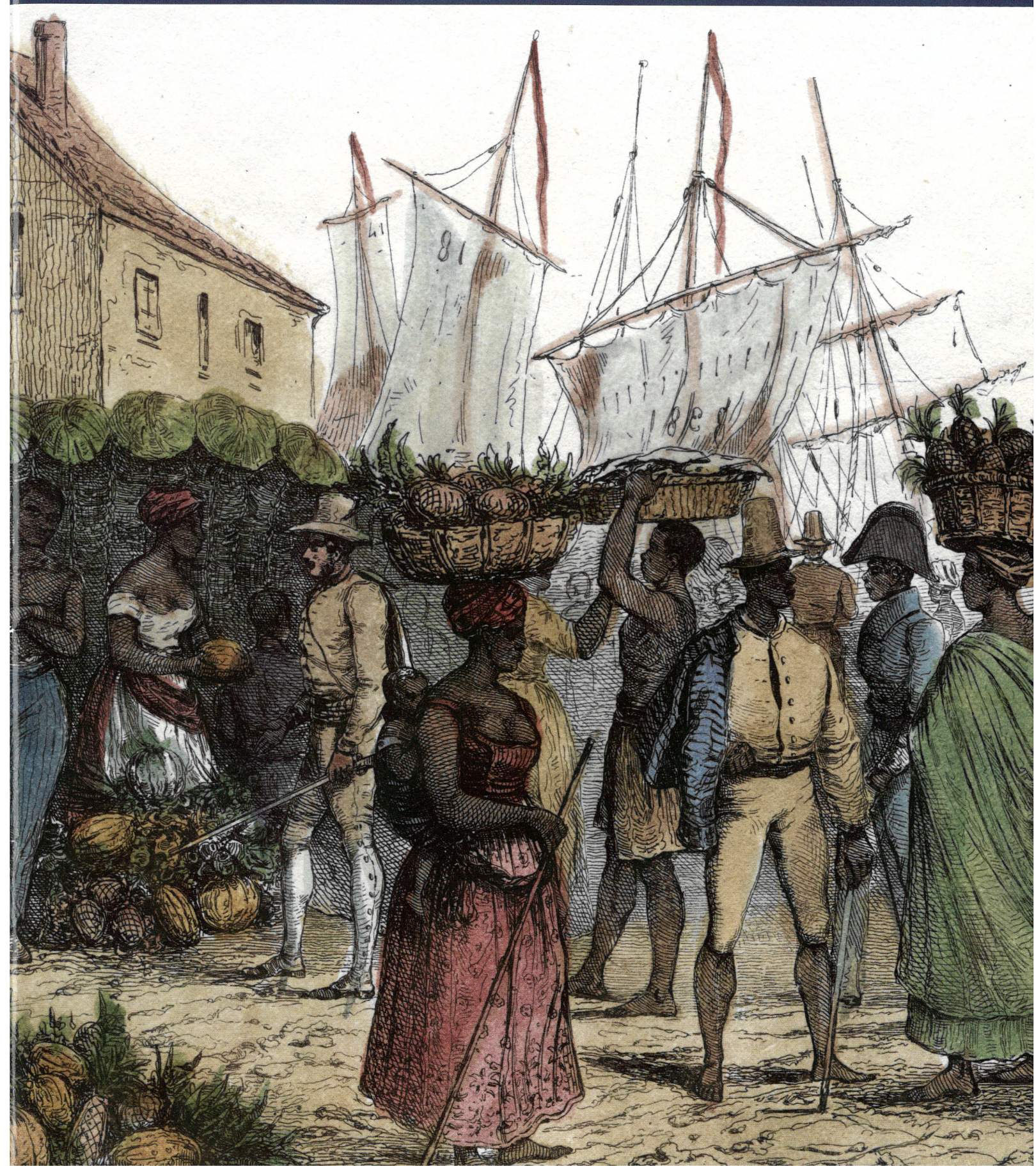


# South Florida History

HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA VOLUME 33, NO 1, 2005 \$3.00





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*Writing the South Florida Frontier*

**A Lecture by  
Peter Matthiessen**

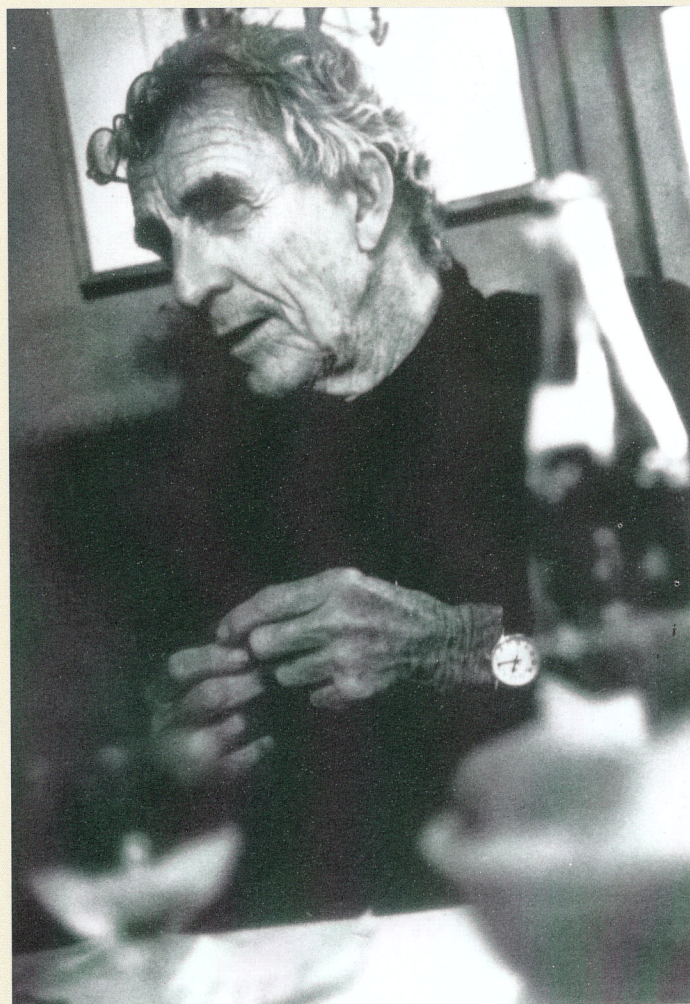
Thursday, January 5, 2006

7:30 pm

FREE Admission

Miami-Dade Cultural Plaza  
101 West Flagler Street Downtown Miami

Peter Matthiessen, widely acclaimed author of *Killing Mr. Watson* and *Bone by Bone* discusses his research into the Florida Everglades and Edgar Watson, and how both reflect on the American frontier and the growth of capitalism.



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*South Florida History* Volume 33, No 1, 2005

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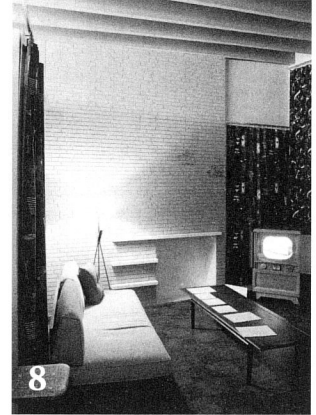
Discover the diverse architectural heritage of this island nation, as well as its built environment, history and urban centers.

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## 26 Miami's Roads Neighborhood

In a time when most center city neighborhoods that were once vibrant have experienced a decline, "The Roads" has always been, and remains today, one of the most desirable and expensive neighborhoods in Miami.

*Paul S. George, PhD*



Cover—Market scene in Haitian town. Masts of ships in background. Illustration probably from *France militaire*/Abel Hugo.—Paris: Delloye, 1838. HASF 2003-263-5.





I am excited over assuming the editorship of *South Florida History*. This wonderful magazine has served the community of history enthusiasts and the general public in impressive fashion from its beginnings as *Update* in the early 1970s. Through the employment of ever-more sophisticated technology to complement a rich variety of articles, *South Florida History* has become a handsome magazine providing readers with stories, photographs and illustrations showcasing the history of Miami and South Florida. The magazine also provides readers with updates on developments at the Historical Museum, summaries of its endless array of exhibitions, commentary on community-

wide activities and book reviews.

Two of the articles in this issue of the magazine are related to an exhibition previously on display at the museum, *Visions of the Caribbean* (Maps, Prints and Photographs from the Collection of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida). "Haiti: The Architectural Heritage," by the country's *Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN), Ministère de La Culture* is a fascinating study not only of the diverse architectural heritage of the island nation, but also of other elements of its built environment, history and urban centers.

Daniel Supplice's "Toussaint Louverture: the Road to Glory," is a succinct history of Haiti from the era of Christopher Columbus to Haiti's independence at the outset of the nineteenth century. The article contains many captivating details of the life and struggle of Toussaint Louverture, the founding father of the Republic of Haiti, against its French colonizers.

Stuart resident Jean Matheson, a writer with an impressive resume, has provided us with "His Brother's Keeper: Addison and Wilson Mizner," a fascinating piece on two larger-than-life figures who were participants in the great Florida land boom of the 1920s. Addison Mizner had the much more important role in the boom since he was, as the "society architect of Palm Beach," responsible for many of the most lavish mansions in that wealthy enclave. Wilson joined his brother, managing Mizner Industries in unconventional fashion. Readers will enjoy this article both for its information and its hilarity.

"Miami's Roads Neighborhood" represents an article that grew out of my participation in an historical survey of that quarter from 2001 through 2002. "The Roads," as everyone calls it, is a remarkable neighborhood because it has remained a coveted location since its inception, while areas around it experienced their share of ups and downs. The neighborhood's streets, historic architecture and diverse institutions make it one of the city of Miami's more interesting areas.

Martha Reiner, who teaches English at Miami Dade College's Kendall campus, provides a review of Raymond Mohl's, *South of The South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960*. In this study, the prolific Mohl, a professor of history at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, turns his attention to early civil rights activities in Miami through the activities of two Jewish women, and the challenges they and other activists faced in this slice of the Deep South.

I know you will enjoy this edition of *South Florida History*. If you or anyone you may know is desirous of submitting an article for possible publication, please contact me or Sara Muñoz, the magazine's managing editor, at [marketing@historical-museum.org](mailto:marketing@historical-museum.org).

We thank you for your interest in this publication and in the rich history of this slice of paradise.

Paul S. George

## *South Florida History*

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# Collections

by Rebecca Smith

*The Florida Home: Modern Living, 1945-1965*, an exhibition on display at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida in 2004, brought attention to the museum's post-World War II architectural collections—treasures that have been carefully arranged, described and stored, but mostly ignored by researchers. The collections are now receiving more use, thanks to *The Florida Home* and a growing interest in the 1950s and 1960s.

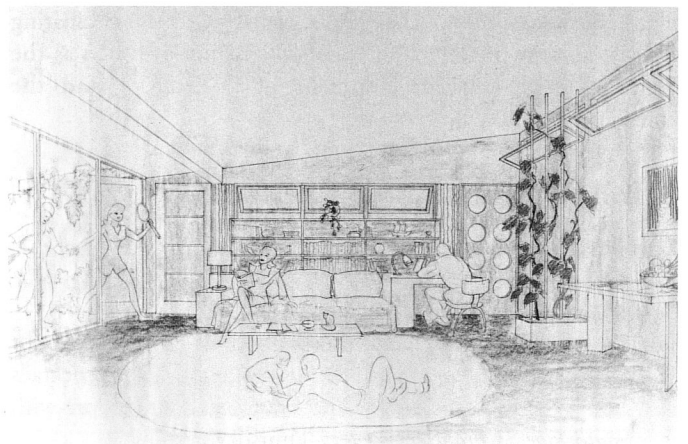
Here are a few of these architectural gems:

The **Polevitzky Collection** contains 1,233 photographs of buildings designed by Igor B. Polevitzky between 1934 and 1965. Views include Miami and Miami Beach homes, Miami Beach and Havana hotels, automotive businesses, retail shops, office buildings and other various businesses. Most of the photographs are exceptional, for Polevitzky commissioned prominent photographers to shoot his buildings, such as Samuel Gottscho. (Gottscho's photographs are at the Library of Congress and on the American Memory Web site: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gschtml/gotthome.html>.) Laurinda Spear and Arquitectonica donated this fine collection in 1986.

