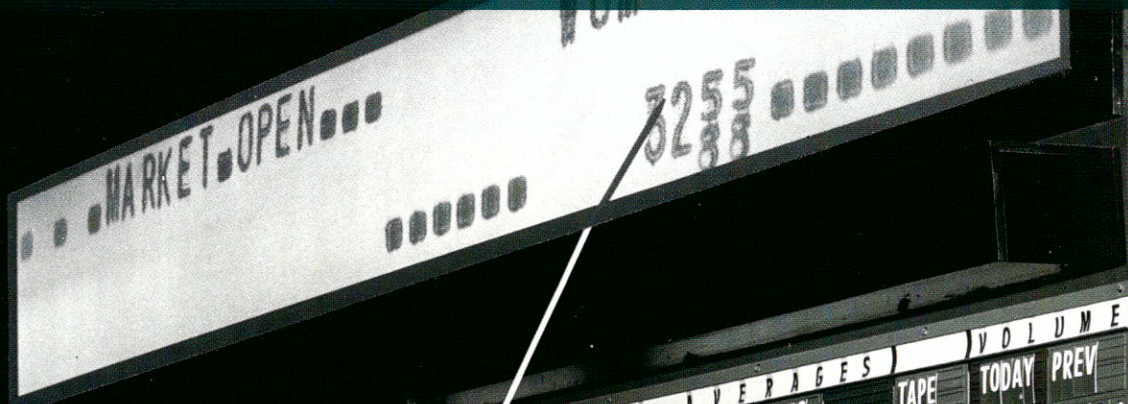


# South Florida History

HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

VOLUME 37, NO 1, 2009

\$4.00



## GIVING BACK TO MIAMI: THE HERTZ FAMILY AND THE MAGIC CITY

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

BLACK CROSSROADS

MICHAEL OXAR:

AN EARLY PIONEER OF MIAMI

ARCH CREEK PARK

LT. ALEXANDER RAMSEY NININGER, JR.





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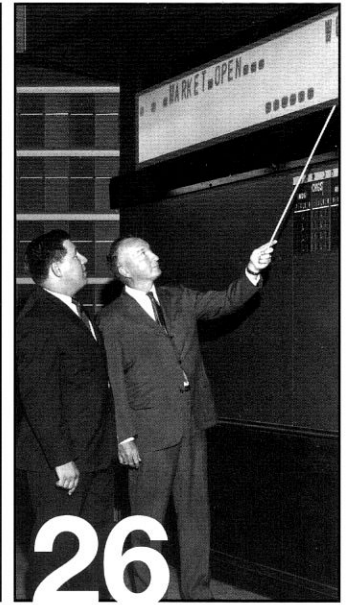
101 W Flagler St Downtown Miami 305.375.1492 [www.hmsf.org](http://www.hmsf.org)



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## FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Summers in Miami are a time when many flock to the sandy beaches, parks and local attractions, or run indoors to beat the heat in movie theatres and shopping malls. Not to sound like a commercial but Miami has something for everyone, tourists, and residents alike. It is no wonder that no two people describe our magical city the same way.

One writer recently described Miami as “one of America’s most colorful and beguiling” areas. Its *history* is just as “beguiling.” This issue of *South Florida History* magazine speaks to the great variety of historical experiences that set our region apart from other areas.

For the past few months, we have continued the momentum garnered from the opening of the critically acclaimed exhibition, *Black Crossroads: The African Diaspora in Miami*.

Joanne Hyppolite, Ph.D., Chief Curator of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, describes in this issue the compelling story of Greater Miami’s rich African American history. As curator of *Black Crossroads*, Dr. Hyppolite discovered in the process of researching historical data for the exhibition, many little known elements of this story.

With “Arch Creek Park,” Mary Oxar has written beautifully of Arch Creek, a natural phenomenon, featuring a picturesque stream and a one-of-a-kind natural oolite bridge (now gone) surrounded by a rich bower of oaks in northeast Miami-Dade County, that gave rise to a fascinating homesteading community. Characterized by its magnificent oaks and other subtropical trees, Arch Creek Park is maintained by Miami-Dade County’s Park and Recreation Department and managed by the Arch Creek Park Trust.

Mary Oxar’s daughter, Hannah Grace Oxar, a fifth generation Miamian and the scion of a German homesteading family, which arrived in Miami in the mid-nineteenth century, has contributed “Michael Oxar: An Early Pioneer of Miami.” This article examines the little-known accomplishments of a farming family living in the area of today’s Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. One needs only to learn of this pioneering family to appreciate how dramatically Miami has transformed itself into an urban giant in a short period.

Mary Zakis, a longtime Miamian residing today in the Kendall area, provides a deep insight into the short, heroic life of Fort Lauderdale’s Sandy Nininger. Fort Lauderdale’s “Lieutenant Alexander Ramsay “Sandy” Nininger: A Hero’s Story” recounts the life of a young boy raised in the small riverine community of Fort Lauderdale in the early decades of the twentieth century. Nininger would later graduate from West Point and become America’s first Congressional Medal of Honor winner in World War II for a superhuman fight against a brutal Japanese onslaught in the early weeks of the Pacific war. All three of the above articles were essays emanating from my Miami/South Florida History classes at Miami Dade College. Mary and Hannah Grace Oxar’s contributions represent a “first” for *South Florida History*, since we are unaware of any previous number containing articles contributed by a mother-daughter tandem.

In “Giving Back To Miami: The Hertz Family and the Magic City,” I profile the Hertz family, namely Arthur, Linda, and sons Stephen and Andrew, who have contributed mightily to our community for more than a half century. Their accomplishments along with their selflessness in making this slice of the subtropics a better place for all of us are applauded. This issue’s book review comes to us from Joe Knetsch, a prolific author with a doctorate in history from Florida State University. He reviews, *Letters from Linton*, Charles Hofman, editor. Linton, today’s Delray Beach, was a late nineteenth century farming community whose beginnings are traced to the entry of Henry M. Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railway into the region in the mid-1890s. Knetsch, historian in the Florida Department of Natural Resources, examines a collection of letters from Adolf and Anna Hofman, two Linton pioneers, to relatives in Germany. Charles Hofman, their grandson, put the missives in a highly readable order. The challenges of pioneering in the wilds of southeast Florida, vividly described in the letters and illustrations from the archival collections of the Delray Beach Historical Society, embellish the narrative.

