

South Florida History

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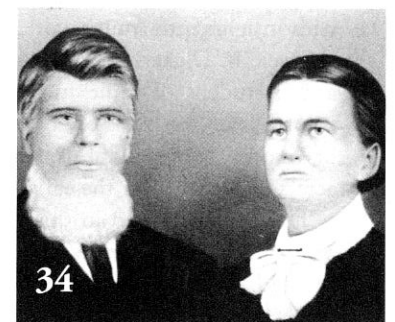
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Paul S. George, Ph.D.



Cover—*The Fountain of Youth*. Anne Mergen's cartoon depicts Florida's spigots of "sun" and "fun" operating a full capacity in the period following WWII. HMSF 2005-507-60.



We are excited over the prospect of sharing with you the rich array of articles found in this issue of *South Florida History*. The *Palm Beach Post's* Eliot Kleinberg, a prolific writer on the region's history, has prepared for this number of the magazine "South Florida's Mercurial Relationship with Baseball," which examines the area's capricious relationship with the national pastime. Baseball was the area's first popular sport, and Royal Palm Park, which stood in front of Henry Flagler's great hotel by the same name, was the venue for many contests in the city of Miami's early years. Spring training for major league baseball came to Miami in the early 1900s and to Fort Lauderdale and elsewhere in South Florida later. Minor league baseball teams appeared in the

decade of World War II and beyond. The Florida Marlins represent, of course, our most successful baseball team, having won the World Series twice within 10 years of their inception in the early 1990s.

Kimberly Wilmot Voss, an assistant professor in the department of mass communications at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, brings us, in "Making the Personal Political: Florida Women's Page Journalists Spread News of a Movement," the critical role of these writers in educating the community about equal rights for women. Progressive women journalists writing and serving as editors for the *Miami Herald*, the *Fort Lauderdale News* and other area newspapers addressed many of the key social issues infusing the rising feminist movement of the 1950s and 1960s, thereby educating their readers on a host of pertinent topics from the seemingly innocuous women's page.

"Anne Mergen: Miami's Trailblazing Editorial Cartoonist" examines the life and work of a woman whose efforts appeared not on the women's page, but on the editorial page. Anne was one of America's first women editorial cartoonists, a rarity even today. She was also among its most decorated editorial cartoonists. Mergen's work at the *Miami Daily News* spanned three decades from the early 1930s till the beginning of the 1960s. Seven days a week for most of this time, Anne Mergen, with help from her husband, Frank, produced cartoons on an infinite array of local, national and international issues, events, personalities and controversies. Her cartoons directed at the corrupt Miami City Commission of the late 1930s led to the recall of a mayor and two commissioners, earning the *Miami Daily News* its first Pulitzer Prize. Joan Mergen Bernhardt, the daughter of Anne Mergen, prepared this article. The accompanying cartoons provide us with insights into Anne's work.

Tracie L. Dickerson, an attorney with the Miami Dade County Health Department, and a student of mine in a recent Miami/South Florida history class, looks at the colorful story early history of Venice, Fla., in "Something For Everyone: A Brief History of Venice." More landlubber than aquatic, the article highlights a unique roster of characters responsible for the early development of Venice.

The book reviewed in this issue of *South Florida History* is Michael Grunwald's *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and The Politics of Paradise*, an impassioned study of the life and times of the Everglades. This magisterial account of a one-of-a-kind resource places special emphasis on the near destruction of the Everglades through drainage and development, as well as the relatively recent recognition of its uniqueness and its worthiness. Accordingly, the emphasis in recent times has been placed on "replumbing" or restoring much of the original features and flow of the Everglades. But the politics of restoration, combined with the daunting task of reversing decades of destruction, render uncertain the future of this magnificent swath of South Florida. This book is a must-read!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Paul S. George". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

South Florida History

Editor

Dr. Paul S. George, Ph.D.

Managing Editor

Sara Muñoz

Assistance

Laura Arango

Kelly Geisinger

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Robert McCammon, President/CEO

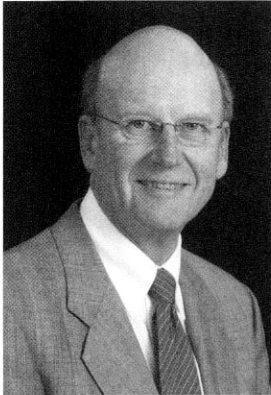
Miami-Dade Cultural Center
101 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33130
305.375.1492 305.375.1609 fax
publications@hmsf.org
www.hmsf.org
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The Historical Association of Southern Florida is a nonprofit cultural, educational and humanistic institution dedicated to providing information about the history of southern Florida and the Caribbean, and to the collection and preservation of material relating to that history.

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2006: A Year of Change

As I enter my third year of leadership at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, I look back and see the many changes that have taken place, and look forward to a future of even greater opportunities.

To meet these tides of change, we've added several new staff members, created a museum brand, and initiated and secured a 25,000 square-foot exhibition space in Museum Park through the General Obligation Bond. We will also expand into a 4,000 square-foot exhibition space on Watson Island as part of the Island Garden project (see "Museum Expansion" on page 8).

The museum obtained a \$150,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services for digitization of our archives and object collection. We continue to be successful in producing first-class, in-house exhibitions—two temporary and two to three lobby exhibitions a year, with the unsurpassed excellence and dedication of our curatorial and design staff.

The Historical Museum is up for review for its fourth accreditation by the American Association of Museums, a distinction of high professional standards met only by the elite of the nation's museums. Upgrades to our permanent exhibition are already underway, and we continue to evaluate other opportunities to expand the museum's presence in our community.

Financially, we continue to manage our institution with balanced budgets and no comment audit reports. The museum remains strong with a \$13 million endowment, and the five Trustees of the Endowment continue to manage the funds well.

Croquet & Croquetas, a blending of the traditional English game of croquet and the delicious Latin delicacy of croquetas, has become our signature fundraising event (April 28, 2007). The Miami International Map Fair (January 27–28, 2007) has become the largest, most prestigious fair of its kind in the world. For 30 years, our Harvest festival, featuring high-quality, handmade arts and crafts, has signaled the start of the holiday shopping season (always the weekend before Thanksgiving).

Our education programming has grown in offering more to a wider audience. We've maximized our relationship with the 4th-grade school program, aligned our programming to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), expanded our role in the museum magnet programs, instituted the first History Day Contest for senior high students and received numerous grants to support additional programs for underserved segments of our community.

As we grow into the next decade, I look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead. Membership is one way you can make an important difference. Every contribution counts. Together, we can preserve South Florida and the Caribbean's rich past, present and future—the stories of our vast, vibrant and ever-changing community—for generations to come.

This is *Your Story, Your Community... Your Museum.*

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HMSF Mission

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida tells the stories of South Florida and the Caribbean. The museum promotes understanding of the past in order to inform the present and create a better quality of life.

HMSF Calendar

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF) is located at 101 West Flagler Street, Downtown Miami. Open seven days a week, Monday–Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm; Third Thursdays from 10 am to 9 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. Saturday is free admission, and Sunday is by contribution.

For more detailed information about the Historical Museum and its events and programs, or to become a member, visit www.hmsf.org or call 305.375.1492.

DECEMBER

Miami Beach: America's Tropical Resort On display through January 14, 2007

Discover the glamorous story of Miami Beach—its transformation from a 1910 mangrove-covered sandbar into a world-famous resort city.

Haitian Community Arts: Images by Iris PhotoCollective

On display through January 14, 2007

See color photographs of artistic, festive and religious traditions in South Florida, home to the largest Haitian community in the U.S.

Tropical Explorers Winter Break Camp

Wk 1: December 26–29 9 am–5 pm

Eight action-packed days of unforgettable winter fun and adventure. Children ages 6 to 12. HMSF members \$90 per week, Non-members \$100 per week.

JANUARY

Tropical Explorers Winter Break Camp

Wk 2: January 2–5 9 am–5 pm

Eight action-packed days of unforgettable winter fun and adventure. Children ages 6 to 12. HMSF members \$90 per week, Non-members \$100 per week.

South Florida History Challenge

Saturday, January 6 2–4 pm

Hosted by Dr. Paul George. Be a contestant or spectator. For contestant applications for this two-hour game, call 305.375.1621. FREE

David C. Brown Reading & Book-signing Reception

Thursday, January 11 7–9 pm
Presentation by the author of *The Story of Little Haiti Featuring Its Pioneers*. Music and food provided. FREE

FFD: South Florida Snowbirds

Saturday, January 13 1–3 pm

Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Chokoloskee, Ochopee & Smallwood Store:

Everglades Coach Tour

Saturday, January 13 9:30 am–4 pm

Led by Frank Schena. HMSF members \$27, Non-members \$32. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.

Uncovering Cabbage Key Two-Day Overnight Expedition

Saturday, January 20–Sunday, January 21

Led by Dragonfly Expeditions. HMSF members \$349 ppdo, Non-members \$369 ppdo. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.

Coral Gables Bike Tour

Sunday, January 21 10 am–noon



Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet in front of The Biltmore Hotel, 1200 Anastasia Ave., HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22.

Fourteenth Annual Miami International Map Fair

Saturday, January 27–Sunday, January 28
10 am to 5 pm
A weekend of browsing and buying antique maps, alongside map dealers, collectors and aficionados from around the world.

Fort Lauderdale Intracoastal & New River Boat Tour

Sunday, January 28 9:30–11:30 am

Led by Dr. Paul George. Leaves from Las Olas Riverfront. HMSF members \$34, Non-members \$39. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.

FEBRUARY

Bayfront Park Walk

Friday, February 2 6–8 pm

Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet in front of the lobby of the Intercontinental Hotel, Biscayne Blvd. and SE Second St. HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22.

Little Havana Coach Tour & Brunch

Saturday, February 10 10 am–2 pm

Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet at the Historical Museum. HMSF members \$44, Non-members \$49. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.



FFD: Family Fun Days
LOP: Live On The Plaza

FFD: Seasons Change Stained Glass
Saturday, February 10 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Miami River Boat Tour
Sunday, February 11 10 am–1 pm
Led by Dr. Paul George. HMSF members \$34, Non-members \$39. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.

Port Royal, Jamaica
On display February 16 through June 3
Port Royal, once known as the “wickedest city on earth,” includes multiple histories significant to the Caribbean and the world.

FFD: Blackbeard the Pirate
Saturday, February 17 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Riverwalk & Stranahan House
Historic Fort Lauderdale Walk
Sunday, February 18 10 am–noon
Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet and park at the house, 355 SE Sixth Ave., Fort Lauderdale, just off Las Olas. HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22.

South Beach Art Deco Walk
en Español
miércoles, 21 de febrero 6:45–8:45 pm
Guía Dr. Paul George, acompañado por un traductor. El punto de encuentro es en la 1300 Ocean Dr. Miembros del HMSF \$17, No miembros \$22.

FFD: Fort Mose Day
Saturday, February 24 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Redland Fruit & Spice and Knauss
Berry Farm Coach Tour
Saturday, February 24 9:30 am–3 pm
Led by Frank Schena. HMSF members \$27, Non-members \$32. Advance payment and reservations required, call 305.375.1621.

MARCH

Coral Gables Twilight Walking Tour
Friday, March 2 7–9 pm
Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet at the Coral Gables Merrick House, 907 Coral Way. HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22,

FFD: Audubon’s South Florida
Saturday, March 3 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Asians in South Florida:
Asian Culture Festival Coach Tour
Saturday, March 3 9:30 am–2 pm
Led by Dr. Paul George. HMSF members \$39, Non-members \$34. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.

FFD: Caribbean Puzzle Maps
Saturday, March 10 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Stiltsville & Key Biscayne Boat Tour
Saturday, March 10 10 am–1 pm
Led by Dr. Paul George. HMSF members \$34, Non-members \$39. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.

Lincoln Road Walking Tour
Sunday, March 11 10 am–noon
Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet by the water sculpture at the corner of Lincoln Rd. and Washington Ave. on Miami Beach. HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22.

LOP: Panel Discussion
History of Port Royal, Jamaica
Thursday, March 15 6:30 pm
FREE

Discovery Days: Crazy Critters
Friday, March 16 9 am–5 pm
Day camp on Teacher Planning Day. Children ages 6 to 12. HMSF members \$30, Non-members \$35.

FFD: Half-Gallon Galleons
Saturday, March 17 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Design District Walking Tour
Saturday, March 17 10 am–noon
Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet in front of Charcuterie French Restaurant, 3610 NE Second Ave. HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22.

Matheson Hammock
Eco-History Walk
Sunday, March 18 10 am–12:30 pm
Led by Frank Schena. Meet at the parking area just east of the traffic light, at 9610

Old Cutler Rd. HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22.

Glittering Brickell
Night Walking Tour
Friday, March 23 8–10 pm
Led by Dr. Paul George. Meet and park at St. Jude Church, 1501 Brickell Ave. HMSF members \$17, Non-members \$22.