Margaret Scoonover donated the **Rada Collection** in 1976. Husband and wife Rudi and Annette Rada shot photographs of various things from 1946 to 1974, most of all subjects pertaining to architecture and interior design. This collection fills 24 linear feet of shelf space—thousands of pictures in total! Rudi Rada shot interior and exterior views of houses, condominiums and buildings for the *Miami Herald*, the *Miami News*, interior design magazines, architectural journals and advertisements. Occasionally people appear in his pictures, making them all the more interesting. Want to see how South Floridians furnished their living rooms, kitchens and patios during the 1950s and 1960s? This is the mother lode.

Architect **Wahl John Snyder's drawings and papers** include plans for Florida homes and townhouses he designed between 1929 and 1982, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s. Snyder introduced the split-level house (1939) and townhouse designs (1964) to the Miami area. This collection was donated by Jane Snyder in 1989.—*SFH*

Right, top to bottom—Igor Polevitzky: Heller Residence #1, Biscayne Island, 1948. Rada: Hugh Smallen House, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., 1953, photo by Rudi Rada. Wahl John Snyder and Rufus Nims: GI Competition House, 1946.





## Historical Museum of Southern Florida

Miami-Dade Cultural Center, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, 305.375.1492, [www.historical-museum.org](http://www.historical-museum.org). Open seven days a week, Monday–Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm; Sunday noon to 5 pm. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Discounted parking available at 50 NW 2nd Ave. Adults \$5; Children 6-12 \$2; HMSF members and children (5 and under) FREE.

### ONGOING EXHIBITION

#### ***Tropical Dreams: A People's History of South Florida***

*On display all year long*

Explore 10,000 years of South Florida history as you wander through the Historical Museum of Southern Florida's permanent exhibition, *Tropical Dreams: A People's History of South Florida*. Visit a re-creation of the Miami Circle and view a sea turtle shell and other artifacts from this 2,000 year-old settlement at the mouth of the Miami River. Walk through the homes of Seminole Indians and Anglo-American settlers in South Florida. Climb on board an actual 1920s trolley and take a video tour of downtown Miami, Miami Beach and Coral Gables. View photographs of the African American community of Overtown, and see a Haitian boat and a Cuban raft that brought refugees to Miami. Also on permanent display are original prints of John James Audubon's paintings of Florida birds.

### SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

#### ***The South Florida Frontier***

*On display at the Historical Museum through January 22, 2006*

Explore nineteenth-century frontier life in South Florida and get into the world of Seminole Indians, Anglo-Americans, African-Americans and African-Bahamians. Walk into a full-scale trading post, where settlers and Seminoles exchanged goods and supplies. Get a taste of frontier life by viewing alligator and buffalo hides, Seminole clothing and gear, trades goods, beads and other thought-provoking artifacts. With more than 200 artifacts, photomurals, oil paintings, prints, photographs, maps and books, *The South Florida Frontier* tells the fascinating stories of some of the major events of the period, such as the Seminole Wars, the development of settlements and the emergence of tourism.

### SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

#### **Live On The Plaza**

*Every Thursday*

*September 22 through January 22 6 to 9 pm*

Join the Historical Museum and other curious downtowners for FREE live music, lectures, panel discussions and delicious cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Live On The Plaza, in conjunction with *The South Florida Frontier*, is every Thursday evening.

#### **Family Fun Days**

*Every Saturday*

*September 10 through December 3 1 to 3 pm*

Join the Historical Museum every Saturday morning for FREE family programming. Surrounded by family and friends, start your weekend off with a different program every Saturday from 10 am to noon. Imagine, create and explore through hands-on activities, art, music, drama, dance and storytelling.

#### **Harvest**

*Saturday & Sunday, November 19-20 10 am to 5 pm*

*Miami-Dade County Fair Expo Center, Coral Way & SW 112th Ave.*

Be part of a South Florida tradition! For nearly thirty years the Historical Museum's annual fundraiser, HARVEST, a major indoor festival featuring crafts, homemade food products, live plants and agricultural products, has paid tribute to our past and to our American traditions. Always the weekend before Thanksgiving, the ever-popular two-day celebration is an event for the entire family. Enjoy historical reenactments, live music, children's activities and displays of antique automobiles. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$2 for children (6-12).

### HISTORIC TOURS WITH DR. PAUL GEORGE

#### **Gallery Walk with Dr. Paul George**

*Thursday, September 22 6 to 8 pm*

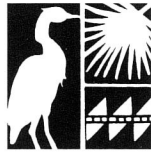
Join the Historical Museum's Dr. Paul George as he leads you through the museum's permanent exhibition, *Tropical Dreams: A People's History of South Florida*. Explore 10,000 years of South Florida and Caribbean history. Meet at the Historical Museum of South Florida. Call 305.375.1621.

#### **Miami River Frontier Walk**

*Saturday, September 24 9 to 11am*

Stroll along the river with the Historical Museum's Dr. Paul George and learn about the Tequestas, who created the Miami Circle on the south bank of the river. Inspired by *The South Florida Frontier* exhibition, this tour will take you through Lummus Park, where you'll encounter a preserved building originally used as slave quarters. End by exploring downtown's amazing historic architecture, including the Olympia Theater, Burdines, duPont and Seybold Buildings and Gesu Church. Meet in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 400 SE 2 Ave. HMSF members \$15, Non-members \$20. Call 305.375.1621.





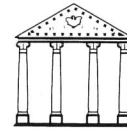
**Collier County Museums, 3301 Tamiami Trail East, Naples—239.774.8476.** Journey back over 10,000 years of Southwest Florida's unique past at our four museum locations. Visit the Collier County Museum at 3301 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, the Naples Depot Museum (opening soon) at 1051 5th Ave South, Downtown Naples, the Museum of the Everglades at 105 West Broadway, Everglades City, and the Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch at 1215 Roberts Ave, Immokalee. Admission is free for all museums, donations appreciated. For information and operating hours, please call: 239.774.8476.



**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 Monday 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.



**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 Monday through Friday, from 9 am–5 pm. Research hours are by appointment Tuesday through Thursday from 10 am–3 pm.

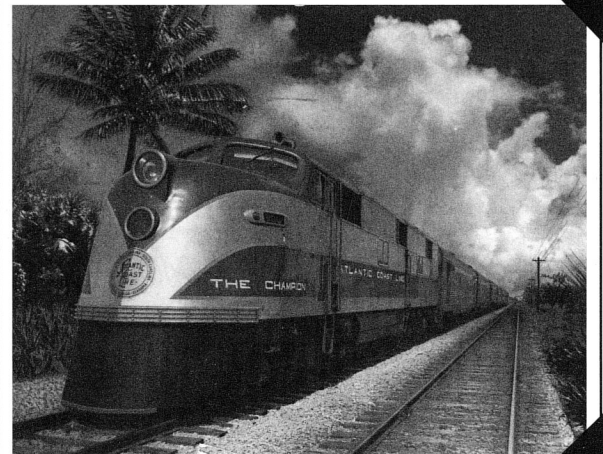
*The above institutions subscribe to South Florida History as a benefit for their members.*

## Yesterday's Visions for Sale at the Historical Museum

A treasure trove of revealing, dramatic and scenic photographs of South Florida's past are available to adorn the walls of your home or place of business.

With more than one million photographs and postcards, there's something for everyone.

Call 305.375.1492, or stop by the Historical Museum's Research Center for further details.



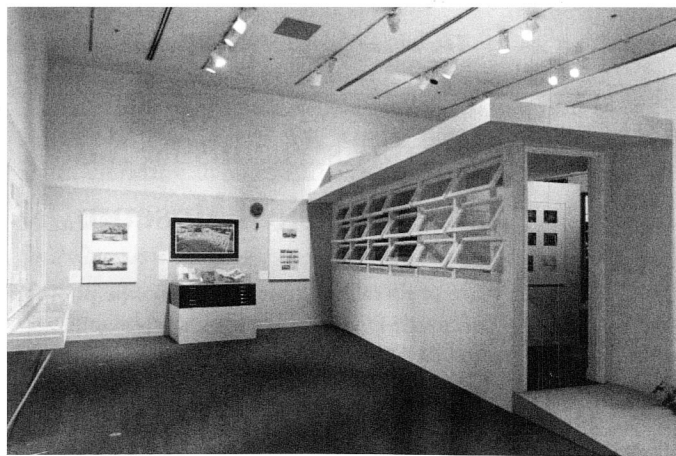


## The Florida Home Modern Living

by Stephen Stuempfle



The two decades following World War II were pivotal years in Miami's history. During this period, the city was transformed by extensive migration, the construction of new highways, the rise of jet aviation, the development of year-round tourism and an expanding economy. In 1945, Dade County's population was approximately 300,000; by 1970 it had surpassed 1.2 million. Among these new South Floridians were GIs who had been stationed in Miami during the war and returned to settle down and raise families. But many other Americans were also enticed by South Florida's job opportunities, warm climate and promise of perennial outdoor recreation. A priority for the thousands of new arrivals in the region was the purchase of a new home. Fortunately, rising incomes and access to low-interest government loans made this dream possible for many families. During the postwar era, developers built an unprecedented number of new houses in neighborhoods throughout the Miami area.



Above and right—Façade of reconstructed Heller House #1, designed by Igor Polevitzky. Originally built on Biscayne Island in 1947. On display at the Historical Museum, 2004.





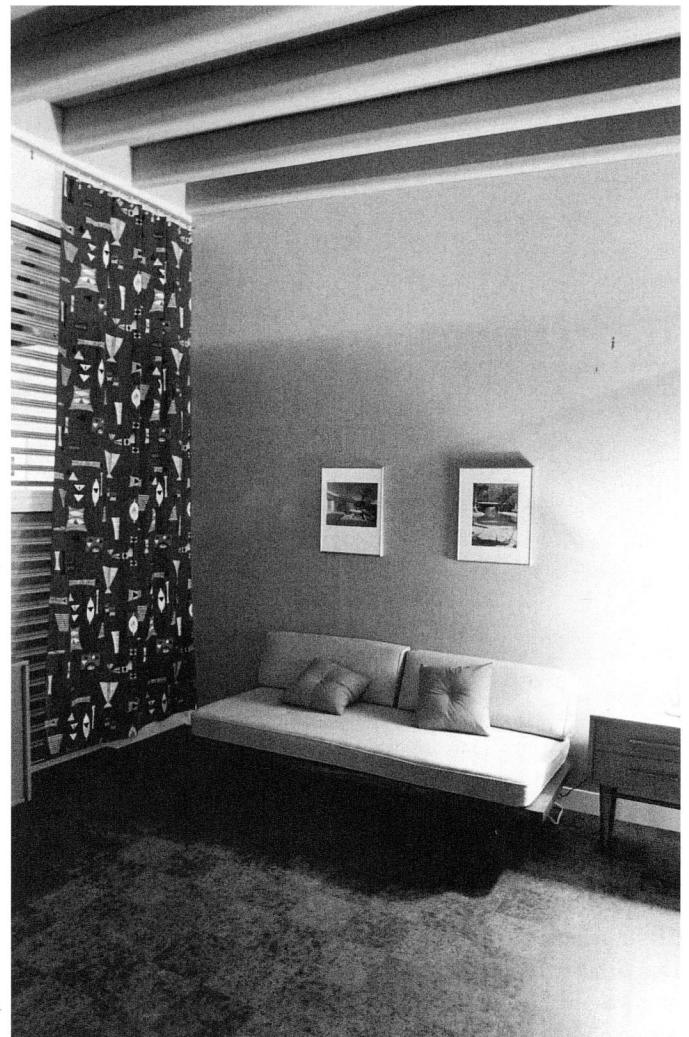
Top—Living room of Heller House #1. Right—Bedroom of Heller House #1. Period furniture for the exhibition was obtained at local vintage furniture stores.