We hope you continue to enjoy your summer, wherever you may be vacationing and make sure that you are accompanied by *South Florida History*. I hope that you enjoy this issue as much as we have delighted in preparing it for publication.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## SOUTH FLORIDA HISTORY

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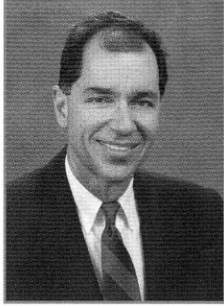
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**Paul S. George, Ph.D.**

For two decades, Dr. George has toured his way to local, national and international acclaim with his continuing series of historic tours around South Florida. A Miami native, prolific author and Miami Dade College professor, he has gained fame for his uncanny ability to recall the most impressive details about the people and places that make the region so unique. He is also the editor-in-chief of *South Florida History*.



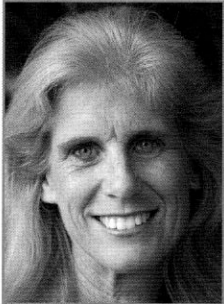
**Joanne Hyppolite, Ph.D.**

“History provides all of us with the ‘big picture’ for understanding our lives and our place in particular moments in time,” is the broad perspective that Dr. Joanne Hyppolite strives for as Chief Curator at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. Dr. Hyppolite oversees the museum’s exhibitions and collections department and curated the current exhibition, *Black Crossroads: The African Diaspora in Miami*.



**Hannah Grace Oxar**

The daughter of Mary Oxar, Hannah Grace Oxar is a native Miamian. She is a graduate of the New World School of the Arts where her father is an instructor. Hannah Grace was a harpist at the school. Presently, she is a student at Florida International University. As a fifth generation Miamian, Hannah has long maintained an interest in her rich family history. This article is a result of that interest.



**Mary Oxar**

A native of South Dakota, Mary Oxar married into one of Miami’s earliest families a quarter century ago. She is a teacher at the Holy Cross Day School and is the mother of four children. For many years she toured the area with her fourth grade classes, explaining its rich history to them.



**Mary Zakis**

A longtime Miamian, Mary Zakis taught history in Miami-Dade County Public Schools for three decades. Now retired, she maintains an insatiable interest in history. Mary’s profound curiosity over the bronze statue of a war hero on the Fort Lauderdale Riverwalk drew her to write the profile on Lt. “Sandy” Nininger.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT



As summer draws to a near end and we welcome the fall season, it is a pleasure to briefly highlight a few of our significant endeavors of the past months.

**Re-Branding Initiatives.** 2010 marks a significant milestone for our institution and organization. We will soon celebrate 70 years of service. In preparation for next year's celebration, earlier this year, we launched a re-branding campaign. This re-branding initiative will allow us to embrace a new name, brand identity, and re-launch us for future ambitions.

Exciting times are ahead for the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF) next year. As we anticipate our

70th anniversary, reflect on the past and look toward the future, it is without question that the founders of the Historical Association of Southern Florida (HASF) and the museum have seen their dream of a pre-eminent history museum come into fruition.

Our founding philosophy of "telling the stories" has served us well throughout the years and will continue to be the cornerstone of this institution. These re-branding efforts are a natural evolution and afford us with the opportunity to re-position and reinforce our status within the community. It will also serve to support the museum's expansion plans and form a significant part of a broader strategy. There has been a lot of hard work and I want to thank the combined efforts and generous support of our trustees, members, donors, staff, and community partners throughout this process.

**Miami Circle.** Earlier this year, in January, we received the news from the U.S. Department of Interior that the Miami Circle had become the 41st National Historic Landmark in the State of Florida. This is a remarkable achievement and marks significant progress since we executed the sublease agreement to manage the Circle in 2008 with the State of Florida.

**69th Annual Membership Meeting.** We honored the outgoing trustees and welcomed new board members at the 69th Annual Membership Meeting held April 23. Over 125 members and guests attended the meeting that included a retrospective discussion moderated by Resident Historian Dr. Paul George, and special guests' included former HMSF Chair of the Board and author Arva Moore Parks, founder of the Black Archives Dr. Dorothy Fields Jenkins and founding Executive Director and Curator of the Jewish Museum of Florida Marcia Jo Zerivitz.

**New Exhibits.** The new exhibition season was launched in March with the opening of *Black Crossroads: The African Diaspora in Miami*. The season has been marked with lectures, special events, historic tours, and educational programs that explore the profound impact blacks have had on the City of Miami. This exhibition features photographs, objects, oral histories and film footage spanning the over 100 year history of Blacks from the American South, the Caribbean, and Africa. The companion exhibition *Black Freedom in Florida 1700-1865*, now on display, is a precursor to the history told by *Black Crossroads*. It examines how Florida functioned as a unique haven for freedom-seeking blacks from 1700 to 1865.

I want to extend to you a personal invitation to join us throughout the summer and fall to experience thoughtful exhibitions and educational programming as we continue to strive to provide tailor-made, unique experiences that connect us with our region's diverse and rich history.

We look forward to sharing more exciting news in the months ahead.

  
PRESIDENT/CEO

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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.



# AUGUST–OCTOBER 2009

## AUGUST

**Brown Bag Breaks:**  
**Plant Essential Oils and Related Herbs in Today's Health Care**  
 Tuesday, August 4  
 12-1 PM

**Family Fun Day:**  
**Hurricane History 101**  
 Saturday, August 8  
 12- 4 PM

**Miami Circle Groundbreaking Ceremony**  
 Friday, August 14  
 5 PM

**Members:**  
**Curator's Cabinet Behind-the-Scenes Tour**  
 Thursday, August 20  
 6 PM

## SEPTEMBER

**Brown Bag Breaks:**  
**Digging Up Our Past with Michele Williams, Ph.D., RPA**  
 Tuesday, September 1  
 12-1 PM

**Celebrating Lincoln's Bicentennial Lincoln Reading: *Team of Rivals* moderated by former *Miami Herald* publisher David Lawrence, Jr.**  
 Books and Books  
 265 Aragon Ave.  
 Thursday, September 10  
 7-9 PM