FFD: Seminole and
Miccosukee Patchwork
Saturday, March 24 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

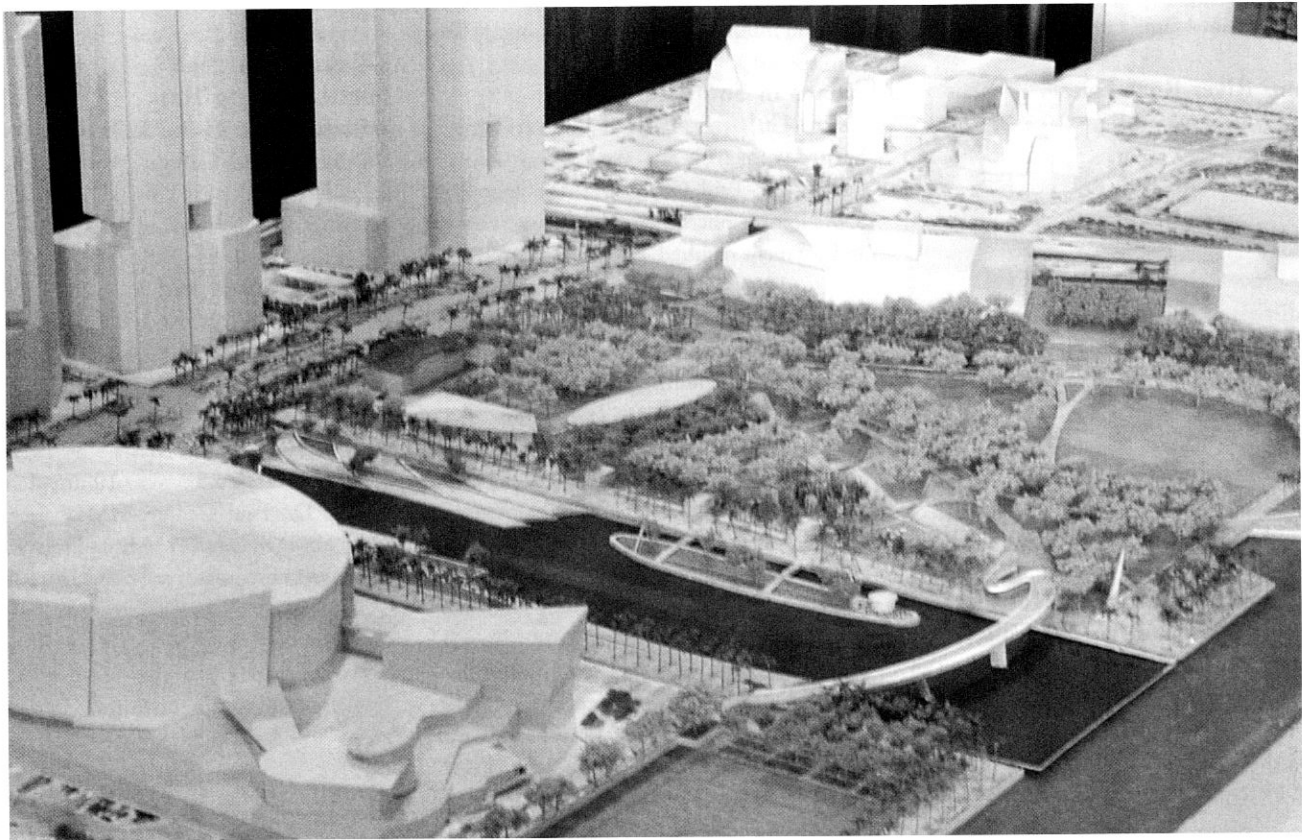
Miami River Boat Tour
Sunday, March 25 10 am–1 pm
Led by Dr. Paul George. HMSF members \$34, Non-members \$39. Advance reservations and payment required, call 305.375.1621.



Discovery Days: Caribbean Castaways
March 30 9 am–5 pm
Day camp on Teacher Planning Day. Children ages 6 to 12. HMSF members \$30, non-members \$35.

FFD: Jamaican Painting
Saturday, March 31 1–3 pm
Fun and unique family programming. FREE

Disappearing Landmarks II:
Upper Biscayne Hotels &
Stiltsville Presentation
Saturday, March 31 2–4 pm
Photo presentation by Dr. Elliot Salloway. Discussion by Paul George. FREE



In 2004, the Building Better Communities general obligation bond was passed to build Museum Park. Voters agreed to \$100 million for a new Miami Art Museum and \$175 million for a new Miami Museum of Science and Planetarium, to include 25,000 square feet of exhibition and educational space for the Historical Museum. South view of Museum Park, 1075 Biscayne Boulevard. Courtesy of City of Miami Planning Department.

Museum Expansion

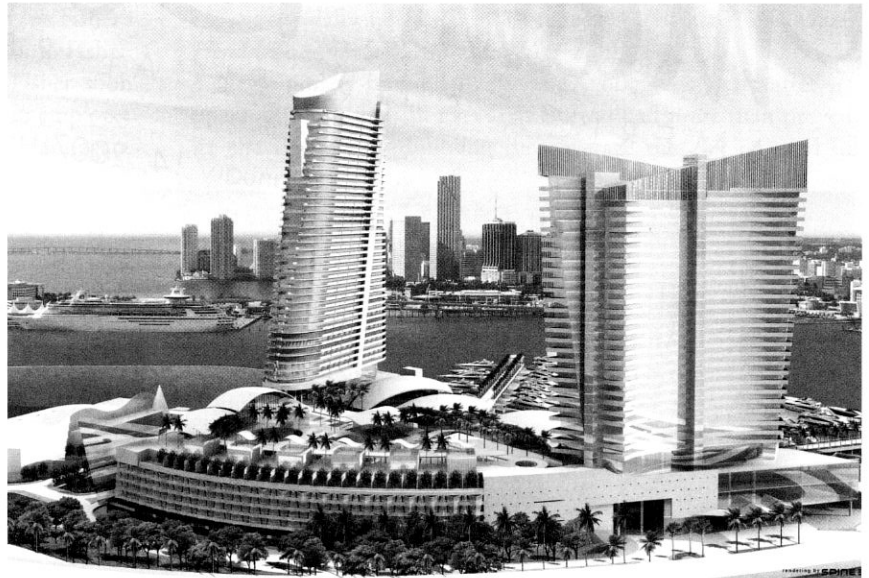
A Conversation with President/CEO Robert McCammon

by Alison Prieto

President/CEO Bob McCammon has a solid vision for the future of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. When described by the president, the museum's expansion into Museum Park and Watson Island seems more a reality, less like a dream. The opening of the Carnival Center for the Performing Arts in October created many new possibilities for Miami as more than just a resort destination. The cultural map of Miami will forever be redefined with the opening of Museum Park in 2010, which will include a 150,000 square-foot Miami Art Museum and a 200,000 square-foot Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium, including 25,000 square feet for the Historical Museum. The institution is playing an active role with the Art and Science museums, Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami to create an iconic

public space that will be as synonymous with Miami as Central Park is with New York. Another Historical Museum satellite will be part of the \$480-million Watson Island project currently under development by the Flagstone Property Group. This “Island Gardens” project will integrate a mega-yacht harbor, resort hotels, luxury residences, retail, dining and public amenities, including a maritime museum built and operated by the Historical Museum. The museum’s current facility in the Miami-Dade Cultural Center will remain a museum with its permanent exhibition of 10,000 years of South Florida history and changing exhibitions program. The current Miami Art Museum will ideally become a joint collections and research center of both museums and the Miami-Dade Public Library System. These three new facilities will allow the museum to share more stories of South Florida and the Caribbean through larger exhibitions, educational programming and collections

Greater Miami from 1896 to the present, focusing on its extensive connections to countries throughout the Western



Above and left—Island Gardens, a luxurious waterfront development by Flagstone Property Group on Watson Island, will include 4,000 square feet of gallery space for a local maritime museum, managed by the Historical Museum. Rendering by Spine 3D.

spaces. The facilities combined would provide a visitor with a day-long learning experience. The visitor’s day could begin at the Museum Park facility, which will feature a 10,000 square-foot permanent exhibition titled *Miami: The Hemispheric City*. This exhibition will explore the history of

Hemisphere through trade, media, migration and tourism. Additional changing exhibitions at Museum Park will examine the history and culture of countries throughout the Americas, from Canada to Argentina. Next on the day tour, the visitor would depart by boat to the Miami Circle, an archaeological site at the mouth of the Miami River, and then to the museum at Island Gardens, with the option of ending the trip at the Cultural Center. At Island Gardens, the visitor would discover an exhibition on human interaction with water in South Florida, with a focus on nourishment, transportation, recreation and environmental impact. At night, the visitor could take in a show at the Carnival Center. All of the activity would be focused around downtown, creating a pulse for the long-neglected heart of the Magic City.—*SFH*

Alison Prieto is the Historical Museum’s Publicist.

Future Historical Museum satellite locations Museum Park & Watson Island

Miami Beach

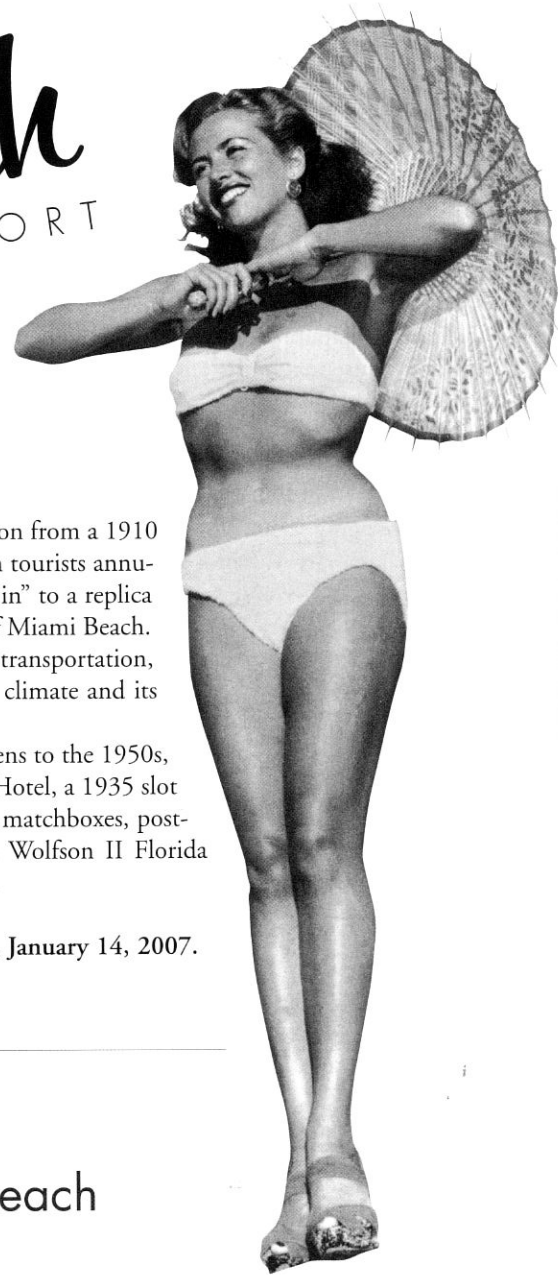
AMERICA'S TROPICAL RESORT

On display through January 14, 2007

It's June in Miami! Discover the glamorous story of Miami Beach—its transformation from a 1910 mangrove-covered sandbar into a world-famous resort city, attracting over 4 million tourists annually. Recreating that magical tourist experience, museum visitors are able to “check in” to a replica of a Miami Modern hotel and begin their journey through the glamorous history of Miami Beach. Topics explored include the beach's early history, public relations and advertising, transportation, hotels and motels, recreation and workers including celebrities. The advantageous climate and its impact on tourist development is the central theme of the exhibition.

Over 100 artifacts are on display, including vintage bathing suits from the late teens to the 1950s, a piece of the wooden 1913 Collins Bridge, a 1930s switchboard from the Skylark Hotel, a 1935 slot machine, a polo mallet from 1926, hotel silver and china, uniforms, swizzle sticks, matchboxes, postcards and photographs dating back to the early 1920s. Footage from the Louis Wolfson II Florida Moving Image Archive features home videos of vacationers and promotional films.

“Check-in” to *Miami Beach: America's Tropical Resort* before it closes on Sunday, January 14, 2007.



How They Heard About It:

Steve Hannagan and the Making of Miami Beach

by Joanne Hyppolite, Ph.D.

No doubt about it—as a vacation destination, Miami Beach is white hot. Today the city attracts over 12 million visitors annually. The city's current popularity among vacationers isn't a modern phenomenon, however. Miami Beach has been luring tourists from all over the United States and the rest of the world for close to 100 years. But Miami Beach might not have been so hot if it weren't for a host of publicists who worked for the city and resort developers over the years to make sure tourists knew the resort existed. One of the first of these was Steve Hannagan. Hannagan played a critical role in making Miami Beach a popular vacation destination from 1924 to the 1940s. His legacy continues to live on in today's promotional campaigns for Miami Beach and a number of other popular resorts.

Hannagan was born on April 4, 1899, in Lafayette, Ind. Born into a family of modest means, he went to work for the *Lafayette Morning News* at the age of 14. His solid writing skills and keen understanding of the profession earned him a spot as city editor at the same paper by the time he was 17 years old. In 1920, he took a job as a sportswriter for the *Indianapolis Star*, where he began making important contacts in the sports world. It was there that Hannagan took on his first publicity gig, when he began moonlighting as a publicity assistant for the annual Memorial Day race at the Indianapolis Speedway, then owned by none other than Miami Beach resort developer Carl Fisher.

Advertising manager of the National Car & Vehicle Cooperation, Fred Wellman, wrote to Fisher in April that year

about the “very good indeed” publicity job Hannagan was currently doing for the speedway. By focusing his publicity efforts on the men who drove the racecars, rather than the cars themselves, Hannagan had more than doubled the amount of press and attendance the Memorial Day race received between 1920 and 1921. Wellman highly recommended Hannagan for Fisher’s Miami Beach publicity interests. (Letter from Wellman to Fisher, April 10, 1920, Carl Fisher Papers CFP–HMSE.) Fisher soon followed up on the suggestion by having T. F. Myers, an employee of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, interview Hannagan. Hannagan’s talks with Myers didn’t result in an offer and Hannagan instead used the following years to develop other important contacts and broaden his knowledge of both the news and public relations business as a reporter for the United Press and a promoter for Eddie Rickenbacker’s motor car.

In 1922, Hannagan established his own public relations agency, Steve Hannagan & Associates, in New York City and returned to publicizing the Indianapolis Speedway and the Memorial Day race. Handling publicity for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway allowed Hannagan to maintain a business connection with Fisher. Fisher obviously thought well enough of Hannagan in later years to provide a letter of introduction for him to Miami Beach business owners. (Letter from Hannagan to Fisher, 1924, CFP–HMSE.) Through these connections, Hannagan handled publicity for the Wofford Hotel and the Miami Beach Casino in 1924. Letters between the two indicate that Hannagan continued to court Fisher’s Miami Beach publicity business—an effort that eventually paid off. Fisher hired Hannagan to handle the 1925 and eventually later seasons as director of publicity for his Miami Beach interests—a decision he came never to regret. Fisher would come to respect Hannagan as a man who “understands publicity from A to Z and is a first-class man.” (Letter from Fisher to “Whom It May Concern”, December 17, 1934, CFP–HMSE.)

Hannagan’s biggest contribution to Miami Beach was launching the city’s first and only news bureau in 1925. According to Hannagan, the Miami Beach News Bureau’s role was “to keep Miami Beach before the eyes of the world” by disseminating news related to the resort and thus expand the coverage the resort received in national newspapers. (Letter from Hannagan to Fisher, June 14, 1927, CFP–HMSE.) To accomplish this, Hannagan staffed the news bureau with newspapermen—men who had in-depth and insider knowledge of the newspaper business and could write sharp copy quickly and well. Hannagan also hired a team of photographers whose responsibility it was to take

news- and publicity-related photos for Miami Beach. Among their daily tasks, Miami Beach News Bureau staff issued a 1500- to 2000-word daily society report to journalists and newspapers nationwide, provided a list of available photographs to newspapers, news sections and rotogravure sections all over the country and wrote daily news stories for papers such as the *New York Herald-Tribune*, *Sun*, *American*, and *Times*.