This postwar housing boom is the subject of *The Florida Home: Modern Living, 1945-1965*, an exhibition that was presented at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida last year. On June 2, the exhibition opened at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee, where it will remain on display through January 2, 2006. The exhibition focuses on the work of several leading Miami architects who adapted modernist design concepts and technologies to South Florida's distinct subtropical environment. Guest curators for the exhibition are Jean-François Lejeune and Allan Shulman, both professors at the University of Miami's School of Architecture. Lejeune and Shulman have conducted extensive research on Miami's architectural history and have worked with various organizations to increase public understanding of the city's location in national and international modernist movements.

The Historical Museum was well positioned to organize an exhibition on postwar residential architecture. Our Research

Center contains two major collections that served as a foundation for the project: photographs of the work of Igor Polevitzky, one of Miami's best-known architects of the postwar era; and photographs shot by Rudi Rada, an architectural photographer who has been published widely in both local newspapers and national periodicals. Over the past several years, guest curator Shulman has been conducting in-depth research on these and related collections at the museum. Conversations with Shulman and Lejeune, also a long-term supporter of the museum, led to the idea of mounting an exhibition on the under-appreciated achievements of Polevitzky and other postwar Miami architects, such as Rufus Nims, Alfred Browning Parker, Norman Giller, Russell Pancoast, George Reed, Wahl Snyder and Kenneth Triester. The Historical Museum's receipt of a grant in 2003 from the Florida Division of Historical Resources allowed the project to move ahead.

In our search for additional architectural drawings and photographs for the exhibition, we turned to the Smathers





Libraries at the University of Florida for material by Nims and Parker and to a variety of local archives for the work of other architects. The wide range of architectural plans, elevations, renderings and photographs selected for the exhibition illustrate various visions of the South Florida modern home as a structure that embraced the subtropical environment and that offered flexible spaces for comfortable outdoor-oriented living. Screened patios, porches, large louvered windows and sliding glass doors all opened house interiors to the outdoors and allowed for natural cooling by breezes, even though air conditioners were increasingly available during this period.

were also determined to provide exhibition visitors with a multi-sensory experience of the residential architecture of the period. Thus, we decided to build a house inside the museum's gallery.

Weeks of work by museum preparators and a crew of assistants resulted in a stunning full-scale reconstruction of a house designed by Igor Polevitzky in 1947 for a businessman named Michael Heller. The reconstruction included the entire house, minus one bedroom and the carport. After the exhibition closed in Miami, we took the house apart and shipped it to Tallahassee, where it has been rebuilt by staff at the Museum of Florida History.



“Outdoor living area” (screened patio) of Heller House #1. Igor Polevitzky and other postwar architects embraced South Florida’s subtropical environment.

The drawings and photographs on display in the exhibition provide a wonderful sense of postwar Miami architects’ imaginative solutions to living in a hot and humid climate. Also exhibited are a variety of books, magazines, brochures and advertisements that illustrate how the building industry promoted South Florida as a tropical paradise for purchasers of new homes. While these archival materials offer detailed evidence of trends in postwar house design and lifestyles, museum staff and the guest curators

Visitors to the exhibition are able to move through the home’s open floor plan, which includes a living room, kitchen, bedroom and “outdoor living area”—an extensive screened patio that *Architectural Forum*, in 1948, described as the most distinctive feature of the house. While in the house, visitors are encouraged to relax on period couches and chairs that Historical Museum staff was able to find at local vintage furniture stores. In the living room, visitors can watch postwar Florida television



programming about houses; in the screened patio they can view home movies that demonstrate how Florida families enjoyed their houses during this optimistic era. The museum obtained copies of the programs and movies from the extensive collection of the Louis Wolfson II Florida Moving Image Archive in Miami.

Other highlights of the exhibition are three detailed wood models of signature houses by Plevitzky, Nims and Parker. Students at the University of Miami's School of Architecture painstakingly constructed the models specifically for the exhibition. Plevitzky's "Birdcage House," designed for client Michael Heller in 1949, is a large screened environment that includes multiple decks, a swimming pool and sheltered rooms. Nims's "Hibiscus House," built for the Adler family in 1952, is raised above the ground and ventilated by glass and wood louvers. Parker's residence, which he built for himself in 1953, also features extensive louvers, as well as a roof deck. The home won *House Beautiful's* Pacesetter award in 1954.

Whether they lived in one-of-a-kind or sub-division houses, postwar families adopted an architecture well suited for the enjoyment of South Florida's lush landscape and year-round warmth. With the Depression and World War II behind them, their new modern houses symbolized a bright future in a dynamic American region. Visitors to the exhibition will encounter a variety of postwar innovations in architectural design and will be encouraged to reflect on their relevance for living in South Florida today.—*SFH*



To view the Historical Museum's online version of the exhibition, visit [www.historical-museum.org](http://www.historical-museum.org) and select "Exhibits."

Models of postwar houses made by students in the School of Architecture, University of Miami. From front: Alfred Browning Parker's "Pacesetter House," Rufus Nims's "Hibiscus House" and Igor Plevitzky's "Birdcage House."

If you missed

## The Florida Home: Modern Living 1945-1963

while on display at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, you can now see it at the Museum of Florida History.

Guest curated by

Jean-François Lejeune and Allan Shulman.

For information, call the Museum of Florida History  
800.245.6400 or visit [www.museumoffloridahistory.com](http://www.museumoffloridahistory.com)

House built by Mackle Brothers. HMSF 1989-011-6363





# His Brother's Keeper

## Addison & Wilson Mizner

by Jean Matheson

**The architect of Palm Beach, Addison Mizner, and his brother Wilson had two traits** in common. Both men were salesmen with a well-developed sense of humor and both were artists. Where Addison used his charm to sell the beauty of his art, Wilson used the flip side of charm to con.

The brothers came from an old California family, aristocratic and eccentric. Addison said, "Mama Mizner brought a big family of children into this world—a ton and a half of them...I was neither the fattest nor the thinnest, the blondest nor the blackest, I was just the next to last." Wilson said, "To my embarrassment, I was born in bed with a lady."

Mother Ella Mizner was a lady of prominence who always demanded her due. The story goes that during the San Francisco earthquake, she successfully flagged a passing fire engine to carry her to safety. Father Lansing Mizner served as ambassador to five Central American countries in 1889. Although his diplomatic career was brief, it had a lasting effect on his teenage sons who accompanied him.





Top—Addison Mizner at the Cloister Inn in Boca Raton in 1926. Left—Wilson Mizner at the Cloister Inn in Boca Raton, 1926.  
Photos courtesy of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County.





Top—View of the Everglades Club, designed by Addison Mizner, from Lake Worth, Palm Beach, ca. 1928.

Right—Interior of the Everglades Club.

Photos courtesy of the Florida State Archives.





Spiral stairs in the  
Everglades Club,  
designed by Addison.  
Courtesy of the Florida  
State Archives.

Wilson—"Angel Birdie"—as his mother fondly called her youngest—learned the full advantage of diplomatic immunity and never again thought the law applied to him. Sixteen-year-old Addison said, "It was probably the greatest day of my life, for there lying white in the sun was my first Spanish town." He used that vision to define his life's work and even today in South Florida, Spanish architecture is called "Mizner."

After studying four years in Spain, Addison returned to California to begin his architectural apprenticeship. When he found that his commissions couldn't fund his excesses, he joined Wilson and older brothers William and Edgar in the Klondike gold rush. Addison threw his considerable weight—at one time over 300 pounds—into the venture, mining enough gold to finance a trip to Hawaii. Once there he painted portraits and co-authored *The Cynic's Calendar*, a rewrite of old quotations with new endings such as, "the wages of gin are breath;" "a word to the wise is resented;" "God gave us our relatives, thank God we can choose our friends;" "where there's a will, there's a lawsuit;" and "people who live in glass houses should pull down the blinds."

He won a few boxing matches in Australia before returning to San Francisco where he discovered that *The Cynic's Calendar* had made him famous. He loved the fame, but when it faded he went to Guatemala, the country whose beauty had always inspired him. However this time the inspiration was the bounty as well as the beauty.

Areas of Guatemala were so deeply scarred by recent earthquakes that the government abandoned them, leaving behind scores of poor people. To feed these poor, a few dedicated priests stripped the churches of their beautiful furnishings and sold them at a pittance of their value. Addison bought truck loads—whole rooms of paneling, altars and altar cloths, doors, windows and chairs, chalices, statues of gold and stone. He bragged that he was the greatest cathedral looter in the world.

He shipped his loot to New York City, hoping to sell enough to finance a career in architecture. His timing was perfect. His fame as an author had preceded him, and time had embellished his adventure stories and the plundered artifacts he had for sale, which quickly made him New York's newest darling. In time these wealthy friends established Addison as a society architect. Hadn't Mama Mizner always taught her boys to socialize with the right people?

Wilson was already well ensconced in New York. He became a theatrical agent and although he thought, writing is too damn lonesome," he also became a playwright. When he married Mary Adelaide Yerkes, a rich widow, society threw open its door to him. The door slammed shut when the marriage ended. Wilson might have been amusing as a suitor but he was a poor choice for a husband.

His career as a Broadway playwright was also short-lived. It ended abruptly in 1921 when he was convicted of running a gambling house. About this time an unknown assailant severely beat him. Asked what hit him, Wilson replied, "I think it was St. Patrick's Cathedral."

In 1918, Addison, suffering from an old leg wound, wintered in Palm Beach with Paris Singer of the sewing machine family. The warm weather worked its magic on Addison's body and the

beauty of the island inflamed his imagination. He designed the Everglades Club, which was so beautiful that Eva Stotesbury, grand dame of Palm Beach, decided she must have a mansion designed by him. As each society lady followed Eva's lead, the Palm Beachers moved from luxury hotels into Mizner mansions. He accomplished what no other architect had, changing the lifestyle of an entire town.

At the height of his popularity, "the society architect of Palm Beach" invited brother Wilson, unemployed at the time, to join him in the rarefied world of the wealthy. He hired Wilson to manage Mizner Industries, which made antique Spanish furniture so necessary to the authenticity of Addison's designs. To age a piece of furniture, Wilson shot it full of holes, beat it with chains and aged it with acid. This proved to be the least destructive of all the things Wilson did in Florida.

In 1925, the brothers joined another gold rush, the "Florida Boom." They purchased 17,500 acres in Boca Raton where Addison envisioned building a city like Venice. In charge of promoting the dream was "Angel Birdie," who placed giant advertisements in northern newspapers claiming that Blackbeard had buried his treasure in Boca Raton and invited the press to record the discovery. "A sucker is born every minute," he said—or was that P. T. Barnum?

Wilson also advertised that the new city was backed by 100 millionaires. He reasoned that if he could "catch the big snobs, the little snobs will follow," and it worked. In just four months, sales reached \$26 million. The affable brothers were on a roller coaster ride to riches—"Be nice to people on the way up because you'll meet them again on the way down."

And down it went—when General T. Coleman du Pont, one of the directors of the Boca Raton project, denounced the Mizners in newspapers from New York to Florida for using his name in false advertising. So effective was du Pont's rebuff that by the end of 1926, the Mizners' dream for Boca Raton was lost. As a result, many men lost their dreams and millions of dollars.