**Family Fun Day:**  
**Pre-Columbian Fun**  
 Saturday, September 12  
 12 PM - 4 PM

**Historic Tour:**  
**Family Metromover Tour**  
 Saturday, September 12  
 10 AM - 12 PM

**Historic Lecture:**  
**The Legend of Black Caesar: South Florida Pirates**  
 Sunday, September 13  
 2-4 PM

**Educator's Night Reception**  
 Thursday, September 17  
 5 PM

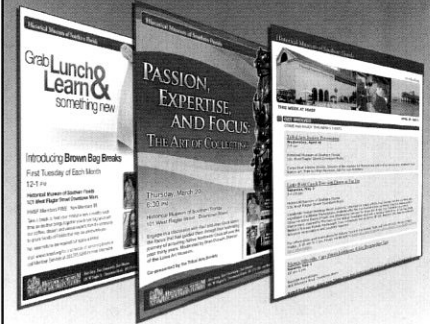
**Explore History & Culture:**  
**Saving Our History: The Preservation of Black Historic Sites**  
 Thursday, September 17  
 6:30 PM

**Historic Tour:**  
**Bird's Eye Black History Metromover Tour and Lecture**  
 Sunday, September 20  
 12-2 PM

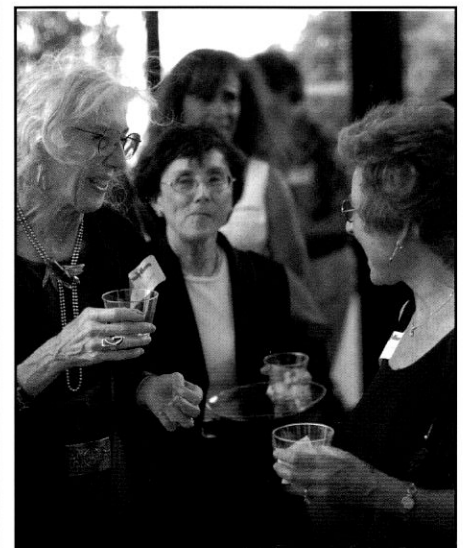
**11 JCHS Symposium:**  
**Early Hispanic Lawyers and Judges**  
 Wednesday, September 30  
 6:30 PM

**Tropees:**  
**Florida Marlins Game**  
 Saturday, September 26  
 5 PM TAILGATING PARTY  
 7 PM GAME

*Don't be left in the dark between issues!*



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 CALL MEMBER SERVICES  
 305.375.5356.



## SEPTEMBER CONTINUED

### Historic Tour:

#### Freedom Tower Exploration Walking Tour

Saturday, September 26

10 AM - 12 PM

### Historic Tour:

#### Miami River Boat Tour

Sunday, September 27

10 AM - 1 PM

## OCTOBER

### Celebrating Lincoln's Bicentennial Lincoln Reading: *Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln* moderated by Bernita King, adjunct professor of history at Miami Dade College

Books & Books

265 Aragon Ave

Thursday, October 1

7-9 PM

### Historic Tour:

#### Little Havana Walk and Lunch

Saturday, October 3

10 AM - 1 PM

### Historic Tour:

#### Bay Harbor Islands MiMo Walk

NEW

Sunday, October 4

10 AM - 1 PM

### Brown Bag Breaks:

#### Lunch with an Afro-Peruvian Beat

Tuesday, October 6

12-1 PM

### Historic Tour:

#### Lincoln Road Walking Tour

Saturday, October 10

10-12 PM

### Historic Tour:

#### Pinecrest Bike Tour

Sunday, October 11

9-11 AM

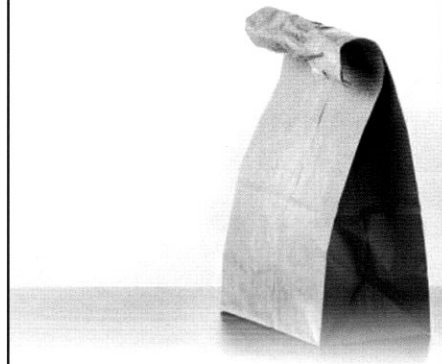
### Celebrating Lincoln's Bicentennial

#### Lincoln Reading: *A. Lincoln* moderated by Alberto Ibarguen, former publisher of the *Miami Herald* and now president of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Historical Museum of Southern Florida

Tuesday, October 27

7-9 PM



Grab your  
**Lunch  
& Learn**  
something new

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**Brown Bag Breaks**

First Tuesday of  
Each Month  
12-1 PM

Historical Museum of Southern Florida  
101 West Flagler Street Downtown Miami

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Becky Smith, Alyce Robertson and Arva Moore Parks review historic photographs at the Research Center, HMSF, 1994-256-84.

## BECKY SMITH CELEBRATES THIRTY FIVE YEARS AT THE MUSEUM

By Marcia J. Kanner



Becky Smith, Curator of Research Materials.

In 1974, armed with her newly-acquired graduate degree in Library Science, Rebecca A. Smith (Becky) became the Librarian for the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF). She arrived midway in the institution's 70 year history and came to know and work with many of the founders of the Association, who inspired her dedication and love for preserving the area's history.