News outlets responded. By 1927, only two years after its opening, the Miami Beach News Bureau had more than proved its effectiveness by doubling the coverage the city received in



Steve Hannagan and film actress Ann Sheridan (far left) dine with Carol Landis (middle) at the Stork Club. Hannagan and Sheridan dated during the 1940s. February 5, 1953. HMSN 1989-011-21280.

national newspapers. It had also done what had never been done before—established a dateline for Miami Beach. The amount of coverage Miami Beach received in national and international newspapers provided tremendous publicity for the resort, which in turn boosted public awareness and interest in the city from potential vacationers. According to public relations scholar Scott Cutlip, the Miami Beach News Bureau’s success established it as “the model for information services and resorts around the world.” (Scott M. Cutlip, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations, a History* [Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994], 255.)

The Miami Beach News Bureau achieved such astounding results under the direction of Hannagan largely because of his keen understanding of the commonalities between publicity and news. Though ostensibly an information-providing service, the creation of news was a significant part of the news bureau’s work. As Hannagan informed Fisher in a 1927 letter, if a newsworthy



Early bathing beauty photos such as this one were used by Carl Fisher to promote his Miami Beach properties. Behind the beauty is Fisher's Flamingo Hotel. March 30, 1921. Photographer Claude C. Matlack, 43-20, HMSE

item such as the fact that Chairman of the National Democratic Committee Tom Taggart was staying at the Flamingo Hotel occurred, the news bureau didn't just report that fact. News bureau reporters also "interviewed him on the subject of the coming presidential elections" which resulted in "two press associations copyrighting the articles, which were published in practically every newspaper in the country." (Letter from Hannagan to Fisher, June 14, 1927, CFP-HMSE.) As seasoned journalists, news bureau reporters knew how to create news stories that were relevant to the interests of national and international media outlets. In the process—or rather as part of the process—they kept Miami Beach's attractiveness as a vacation destination for VIP's before the eyes of the nation.

The Miami Beach News Bureau also generated publicity by continuing to use bathing beauty photographs to "sell" Miami Beach's sun, fun and sexy image as a resort. Bathing beauties had been a staple of Miami Beach marketing since as early as

1918, when resort developer Carl Fisher came up with the idea of using bathing beauties to promote Miami Beach. That it was Carl Fisher who initiated this concept is not surprising. This was the man, after all, who in order to promote his automobile dealership in 1908 had attached a Stoddard-Dayton automobile to a hot air balloon and flew it over Indianapolis. When it came to his long list of business interests, Fisher was a consummate promoter. He especially knew how to get the media's attention by staging elaborate show-stopping publicity stunts. According to Jane, Fisher's first wife, he came up with the idea of using bathing beauties after a Miami minister remonstrated her for wearing her swimsuit at the Roman Pools without the requisite long stockings of the period. According to Jane, Fisher claimed, "By God, Jane, you started something! Why, damnit, I've been trying for months to think up an idea for advertising the Beach. We'll get the prettiest girls we can find and put them into the goddamndest tightest and shortest bathing suits and no stocking or swim shoes either. We'll have their pictures taken and send them all over the goddamn country." (*Polly Redford, Billion Dollar Sandbar* [New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1970], 105.) Advertisements and posters for Fisher properties and Miami Beach that featured bathing beauties soon began appearing.

Part of Hannagan's work at the news bureau involved taking over and managing the bathing beauty publicity campaign. To accomplish this, Hannagan's team held annual auditions for potential models at high schools on Miami Beach, with scores of girls volunteering for the honor. According to a 1936 *Life* magazine article, many high school girls volunteered to pose for the ads in the hope of launching professional modeling careers. ("Steve Hannagan's Girls," *Life Magazine*, Nov. 30, 1936.) News bureau photographers took countless photos of girls in bathing suits, posed on the sand, by the pool or ocean, against palm trees, and in a variety of attention-getting, if preposterous scenes, such as having snowball fights, skiing on the sand,



Hometown Arts Photo of Little Rosemary Hilton. Miami Beach News Service, c. January 1932. HMSE X-70-66.

(H)

Miami Beach, Fla.
Dec. 28, 1925.

Mr. Steve Hannagan,

Will Rogers is going to be here on the 29th of January. We want to have a big crowd out to hear him at the Auditorium. Let the newspapers get back of it and publish the matter to the limit. Also if you can think of some scheme to frame up on Will we will have a lot of fun, but don't forget that he is one of the hardest men in the world to frame.

CARL G FISHER

CGF*JJG.

Carl Fisher often guided Steve Hannagan in his efforts to drum up publicity for Miami Beach. Letter from Fisher to Hannagan, 1924. HMSE, Carl Fisher Papers.

decked in fur coats and playing cards with Santa (also in a bathing suit) on the beach. News wires all over the country picked up these photographs and published them. Bathing beauties continue to be a staple of Miami Beach and other resorts' marketing campaigns.

Hannagan left his most indelible signature on Miami Beach publicity in the hometown arts features created and distributed by the news bureau. Hometown arts involved taking photos of vacationing children and women in bathing suits and sending the photo to their hometown newspapers, which often printed them. Photos were accompanied by the all-important Miami Beach dateline and a witty line or two about the subject of the photographs as in the following of a child enjoying the waters on Miami Beach (see photo on opposite page):

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. Jan. 00 — "Come on in, the water's fine" is the message of little Rosemary Hillman of Chicago from the surf at Miami Beach. It may be an old line but it never had a better exponent."

Hometown runs essentially allowed vacationers to sell Miami Beach. Neighbors and relatives who happened to see the

photos could call the subjects of the photo and hear all about their wonderful Miami Beach vacation—and then make plans to book their own.

Hannagan continued to handle Miami Beach's publicity interests until the 1940s, when one of Miami Beach's other great PR men, Hank Meyers, and his firm took over the city's account. Hannagan himself died in 1953, but not before he and his firm enjoyed enormous success in later years for popularizing two other signature American resorts—Sun Valley and Las Vegas—by employing the same methods he used in Miami Beach. In both cases he established news bureaus staffed by journalists and photographers, used bathing beauties (posed on snow-covered mountains of Sun Valley or decked out in sequined Las Vegas glory) and tasked News Bureau employees with creating news, writing stories for the media and producing daily hometown runs. As in the case of Miami Beach, tourists responded by coming to Sun Valley and Las Vegas in droves—proving that where Hannagan's publicity strategies were concerned, magic can happen more than twice.—SFH

Dr. Joanne Hyppolite is the Historical Museum's Curator for Community Research.

To learn more about the marketing strategies and other historical factors that helped "make" Miami Beach, "check-in" to the Historical Museum's exhibition *Miami Beach: America's Tropical Resort*, currently on display.

South Florida's Mercurial Relationship with

Baseball

by Eliot Kleinberg

The latest round of uncertainty about the future of Major League Baseball in South Florida should be no surprise. The region has had the kind of off-and-on, you-left-but-I'll-take-you-back romance you might hear about in a country western song; one that started long before the Marlins arrived in 1993.

For so long, South Florida had pressed its nose to the window. The area that grew to a metropolis seemingly overnight boasted many symbols of prominence. It wanted one more: baseball.

Dreamers laid out schemes that would make Ralph Kramden proud, only to disband in rancor or give up when the public wouldn't buy in.

And every spring, baseball had teased us for a few months, then left us like a jilted lover.

When the door finally opened, it was almost anticlimactic. All it took was a man with a checkbook. Just like that, Florida became big league.

No Stadium, No Team

Until 1960, the issue was moot. The major leagues stayed at 16 teams. Major League Baseball added eight teams in the 1960s and two more in 1977. Texas got two and California five. Florida got none.

Miami, and by association, South Florida, had three big drawbacks, Bob Dean, a senior research associate at the National Baseball Hall of Fame, said in 1993: It wasn't a big city yet, too many residents were retirees (baseball likes younger people with lots of disposable income) and, most importantly, there was no place to play.

There was, of course, the Orange Bowl. The venerable stadium has held up to 84,000 for football. But it was not designed for baseball. Redesign estimates in the 1970s were in the \$25 million range.

In the 1950s, the area pushed for a minor league team in the Class AAA division, the one just below the big leagues. The idea was to fill the 9,400-seat Miami Stadium northwest of downtown and impress major league owners enough to nab a franchise. But the original Marlins—the Miami Marlins—never caught on in a big way.

When Miami civic leaders finally began pushing for a new stadium in the mid-1970s, it wasn't so much the hope of drawing baseball as the fear of losing to the suburbs the fledgling but triumphant Miami Dolphins football team.

Several tax referenda to build a new multipurpose stadium or renovate the Orange Bowl failed at the ballot box or never got there.

In a 1993 interview, Rick Horrow, who was active in many of the efforts and later owned a national sports development firm, blamed baseball itself; two decades with no dangling carrot discouraged South Florida's business and political



Built in 1949 by Jose Aleman Sr., a onetime, high-level Cuban governmental official, Miami Stadium featured a cantilevered roof and no visual obstructions. For these reasons, the facility, which seated 9,400 fans, was considered state of the art among minor league baseball stadiums. HMF, Miami News Collection 1989-011-15984.

leaders from working in harmony and the public from spending money.

But Horrow said there was plenty of local blame.

“When I was growing up in South Florida,” Horrow said, “I could recite the 10 arena failures and 18 stadium failures chapter and verse. Between 1980 and 1986 we had four different sports authorities with 77 different appointed officials responsible to 47 different elected officials, (including) two governors, seven city managers and five county managers.

“The clear difficulty was the transient leadership,” Horrow said, “and frankly, facility development was equivalent to pushing up rope.”

Joe Robbie was getting mad.

A Twist of Fate

In 1985, Robbie, owner of the Miami Dolphins, was eager to flee the aging Orange Bowl and was fed up with stumbling government efforts. He did the unheard of; he borrowed \$115 million, backed by Dade County industrial bonds, and built his own stadium.

Then, a series of bad breaks.

National Football League players went on strike the second week in 1987, the inaugural season of Joe Robbie Stadium. One home game was canceled and another played by strike-breaking replacement players.

The Dolphins then suffered a series of mediocre seasons and home attendance dropped. Players’ salaries and bank interest rates soared.

Complaints from neighbors led to limits on events and the stadium failed to draw as many non-Dolphins functions as it had hoped. In 1988, the stadium grossed only 70 percent of its projections.

And in January 1990, when Joe Robbie died and his son Tim took over the Dolphins, the family was socked with big estate taxes.

The Robbies, who had leveraged virtually their entire empire—Joe had even put up the Dolphins as collateral—were reportedly \$88.4 million in debt on the stadium.

They began shopping for someone to help them out, and someone to fulfill their father's other dream. Joe Robbie had made sure the stadium was built to allow conversion to dual-purpose.

Three months after his father's death, Tim Robbie did the unthinkable, but financially necessary. He sold a piece of his family's treasure. The buyer: H. Wayne Huizenga, then king of the Blockbuster Video empire.

Huizenga, who had first approached Joe Robbie in October 1989, paid a reported \$75.5 million for 50 percent of the stadium and 15 percent of the Dolphins.

That day, Huizenga said what South Floridians had heard for years but now dared to believe: "We need to raise our guns and go after baseball."

Less than a month later, Huizenga was working a crowd of Dade, Broward and Palm Beach county leaders gathered at Joe Robbie Stadium to talk the logistics of baseball in South Florida.

Tim Robbie was getting excited.

"South Florida getting a team is a matter of when, not if," he said. It would take only 53 weeks.

Come and Get It

In June 1990, Major League Baseball said the National League would expand by two teams within three years.

Three Florida regions made pitches: St. Petersburg, so often the bridesmaid, with a just-completed, \$110 million, 43,000-seat domed stadium ready to go; Orlando, hampered by lack of a stadium and proximity to Tampa Bay; and South Florida.

Huizenga's was one of three South Florida groups.

The Miami Sports and Exhibition Authority, arguing that people wouldn't trek to northwest Dade on a weeknight, listed four downtown locations, including a new Orange Bowl.

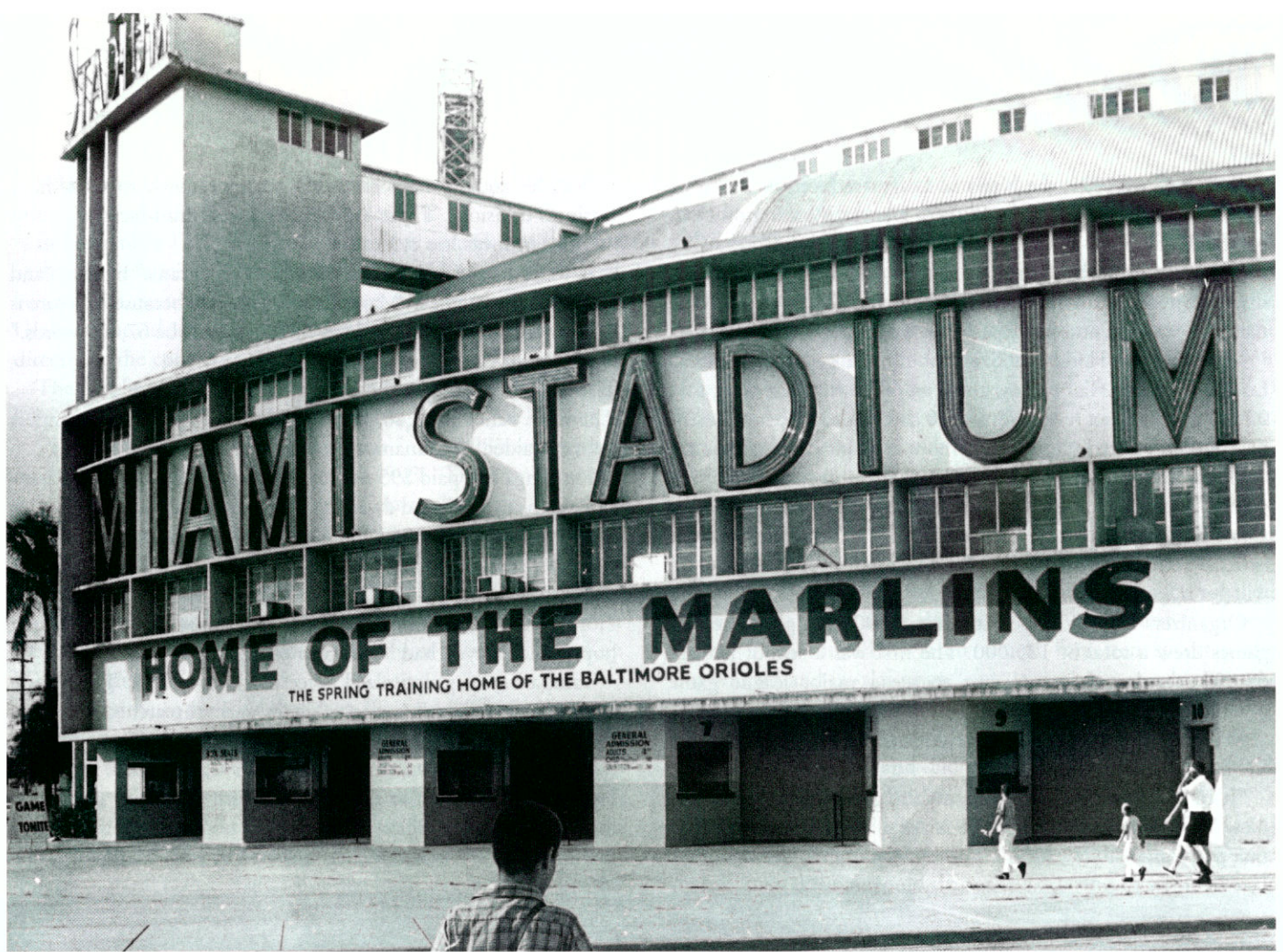
Another group, headed by New York investment banker Mort Davis, included Palm Beach sugar giant Alfonso Fanjul and retired baseball star Mike Schmidt.

