1994-653.

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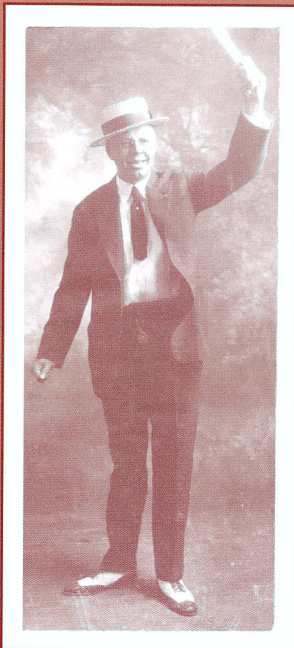


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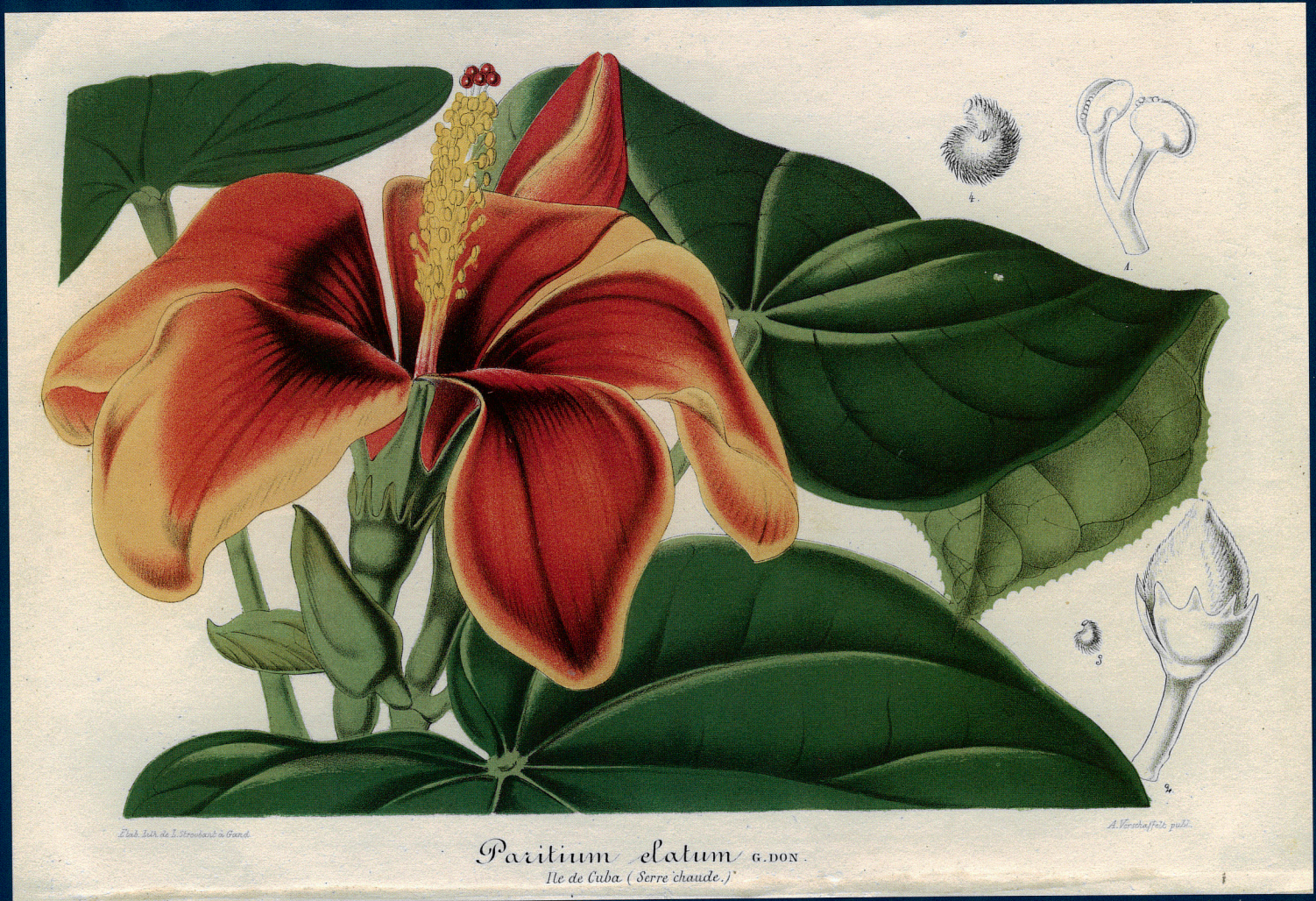
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