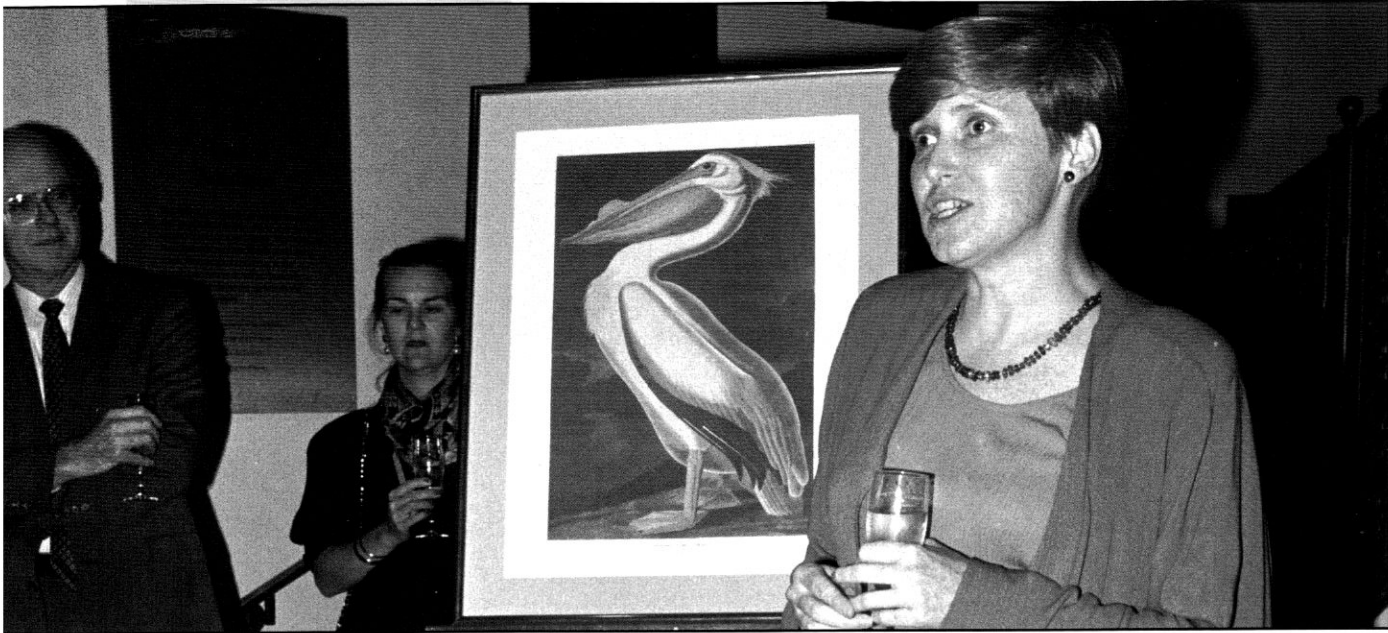
Randy Nimnicht, former HMSF President & CEO recalls Becky's "fast walk of enthusiasm. People would come into the library and ask a question and Becky would jump up (often to the astonishment of the researcher) and go charging off full speed to lay her hands on the source. What a wonderful attitude!"

As Curator of Research Materials, Becky has been responsible for the growth and development of the Charlton W. Tebeau Library of Florida History. She has implemented a professional library and archives, digitized the cataloguing system, and helped the photographic collection grow from a few thousand images to over 1 million. She's helped develop and install over 30 exhibitions and has curated several. Becky helped create the acclaimed *Reclaiming the Everglades*, a Library of Congress American Memory Project. She was the first person to recognize the possibilities inherent in the Internet and was our original "web goddess." Traffic to the museum's website has increased exponentially and has brought broad national and international exposure to the collection

Becky has always been protective of the collection. Nimnicht recalls a visit from trustees of a foundation issuing grants for conservation activities. They asked Becky to describe the most common problems she faced. "Becky said 'scotch tape'." I explained to Becky that the foundation's considerable wealth was based on gifts from heirs of 3M stock, whose flagship product was, of course, scotch tape. Becky's blush was truly amazing. It matched her beautiful hair. Oh yes! We got the grant."



## SPOTLIGHT ON



Becky Smith celebrates the museum's acquisition of the John J. Audubon's *Birds of America* prints.

Becky's good friend and colleague, Sam Boldrick, recently retired manager of the Miami-Dade Public Library's Florida Collection and current President of the Florida Historical Society, recalls "Becky and I have been trading good reference questions (the kind that are really a challenge) for 30 years. When I was working at the Library, people would call in and ask me a question, and then they'd call Becky and ask her to see if we both gave the same answer. Becky and I would warn each other of certain "special questions" on the extension phones, which my library colleagues called our "hot line." Even in my retirement we trade our little "gems."

For Dawn Hugh, Archives Manager, and the person who has worked most closely with her for 25 of the last 35 years, "Becky's unwavering dedication and passion for the museum has not diminished over the years. She takes great pride in maintaining our position as one of the prime institutions of learning in the community. As soon as it became inevitable that museums would be moving into the world of online accessibility, Becky secured funding and we became one of the first history museums in the nation to have its archives and manuscripts catalogue available to the public via the web. Becky's knowledge of South Florida and the museum's history makes her the sounding board for both staff and public. Nothing delights her more than showing new staff members the ropes or helping a hapless reporter understand that the Seven Mile Bridge does not connect Key West with the mainland.

So, to Becky Smith, our institutional memory, we say thank you for 35 wonderful years. Perhaps Joanne Hyppolite, Ph.D., HMSF Chief Curator sums it up best. "It would be hard to find someone in today's market with the breadth and depth of experience that Becky has. She's archivist, librarian, curator, historian, graphic designer, webpage developer, and exhibit production guru all rolled up into one. And she's passionate about the work. I don't know what we'd do without her."

-SFH





# BLACK CROSSROADS THE AFRICAN DIASPORA IN MIAMI

BY JOANNE HYPPOLITE, PH.D.

On display in the museum's main temporary gallery this year is *Black Crossroads: The African Diaspora in Miami* – an exhibition that explores the impact Blacks from the American South, the Caribbean, Latin America and Africa have had on the city of Miami. In this article, I offer a general overview of the origins of this community – origins which date back to the late 1800s and add another layer to Miami's important role as a gateway city.

## **The Term Diaspora**

The term Diaspora refers to the condition of having been born in one country and having left it to live elsewhere. While this article focuses on the Black experience, being part of a Diaspora is not unique to any individual or group. The word Diaspora is an old one, referring originally to the dispersal of the Jews to various parts of the world from Babylon, as described in the Bible. In contemporary discourse, the word Diaspora has maintained its association with dispersal but broadened its cultural and national affiliations. One can use the term Diaspora to refer to the experiences of

migration and exile by any ethnic and cultural group so that it is possible today to speak of an Asian Diaspora, an Indian Diaspora, and an African or Black Diaspora.

The emergence of the African or Black Diaspora in the Western hemisphere is linked to one particular history of dispersal: the enforced transportation of an estimated 12 million people from Africa to the New World through the transatlantic slave trade between 1520 and 1860. It is this dispersal and the new fusions made with the land and the people of the regions they were moved to that has resulted in the formation of New World Black cultures and nations such as Jamaica, Cuba, Brazil, and in the United States – African Americans.