But Huizenga argued South Florida was no longer just Miami. He cited his stadium's proximity to nearly 4 million people from Fort Pierce to Key West, 2.7 million of them within 20 miles. That sprawl would be the largest metropolitan area, and television territory, in America without a major league baseball team. And there was the golden egg of Latin American television and marketing.

Unlike the others, Huizenga could offer an existing stadium easily converted to baseball—it already had been renovated to make stands movable.

And, he was a money machine worth a reported \$300 million who didn't have to worry about partners defecting. He could buy the team himself.





Top—Miami Stadium, home of the Miami Marlins, members of the Florida State League, 1966. HMF, Miami News Collection 1989-011-15988. Above—Center field wall at Miami Stadium. The reference to the Birds Nest stems from the fact that the facility served as the spring training home of the Baltimore Orioles for more than three decades. In the 1950s, it was the spring training home of the Brooklyn Dodgers. HMF, Miami News Collection 1989-011-15471. Left—The Miami Stadium was torn down in 2001 to make way for a large housing project. HMF, Miami News Collection 1989-011-15465.

In December 1990, the National League reduced its list to six regions: Tampa Bay, Orlando, Buffalo, Denver, Washington D.C. and South Florida—but only Huizenga's South Florida group.

Suddenly, South Florida's patchwork of disorganized, disconnected and often competing baseball efforts was out. One man, his stadium and his checkbook were in.

Most believed Florida probably would not get both National League franchises. Tampa Bay, a veteran of the franchise wars, sold 22,697 season ticket reservations in 30 days to show a team's potential support. Huizenga opted for a more dramatic demonstration.

He announced two consecutive nights of spring training games between the New York Yankees and the Baltimore Orioles. Everyone knew the games themselves were not the issue. The message to South Florida was clear: Come, and we will get it.

Organizers initially hoped to draw 30,000 a night. The two games drew a total of 125,000. The first was a sellout and, at 67,654, the largest crowd ever to see a major league game outside a major league park.

Many in South Florida believed that weekend locked up the franchise.

"It's a momentum thing," Al Harazin, general manager of the New York Mets, said in 1993. "I can't tell you it was something that put somebody over the hump but it certainly didn't hurt."

But, he said, "I tend to think it comes down to cold, hard business decisions. Those kind of things are mini-factors."

Huizenga was less cynical that weekend.

"I want to take a picture of this place full of fans," he said, "and send it to the people of Major League Baseball, because a picture is worth a thousand words, only in this case it will be 67,000 words."

The Brass Ring

The birth came at 12:40 p.m. on July 5, 1991; it was a painless delivery, aided by a unanimous vote of major league owners.

Huizenga had paid \$95 million, 10 times the fee for the expansion teams in 1977 and dwarfing the \$7.5 million Joe Robbie and his partners paid in 1965 for the Miami Dolphins. The start-up costs were estimated at \$35 million.

Not everyone in Florida was smiling. Tampa Bay and its Florida Suncoast Dome, built with 110 million tax dollars on a hope and a prayer, had been spurned again.

Tampa Bay was victimized twice more since then. The Seattle Mariners and San Francisco Giants each threatened to move there but stayed put.

In the case of the Giants, many in Tampa Bay suggested Huizenga didn't want to share Florida with a pennant contender for sale for \$115 million, \$15 million less than Huizenga was shelling out for a new franchise doomed to early mediocrity.



Dade County's finest high school baseball players sat for this photograph in one of the stadium's dugouts. c. 1960s. HMSF 1995-277-2649.

While Huizenga, voting as a team owner, supported the move, critics accused him of secretly helping stop it.

In November 1992, Tampa Bay interests named him in a suit against San Francisco area officials; it charged he “actively worked behind the scenes to foster support for the San Francisco Group...notwithstanding public stances, promises and statements directly to the contrary.”

The Marlins denied the charges. And others said the effort to keep the Giants in California was far bigger than Wayne Huizenga.

“The vote stands on its own merits,” Larry Himes, general manager of the Chicago Cubs, said in 1993. “There isn’t any one guy in the game who has that kind of power.”

The spat became moot when the majors awarded the Tampa Bay Devil Rays franchise in 1995.

Huizenga also offended Miami leaders by naming his team the Florida, not Miami, Marlins. It was strictly business; with Tampa Bay out, he wanted fans watching Marlins on television from Key West to Pensacola.

So it was the entire state that then-Commissioner Fay Vincent welcomed to major league baseball, at the unveiling of the Marlins’ team logo on July 18, 1991, saying, “On behalf of everybody in the baseball family, let me say that it’s about time.”

Gleaming Jewels and Filthy Hulks

The ascent of major league baseball was accompanied by the decline of a much longer running show: the minors.

There was no greater symbol than Bobby Maduro Miami Stadium. The once-shining minor-league ballpark near downtown Miami ended its life as a filthy hulk, home only to the homeless.

Closed down for years, ravaged by fire in the summer of 1998 and finally sold off by the city, the eyesore in one of the city’s most depressed neighborhoods was torn down in 2001 to make way for low-income housing.

It was the latest in a string of baseball stadiums to go away as small and medium towns became big towns and Florida became more and more major league.

At least 17 parks from Vero Beach to Key West play host to or have played host to spring training or minor league teams.

Some, such as Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, are gleaming new jewels pumped with money from local governments and business, hoping to tap the baseball fans who, according to one state study, spread \$17 million to \$20 million in economic impact per ballpark just for spring training.

Some, such as the complex in Homestead, were tools to lure teams from other Florida cities in a vicious scramble for that bounty.

Some, such as Vero Beach’s Dodgertown, are flourishing historic icons.

And others, such as Maduro, have seen their glory days.

“We’re losing a great deal of history with these ballparks going,” Sonny Hirsch, a longtime broadcaster who was general manager for the Florida State League’s Miami Marlins from 1977 to 1987, said in a January 1999 interview. “But you have to make way for progress. It’s a great chunk of history.” Hirsch died in March 1999.

Teams made of waiters and bellhops from luxury hotels played as early as the turn of the century in Palm Beach and Miami.

With the boom, baseball became a way to highlight Florida and lure tourists. Ballparks sprang up all along the East Coast. Spring training drew northerners as well as reporters who transmitted glowing dispatches that always included colorful descriptions of balmy winds, sparkling waves and rippling palm trees. It was too easy. Smaller towns such as Hollywood, Fort Pierce and Vero Beach reveled in the brief visitations by sports royalty and the cash and publicity that came with the package.

As it does now, baseball in South Florida had to compete with everything else the area offers. The St. Louis Browns left in 1947 after only one season at the old Miami Field; they would return to town in 1959 as the Baltimore Orioles.

“We may be back,” the team’s traveling secretary told the *Miami News*. “But if we do return we’ll know next time what we’re getting into. This is an almost forgotten sport in this dogs-horses-and-jai-alai town.”

Most early parks were more Spartan than state-of-the-art.

“It was very easy to build a stadium,” Kevin McCarthy, a professor of English and Florida studies at the University of Florida and author of *Baseball in Florida*, said in 1999.

“You did not need a lot of expensive equipment,” McCarthy said. “In the beginning some of those parks didn’t even have grandstands. People would drive their cars and horse buggies up to the foul line and watch the games.”

And, he said, “They were able to be used year-round because of our good weather. Maybe the local high school or junior high school or Babe Ruth League could use the fields, too.”

West Palm Beach’s Connie Mack Field, austere but historic, was born in the boom and stood for most of the city’s history.

“The clubhouse was pretty dad-blame small at West Palm but it was adequate,” Ned Garver, a Browns pitcher from the 1950s, said in 1993. Grandstands held about 2,000. Black fans watched from a small section in the right-field corner.

Down in Miami, however, a modern 9,000-seat park, privately bankrolled by expatriate Cuban politician Jose Aleman Sr., was going up near downtown.

“I know of no more beautiful stadium in the country,” Baseball Commissioner Happy Chandler said at the 1949 dedication of Miami Stadium, which boasted a revolutionary cantilevered roof.

“Back then, Miami was smaller and more provincial,” Sonny Hirsch said in 1999.

“What it meant to see the Mickey Mantles and the various players come in,” he recalled. “We’d all be bug-eyed.”

The success of spring training begat minor-league teams; once the big-leaguers piled onto their trains at the end of March, and with big-league franchises a half-century away, the minor leaguers were, literally, the only game in town.

Developers Step In

With the arrival of the postwar boom in the 1950s, there was a new lure: Where once ballparks drew tourists who rented by the day, now they could draw people ready to buy.

Decades before developers assembled stadium development packages such as Thomas J. White at St. Lucie West and Roger Dean at Jupiter's Abacoa, Boston Braves owner and developer Lou Perini brought the big league Braves and West Palm Beach's "westward expansion." The expansion came but the West Palm Beach Municipal Stadium and its sister, the West Palm Beach Auditorium, became dinosaurs and eventually were gone.

"The cycle has gone from the functional, historical facilities like Bobby Maduro, like Dodgertown, like (West) Palm Beach Municipal Stadium, into fully-integrated, state-of-the-art baseball compounds," sports development consultant Rick Horrow said in 1999.

Even Dodgertown has been in jeopardy. The Los Angeles Dodgers threatened to at last move spring training to Arizona, closer to their southern California home.

To compete with communities that own complexes and lease them to teams in sweetheart deals, in 2001, Indian River County bought the property for \$38 million, using state grants and a county bond issue, and leased it back to the team at \$1 a year for 20 years.

Connie Mack Field now is a parking garage at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach. A Home Depot opened where Henry Aaron's home runs left West Palm Beach Municipal Stadium. And the cantilevered roof of Bobby Maduro Miami Stadium disappeared from its place near Miami's gleaming, 21st-century skyline, and history along with it.

"In those days they were ballparks," Sonny Hirsch said. "They weren't stadiums. They were ballparks."

Ballparks: Then and now

Holman Stadium, Dodgertown, Vero Beach 1948–present. Capacity: 6,500. Tenants: Brooklyn/Los Angeles Dodgers, 1949–present; Vero Beach Dodgers, Florida State League, 1980–present. History: After the federal government turned over a Naval air station to the city after World War II, airport manager Bud Holman suggested spring training and the town invited the then-Brooklyn Dodgers. Holman Stadium opened in 1953.

Jaycee Field, Fort Pierce 1938–1958. Capacity: 1,400. Tenants: Pittsburgh Pirates, 1954; Fort Pierce Bombers, Florida East Coast League, 1940–1942. History: Fort Pierce Jaycees built field for football and baseball.

Thomas J. White Stadium St. Lucie West 1988–present. Capacity: 7,347. Tenants: New York Mets, 1988–present; St. Lucie Mets, Florida State League, 1988–present. History: White, developer of the St. Lucie West neighborhood, lured the New York Mets to the \$11 million, 100-acre spring training and minor-league complex.

Roger Dean Stadium, Jupiter 1998–present. Capacity: 7,200. Tenants: Montreal Expos, 1998–2002; St. Louis Cardinals, 1998–present; Florida Marlins, 2002–present; Jupiter Hammerheads, Florida State League, 1998–present. History: The \$28 million stadium opened in 1999 as the spring training home of the Montreal Expos and the St. Louis Cardinals.

West Palm Beach Municipal Stadium 1963–1998.

Capacity: 4,200. Tenants: included Milwaukee/Atlanta Braves, 1963–1997; Montreal Expos, 1969–1997. History: When the Braves arrived in 1963, the unfinished \$1 million stadium was in the middle of nowhere. Expos came in 1969. Jehovah's Witnesses bought the property in 1997 and it was torn down and replaced by a Home Depot store.

Municipal Athletic Field (Connie Mack Field) 1924–1992.

Capacity: 3,500. Tenants: included St. Louis Browns, 1928–1936; Philadelphia Athletics, 1945–1962; West Palm Beach Braves, Florida State League, 1955–1956. History: An exhibition between the Athletics and the Brooklyn Dodgers, featuring Jackie Robinson, was one of the first games to break the color barrier.

Municipal Stadium, Pompano Beach 1954–1998.

Capacity: 5,500. Tenants: included



Built by Dolphins' owner, Joe Robbie, near the county line in north Dade, the stadium opened in 1987.

HMSF 1989-011-24518.

Washington Senators/Texas Rangers, 1961–1996; Miami Miracle, Florida State League, 1989–1990. History: The Miracle's Mike Veech followed the footsteps of his stunt-crazy father Bill, trying such come-ons as haircuts in the stands and a visit by busy game-crasher Morganna.

Fort Lauderdale Stadium 1961–present. Capacity: 8,340. Tenants: New York Yankees, 1962–1995; Baltimore Orioles, 1996–present; Fort Lauderdale Yankees, Florida State League, 1962–present. History: Orioles threatened in late 1990s not to renew lease and city said stadium might be converted for use by local groups or torn down. Team struck two-year deal with city in 2004.

West Side Park, Fort Lauderdale
1925–1955.