After the "bust," Addison returned to Palm Beach where he continued his architectural career. Wilson fled to Hollywood where he became part owner of the Brown Derby Restaurant noted not for its food but for its famous clientele, many of whom became Wilson's friends. Sound pictures were just coming in vogue and Wilson Mizner wrote the dialogue for one of the early talkies, *One Way Passage*.

Informed that Addison was dying in 1933, Wilson telegraphed his brother, "Stop dying. Am trying to write a comedy." In fact, Addison's death crushed Wilson, who died two months later at age 57. He knew that, "life's a tough proposition, and the first hundred years are the hardest."—*SFH*

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*Jean Matheson has written historical vignettes on Palm Beach County and Martin County. In the past, she served on the Board of Governors of the Historical Society of Palm Beach and The Preservation Board of Palm Beach County. Presently, she is on the Board of the House of Refuge.*





Top—Eva Stotesbury's estate, *El Mirasol*, designed by Addison. Left—The front entrance and stair tower to *Casa Nana*, designed by Addison and built in 1926.

Photos courtesy of the Florida State Archives.

# Toussaint Louverture

## The Road to Glory

by Daniel Suplice

On December 5, 1492, the island of Ayiti was unassumingly and peacefully sleeping through the clear, warm and emerald-colored water of the Caribbean Sea. The “Nordée,” the north-westerly wind, was strongly blowing over the Marien territory. Guacanagaric, the political and spiritual chief, was not aware that the life of his subjects was going to be forever different.

In their quest for more land to conquer and more gold and spices to find for the satisfaction of Europe’s appetite, the Italian-born navigator accidentally collided with the way of life of those who migrated from the Amazon basin, guided by the stars, to the island.

This brutal encounter was pivotal in the shaping of the way culture and history were going to set the tone for life in the New World.

Shock of languages, attitudes and behaviors, the aggressive and voracious appetite of the Spaniards for gold and the insidious impact of newly encountered germs did take its toll on the local populations. The material superiority of the Spaniards, based on the use of technology and weapons, led to the ethnocide and the total destruction of the *Arawak-Taino* culture and civilization.

Two decades after the first Europeans set foot on the island, more than 95 percent of the original population had been exterminated. The abolition of “repartimientos” influenced by Bartolome de Las Casas forced Charles V to officially take the decision to bring slaves from Africa to Hispaniola by authorizing the export of 15,000 ebony sticks in 1517. The Spanish colony of Hispaniola became a property of France after the Ryswick treaty of 1697. The amount of slaves crossing the Atlantic bound

for the plantations of Saint Domingue, the richest French colony in America, increased considerably.

In 1725, Pantaléon Guisbert de Bréda, officer in the French army stationed in Saint Domingue, bought a sugar plantation in an area called Haut du Cap 40 miles from the city of “Cap Francais.” Brédas’ heiress and her husband Louis Pantaléon de Noé were not able to personally take care of the plantation, so they called upon Antoine Bayon de Libertat to manage the growing and prosperous business. As the sugar trade flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century, the demand for a larger labor force increased.

Around 1735, a boat full of slaves arriving from the area called Allada (Kingdom of Dan-Home, West Africa) landed in Cap Francais. To sustain the economic progress of the Bréda Plantation, Antoine Bayon de Libertat bought slaves from that shipment, and among them was a slave called Gaou Ginou who later was baptized under the name of Hippolyte. Seven years later Hippolyte married Pauline Baptiste, a house slave who gave him a son. François Dominique Toussaint was born a slave on May 20, 1743.

As a child, Toussaint Bréda was frail and delicate, medium-sized, ugly and always ill-looking. He decided to strengthen himself by exercising his body and his mind. He became a strong swimmer and a skilled horse rider before the age of 12. Even though it was illegal for a slave to acquire the basis of written communication, Toussaint learned how to read and write from an old Bible with the help of his godfather. Stable boy, coachman of the plantation and steward of the livestock, he became an experienced and





Presumed authentic portrait of Toussaint Louverture offered by himself to Roume. Lithograph by Fourquemin and Macon.

efficient veterinarian because of his knowledge of traditional medicine and the virtues of local herbs and plants. In 1776, because of his good behavior and his sense of responsibility, Antoine Bayon de Libertat decided to give him his freedom and from Toussaint Bréda, he became known as Toussaint the veterinarian. As a free man, he joined the troop of a French general named Biassou who appointed him “Médecins des Armées du Roi” (physician to the armies of the king). After the collapse of his first marriage in 1777, he married Suzanne Simon Baptiste in 1780 and had two sons. His experience in administration, his discipline and will power made him a successful businessman and the proud owner of a 20-hectare coffee plantation in “Petit Cormier, Grande Rivière du Nord.”

On the night of August 22, 1791, in the mountain area of Morne Rouge, Acul du Nord, a region overlooking the city of Cap Francais, hundreds of slaves from surrounding plantations started a revolt. Toussaint, who had been in secret communication with slave leaders, realized that words alone could not bring freedom for all. He decided to openly join the revolution. Thousands of blacks with freedom on their minds flocked to join him. He dropped his physician position and assumed the honorific title of brigadier-general.

In the early months of 1792, he was facing the situation of how to organize thousands of untrained and ignorant former slaves to make an efficient force capable of fighting the strong and powerful French army. He started to train his men and developed a new war strategy: poison water holes, choose wooden spots instead of open spaces, go around or ambush the enemy

instead of facing him and finally annihilate him with the weight of numbers. His fighting ability in combat and his superior organizational capacity would soon be recognized.

While rising in power, he used diplomatic skills to achieve the objectives of freedom and political rights. Toussaint, now called Louverture, joined the British in 1792 and by May 1793 he was fighting alongside the Spanish. On May 18, 1794, after learning that the Convention Nationale had abolished slavery, he went back to France with an army 4,000 men strong. Etienne Maynaud Bizefrance de Laveaux, Governor General of Saint Domingue, fully aware of his growing military success, offered him the rank of colonel on March 25, 1795. On July 23, 1795, he was raised to the rank of brigadier-general and on March 31, 1796, he was promoted to lieutenant general. On August 17, 1796, he was the first black general of a division of the French army. Less than a year later, he was nominated commander-in-chief of the colony of Saint Domingue and lieutenant governor.

On October 12, 1800, he signed a treaty of Commerce with the newly independent United States of America and forced mulatto General André Rigaud, with whom he had major disagreements, to leave Saint Domingue on August 1, 1800. On January 26, 1801, he captured the Spanish city of Santo Domingo and placed the whole island under his authority. With the back-up of his 25,000-man army, he promulgated (without the approval of France) on May 9, 1801, a constitution in which he proclaimed himself governor-general of the entire island for life, with the right to nominate his successor.

Ten years of revolution had left the country in ruins: towns were destroyed, plantations were burned and irrigation systems were dismantled. Worst of all, more than a third of the population had been killed during the raging civil war.

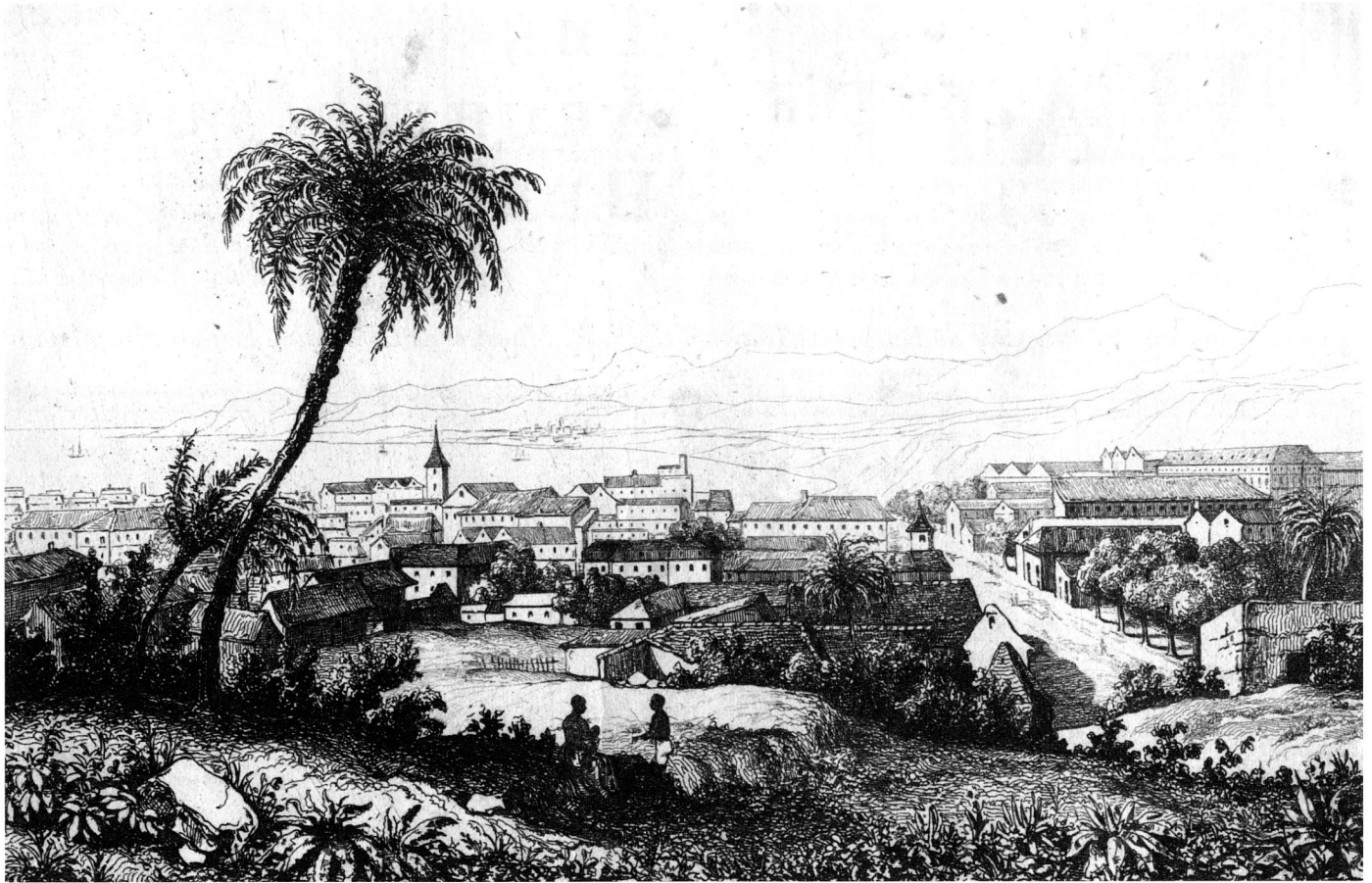
Toussaint reorganized the public administration, created courts of law and asked for the complete inventory of the available resources. He lowered the export duty and put into effect a new system of taxation while creating a maritime police with trained customs officers. He also encouraged the practice of the Catholic religion and promoted the institution of marriage as the moral basis for the new society.

His deepest dream was to transform the newly freed population into a community of free landholders because he believed that the prosperity of the new state relied mainly on the development of agriculture and the capacity to export. He condemned the cultivation of small plots of land, promoted largescale production and used the army



Sugar trade flourished in the French colony of Saint Domingue during the first half of the eighteenth century increasing the demand for a larger labor force. Theodor de Bry, 1528-1598. HASF 1991-483-1.





On August 22, 1791, in the mountain area overlooking the city of Cap-François, hundreds of slaves from surrounding plantations started a revolt. Soon after, Toussaint joined them. Cap-François, Saint-Domingue. HASF 2005-299-2.

to enforce discipline in the plantations. Rapidly, he managed to restore most of the prosperity.