The term Black or African Diaspora is also linked to type of consciousness among its members of a shared beginning and a shared set of pervasive social conditions they experience internationally. Black political movements such as Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), as well as the Pan-African Congress convened in 1900 by

# FEATURES



Name:  
Dana Dorsey

Place of birth:  
Quitman, GA

Moved to Miami in:  
1897

Pull factor:  
Economic Opportunity



Name:  
Yvonne Elaine Hill

Place of birth:  
Jamaica

Moved to Miami in:  
1980s

Pull factor:  
Family

W.E.B. Du Bois of the United States and Henry Sylvester Williams of Trinidad have all contributed to the development of an awareness among the different groups included in the Black Diaspora that they share “a common origin” and a “common set of conditions in their diverse homelands resulting from their social, economic, and political marginalization largely on the basis of their color.” Because of these movements, Black or African Diaspora is now a term associated with a sentiment of solidarity and with efforts made through the political and international organizations they have founded to end oppressive conditions and affect change in international public policies toward Africa and the Caribbean. In the past fifty years, the application of the term Black Diaspora has become even more broad as it has shifted to accommodate new generations of Black migrations, so that it is now possible to speak of a large Caribbean Diaspora or Latin American Diaspora or, more specifically, a Haitian Diaspora.

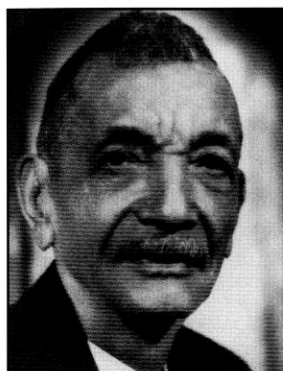
### Miami’s African Diaspora

Miami’s Black population today is a composite of members of the African Diaspora and the New World cultures created from it. This group includes significant numbers of Black Caribbeans such as Trinidadians and Jamaicans, Latin Americans such as Afro-Cubans and Afro-Columbians, African Americans (defined here as those Blacks whose enslaved ancestors were transported and settled in the United States) and a small but growing population of Africans from

countries such as Nigeria and Ghana. Together these groups make up close to 20 percent of Miami-Dade county’s population, making it the second largest racial group in the city and the most diverse Black population in the United States outside of New York.

### Push and Pull Factors

Immigration scholars often divide the factors that cause individuals and groups to emigrate from one country to another into push and pull categories. A push factor can be an event, such as a civil war, which forces a person to leave their homeland for their own safety. Pull factors are circumstances or conditions in another country that draw an individual to leave their homeland. Member of Miami’s Black Diaspora have come to live in Miami for many of the same pull factors that have and continue to attract other groups: geographic proximity to the Caribbean and Latin-America, the warm climate and the presence of other family members in the area. One particularly significant and enduring pull factor, however, has been the economic opportunity available in South Florida. In the mid 1800s, Bahamian seamen found their way to Florida’s southernmost shores, where they worked as salvagers and wreckers. Other Bahamians settled in Key West, where they worked in trades such as sponging and carpentry. By the 1880s, a significant number of Bahamians had begun settling in Coconut Grove and Miami, where they were actively employed as laborers by the prominent white fami-



Name:  
E.F.W. Stirrup

Place of birth:  
Governor’s Harbor Island,  
Bahamas

Moved to Miami in:  
1890s

Pull factor:  
Economic Opportunity



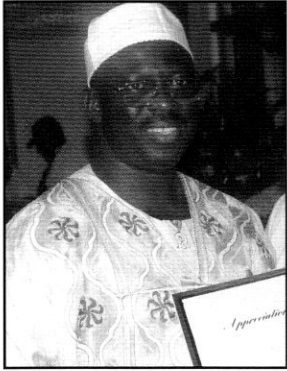
Name:  
Claire Nassar

Place of birth:  
Haiti

Moved to Miami in:  
1965

Pull factor:  
Economic Opportunity





Name:  
George Sock

Place of birth:  
Nigeria, West Africa

Moved to Miami in:  
1980s

Pull factor:  
Education

lies and farmers in the area. African Americans from southern states such as Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina and parts of Florida soon joined them, many as employees of Florida railroad developer Henry Flagler's real estate and railroad construction crews. This movement of African Americans south of the South and north of the Caribbean reflects a migration pattern in the Post-Reconstruction United States that is unique to Florida and that has received little recognition save from a few scholars of South Florida history.

Economic opportunity remained an important pull factor for later generations of Black immigrants. Haitian individuals such as Claire Nassar began arriving in the 1960s where she found work as a seamstress in the city's burgeoning garment industry. Claire Nassar would become one of the first two people to purchase a home in the area known as Little Haiti – a home which she still occupies today. During the 1970s, medical professionals began moving from Jamaica to Miami to take advantage of higher wages in the medical field. Miami would soon become the primary immigration site for Jamaicans, surpassing both England and New York, where earlier generations of Jamaicans had previously settled. Economic opportunity has also played a central force in attracting the thousands of immigrants from African countries such as who have settled in Miami. Many, such as George Sock and Fidelis Ezewike who both came to Miami in the 1980s from The Gambia and Nigeria, came first to attend college and university in Miami and stayed because of the greater economic opportunity available here.

Miami's African Diaspora has come full circle with the growing presence of Africans in the city. Though small in number, their addition to the convergence of African Americans, Haitians, Jamaicans, Afro-Cubans, and many other Black cultures represented in the area has brought this particular Diaspora back into geographic proximity again. Very few places in the world can claim this attribute.

- SFH

## A SNAPSHOT BLACK IMMIGRANTS AND MIGRANTS IN MIAMI: 1870S-1980S

### 1840s

A community of enslaved blacks owned by William English live on property bordering Miami River for several years. They eventually move with English to California.

### 1870s

African Americans from South Carolina settle in Lemon City where they work largely in the citrus industry for white farmers.

### 1880s

A black community in Coconut Grove develops after Bahamian laborers arrive in the area to begin working at the Peacock Inn.

### 1890s

An African American work crew employed by Henry Flagler arrives in Miami to begin building two of the area's first hotels. African Americans also help lay the railroad tracks from West Palm Beach to Miami and later to Key West, swelling their numbers in the area.