Capacity: 2,000. Tenants: included Boston Braves, 1946–1947; Fort Lauderdale Braves/Lions, Florida International League, 1947–1953. History: Used before World War II by semi-pro teams; now site of Fort Lauderdale police headquarters.

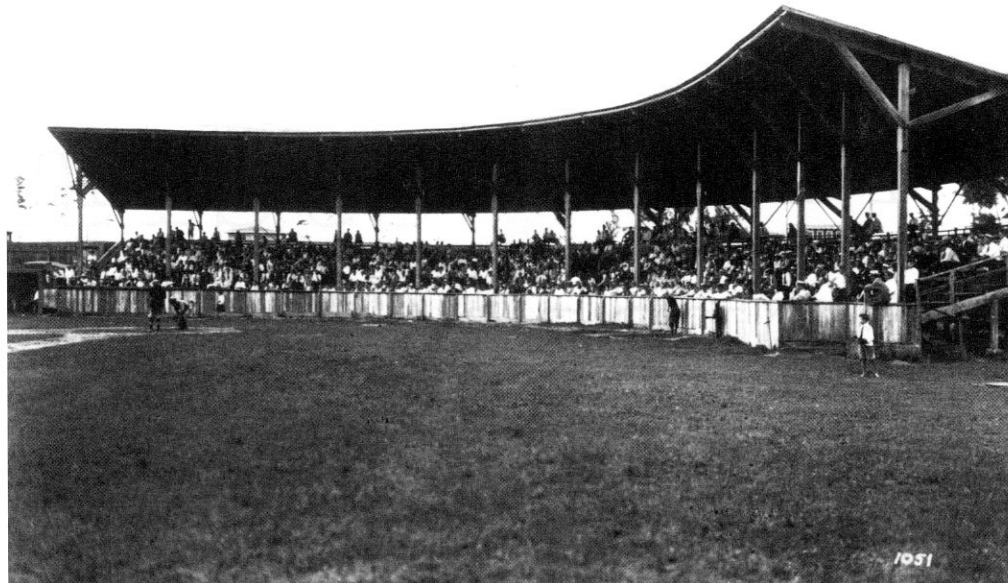
Dowdy Field, Hollywood 1934–present. Capacity: 3,500. Tenants: Hollywood Chiefs, Florida East Coast League, 1940. History: Hosted minor league games, major league exhibitions.

Flamingo Park, Miami Beach 1918–present. Capacity: 2,000. Tenants: included New York Giants, 1934–1935; Philadelphia Phillies, 1940–1942, 1946. History: Carl Fisher created the Flamingo Polo Grounds from swamp.

Bobby Maduro Miami Stadium 1949–1998. Capacity: 9,000. Tenants: included Baltimore Orioles, 1959–1990; Miami Sun Sox, Florida International League, 1949–1954; Miami Marlins, International League, 1956–1960. History: Changing nature of the neighborhood made it a dangerous place to visit. There was even a murder in 1980. It was torn down in 2001.

Tatum Park/Miami Field 1916–1964. Capacity: 4,500. Tenants: included Boston Braves, 1916–1918; Cincinnati Reds, 1920; Brooklyn Dodgers, 1933; New York Giants, 1941–42, 1946; St. Louis Browns, 1947. History: Razed in 1964; now an Orange Bowl parking lot.

Royal Palm Park, Miami 1896–1930. Tenants: Miami Magicians: 1912–1916. History: opened in



Exhibition game between Yankees and Cincinnati at Tatum field, later called Miami Field at what is now SW corner of Orange Bowl parking lot, NW 16 Ave and 3 Street. March, 1920. Miami Field hosted major league baseball spring training games in that era. Later, it was a favorite venue for high school contests. It was razed in 1964. HMFSE, Miami News Collection 1989-011-15463.

1896 across from the Royal Palm Hotel in downtown Miami. It was standing room only; no grandstands. Later the parking lot for the Dupont Plaza hotel; now part of the downtown revitalization.

Homestead Sports Complex 1991–present. Capacity: 6,500. History: Indians backed out of plan to move to Homestead after Hurricane Andrew.

Wickers Stadium, Key West 1951–1988. Capacity: 3,000. Tenants: included Key West Conchs, Florida International League, 1952; Key West Cubs, Florida State League, 1975. History: City acquired property just before WWII and first used it as a dump. One of the stadium's last hurrahs was a concert by Jimmy Buffett in 1987 to help preserve the city's salt ponds.

This article was adapted from stories that ran in the Palm Beach Post on April 4, 1993 and February 28, 1999, and appear by permission. Other sources: (Vero Beach) Press Journal, November 9, 2005; South Florida Sun-Sentinel, May 14, 2005. Also: Miami historian Howard Kleinberg and Palm Beach Post baseball writer Joe Capozzi.—SFH

Eliot Kleinberg, a Miami-Dade County native, has been a staff writer for the Palm Beach Post since 1987 and is the author of nine books, all about Florida. He is a lifetime .035 batter and has attended every Marlins opening day.

Making the Personal Political: Florida Women's Pages Spread News of a Mo

by Kimberly Wilmot Voss, Ph.D.

Prior to the 1960s, female journalists were long confined to women's pages at many newspapers. While the content of many of these sections was based on traditional women's roles of wives and mothers, as society evolved, so did the sections. This was especially true in South Florida during the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, in the first three years of the national J.C. Penney-Missouri Awards—the top honors for women's pages—Florida's women's page editors won 9 of the 27 spots in the three circulation brackets.

In a national oral history project interview, pioneering Miami women's page editor Dorothy Journey looked back at the coverage of social issues and the role of women journalists during this time. She said, "All of the stories that dealt in depth with social issues affecting women and the family...the best stories were done either in sections or by women who had been women's editors. They knew what they were talking about." Journey was one of many progressive women's page editors in South Florida who changed the content of their sections and in doing so, raised the consciousness of their communities.

The 1950s and 1960s were a golden time for women's page journalism in South Florida. While many metropolitan newspapers were late to cover the women's liberation movement (for example, most news and book sections of newspapers did not bother to review Betty Freidan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, but women's pages did), the women's sections of Florida newspapers were publishing plenty of progressive stories. A review of these women's sections shows that these editors were reporting on topics such as domestic violence and sexual harassment, which did not appear on the front pages for several more decades.

Leading the way were the women at the *Miami Herald*. The newspaper's women's section was run in the 1950s by Journey, who went on to be known as the "godmother" of women's pages for including hard news in her sections. Journey came to the Knight-owned *Miami Herald* in 1949 following a few unsatisfying years at the *Miami News*. She was hired by Editor Lee Hills, who wanted to strengthen the section, and she brought along colleague Marie Anderson as her assistant. The pair quickly changed the direction of the section away from the traditional pattern of family, fashion, food and furnishings. They added hard news stories about political and social issues, features about professional women and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's daily "My Day" column. They ran stories on the controversial yet groundbreaking Kinsey Report, the largest study ever conducted on human sexual behavior. They also covered housing needs in the African-American community, workplace inequities and foster care issues.

In 1959, Journey followed Hills to the *Detroit Free Press* to strengthen its women's section. After Journey left, Anderson became the editor, and she continued to tackle tough issues. For example, a repressed task force report about women produced by the Nixon administration was leaked to Anderson and she made it available as a brochure. Texas native Marjorie Paxson, who had arrived a few years earlier, was promoted to Anderson's assistant and the pair continued to raise the standards of their section.

Anderson and Paxson ran excerpts from Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* as well as stories about birth control pills, the sexual revolution, unmarried couples living together and women's medical concerns. The section included a 1962 series profiling African-American residents in Miami—well before more news sections were covering the African-American community. Club reporter Roberta Applegate, who wrote the controversial series, recalled in a memo that she was "frankly amazed that the reaction has been so one-sided: favorable."

e Journalists vement



In the 1950s, Marie Anderson and Dorothy Journey quickly changed the direction of the *Miami Herald's* women's section by adding hard news stories. Anderson and Journey at a symphony ball in 1961. Courtesy of Marie Anderson Papers, Western Manuscript Collection—Columbia, MO.

Neither did these women shy away from reproductive issues. A 1969 *Miami Herald* article edited by Anderson detailed how the introduction of the birth control pill had changed young people's views on birth control—although societal stigmas remained. The expert quoted in the story described the University of Florida as being progressive because it no longer expelled pregnant students; the article also included information that upheld traditional values. The expert was quoted further as saying that if students who were not engaged wanted birth control pills through the student health center, they had to get permission from their parents. Historian Anne Kasper said of Anderson, "When the women's movement erupted Marie saw increased possibilities for reporting news about women and she took significant risks in printing stories which management found disturbing and too controversial."

It should also be noted that while Anderson, Journey and Paxson fought to include progressive content, they did not find stories deemed "soft news" as unimportant. They did not consider news that was important to homemakers to be insignificant, but they did question the news value of including brides and club notices. Journey had come from a hard news background and working as city editor at the *Washington Daily News*, a Scripps-Howard newspaper, during the war, and she shared her views with Anderson. The two editors believed that typical club notices needed to be eliminated due to the lack of news value. Anderson said: "All of these people who are going to these meetings know that they are going to these meetings. ... There was better use of this space." But if there was significant news coming from the meeting or club, Anderson was all for it. The women did not want to alienate their homemaker readers.

The progressive content of the *Miami Herald* caught the attention of the Penney-Missouri Awards judges. The awards program began in 1960 to recognize progressive content. Anderson won so many prizes for the top section in her circulation category that she was retired from the competition in the mid-1960s and became a consultant to the competition. In 1968, after 12 years at the *Miami Herald*, Paxson got a phone call offering her the position of women's editor at the *St. Petersburg Times*, where she also earned a Penney-Missouri Award.

In Fort Lauderdale, Edee Greene was also working to transform women's page journalism. During the late 1950s and 1960s, she was the women's editor at the *Fort Lauderdale News* and the *Sun-Sentinel*. She reduced society coverage and replaced it with news about job discrimination and the need for child care. She also included African-American bridal announcements at a time when this practice was rare. Greene was recognized for her work with Penney-Missouri Awards for her sections in 1960, 1962 and 1967.

Greene and Paxson collaborated to improve the status of women's page editors in Florida. They said the key to transforming women's news was the activism of the women's page editors and the support of the male managing editors and publishers—especially because women editors did not have the authority to make the final decisions at most newspapers. Paxson said, "We had a

good idea of what our readers wanted but we needed them [the editors] to back us up. Some managing editors got it, some didn't." As a way of strengthening that connection, Paxson and Greene gave a presentation to a meeting of Florida managing editors called "What's Wrong with Women's Pages." In Greene and Paxson's presentation, the editors focused on the limited roles of women as wives and mothers. Paxson said: "We thought they made a mistake when they allowed reporters to write something to the effect that 'although Edee Greene is a champion stock car driver, president of the Florida women's press club and women's editor of the *Ft. Lauderdale News*, she still finds time to be a wife and mother.'" To make their point, they turned the story around, asking whether male journalists would write a story explaining that Milt Kelly (Greene's boss) was a professional marksman, a flycaster and a managing editor and yet still found time to be a husband and father.

The presentation also encouraged managing editors to include fewer stories about traditional topics like brides and "club trivia" and more stories about medical, educational, economic, sociological and community issues. The editors encouraged the managing editors to stand behind the women's page editors when they received irate phone calls from parents asking why there wasn't space to write about the train on their daughters' wedding dresses.

They also requested a new job description for women's page editors. They thought a women's page editor should have more power and that she be considered a newswoman who was alert to what was going on in her community. There was also the question of administrative skills. Typically, women's page editors did not have the power to hire or fire, nor any budgetary control. Paxson told the group: "This is something that got overlooked a lot of times. Some woman simply was promoted but she needed to learn how to manage the staff, how to keep the staff on its toes."

Gloria Biggs was another prominent Florida women's page editor and Penney-Missouri Award winner who often included progressive content when she was the women's section editor at the *St. Petersburg Times* and then *TODAY* in Cocoa. She was described by former *USA Today* Editor John Quinn as "a natural-born news junkie." She combined it with traditional content. Gannett executive Al Neuharth described her as "a highly regarded feature and women's editor."

Other women's page editors who won Penney-Missouri Awards during the 1960s included Beverley Morales of the *Pompano Beach Sun-Sentinel*, Nancy Taylor of the *Miami News*, Ann Rowe of the *St. Petersburg Independent*, Billie O'Day of the *Miami News*, Dorothy-Anne Flor of the *Lakeland Ledger*, Sallie Batson of the *Lakeland Ledger*, Kathryn Robinette of the *Palm Beach Post-Times* and Sandra Wesley of the *Boca Raton News*.

These women's page editors led the way for other women journalists, although their stories are often forgotten. While Ben Bradley and the *Washington Post* are often given credit for transforming women's sections and addressing significant content, women's page editors in South Florida were introducing these concepts long before as demonstrated by the numerous Penney-Missouri Awards. The editors also benefited from the movement they covered. Anderson left the *Miami Herald* in 1972 to become a dean of University Relations and Development

at Florida International University, which was established in 1965. Biggs went on to become one of the first non-family newspaper publishers in the country when she was named to the position at the *Melbourne Times* in Florida in 1973. She was an editor at *The St. Petersburg Times* and *The Palm Beach Post* before Al Neuharth, former Gannett chairman, recruited her for his start-up newspaper in Melbourne, now called *Florida Today*. As a “first,” Biggs was often invited to many conferences. She was a speaker at a meeting of New York editors when she was asked by a man in the audience, “Do you think a woman is as good as, better, or worse than a man?” She responded with “At what?” A few years after Biggs’ appointment, Paxson became the fourth female Gannett publisher.

Jurney played a leading role in several studies that looked at the annual gender make-up of reporters at newspapers as well as organizing the initial “New Directions for News” study that looked at how newspapers covered issues important to women. She gave speeches and presentations throughout her career about how to improve women’s sections and the coverage of news pertaining to women. She reported that the media did not cover the pay inequities for women. She also wrote, “Newspapers ignore these and other facts concerning U.S. women in the labor force. They also ignore the injustices in social security, inheritance and other legal facts which work to the detriment of all women, especially those who are homemakers.”

South Florida women’s page journalists were progressive pioneers at a changing time. Their efforts led the women in their communities to understand why the issues central to the second wave of the women’s movement were important. They educated by combining new concepts of female identity with the more traditional roles. By negotiating these messages, the impact was less threatening than the messages sent by the national media that were often radical and controversial.

Neither were they afraid to take a stand on women’s movement issues themselves, acting as models for advocacy. For example, Anderson was a member of Florida’s Commission on the Status of Women, and Greene was a founder of the Women in Distress of Broward County, Inc.—the county’s first refuge for homeless women.