The French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte realized that his ambition to conquer the New World was put to a halt by the new political situation in Saint-Domingue. He reacted immediately by sending the largest military expedition in history to take control of the situation and reestablish slavery. The punitive armada reached the northern coast of Saint-Domingue and on February 5, 1802, a detachment of 5,000 men went ashore off Cap-François. After a series of battles with the French troops and because he had been accused of “agrarian caporalism” by some of his closest officers, Toussaint Louverture felt betrayed and surrendered on May 1, 1802. One month later, on June 7, 1802, he was arrested by the French general Brunet. His plantations were destroyed and his jewels and important papers were stolen. He and members of his family were rushed without any consideration into a frigate and embarked for deportation in France.

He reached the port of Brest on July 12, 1802, and was brought to the Fort de Joux in the Jura Mountains for his incarceration. On October 1, 1802, he was reduced to the rank of soldier. On March 29, 1803, he complained about pain in his stomach and in the early hours of April 7, 1803, he was declared dead by the jail physician due to pulmonary disease.

With a strong personality nurtured in slavery, his rare sense of historical timing, his aptitude to lead men to battle, his ability to always keep objectives in focus and his capacity to keep opponents off balance, Toussaint Louverture, founding father of the Republic of Haiti, had during the path of his life the privilege to experience within a very short time span the road from slavery to stardom, from social obscurity to historical fame.—*SFH*

*Daniel Supplice, born in Port-au-Prince, has held several posts in public service in Haiti, including Minister of the Department of Social Affairs in 1985. Between 1990 and 1994, he was an internationally recognized columnist for Le Nouvelliste newspaper. Currently, he is a sociology and history professor.*

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# HAITI THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

by The Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN), Ministère de La Culture, Port-au-Prince, Haiti





### PRE-COLUMBIAN TRACES

The origin of the architectural heritage of Haiti dates back to more than 3,000 years before Columbus reached that part of the world. When the Spaniards set foot on the island in 1492, it was inhabited by nearly 1 million indigenous people living in small villages of around 1,000 inhabitants.

Archeological artifacts confirmed that most villages were built near a sweet water source in places not far from riverbeds. The huts were made of wood, covered with straw and gathered around a circular or elliptical area paved in stones. The inhabitants used natural caves near to their villages for either religious needs or as shelters against bad weather.

### TRACES OF SPANISH COLONIZATION

Not far from an Arawak village, at Bord de Mer de Limonade, a fortification called Villa de Navidad was built with the remains of one of Columbus' sailing ships. It was the first European construction in the New World and this humble palisade, flanked with a wooden tower, is incontestably the founding act of European colonization in the New World. It inaugurated a long series of military works throughout the Americas.

Nicolas de Ovando, the governor of the colony, ordered the creation of nearly fifteen towns in an attempt to control the entire territory and guarantee a true colonization of Hispaniola. Located at nearly two kilometers from Guacanagaric's village (a pre-Columbian settlement), Villa Puerto Real was built in 1503 by Rodrigo de Mexia. This authentic imperial city of sixteenth century America first experienced a flourishing period then a precocious decline due to the progressive desertion of its inhabitants. By 1578, it was completely abandoned.

### THE FRENCH COLONY

Soon after the island's initial occupation by Spain, English, French, Flemish and various other pirates were seduced by rumors of treasures brought back from the American territories by Spanish galleons. Essentially seamen who were extremely mobile and answered to the sole authority of their chosen chief, these merciless pirates attacked the Spanish boats loaded with gold, spices and other precious goods. Upon the abandonment of the western part of the island by the Spaniards, the pirates chose strategic areas as safe havens where they could share their riches. In Haiti, the island of Tortuga, the Ile à Vaches and Labadie became hiding places for pirates where impressive architectural structures were erected. Following the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 when the Spanish formally ceded the western part of the island of Saint Domingue to the French, colonial cities were developed by the French administration at Saint Louis du Sud (headquarters at the beginning of the seventeenth century of the Compagnie Royale des Indes Occidentales), Le Bourg du Bas du Cap (later known as Cap Francais—the economic capital of the territory) and L'Hopital.

### THE COLONIAL HOUSES

In 1697, Spain recognized France's authority on the occidental third of the island of Hispaniola, allowing it to establish control and administration. The colonial system was characterized by large agricultural centers dedicated to exclusive trade with the



Section of a map showing the island of the Hispaniola, Ca. 1700.

HASF 1992-450-1 (Gift from Lydia Cabrera).

motherland. From the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century, this system would make Saint Domingue the most flourishing of all the French colonies. Today we can still see the ruins of aqueducts, mills, residences and other industrial plants producing tobacco, cotton, indigo, coffee and particularly sugar. In the Cul-de-Sac Plains, the ruins of the following plantations may be found: Caradeux, Frère, Dignerou, Noailles, Chateaublond and Dargourt. Over in the Plain du Nord, the plantations of Galifet, Duval, La Grossetet, La Ginguette, Grand-Pré and Sainte Paulette can also be seen.

#### THE DEFENSE SYSTEM OF THE FRENCH COLONY OF SAINT DOMINGUE

The colonial system was exclusively oriented towards agricultural production, but the cities with warehouses and shipping centers needed a defense system to protect their importance and wealth. Solid masonry fortifications placed near the sea were built not only around the major cities but also near all close access points. Defense was ensured around Cap Français and other centers such as Fort Belly, Fort Saint Joseph, Fort Belair, The Batterie du Gris-Gris, Fort Picolet, Fort aux Dames, Fort de la Baie and Fort Labouque.

It is important to note that in 1802, the French expeditionary corps squadron commanded by General Leclerc was incapable of forcing the defense lines of the Cap Français. At the time, Cap Français was under the revolutionary leadership of general Henri Christophe. It was only when the French General Rochambeau, with the help of 4,000 men overcame the defense at Fort Liberté that Christophe, fearing an attack, commanded his troops to abandon the city and burn it.

#### THE DEFENSE SYSTEM AFTER HAITI'S INDEPENDENCE

On January 1, 1804, the French colony of Saint Domingue became the independent Republic of Haiti. The new state's first constitution advocated that "at the first signal of alarm, the cities should be abandoned and the nation put on a state of national alert." It had long been recognized that coastal fortifications were not a sufficient defense against an invading army. What was obvious however, was that the mountains formed a natural and practically impregnable line of defense. Since the beginnings of the slave revolt, many runaway slaves had found refuge in these mountains. Upon orders from Jean Jacques Dessalines, the self declared emperor of a new independent Haiti, the generals began building a series of fortified works atop mountains. These fortifications jutted over inland penetration passages and were destined to protect a fall back position if necessary.

The following fortifications were constructed in the north: Fort des Trois Pavilions, Fort Riviere in Dondon, Fort Neigh in Saint Rafael, Fort Dahomey in Limbe, Fort Le Redoubtable in Marmalade, Fort Sans-Quartier, Fort Brave, Les Redoutes de Rammiers and the famous Citadel at Milot.

On the mountains overlooking the Artibonite Plain and surrounding Marchand, the first capital of Haiti, the aggressive contours

of Fort Decide, Fort Culbuté, Fort Madame, Fort Doko and Fort Fin du Monde can still be admired. In the west, Fort Jacques and Fort Alexander near Fermathe and Fort Campan, above the line of the city of Leogane, were also built.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS AFTER 1804

Soon after the proclamation of independence, and particularly in the northern part of the country, major administrative buildings were erected by general Henri Christophe who proclaimed himself king of the northern part of Haiti in March 1807. During his thirteen year reign he constructed the Sans Souci compound, the Palace at Belle Rivière (also named the Palace of 365 doors at the Petite-Riviere de l'Artibonite) and the Palace of the Belle Vue Par Le Roy in Limonade.

#### THE CITIES

##### *Cap Haitian*

Cap Haitian was founded in 1670 and constructed on the ruins of an old Taino village site named Guarico. Initially, the city was a modest pirate village known as Bas du Cap but in 1711, the city was officially raised to the rank of a French colonial town. Due to intense exploitation in the Plain du Nord, the city of Cap Français became a splendid, vibrant city in the seventeenth century and was considered the Paris of Saint Domingue. Later, in the eighteenth century, it was a city with Neoclassical architecture—sober and repetitive in style. As the economic and political center of the colony of Saint Domingue, the Cap felt the first tremors of the profound social turmoil that shook the French motherland in 1789. From the great landowners' revolt to the slave revolution and the free men's rebellion, the Cap was the theater of the major political events of the time. In 1804, after Haiti's independence, the Cap became the trading capital of Henri Christophe's kingdom and was renamed Cap Henri. The administrative capital was transferred to Sans Souci, a compound built on eight hectares inland on the Milot plantation at the foot of The Citadel Henri Christophe. Near the end of the nineteenth century, the Cap experienced an economic rebirth and attracted major investments that allowed it to recover from the devastating earthquake of 1842. It was also at this time that corbelled balconies were added to the austere facades of colonial homes and give the city its charm and originality today.

##### *Jacmel*

Founded in 1698 by French settlers, Jacmel became a colonial city in 1720. This new function favored an economic development mainly based on the exploitation of coffee, cotton and indigo. During the entire French colonial period, the area was scarcely populated and the physical characteristics of this part of the territory have always been the cause of its isolation. Moreover, due to the craggy mountains and thick forests surrounding the city, Jacmel became a famed and impregnable land of refuge for the runaway slaves from the sixteenth century. During the nineteenth century, the city of Jacmel experienced a boom due to the area's coffee production. From the mid-nineteenth century, nearly 20 percent of the national coffee exportation was shipped from its





The colonial system in Saint Domingue, which became Haiti on January 1, 1804, was characterized by great agricultural centers dedicated to the exclusive trade with the Metropole. Illustration probably from *France militaire*/Abel Hugo.—Paris: Delloye, 1838. HASF 2003-263-5.

ports. At that time, the city was characterized by an abundant flowering of stone houses with red and green house roofs. The local bourgeoisie claimed ownership of the aesthetic codes of the era and integrated into the facades of buildings a Neoclassical vocabulary of columns, balconies and other metallic ornamental details imported from Belgium, England and France. These details were used to enhance the heavy masonry buildings and the result is an architecture of rare elegance.

#### *Port-au-Prince*

In the first half of the eighteenth century, for economic, administrative and military reasons, there arose the necessity to establish in a central position new capital for the French colony of Saint Domingue. On November 25, 1749, a decree from the king of France declared Port-au-Prince the new capital. Originally built on the Randot Habitation, from Bel-Air hill to the seashore, the city continued to grow towards the south. The first parish church of Port-au-Prince was built on the site of an abandoned sugar mill. The location of this site was to later become the cathedral of Port-au-Prince. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, this parish church formed an immense compound overlooking the commercial town with its presbytery, offices, gardens, the Hotel de La Marine, the Mur de La Terasse and Place de L'Abreuvoir. It is in the same area that the building housing the Lycee Petion, the first lyceum established in the republic, was to be erected in the second half of

the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Port-au-Prince's new cathedral and the School of Des Arts et Metiers, presently the National School of the Republic of Venezuela, was built. Today all these buildings constitute an immensely valued architectural heritage.

In the new city a vast area was reserved for the seat of military power. This area later became the Champs de Mars, an enormous open green space housing government buildings. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the building of a number of public administrative offices defined this area as an administrative, cultural and recreational site of historical, symbolic and urban value.