### 1910s

An estimated 42 percent of Miami's 5,000 plus population is black. Most are laborers working in the city's agricultural, construction and tourism field.

### 1940s

Large numbers of Jamaican migrant laborers are processed in Overtown before being moved to labor camps in the Lake Okeechobee region.

### 1960s

Haitians begin arriving in Miami both to attend university and to work in the tourism and garment industries. Some begin buying homes and settling permanently in the Lemon City area, which will later become known as Little Haiti.

### 1970s

A small community of middle-class Jamaicans develops in South and North Dade. Many are medical professionals seeking better work opportunities in their field. Their number grow to over 31,000 in Miami-Dade County by 2004.

More African students from countries such as Nigeria begin attending college and universities in Miami. In 1978 they form the Nigerian Students Association at the University of Miami. The organization's goals included helping Nigerian students adapt to their new surroundings and educating others about Nigeria and Africa.

Waves of Haitian immigrants begin arriving in Miami by boat and continue to do so for successive decades. They are joined by the Haitians who had previously settled in states such as New York, swelling the population to its present day number of over 110,000 in Miami-Dade County alone.

### 1980s

An estimated 22 percent of the Cubans arriving through the Mariel Boat Lift passengers are Afro-Cubans.

# Michael Oxar: An E

By Hann



There are many well-known Miami pioneers with big dreams, such as the Brickells, Flagler, Tuttle, Wagner... among others, who helped make the City of Miami what it is today. There were also many other hardworking, daring, and courageous pioneers such as my great-great grandfather Michael Axer, who despite the hardships of living in a subtropical, mosquito infested wilderness, contributed greatly to the birth of Miami.

Michael Axer was born around 1825. During his youth he lived in Darmstadt, Germany. Within the first two decades of Michael's life, he escaped Germany to avoid being drafted into the German military with the prospects of fighting in a bloody war raging in Germany at the time. He secretly escaped Germany by swimming across the Rhine River before becoming a stow-away on a trans-Atlantic ship headed for North America.

Soon after arriving in North America, Michael found himself, in the mid-19th century, earning a living as a baker in Key West, the young state's most important city. He later moved to Miami, a tiny settlement on the river by the same name. There he worked at a comptie or coontie starch mill on the

Miami River for George Washington Ferguson. The starch, which was derived from a cycad plant, was sold under the popular name of Arrow Root starch.

In the mid-1800s, Michael moved to the small cattle town of Helena, Texas. In the early 1860s, with the nation mired in Civil War, residents of Helena became alarmed over the threat of an invasion by a Union Army. Accordingly, they organized a home guard unit named "The Helena Guards of Mounted Riflemen." Michael enlisted as Private William Oxler, which was one of his many name changes during his life.

In June 1861, Michael was assigned to the 29<sup>th</sup> brigade of Texas State Troops under the command of Captain Charles A. Russell. He was issued a revolver, a rifle, and a new uniform. As a member of the Texas State Troopers, Michael was transferred to Camp Laguna on June 30, 1861. Three months later, in September 1861, he was ordered to Fort Brown, near Brownsville, Texas, where he mustered out of service following a "Mustering Out" payment of \$53.65. His name suddenly appears on the Company's "Mustering Out" roster...as William Oxer!

Pictured above: Aerial View of Miami River, circa 1905. HMSF X-0180-1.



# Early Pioneer of Miami

Grace Oxar



On the following day, September 14, 1861, at the age of 22, Michael became a member of Captain Mat Noland's Company G of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Cavalry. He volunteered one year of service with the Confederate States of America. The Confederate Army paid him \$12.40 for the use of his horse, which was above regular monthly private pay of \$11. In 1862 at Point Isabel, near Comingsville, Texas, Private William Oxar was given \$50.00 for re-enlisting for the remainder of the war.

At the time of the Confederate surrender in the spring of 1865, Michael "William" was a Union prisoner in Galveston, Texas. He was released on June 21, 1865. His parole document listed him as "Private William Oxar, CSA," a member of Company K, 8<sup>th</sup> regiment.

After the war, Michael became a citizen of the United States in Key West. A record of his naturalization on November 30, 1866, indicates that his name was changed to Michael Axar. Two years after becoming an American citizen, Michael married a widow, Elizabeth "Lizzy" Sullivan, 14 years his junior and the mother of two daughters, Susan Annie and Mary Ann. Elizabeth's daughters did not live with them, but,

instead, resided with the family of William H. Gleason, friends of the Oxars, who lived nearby on Biscayne Bay.

Michael and Elizabeth Oxar began farming on Biscayne Bay in 1870 on a 143 acre homestead along the water. The land (located on Lot No. 2, Section 36 Township 53 South of Range 41 East and Fractional Section, which was located in and around today's Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County) was on high ground and considered very desirable for farming. When Michael purchased his land in 1870, he gave his name as Michael Axar, but one of the county clerks in Tallahassee made a mistake and wrote his name as Michael Oxar. Since he did not feel like fixing the mistake, he left the spelling alone. "Oxar" remains the spelling of the family name.

Together Michael and Elizabeth had three children: Charles Edward (June 6, 1875), Jennie Margaret (October 18, 1878), and Martha L. (1919). Martha died in 1920, but Charles and Jennie lived into adulthood. The Oxar family lived in a two story house, just 50 yards west of Biscayne Bay on today's Northeast 13<sup>th</sup> Street.



Confederate Grave marker for Michael Oxar located in the Miami City Cemetery.

To support his family Michael farmed, fished, hunted, and manufactured starch from his own comptie root mill that he and a friend built. He traded, sold, or used the starch for his own personal use. Michael shipped this starch to Key West for delivery to market every six weeks. The comptie starch drew Seminole Indians to Michael's house for the purpose of trade. The Seminoles even slept on Michael's porch and ate dinner with the Oxar family.