The fact that these women dominated the national women’s page awards is further proof of their progressive nature. Just as



Anderson and Marjorie Paxson at the Teta Sigma headliner dinner at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, CA on August 20, 1964. Courtesy of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Anderson papers.

the suffragettes had combined forces with women’s clubs in order to get the 19th Amendment passed, women’s movement leaders combined with women’s page editors to educate the community about equal rights for women. These women’s page editors were, though often overlooked by historians, leaders in journalism and leaders in South Florida.—SFH

Kimberly Wilnot Voss, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in the Department of Mass Communications at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She studies women’s page editors at newspapers during the 1940s through the 1970s. She has published several articles on women’s page editors and women’s page content.



Anne Mergen at work in the study of her home in Miami's roads neighborhood, mid-1940s. HMSF 2006-209-1.

Anne Mergen

Miami's Trailblazing Editorial Cartoonist

Anne Mergen, a prolific, acclaimed editorial cartoonist, was one of the first women in the United States to venture into this male-dominated field. Born in 1906 in Omaha, Neb., Anne Briardy came to Miami in 1926, as the great real estate boom was dissipating. She worked for a time at the downtown Burdines department store in the toiletries department before leaving Miami for Chicago to pursue her first love, art. Anne attended an art school in the Windy City before returning to Miami where she took a position in Burdines' advertising department.

Anne drew fashion ads with Burdines but grew bored with her job while harboring an idea to create a fashion story centering around two cartoon characters, Anne and Peg, who stayed at Miami Beach's ritzy Roney Plaza Hotel. A *Miami Daily News* editor was impressed with Anne's work here and realized he had no staff cartoonists. So Anne, now married to Frank Mergen, whom she had met in Miami in 1926, was hired as a cartoonist in 1933. Anne's first editorial cartoon, treating the subject of Prohibition, appeared during that year in the *News*. For more than 20 years, or until 1956, she drew a daily editorial cartoon. With her comprehension of current events, ingenuity, artistic ability and persistence, Anne Mergen worked her way onto the editorial page with her cartoons, a nonpareil feat for a woman. As late as 1989, only four women were listed among the 240 active members of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists. Six other women were known to have worked earlier as editorial cartoonists. Mergen was one of these six women.

With a bold, simple style, her work influenced and entertained thousands of readers daily. Local, national and worldwide events were depicted in her cartoons. Her work included caricatures of many public figures, including three presidents: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Powerful images of World War II and the problems engendered by the Cold War were subjects she dealt with, as well as many local issues. She contributed to the improvement of life for the citizens of Florida when she brought a heightened awareness of many issues with her work. During the early '40s, when her children were young, polio was a dread disease with no cure. As a concerned

by Joan Mergen Bernhardt
and Paul S. George, Ph.D.



Always Room For One More. In the expansive era following World War II, Dade's public schools were bursting at the seams with students, the result of a population boom. HMSF 2005-507-150.



Hail and Farewell. Eleanor Roosevelt's "whirlwind" visit to Miami in 1944 was the subject of this Mergen cartoon.

HMSF 2005-507-7.

mother, she brought awareness to the disease through numerous cartoons, urging people to contribute to the polio cause. When the polio vaccine was developed in the '50s, Mergen felt she helped in some small way with the victory over polio.

In the 1950s, when the Florida turnpike was still an idea freighted with many questions, Mergen drew numerous cartoons to bring awareness to the situation. She also brought attention to the need to preserve the Everglades before it became a park, discouraged sewage from being dumped into Biscayne Bay, and helped rid city hall of corruption, to name a few concerns. During the day, Mergen maintained a normal routine with housework and raising two children. In *Editorial Cartooning*, Dick Spencer observed, in 1949, that “despite the fact that she was one of the few, if not the only woman in the field at the time, she felt that editorial cartooning was the best job a woman could have. She put her home and children first, yet the certainty that they were her daytime job didn’t keep her from her absorbing career in the evening.” After dinner, Mergen would climb up the stairs of her home in Miami’s Roads neighborhood and spend several hours on the following day’s cartoon. Her husband Frank was a big help. She often said that she would try out her ideas on him first. He would pose for the “hard to draw” figures when necessary, and, then, late at night when the drawing was complete, he would deliver the cartoon downtown to the News Tower.

Mergen’s cartoons appeared regularly in the *Atlanta Journal*, the *Dayton (Ohio) News* and the *Springfield (Ohio) News*, along with the *Miami Daily News*. Cartoons with the greatest appeal were often reproduced in newspapers throughout the country. Because of this, she received fan mail from many areas of the country. Letters came from people such as Eleanor Roosevelt; J. Edgar Hoover, FBI director; Edward R. Stettinius, secretary of state ('45); Estes Kefauver, U.S. Senate; V.W. Peterson, director of Chicago crime commission; Louis Johnson, secretary of defense and others. The letters frequently commented on, or thanked her for, a particular cartoon. For example, J. Edgar Hoover was appreciative for a cartoon he had requested in 1951 and wrote, “You have portrayed in a most effective manner the activities of the FBI in connection with our work to combat the subversive individuals who are seeking to undermine and destroy our democracy. My associates join me in thanking you for your support.” Another letter, from an *Atlanta*



The Honeymooner. Miami’s City Commission has long been fractious, as seen in this Mergen cartoon from more than one half century ago. HMSF 2005-507-186.

Journal reader in Georgia suggested that a lot of “Mergen cartoons” be published because the “best recount of our news of world happenings have been portrayed by the pen of Mrs. Mergen.”

Mergen’s cartoons first received national attention in 1938, when the *Miami Daily News* won the Pulitzer Prize for its campaign against Miami’s notorious “termite administration,” a corrupt mayor and city commission. In that era, her work became limited to little else but the sad conditions at city hall. Hundreds of her cartoons played an important part in a campaign that, ultimately, forced three commissioners from office following a recall election. During that searing time in the city’s political history, Mergen’s cartoons frequently appeared on the front page of the newspaper accompanied by an editorial. Mergen received her share of the nationwide acclaim following the newspaper’s award for “the most meritorious and disinterested public service performed by



Drainage Canal. Mergen was an early environmentalist and a sharp critic of the state's drainage efforts in south Florida. HMSF 2005-507-51.



The Preliminaries. Florida's plans for a turnpike system in the decade following World War II prompted strong lobbying from communities hoping to benefit from its nearby presence. HMSF 2005-507-125.



When A Fella Needs a Friend. Built in the mid-1930s, the Orange Bowl grew significantly in subsequent decades as its football games and other events held there drew ever larger crowds. HMSF 2005-507-62.

any newspaper in the United States.” *Miami Daily News* editor, Hal Lyshon, upon accepting the Pulitzer Prize for his newspaper in New York in May 1939, wired Mergen: “Don’t let anybody ever tell you it wasn’t Mergen cartoons that won the Pulitzer today. And if they want to argue about it send them to me.”

When Franklin D. Roosevelt died in 1945, Mergen drew two cartoons upon his death that were sent by wirephoto to newspapers around the country. These cartoons became her most famous works after Eleanor Roosevelt wrote Mergen requesting the originals. Mrs. Roosevelt wanted the cartoons to hang in the Roosevelt memorial room at Hyde Park. When Eleanor Roosevelt requested the cartoons, she was unaware that the signature “Mergen” was that of a woman.

Another highlight of her career occurred in 1953. Mergen was honored with the Wendy Warren Award, a national award

presented to her by *Today’s Woman*. This award was given by the magazine to an outstanding woman “who has added stature to woman’s place in the world, achieved marked success in business, industry, science or the arts, or who has contributed to the community welfare through her activities and accomplishments” (plaque inscription). The presentation was broadcast nationally over the Columbia Broadcasting System

Editor and Publisher magazine was considered the “bible” for U.S. newspapers. The magazine would select three cartoons drawn by some of the country’s outstanding cartoonists on a certain subject. Mergen’s work was chosen numerous times by *Editor and Publisher* for reprint in the section on cartoons-of-the-week.

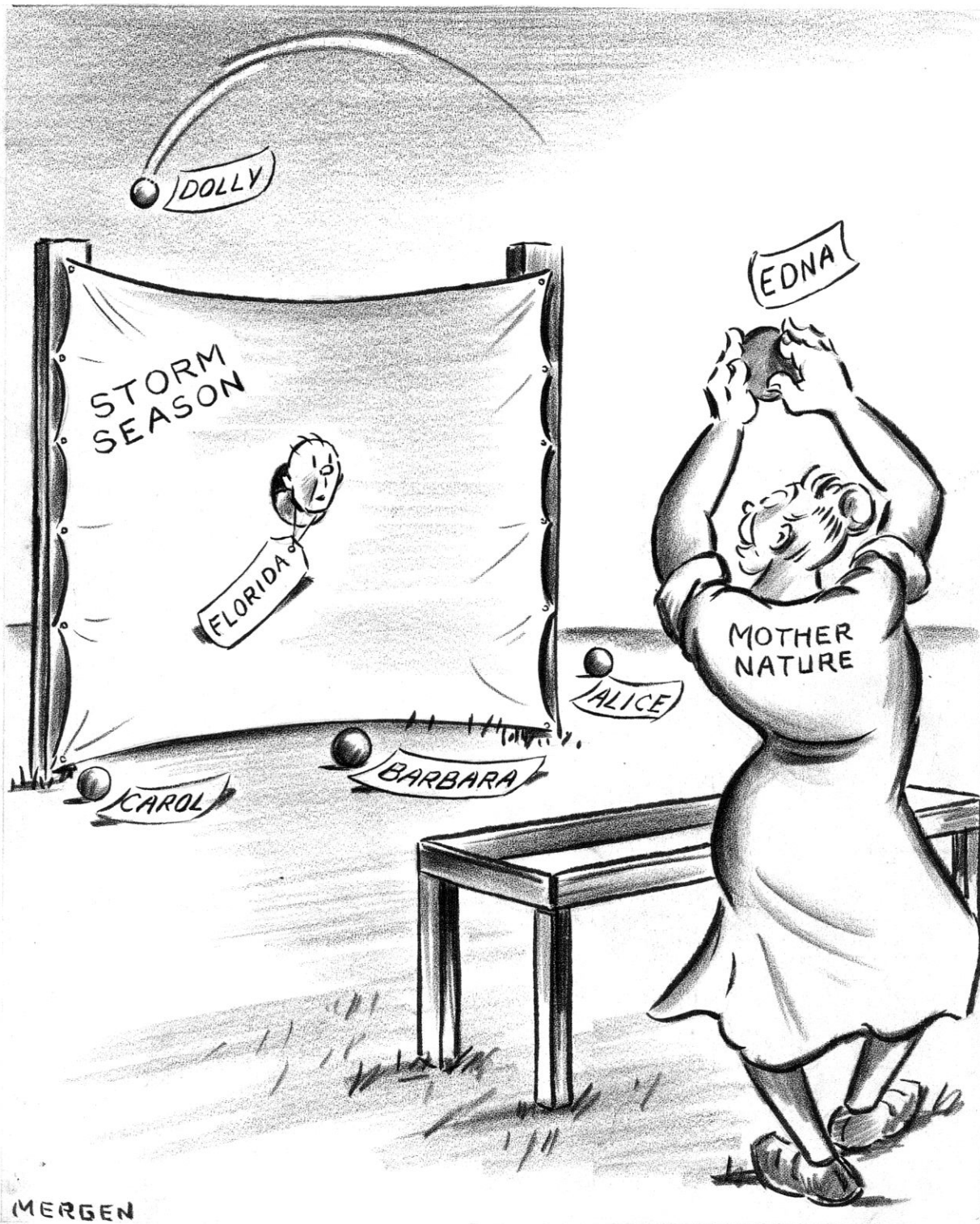
During her career, Anne Mergen produced more than 7,000 cartoons; more than 1,400 of her original cartoons remain. These historic drawings are now in the Library of Congress, the Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library and the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. These institutions will preserve the historic works of Anne Mergen and make them available for research for future generations.

Anne Mergen died in 1994, but her life was one of accomplishment because she possessed the courage to enter a field that had traditionally been a man’s territory. Her example may have inspired other women to follow their dreams and venture off the beaten path. Her contributions to the political and social fabric of Miami and even elsewhere were significant because

they raised the awareness of people for the world around them and caused many of them to demand of their leaders better direction and greater compassion for the people they served.—*SFH*

Joan Mergen Bernhardt is a native Miamian, artist and former commercial illustrator for Jordan Marsh department store.

A selection of Anne Mergen’s cartoons will be on display at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida from June 19, 2008, through September 4, 2008.



May Every Pitch be Wild. Hurricanes assumed names by the beginning of the 1950s. In this drawing, Mergen expresses her wish that the state be spared the wrath of Hurricane Edna amid the intense hurricane season of 1954. HMSF 2005-507-94.

Something
for Everyone

A Brief
History of

Venice

by Tracie L. Dickerson

The city of Venice, Fla., was not incorporated until 1927. However, Venice and the surrounding area hold historical significance for South Florida.

Human settlements on the Gulf Coast of Florida can be traced back for more than 10,000 years. The Calusa Indians, the last of the aboriginal people in the area, flourished for a few thousand years before the Spanish entrada. Their domain included the area now known as Spanish Point, with its rich archaeological treasures dating to 3,000 B.C. and including a prehistoric burial mound and two shell mounds. Spanish Point is a 30-acre site that juts into Little Sarasota Bay. It is bordered by mangroves on the west and pine flatwoods on the east. The first recorded exploration of the area on the part of the Spanish and Juan Ponce de Leon was at Charlotte Harbor in 1513. Florida later became a territory of Spain, and then of England, before its purchase by the United States in 1821. The Venice area remained unsettled, however, until after the Civil War.