#### ARCHITECTURE OF WOODWORK LACE

The architectural movement inspired by the Victorian style of architecture, which appeared in the entire Caribbean during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, gave rise to a multitude of original realizations. In Haiti, this style of architecture has a distinctive echo expressed in homes called Gingerbread houses. The architects of these homes were mostly trained in Europe but many houses were also constructed by local builders. Both have left an important collection of work blessed with climactic integration and gifted with a remarkable sense of shape and detail. A new interpretation of this authentic Caribbean architectural style, to which is added a strong African influence, is also found in the peasant houses in several parts of the country.—*SFH*



Top—In the early 1920s, wide thorough areas began to penetrate the piney woods that covered the future Roads neighborhood. Above, left—Clearing land for development with a steam tractor, 1922. Above, right—A land auction for the Brickell Hammock subdivision of the Roads drew a large crowd in 1923. The tent stood at the intersection of today's Southwest 25th Road and Second Avenue. Photos courtesy of the Florida State Archives.



# Miami's Roads Neighborhood:

**Lying immediately south/southwest of downtown** Miami, the Roads neighborhood is a notable exception to one of America's great post-World-War-II failures: the decline of once-vibrant center city neighborhoods. In one city after another, the postwar flight to suburbia sapped the strength of many of these neighborhoods, causing a host of problems ranging from a sharp decline in real estate values to the departure of longstanding businesses, and the influx of new residents with challenging problems. Riverside, Southside and Shenandoah, three neighborhoods contiguous to the Roads, experienced these problems. But the careful preparation in planning the Miami Roads neighborhood at the dawn of its development in the 1920s enabled it to avoid the fate of these other quarters as residents remained and non-residents clamored to move in, and real estate values, accordingly, rose sharply in the postwar period and beyond. Today, it is among the city of Miami's most desirable and expensive neighborhoods. Its history provides perspective on this achievement.

Stretching from 15th to 32nd Road and 12th Avenue, from South Miami Avenue to Southwest 11th Street, the Roads is comprised of three large subdivisions, Holleman Park, Brickell Hammock and Brickell Estates. The Roads contain about 1,400 structures, the vast majority of which are residences. The neighborhood name "Roads" emanates from its street names and from the fact that from its beginnings as a neighborhood in the early 1920s, Mary Brickell, its initial guiding force, insisted on wide streets or roads while lamenting the failure of the city of Miami, in its original survey in 1896, to provide for wide thoroughfares.

The Roads were originally part of the Polly Lewis Donation and the Jonathan Lewis Donation; the Lewises were members of the same white Bahamian family awarded this land in the early 1800s by the government of Spanish Florida to encourage

## A Sparkling Center City Quarter

by Paul S. George, Ph.D.

development of its forlorn colony. Following the purchase of Florida by the United States in 1821, its new owner approved the Lewises' holdings. By the late 1800s, the Brickell family had taken title to the land comprising the future Roads. William and Mary Brickell and their children moved to the Miami River from Ohio at the outset of the 1870s. At the time, the area was virtually devoid of people, but the Brickells sensed that someday it would become an important population center owing to its temperate climate, sparkling waters and location. The Brickells began buying land soon after their arrival until, by the time the Florida East Coast Railway opened Miami to settlement with its entry in 1896,

Florida by the mid-1920s. The development of the Brickell property, known then as the Brickell Hammock, and including today's Roads neighborhood, was a result of the boom. Just before her death in January 1922, Mary Brickell issued a plat for a subdivision called Brickell Hammock, which she planned to develop in conjunction with the J.W. Greshman Manufacturing Company of Griffin, Ga. Its borders encompassed the area bracketed by South Miami Avenue on the south and Southwest Fifth Avenue on the north, and 23rd Road through 27th Road from east to west. Running through the center of each wide roadway was a median, or island, which would contain shade trees. Mary Brickell died soon after, but the Greshman Company continued its work, holding an auction of lots, on February 1, 1923, under a large tent at Southwest 25th Road and Second Avenue. Many small homes bearing a Spanish eclectic or Mediterranean Revival style of architecture arose in subsequent months and years in the Brickell Hammock subdivision. A few examples of them stand on the west side of 26th Road between Fourth and Fifth Avenues.

In 1922, even before the first lots were auctioned in Brickell Hammock, C.J. Holleman, president of a company by that name, had purchased 153 acres of land lying contiguous to the eastern flanks of Brickell Hammock. In the same year, he platted the property, creating the subdivision of Holleman Park consisting of 682 lots. Fifteen months after they went on the market, all of the lots were sold for a sum of \$1.6 million. Soon many of the most architecturally interesting buildings in the Roads began to rise in Holleman Park. Many are still standing throughout the subdivision, especially several large Mediterranean Revival style homes on Southwest 19th and 20th Roads between Second and Third Avenues.

In 1925, the peak year of the great Florida real estate boom, the Brickell Estates company began platting a subdivision by the same name. Brickell Estates is, therefore, the youngest of the three subdivisions comprising the Roads. Much of its building stock can be traced to the era immediately preceding America's entry into World War II (1941-1945), as well as the decade following the conflict. In fact, most of the homes in the Roads were built after World War II because the real estate boom collapsed in 1926, and the area entered a severe economic depression with the resultant slowdown in construction. As good times returned in the late 1930s, construction resumed with many modest homes bearing the Streamline Moderne or Minimal Traditional style. The latter is especially prevalent in the Brickell Estates subdivision. Several of the finest examples of these styles stand on Southwest 28th Road between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. The full flush of postwar prosperity led to greater construction than ever before.

The Roads represents one of Miami's early suburbs whose surging development was in concert with the broad movement of Americans, by the early 1920s, from an urban to a suburban milieu. With its eastern border and a portion of its northern border representing a part of the original borders of the city of Miami, this neighborhood represents an early attempt at city planning and suburban development. The neighborhood is



The construction of I-95 in the mid-1960s bifurcated the southern segment of the Roads. HASE, Miami News Collection 1989-011-5418.

the family owned thousands of acres, including the future Roads, most of which was a thick subtropical hammock lying south of the Miami River.

Miami developed quickly, rising in numbers from a single digit population along the Miami River in 1895 to nearly 30,000 residents by 1920. The city, region and much of the state were poised for a real estate boom that would radically transform



laid out around centrally located Coral Way, also known as Third Avenue.

Mass transportation systems have, during the past century, bifurcated the Roads. In 1903, before there was a Roads neighborhood, Henry M. Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway cut a curving swath through the southern portion of the area en route to deep south Dade County and eventually Key West. In the early and mid-1960s, a portion of the superhighway I-95 was completed through another part of the southern segment of the roads, effectively separating it from points north. In 1984, Metrorail, a 22-mile-long high speed train system, was completed over the right-of-way of the Florida East Coast Railway, which

original dimensions, are/were modest single-family detached residences. Most homes are simple in exterior details and ornament but many possess characteristics of both modern and eclectic styles typical of southeast Florida during the era of 1920 to 1955. Period homes, like the Mission, Spanish Eclectic and Mediterranean Revival share consistent massing, scale, proportions and setbacks. The Modern styles, like the Streamline Moderne and the Minimal Traditional, also share this consistent massing; however, unlike the Period styles, the Modern style has a clear absence of ornamentation and added detail.

Architectural details found within the Roads neighborhood include frontal porches, car ports or enclosed single stall garages,

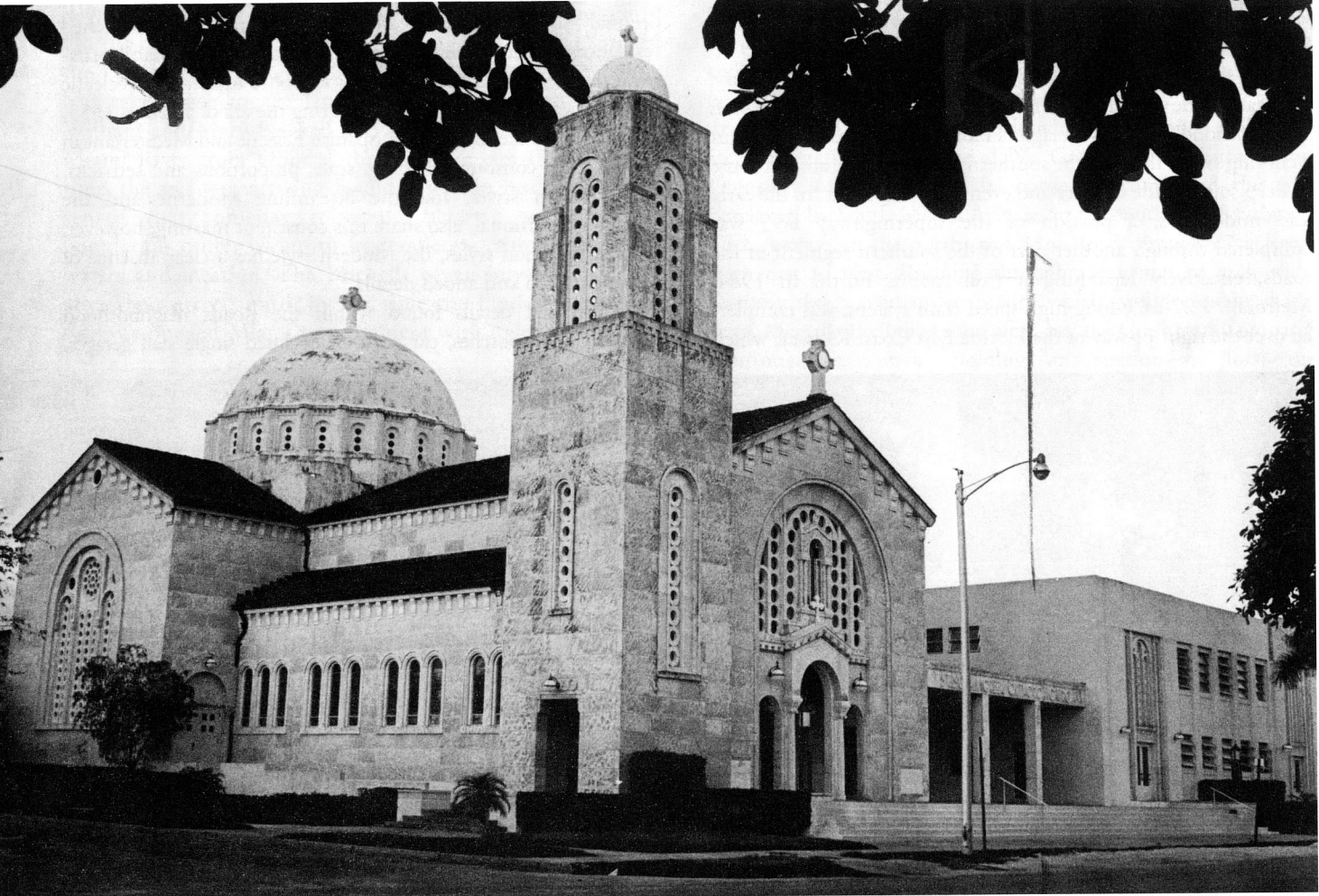


The banyan trees, between 18th and 19th Avenue on Coral Way, make a natural canopy. HASF, Miami News Collection 1988-011-15681.

ceased to operate in the area in the early 1960s. These highways have hurt the physical unity of the neighborhood.

The most prominent architectural styles found in the Roads are Mission, Spanish Eclectic or Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Mediterranean Transitional, Streamline Moderne and Minimal Traditional, as well as more modern styles, such as Florida Ranch. Most of the homes, at least in their

metal frame casement or jalousie windows, barrel roof tiles, scupper, incised stripes or "racing stripes," metal awnings over windows, flat roofs with parapet detailing, triple-arched or parabolic shaped focal windows, flat concrete roof tiles, front facing secondary gable or hipped roofs, L-shaped floor plans, arched window bays, door bays, chimneys, projecting sills, built-in concrete planters, stucco or concrete wall massing and wrap around windows.