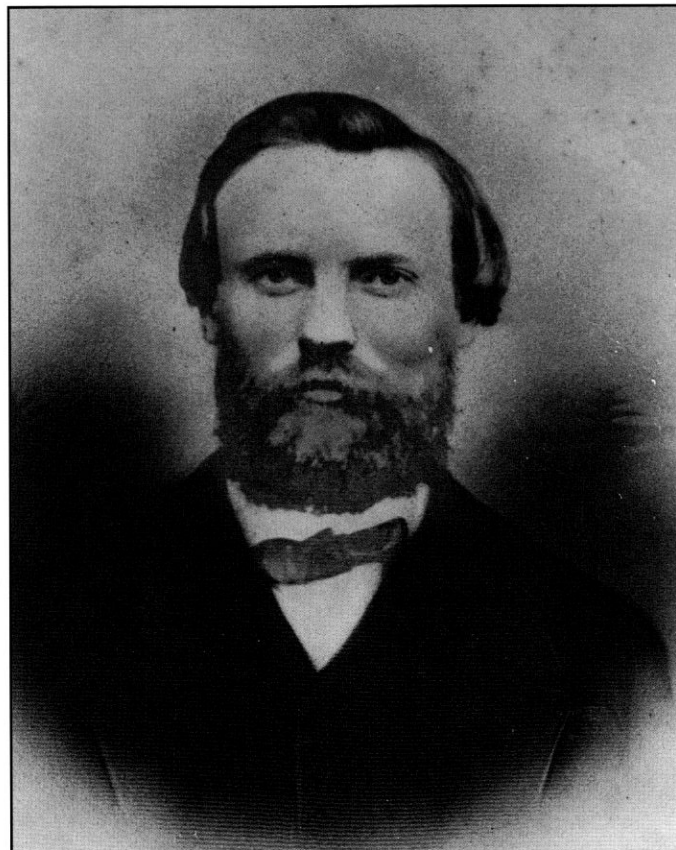
Michael's robust physique and knowledge of the challenging terrain of southeast Florida led to his selection as one of the early barefoot mailmen. By the late 1860s, he was carrying the mail between the Jupiter Inlet and Fort Dallas on the Miami River, a trek covering 90 miles. Later, between 1885 and 1892, another group of barefoot mailmen delivered the mail between Lake Worth in today's Palm Beach County and the mouth of the Miami River, winning fame decades later in Theodore Pratt's book, *The Barefoot Mailman*.

During his trip Michael only carried needed supplies such as shoes and food. Where the sand was firmer along the water's edge with his pant legs rolled up he would throw his shoes over his shoulders to preserve them. To conserve on weight he would collect most of his food from the land because in South Florida there are lots of fruit trees, berries, coconut trees, and marine life to live on. Michael did not always trav-

el alone; sometimes he would have paid company that he would lead through the woods and swamps. Those accompanying him would need to keep up with his long strides.

As the years progressed good roads were built along with more post offices. By the early 1890s, the barefoot mailman was out of business, replaced by the Bay Biscayne stage line. However, the legacy of the barefoot mailman has not been forgotten. In the West Palm Beach post office there is a six piece mural depicting the route of the barefoot mailman. There is also a plaque on Haulover Beach dedicated to the memory of the barefoot mailman. The Boy Scouts of Broward County each year replicate his trek through the lengthy coastline of that county.

Michael was not only known as the barefoot mailman, but also as a neighbor and friend one could always count on. On more than one occasion, Michael returned a favor by awarding the person involved in the action a piece of his land! Michael believed in education so he gave a piece of land away so a school house could be built upon it. It is believed that he awarded portions of his land to more than 30 persons.



William H. Gleason was a prominent landowner and politician. He served briefly as Florida's second Lieutenant Governor in 1868. HMSF, X-1806-1.





Barefoot Mailman mural at West Palm Beach post office. HMSF X-0485-2.

Like Julia Tuttle and the Brickells, who were instrumental in bringing Henry Flagler and his Florida East Coast Railway to Miami, Michael was an early promoter of the area, selling a large swath of land to Flagler for a mere dollar. He also sold a parcel of his homestead to Mary Brickell.

As Michael grew older, his land became the host site for the homes of his children, grandchildren, and many friends. Later, the Oxar homestead would be occupied by prominent landmarks: the Sears tower, the Northside Technical School, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, Dade County Public Schools' administrative building, the *Miami Herald* building, the former Omni Mall, and the massive building complex embracing the waterfront from Northeast Fifteenth Street to Seventeenth Street.

Michael's pioneer life was full of adventure, hard work and happiness but along the way there was also sadness. His wife Elizabeth suffered from a prolonged illness and died in 1892. She was first buried in the small homestead cemetery along

with her youngest daughter. Later both were moved to the City of Miami Cemetery near the family's homestead.

While few Miamians know of Michael Oxar, it is important to acknowledge his accomplishments as one of the first pioneers of development in Miami and an early barefoot mailman. Oxar died in 1910. In the obituary that appeared in the *Miami Metropolis*, his name was not even listed correctly, but as "Mitchell Oxer." No one could ever get his name right!

- SFH







# The Arch Creek Park

By Mary Oxar

The swish sounds of prehistoric Indian arrows, haunting silence of them hiding, loud belting commands of Colonel Abner Doubleday, splashing of water as it turns a waterwheel, tour guide's informative voice, playful sounds of kids frolicking, a love song being sung with heartfelt emotion, crashing sound of rocks falling into the gentle clear waters below. . . . If a bridge could talk, the stories it would tell. The Arch Creek Natural Bridge of Arch Creek Park, located on 135<sup>th</sup> Street near Biscayne Boulevard, has numerous tales stored in its limestone creaks and crevices. Stories of compassion, anger, frustration and love are just waiting to tell their adventurous tales from as long ago as 2,000 years ago. If this natural limestone bridge in the middle of North Miami—cushioned between thousands of cars hurtling by on two sides, with stores to the south side and railroad tracks to the west—could talk, what would it say?

Do as Miamians did years ago, bring a picnic basket with friends and family, enjoy the beauty of the dense subtropical hammock formed by fern laden oak trees and Arch Creek bordered by beautiful red mangroves. Listen carefully as the breeze blows through your hair to the gentle whispers of the limestone rock. Whispers that may intermittently be interrupted by the splashing sound of crocodiles plopping into the creek or birds calling to their mates and awkwardly flying off together. These limestones begin their story with Arch Creek, which flows below this natural limestone bridge, a span 40 feet long

Arch Creek, circa 1890. Ralph Munroe collection. HMSF 97D.

and 20 feet wide. Of course, the stones in the bridge could take claim for the fame of the park. Where else is there such a beautiful natural bridge that draws the attention of nature and human activity throughout history?