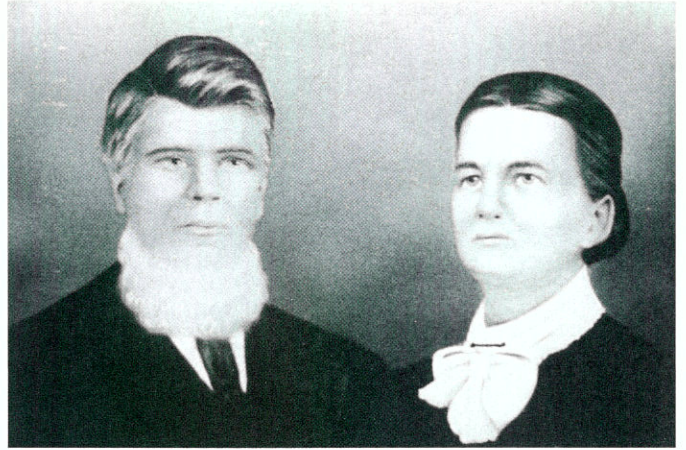
Early Florida pioneers named the area "the Horse and Chaise" because of a carriage-like tree formation marking the area for fishermen. The Homestead Act of 1862 brought new families from the northern states into southwestern Florida. One of the first families to call southwestern Florida home was the Webb family from Utica, N.Y. In 1867, John and Eliza Webb and their five children homesteaded and settled in the area now called Osprey. The Webb family established and ran a sugar mill, a refinery and guest cottages for tourists, Webb's Winter Resort. John Webb, after 20 years of traveling long distances for his mail, petitioned in 1884 for a separate postal address for Webb Point. John Webb chose "Osprey" as their postal address, because

federal regulations mandated the use of only one word for the new address. This area is also known as "Historic Spanish Point." Soon thereafter, Jesse and Caroline Knight and their 15 children moved from Hillsborough County, Fla., to the Venice area. The Knight family later became the cattle kings of the area, having purchased about 600 acres of land for about 90 cents per acre. The Knight family's land included the areas that became Nokomis and Venice on both sides of the present-day Dona and Roberts Bays and Shake it Creek. In more recent times, Sarasota County Department of Parks and Recreation has petitioned to name a lake Knight Lake after Jesse Knight, who, along with his family, was instrumental in early Florida's development of the cattle industry. The Knight family also

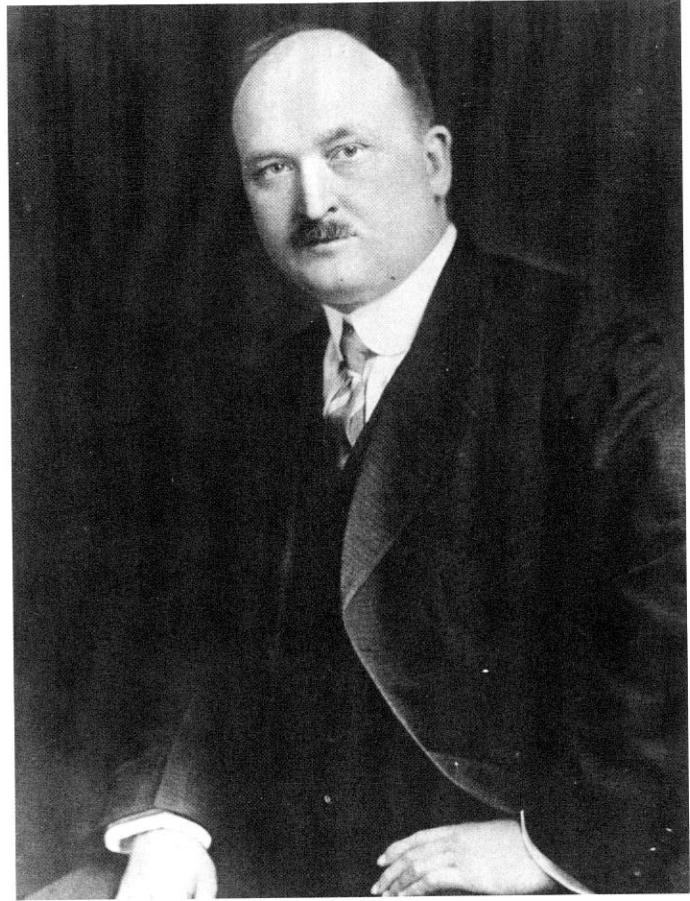


constructed the area's first church and donated land for the area's first school.

Another settler included Robert Rickford Roberts, who owned 120 acres at the south end of the bay. He grew bananas, sugar cane, corn, potatoes and tobacco. Also settling nearby in 1881 was the Blackburn family. John Slemans Blackburn purchased 188 bayfront acres for \$32.50. His son also purchased 80 acres of property nearby. In 1884, Roberts sold a portion of his land to Frank Higel, the "Father of Venice." During the process of selecting a name for the proposed post office for the current Nokomis area, Venice was submitted by Frank Higel. On July 3, 1888, the Venice post office was established. Darwin O'Curry served as the first postmaster. Frank Higel chose "Venice" because of its close resemblance to his childhood home in Italy. Frank Higel also spent time promoting the region to attorney Joseph H. Lord and Lord's friend Mrs. Potter Palmer, a Chicago socialite. By October 1887, Frank Higel was knowledgeable about the surrounding flora and fauna and was interviewed by W.E.D. Scott when preparing an article for *The Auk*.

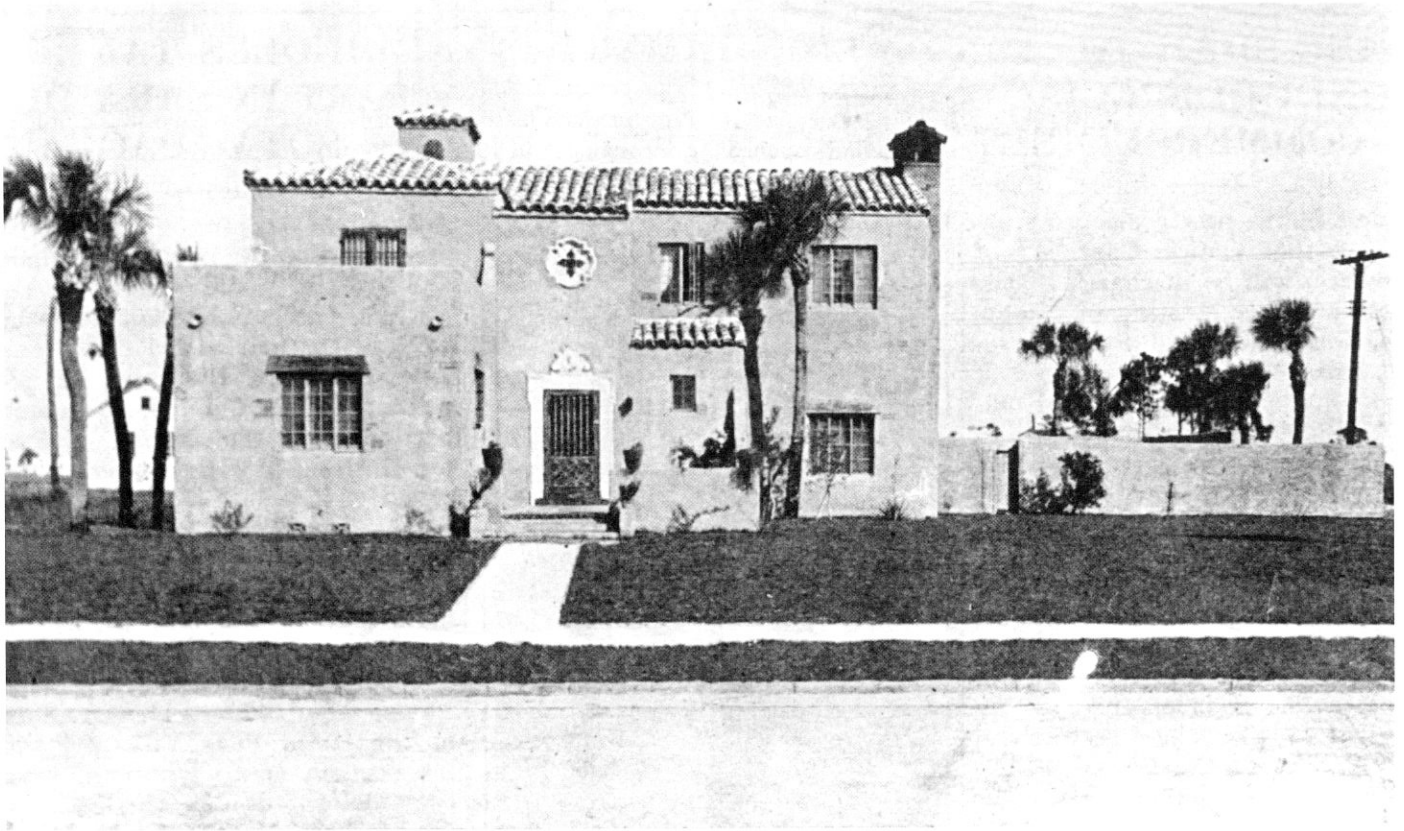


Top, left—John and Elizabeth Webb and their five children were one of the first families to settle in the area now called Osprey. 1928. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives. Top, right—Jesse and Caroline Knight constructed the area's first church and donated land for the area's first school. Above—During the process of selecting a name for the proposed post office for the current Nokomis area, "Venice" was submitted by Frank Higel. Photographs courtesy of the City of Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection.



Top, left—After moving to Florida in the early 1900s, Bertha Honoré Palmer began to effect change in Florida cattle ranching, as she became one of the first ranchers in the state to dip cattle to eliminate ticks. Above—Dr. Fred Albee commissioned John Nolen (left) to formulate designs for the development of Nokomis and Venice. Photographs courtesy of the City of Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection. Bottom, left—John Nolen's designs included a city and a farm development inspired by Venice, Italy. Courtesy of the Division of Rare & Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

In 1910, the widow of Potter Palmer, Bertha Honoré Palmer, acquired 140,000 acres of Florida wilderness and created a cattle ranch. Potter Palmer was a dry goods seller, a real estate magnate and a luxury hotel builder. Potter Palmer's wedding present to his new wife was the Palmer House Hotel, which was reduced to ashes in the Chicago Fire of 1871. The hotel was later rebuilt. After the Palmers moved into a large private residence in Chicago, Bertha quickly became known as the "Queen of Chicago Society." Mrs. Palmer was an active reformer who belonged to the Chicago Woman's Club, a progressive organization that lobbied for fair treatment of women and children in hospitals, prisons, poorhouses and in the neighborhoods that received little attention from city government. One of Mrs. Palmer's most notable contributions came in 1891, when she was named chairwoman of the Columbian Exposition's Board of Lady Managers. This group was charged with creating a pavilion to



The Banyan House, a historic home in Venice, 1926. Courtesy of the City of Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection.

celebrate the accomplishments of women around the world. During the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, celebrating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of the New World, Bertha Palmer served as the de facto hostess for the city, entertaining royalty and presidents.

After moving to Florida, Bertha Palmer began to effect change in Florida cattle ranching, as she became one of the first ranchers in the state to dip cattle to eliminate ticks. Palmer launched pasture improvement projects and raised experimental farms and crops including celery and watermelon. In similar fashion to Julia Tuttle of Miami, Bertha Palmer exerted her influence to secure the railroad's extension from Fruitville Junction to her property south of Robert's Bay. The railroad terminated at Venice. The 1888 post office was then moved to the Venice rail station. Citizens of the original Venice then chose Nokomis as a new name for the old Venice post office.

Later in 1916, Dr. Fred Albee, a bone specialist from New York, purchased a large amount of acreage from the Sarasota-Venice Company, a company owned by the Palmer family. Dr. Albee's acquisition included the village of Nokomis and modern Venice. Dr. Albee commissioned John Nolen, a Boston city planner, to create a Gulf Coast paradise. Other sources dispute the date of 1916, insisting instead that in 1925, Dr. F. H. Albee purchased more than 2,000 acres in the area for development of a new city. However, it seems that John Nolen was commissioned to formulate designs for the development of Nokomis and Venice

by Dr. Albee. Nevertheless, he never implemented his plan for the dream city because in 1926, Dr. Albee sold the area to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Union. It is disputed as to whether it was Dr. Albee or the Brotherhood who retained the services of John Nolen, a man considered to be a pioneer figure in American urban city planning. The Brotherhood also retained the New York firm of Walker and Gillette as supervising architects and Prentis French as the landscape architect to lay out the development.

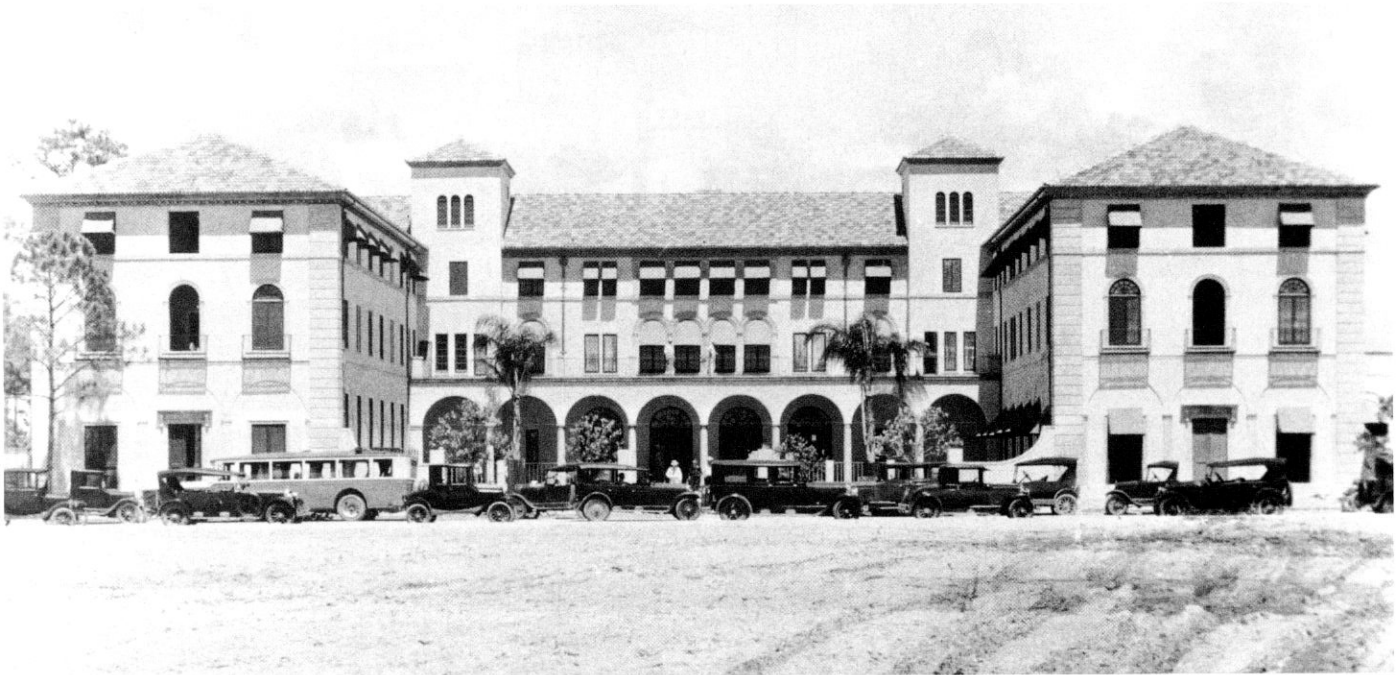
John Nolen considered the offer to design Venice as an opportunity to build from the ground up a city that would offer a balance of tourism, trade and agriculture. Nolen considered it, in his words, the "Master City Plan" of his career.