Top—St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, located in the 2400 block of Southwest Third Avenue (Coral Way), was completed in 1948. HASE, Miami News Collection 1989-011-3593. Above, left—The Beth David Synagogue located in the 2600 block of Southwest Third Avenue. Upon its completion in 1949, it was the largest synagogue in Florida, 1961. HASE, Miami News Collection 1989-011-2877. Above, right—Built in 1939, Sts. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church is located on Southwest 26th Road at Ninth Avenue. HASE, Miami News Collection 1989-011-3565.



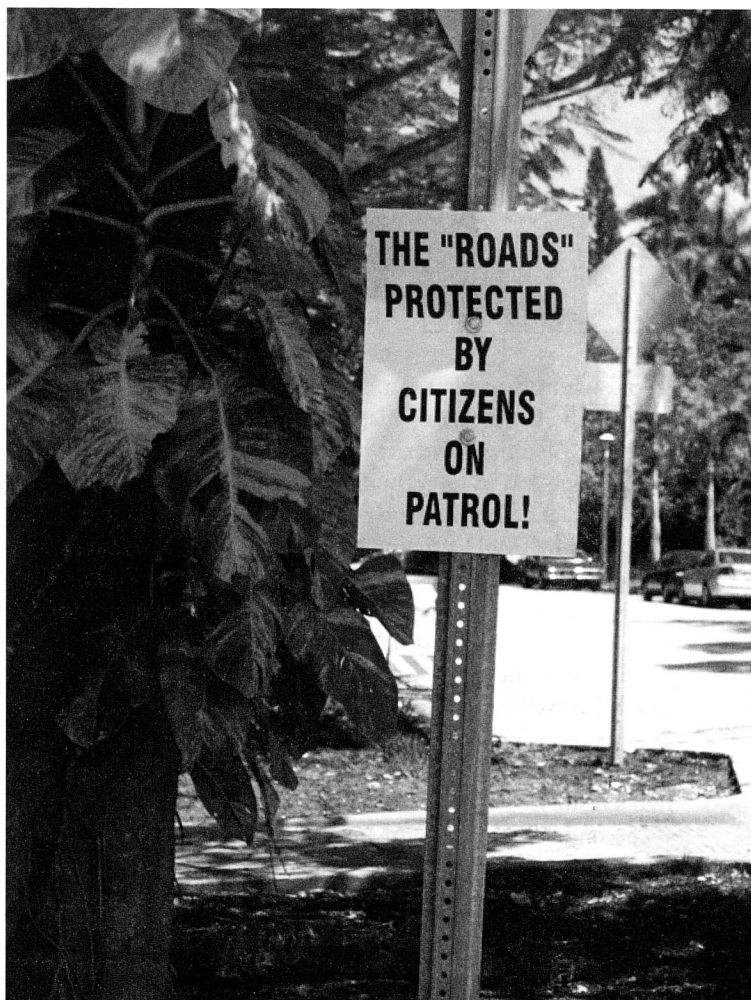
What there is of a non-residential portion of the Roads is found almost exclusively along Coral Way, a broad thoroughfare with huge, spreading ficus trees positioned in its median. Also known as Third Avenue, Coral Way hosted an interurban rail line between 1925 and 1935, linking downtown Miami with the beautiful city of Coral Gables, five miles to the west. The ficus trees had been planted on the edges of the street in the late 1920s, but were transferred to the center after the trolley ceased operating and the tracks were removed in the late 1930s.

A small number of restaurants line the eastern reaches of Coral Way while other portions of the thoroughfare host tall office, apartment and condominium complexes, along with smaller business and professional office buildings. The most distinctive buildings on Coral Way, however, are St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church in the 2400 block of Southwest Third Avenue (Coral Way), which was completed in 1948 and exhibits neo-Classical features, and Beth David Synagogue, in the 2600 block of Southwest Third Avenue, which upon its completion in 1949 was the largest synagogue in Florida. It too features neo-Classical detail, especially with its tall columns. Another noteworthy institution in the Roads is Sts. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church on Southwest 26th Road at Ninth Avenue. This Romanesque structure was built in 1939. A rectory and school complex stand west of the church. The Holleman Park Methodist Church, today a Hispanic Protestant church, was located in a beautiful Greek-revival styled building, which opened in 1923, on property given to the congregation by Mary Brickell. It stands on Southwest 15th Road and Fifth Avenue.

The neighborhood is blessed with two parks, Triangle Park, a pocket park with swings, a basketball court and barbecue pits, in the northeastern sector of the Roads, and lush Simpson Park on its southeastern border. Named for famed naturalist Charles Torrey Simpson, this park began as Jungle Park in the second decade of the 20th century. More than seven acres in size, it possesses a hardwood hammock second to none in Miami-Dade County. If one wishes to catch a peak into the past appearance of the area more than a century earlier, he needs only to visit this singular park.

The Roads was a multicultural neighborhood long before that term became commonplace. In the years immediately after World War II, it hosted large numbers of Jews, Syrians, Lebanese and Greeks, in addition to others. The neighborhood has been the residence of many prominent Miamians, including Ernie Seiler, the "mad" impresario, who, for decades, staged the King Orange Bowl Parade, held each New Year's Eve, as well as the stunning halftimes at the New Year's Day Orange Bowl Classic; Abe Aronovitz, a Miami mayor in the 1950s; Carlos Prio Socarras, a onetime president of Cuba; Hugh Wilson, a television writer, producer and movie maker; Caesar Lamonaca, a bandleader and composer, whose weekly performances in downtown Miami's Bayfront Park Bandshell entertained generations of Miamians and visitors from 1930 till 1978; and members of such pioneering families as the Lummuses, Peacocks, Langfords and Thompsons.

Today the Roads along Coral Way is experiencing the building boom that has already radically transformed nearby Brickell Avenue. Tall condominium complexes have risen along Coral Way with others under construction. Many modest homes around that thoroughfare have been enlarged significantly. The price of single-family homes in the Roads has soared in recent years, increasing nearly threefold in some cases. Property taxes



The future appears bright for Miami's Roads neighborhood thanks in large measure to the care and concern its residents have extended toward it.

Courtesy of The Honorable Scott J. Silverman.

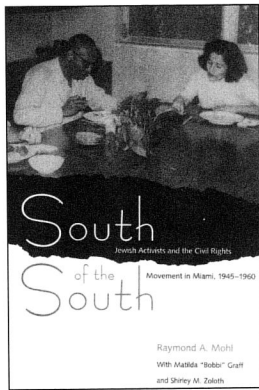
are among the highest in the city. The future appears bright for Miami's Roads neighborhood thanks in large measure to the early planning behind its development, the care its residents have extended to their properties since then and its coveted location close to many important, attractive areas of the city and county.—*SFH*

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*Dr. Paul S. George, a professor at Miami Dade College, is the Historical Museum's historian and the Editor of South Florida History.*

## SOUTH OF THE SOUTH: JEWISH ACTIVISTS AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN MIAMI, 1945-1960

by Raymond A. Mohl, with Matilda "Bobbi" Graff and Shirley M. Zoloth: University Press of Florida, 2003. 263 pages—**hardcover**. \$39.95



by Martha Reiner

*South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960* is Ray Mohl's new book from University Press of Florida. His narrative focuses on two Jewish women who were activists in the civil rights movement in Miami after World War II, Matilda (Bobbi) Graff and Thalia Stern.

Mohl is an urban historian. He moved to Alabama in 1996 to teach at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, after teaching at Florida Atlantic University beginning in 1970. His first college teaching job was in Gary, Ind.

"Earlier, and for a very long time, Miami was really part of the Deep South," Mohl proposed at an author's talk at Books and Books in Coral Gables. There was some early immigration from the North, and after the war there was much more, especially from Chicago. After World War II, "jobs were segregated, going swimming at the beach was segregated. Government was segregated. Everything was kind of segregated. It really was a Deep South city," Mohl explained. Now Caribbean and Cuban immigration and interchanges may tend to overshadow Miami's civil rights history.

"Second," Mohl said, "there was the Cold War, the era of McCarthyism and the Red Scare...There was an effort to curb any political dissent." Many in the civil rights movement were communist, many were Jewish. In public opinion there was an effort to link integration with socialism. Defense of segregation went together with anti-semitism and anti-communism. "If you were Jewish and pushed for integration, you were targeted."

In the 1940s and 1950s Jewish cemeteries were bombed by the Klan. Especially after the Brown decision (*Brown v. Board of Education*, Topeka, Kansas, 1954), "Jews were blamed for pushing integration," Mohl said. "There was a series of bombings of temples and cemeteries in 1958." In Miami, the bombings occurred especially in 1951 and 1958. "The Ku Klux Klan remained dangerously active in Florida throughout the 1950s, as segregation came under attack from blacks, progressive whites, and the federal courts," he notes in *South of the South* (23). Mohl builds an intriguing, detailed narrative from interviews along with manuscripts of activists and activist organizations, law enforcement agencies and governors and other officials.

Mohl suggested looking back to the early decades of the 20th century. Then, most of the black population came from the

Bahamas. "Many of them were in construction," said Mohl. "They were not used to the segregation." Blacks joined the Universal Negro Improvement Association, a Marcus Garvey black nationalist organization.

After World War II, whites became more active in the civil rights movement, and black activism and civil rights were more connected. The Civil Rights Congress formed in Detroit in 1946. Bobbi Graff and her husband Emmanuel Graff, earlier from Brooklyn, were living in Detroit and active in progressive and civil rights organizations. They moved to Miami in 1946, and Graff led Civil Rights Congress work in Miami. Part of Mohl's book is an autobiographical memoir written by Mrs. Graff. She includes organizing information from 1939, the organization of laundry workers. In 1941, with the Shipbuilders Union, "black, white, and Seminole Indians, some four thousand workers, were organized into one union" (77). Graff's memoir describes connections between the police and the clan, working with NAACP lawyers, learning to watch out for FBI agents, and the "interplay" of "liberal organizations in the area functioning alongside the civil rights and civil libertarian groups" (105).

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was founded in 1942. "CORE was founded at the University of Chicago by an interracial corps of students," said Mohl. Shirley Zoloth became a CORE activist in Miami in 1955 and sent reports to the organization's headquarters after each meeting. She and her husband Milton Zoloth had moved to Miami in late 1954. They had been progressive activists in Philadelphia after the war. Their parents were in real estate in Miami. Reports from Mrs. Zoloth also are part of Mohl's book. She includes her observations from a 1957 Board of Public Instruction meeting with comments about foreign influences and religious freedom, a Human Relations Council Public Accommodations Committee meeting about public transportation and services considering codes shifts and CORE sit-ins. She describes community practices in theaters, restaurants, shopping and transportation along with the activists' challenges to segregation.

"There was a young state legislator elected from Miami, a man named Jack Orr," recalled Mohl. "In the 1950s, he was the only state legislator who voted for integrating the schools in 1956. The progressive community came together to support Jack Orr."

"The 1958 Orr campaign [a defeat] had the effect of bringing together a progressive Jewish community that never had been united before," Mohl said. "What was it going to do?...First, it contacted Chicago and New York," he said. The Miami activists read a



pamphlet about integrating schools in Nashville. The group led lunch counter sit-ins a year before the more famous student lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, N.C. However, it took another year before the restaurants “opened up,” and CORE efforts to fight segregation “had to continue into the sixties.”

Barbara Gordon and Thalia Stern became civil rights activists with Graff and Zoloth in the late 1950s, Mohl said. “For one demonstration, Bobbi Gordon went around the neighborhood and recruited men from the pool halls,” Mohl recalled. “Bobbi Gordon is Jack Gordon’s ex-wife, and Thalia Stern is Jack Gordon’s sister-in-law,” he added. Jack Gordon was elected to Miami’s School Board in the early 1960s and later was elected to the Florida Senate.