Venice was a planned resort community; the design included a city and a farm development inspired by the city of Venice, Italy. The plans created by John Nolen, along with the land, were then sold to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers during the land boom of the 1920s. At the time, the Brotherhood claimed 91,000 members in Canada and the United States. The city was constructed in the Northern Italian style and has wide avenues, schools, a playground, golf course, tennis courts, ball fields and a civic center. The city of Venice with all of its amenities quickly became a retirement haven for members of the engineers' union.

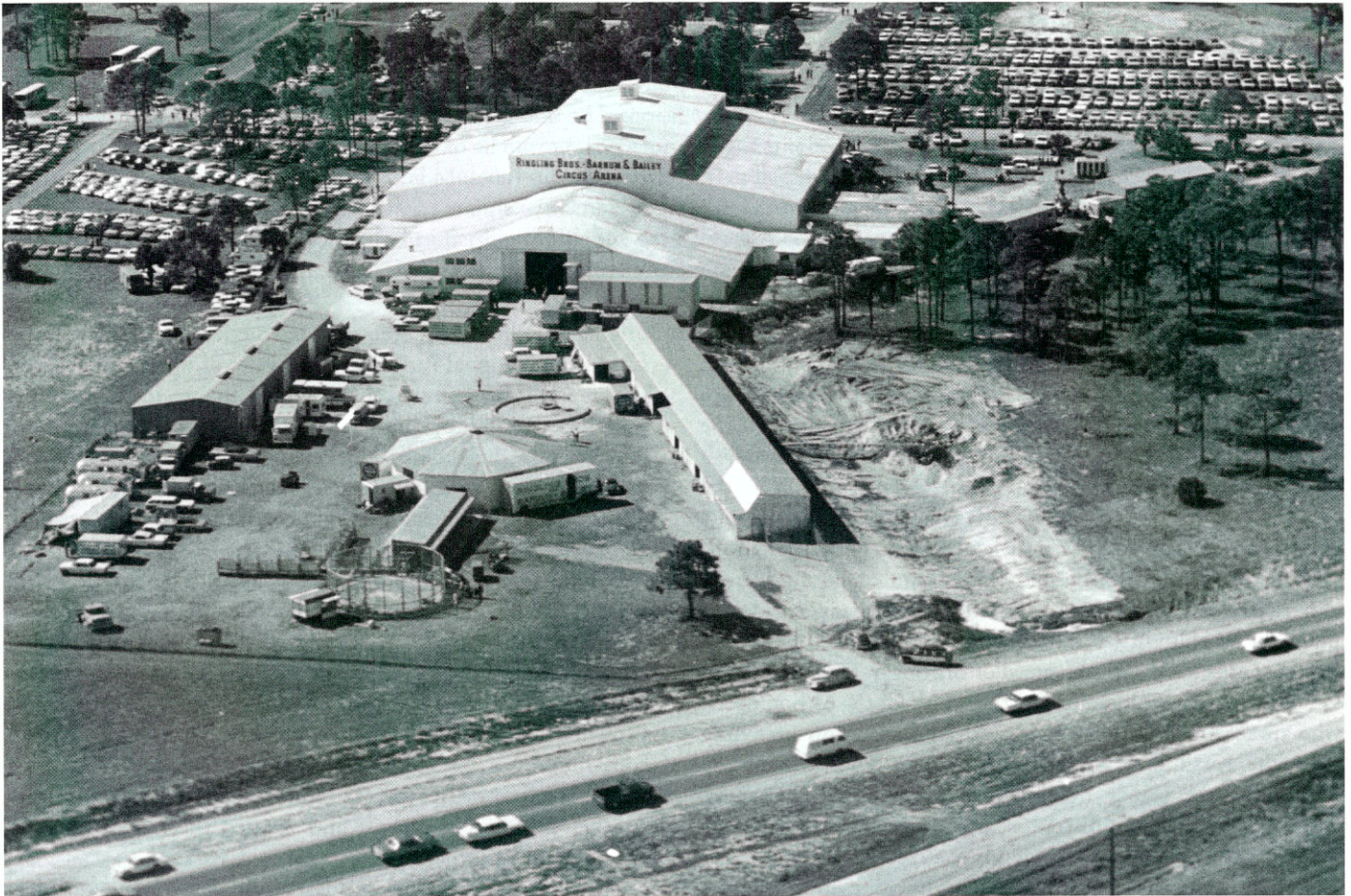
Many building projects were being completed in 1926. The Banyan House, a historic home of Florida, was

completed during this period. Additionally, the Hotel Venice, designed by John Nolen in the Northern Italian style, opened. The Hotel Venice's visitors included Thomas Edison, Ty Cobb and William J. Burns. Walker and Gillette designed a two-story Italian Renaissance building that opened in 1926.

Early Venice also contained many industries, including toy and tile manufacturers, printers and publishers, real estate agents, lumber and building companies, novelty mills, an ice plant and a marine ways machine company. The city of Venice was officially incorporated in 1927, and became a model city. One year after incorporation, Venice was connected to the Tamiami Trail, an



Top—Hotel Venice, designed by John Nolen, opened in 1926. Above—The Venice Army Base opened in 1942 and served as a training base for combat pilots, ground crews and units responsible for airplane maintenance. Photographs courtesy of the City of Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection.



Top—Venice was the winter headquarters for Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus from 1960 to 1991. Photographs courtesy of the City of Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection.

interstate from Tampa to Miami. In 1929, the city of Venice became bankrupt. With the end of the Florida land boom and the country on the verge of the Great Depression, Venice became a ghost town. The city received an economic boost in 1932 when the Kentucky Military Institute moved into the San Marco Hotel and Orange Blossom Garage buildings, and another in 1941 when the Army opened a training base at the municipal airport. The Kentucky Military Institute used its properties in Venice as its winter headquarters until 1970. They used the San Marco and Venice hotels as classrooms for students and faculty.

In 1933, Dr. Albee purchased the Park View Hotel with the intent to convert it into the Florida Medical Center, a private general hospital. Due to its rapid growth, it was transformed into a volunteer hospital with charter permitting it to be a postgraduate medical teaching institution. Nine years later, the United States Military opened an Army air base. This base served as a training base for combat pilots and ground crews and units responsible for airplane maintenance. Later, a military hospital opened. The base ceased all operations in November 1945.

Over the course of the next 15 years, Venice gained a daily newspaper, and South Venice was also developed. The Venice Hospital opened along with Venice High School and Venice

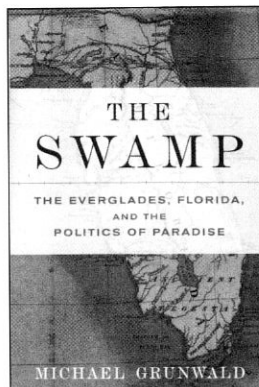
Elementary School. Venice gained a number of new residents over the years, many of whom were just winter visitors. Some of the more notable winter Floridians came in 1960 with the opening of the winter headquarters of the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus. Although the circus pitched its tent in Venice for many years, the circus held its final show at the winter headquarters in 1991.

The beauty of this city has been preserved over the years, and it has been designated by the Florida Historical Society as a Florida Main Street City. In more recent times, Venice has become known among beachcombers for a small stretch of beach named Caspersen, known for the beautiful prehistoric shark teeth that can be found washed ashore or in a few feet of water. Locals and tourists alike benefit from the long, leisurely walks along the shoreline looking for these tiny treasures. From this, Venice has been named “Shark’s Tooth Capital of the World.”—*SFH*

Tracie Dickerson is an attorney with Miami-Dade County Public Health Department.

THE SWAMP: THE EVERGLADES, FLORIDA, AND THE POLITICS OF PARADISE

by Michael Grunwald, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2006. 445 pages—**hardcover**. \$27



by Paul S. George

The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise is an impassioned study of the Everglades from its pristine stages through the present by Michael Grunwald, a *Washington Post* reporter. It is the story of America's most unique

ecosystem, of humankind's near-fatal assault on this environmental treasure, of the belated recognition of its uniqueness and value, and of the agonizing efforts in recent decades to undo the wrong visited upon the River of Grass. *The Swamp* also concerns itself with the greed of Big Sugar, the harebrained schemes and harmful actions of the Army Corps of Engineers, who are responsible for a broad swath of destruction stretching from the Kissimmee River to the southern portions of the Everglades, the greedy developers and compliant lawmakers and governmental administrators, and prescient, brave environmentalists who were responsible for the creation of Everglades National Park and for a halt in further developmental schemes for the wetlands.

Stretching 100 miles in a north-south direction and 60 miles from east to west, and initially comprised of 8 million acres, the Everglades represents the southern portion of an intricate, fragile ecosystem reaching south from a chain of lakes below Orlando through the Kissimmee River and Basin to Lake Okeechobee north of it. Lying south of the swamp is Florida Bay. Water flows almost imperceptibly from the top of the system into Florida Bay. This was the way the ecosystem operated, seemingly touched by the hand of God, characterized as it was by a mysterious precision and pragmatism enabling it to lubricate South Florida's nonpareil surface.

At least that is the way it worked till Everglades drainage, an idea that had already been around for 60 years, began in earnest from the south fork of Fort Lauderdale's New River in 1906. From that time forward, the swamp and other elements comprising the South Florida ecosystem were dealt successive blows, with each subsequent assault related to and worse than the previous one. In the wake of state-sponsored drainage came the erection of a mammoth dike over a portion of Lake Okeechobee, residential development in the former wetlands, destructive fires and the disappearance of wildlife from the swamp, flood control and the division of the Everglades into three distinct "zones" and harmful phosphorous runoffs from Big Sugar. The result was the destruction of one-half of the

original 8 million acres, the near destruction of the magnificent Everglades National Park, and the specter of water shortages for the mammoth population by then living in the former wetlands. Finally, by the late 1960s–1970s, an era rife with reform and a heightened appreciation for the environment—and with the River of Grass hanging on for dear life—Americans turned their attention toward this distressed resource and called for a reversal in direction.

Long before then, while the early stages of destruction were underway, brave environmentalists like Mary Barr Monroe, Ivy Stranahan and Ernest Coe, paved the way for the creation of Everglades National Park. Later environmentalists, including Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Dexter Lehtinen, Joe Browder and Art Marshall fought the good fight against construction of the giant jetport in Big Cypress Swamp, the transformation of the former Homestead Air Force Base into another commercial airport and secured the largest nutrient cleanup in history.

The early stages of Everglades repair, baby steps aimed at growth and water management, began in the 1970s. The process has moved forward in recent decades with the Everglades Forever Act, which aims to clean up the swamp, passed during the Clinton presidency. Additional programs for replumbing and repair are innovative, directing billions of dollars toward Everglades restoration, but they have suffered from the irreparable damage already visited upon the Everglades (how does one remove the Tamiami Trail or the hundreds of thousands of suburban homes and millions of residents located in the former swamp?), and they have been weakened, to the horror of environmentalists, by the effective lobbying efforts of Big Sugar and other businesses with huge financial stakes in the outcome of this battle over the fate of the wetlands.

Improvement has arrived in some areas of the wetlands, especially with the partial restoration of the Kissimmee River. But the future of the Everglades and other parts of South Florida remains imperiled and uncertain.

Grunwald's study is exhaustively researched, written with verve and passion and characterized by clarity in its explanation of technical matters. The definitive work on the topic of the Everglades ecosystem, *The Swamp* offers readers a deep sense of wonderment for the majesty of the region's ecosystem, along with a feeling of heartbreak for the manner in which it has been mishandled. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the past—as well as the future—of South Florida.

New Friends, Old Friends—Good Friends

During the holidays we remember our special friends in the community, those who actively support us as we strive to preserve South Florida's heritage. We remember you, the members of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. On behalf of the staff and the Board of Trustees, we extend our very best wishes to all our members for a bright and beautiful holiday season and a very Happy New Year.

The following list highlights Historical Museum supporters who either became new members or reinstated their membership from June 2 to October 27, 2006. This is not a complete membership list. It is simply a way of acknowledging those who have chosen to make the museum their own through membership during the dates listed. A complete membership list will appear in *Tequesta* 2006.

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Museum e-Calendar

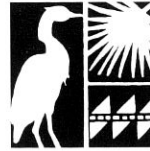
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Boca Raton Historical Society Town Hall, 71 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton—561.395.6766. The Boca Raton Historical Society operates a museum and gift shop at the old town hall. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 10 am–4 pm.



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.



109 Central Avenue, Clewiston, FL 33440

Clewiston Museum, 109 Central Avenue, Clewiston—863.983.2870. The Clewiston Museum, founded in 1986, reflects the history and heritage of Clewiston and eastern Hendry County. The museum includes a 60-seat theater with historical video presentations and exhibits depicting artifacts and narratives about our development from 1915. Research hours are by appointment. The Clewiston Museum is open 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday (closed on major holidays) and arrangements can be made for weekend visits by groups. Admission is \$4 (adults), \$3 (seniors), and \$2 (students). Group rates are available.



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.

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Historical Museum of Southern Florida

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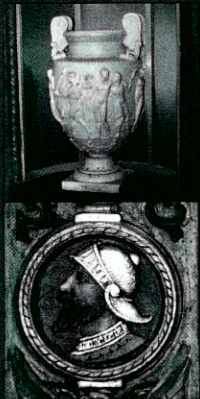


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Participating institutions include:

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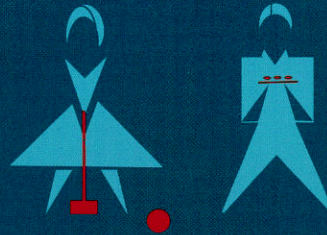
During this month-long program, membership at any one of these participating museums will work as a free pass to any of the other museums. Whether you just joined or have been a member for years, this is an incredible opportunity to museum hop and experience the Miami cultural scene.

The month will be punctuated by a vast range of programming at each of the institutions, including exhibitions, cocktail hours, family days, and educational lectures. Contact a participating museum for details.

Historical Museum of Southern Florida



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Caption—View of Port Royal and Kingston Harbour in the island of Jamaica, 1782. HMSF 2004-332-1.



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