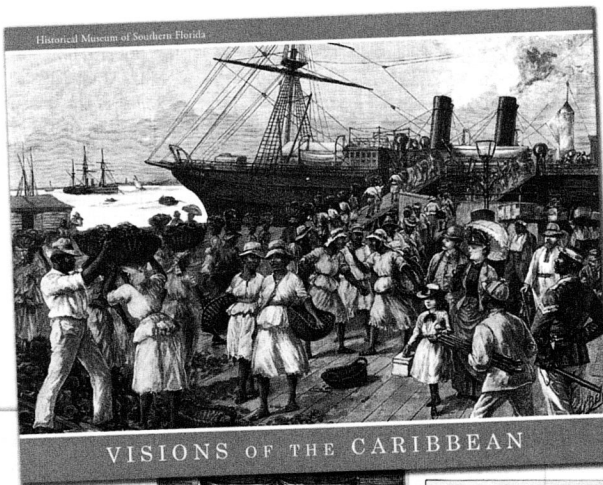
When Mrs. Graff was “driven out” of Miami in the 1980s, she went to Detroit, Mohl said, where she went to college again. She

took a class and wrote about how she was harassed from 1946 to 1954. Her husband was thrown in jail for refusing to discuss his political beliefs.

“How did I start this book?” Mohl reflected. “I’m not Jewish. However, I write about urban history, about cities. Like most people, I write about the sources that are close...I found a small newspaper article and read about a civil rights sit-in led by Mrs. Zoloth, in 1959 or 1960. I looked in the phone book to see if I could find her. I did. She was living in Miami Beach when I was looking, in 1991 or 1992.”—*SFH*

*Martha Reiner teaches English at Miami-Dade College, Kendall.*

## Missed the Historical Museum’s exhibition VISIONS OF THE CARIBBEAN?



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**Towns and Cities**

European colonization of the Caribbean involved not only the development of plantations but the establishment of towns for administration and commerce. Early town plans drawn by artists and engravers illustrate main plazas or squares surrounded by layers of streets, typically in a grid pattern. Artists also drew perspective views of port towns and cities, often with ship-filled harbors in the foreground. Such views suggest the economic significance of towns and cities as centers for trade in agricultural products and other goods. Also common are drawings and photographs that focus on the architecture of colonial towns, such as forts, walls, churches, administrative buildings and schools.

Illustrations of Caribbean towns and cities were fascinated by the regions vibrant street life. Drawings and photographs capture the various social classes and ethnic groups that inhabited Caribbean urban centers and portray their interactions in public spaces. Dress styles of dress are meticulously documented. In addition, images of carnivals and other festivals depict the temporary transformation of the urban environment into a setting for society and artistic expression through masquerades and other performances.

Look to the right, top to bottom:  
 John Blaeu's Map of the Caribbean, 1657. 17th-century view of the Caribbean. In: *Atlas of the Caribbean*. Amsterdam: 1700. 16th-century.  
 Francisco de Meléndez, 1671. *View of the Bay of San Juan, Puerto Rico*.  
 The Old Havana. View of Havana, 18th-century. 18th-century.  
 Charles Christian Nipperdey, 1850. *View of Havana in the Island of Havana in the West Indies*. London: 1850. 19th-century.

Maps, Prints and Photographs from the Collection of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida

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Year after year our members give of their resources to guarantee that all of us enjoy the benefits that a vibrant museum brings to our community. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the museum staff, we say thank you to each member of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida for your generosity and altruism.

This list acknowledges only those who became new members or rejoined the museum from July 21, 2004 until June 6, 2005. This is not a complete membership list; it just expresses our gratitude to those who have recently affiliated themselves with our other members and our mission. A complete listing of all members will appear in *Tequesta* 2005.

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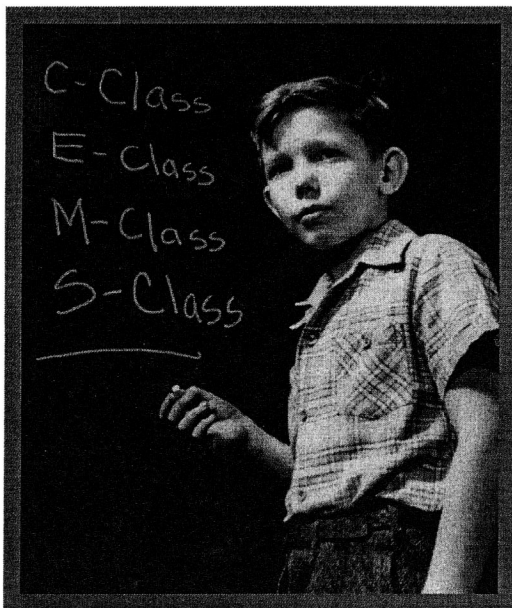
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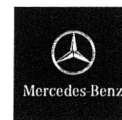
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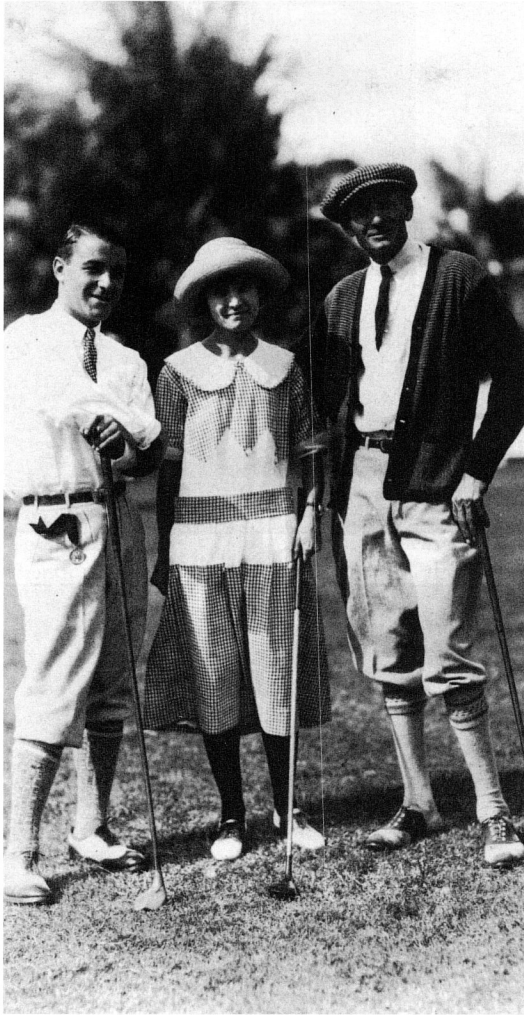
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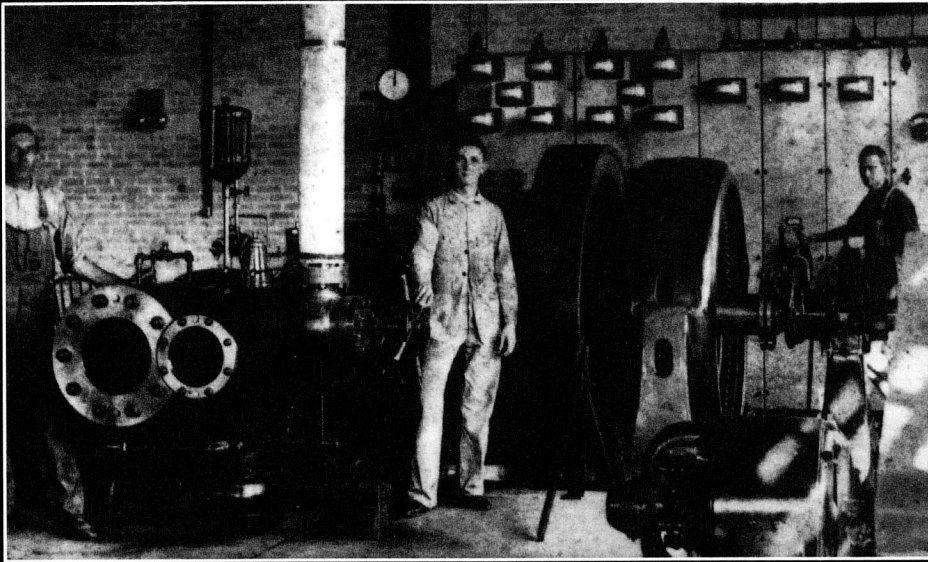
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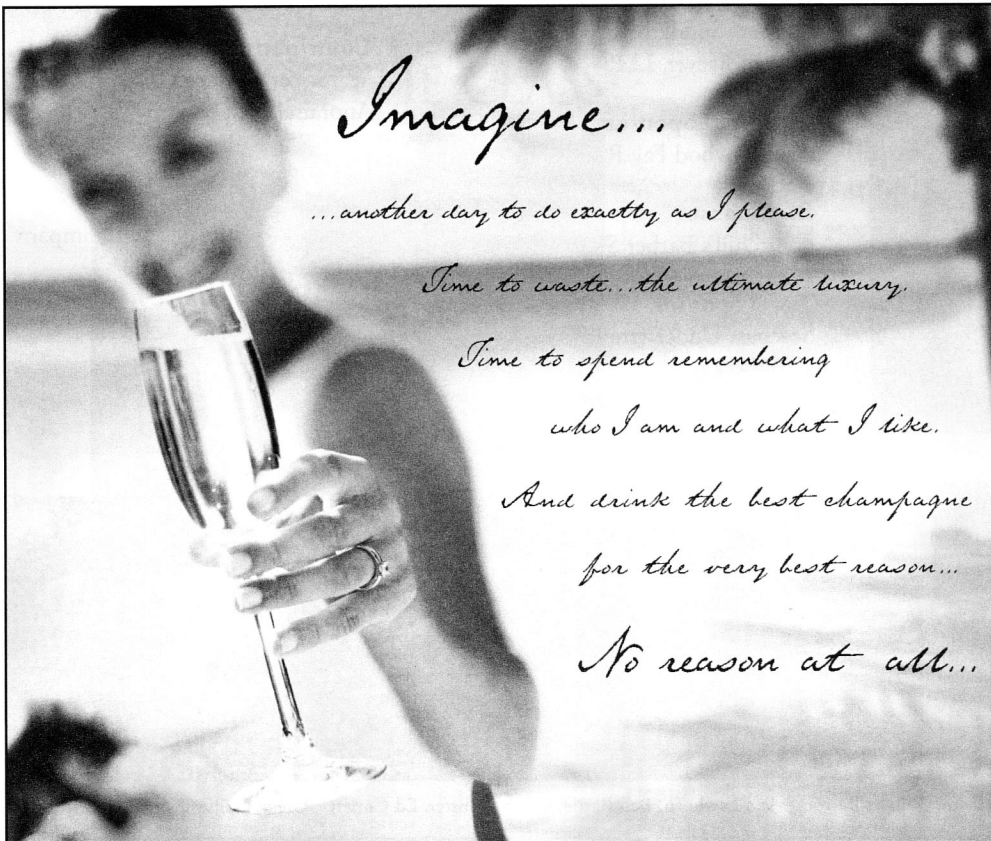


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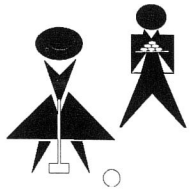
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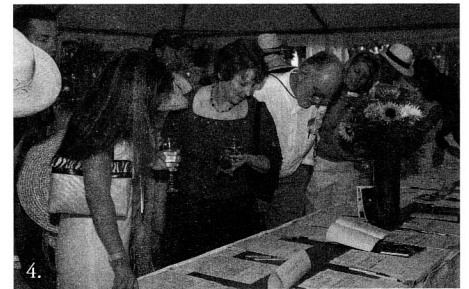
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