Arch Creek at one time flowed from the Everglades eastward into Biscayne Bay. Arch Creek was a perfect haven for prehistoric Indians, who occupied this area from 500 BC to the 1700s, and visited this beautiful oak tree hammock. They possessed a nomadic lifestyle of hunting and gathering. The hammock provided nutritious plants, nuts and berries. Numerous remains of marine animals have been excavated, suggesting that the Indians were frequent users of the creek and ocean. Since Biscayne Bay was so accessible—less than a half mile away—the Indians ate from the sea and made many tools out of the conch shells. To the north of the hammock rested a pine flatland, which formed a perfect environment for the “coontie” plant, a cycad. Indians ground the roots of the plant into an edible starch-like paste that was used for cooking and to thicken gravies and soups. Later, non-native cooks used it in puddings, breads, cookies, pies, crackers, biscuits and spaghetti. The coontie starch was also good for burns. Moreover, the decayed pulp of the plant was good fertilizer for the fruit trees.

Not only was Arch Creek a beautiful place to live, but also a beautiful place to bury the dead at their sacred Indian burial mound.

The limestone bridge became part of the Military Trail between Fort Lauderdale on the New River and Ft. Dallas at the Miami River in the Third Seminole War fought between 1855 and 1858. Captain Abner Doubleday designed the trail, on which soldiers carried military supplies through pine, palmetto and coontie, and crossed three different streams, one of which was Arch Creek. One Luis the Breed, who lived near the bridge, sold guns to the Indians during the Third Seminole War, Luis was supposedly killed on the bridge during one of the many bitter “natural bridge” skirmishes. After the war the trail was abandoned and in many places obliterated.

As the limestones whisper the year 1858, the sound of the coontie mill could be heard as it processed coontie root. The coontie mill at Arch Creek differed from most makeshift mills, which were operated by hand. The Arch Creek mill was powered instead by running water. The mill was built on top of the arch; water flowing beneath the arch caused a water wheel to turn, which made the mill machinery work. The mill worked efficiently, as long as there were plenty of coontie plants. Once the coontie plants were depleted, the mill shut down.

The limestones remember certain white settlers from the 1870s: Mike Fallon, Benjamin Coachman, Mr. and Mrs. William Fogg, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Rhodes, Charles J. Ihle and William S. Milliken. Mrs. Rhodes, a plucky little woman, did what was

necessary to survive. One day she met a six foot nine inch rattlesnake on the arch and killed it with a garden hose. She thought nothing of what she had done. Charles J. Ihle bought 80 acres in the Arch Creek area for \$1 dollar an acre. He planted fruit trees and coconut palms, and landscaped his property with tropical plants. When William S. Milliken died, he was buried close to the natural bridge. A large granite tombstone marked his grave. Unfortunately, his grave was frequently disturbed because his epitaph on the tombstone included the word “treasure.”

The year 1892 brought more traffic to the limestones. The first county road built at taxpayers' expense was completed in that year. The road spanned 60 miles from Lantana to Lemon City. It cost \$25 per mile to build. The road crossed the limestone natural bridge. The natural bridge at Arch Creek was a stop for the springless wagon drawn by mules, with boards to sit on and a canvas top for shade. The stagecoach, which began operating in 1893, made its last southbound rest stop at the arch. At the rest stop there were no facilities, but plenty of bushes and good clear water with plenty of fish.

The bridge was also heavily used in the early 1900s by the Elmirans, settlers from Elmira, New York, who established at winter colony at Arch Creek, creating in the process, the first organized settlement. Between 1900 and 1926 Arch Creek formally called Natural Bridge, grew as a community. The stones felt extra vibrations as the Florida East Coast Railway came through and established the Arch Creek Depot in 1903. Letters were opened and read on the bridge after the first post office at Arch Creek opened the same year. The opening of the Arch Creek School followed two years later. In addition, a church, stores and packing houses were built and used. The community was agricultural, with tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapples representing the most important crops. The natural bridge took hosted much community business with its 307 residents.

Arch Creek was a popular site for picnics, boating in the creek, fishing, political rallies, Easter egg hunts, baptisms, or just relaxing under the shady oaks. A conch shell clad refreshment stand, known as the Arch Creek Tearoom, stretched over the creek and was popular with many. The tearoom was featured on many postcards. The bridge basked in the beauty of family and friends as they enjoyed the day.

Sadness hung over the bridge as the Arch Creek community eventually disappeared. The real estate boom of the mid-1920s transformed the small community into a fast-paced city, as Arch Creek became part of the municipality of Miami Shores in 1926. In the 1950s, portions of the oak hammock were cleared for the Seabreeze Trailer Park. Subsequently, residents of the trailer park destroyed much native vegetation and replaced it with many exotic plants. Five years later the trailer park was sold, and the residents moved out.





Mozier family on the natural bridge, 1908. HMSF, 1976-040-6.

Shockingly, the natural bridge almost met its death in 1957, When the Army Corps of Engineers proposed blowing it up and redirecting the creek for better drainage. Fortunately, protests from the Audubon Society, the Historical Association of Southern Florida and local residents prevented either alternative from becoming a reality.

In 1972, another threat to the bridge and the hammock arose when the Chrysler Corporation, owner of the property, proposed building a used car lot there. Citizens' groups such as Tropical Audubon Society, Miami-West India Archaeological Society and the Arch Creek Trust were greatly angered at the idea of destroying the beautiful tree hammock and paving the ground with concrete. They launched a campaign aimed at saving the land from destruction. After a year of intense lobbying with the state, the Florida Cabinet voted unanimously to preserve the property. The State's land acquisition trust fund allocated \$822,000 to buy 7.9 acres east of the creek for development into a state park. The bridge was saved!

Within hours of signing the official 1973 documents, however, the natural bridge collapsed into the creek. This calamity was probably the result of erosion, old age and the accumulated vibrations from auto and railroad traffic. As the doomed limestone rested in the creek, state officials held a ground-breaking ceremony for a museum in the park in 1975, although construction did not begin until the beginning of the 1980s. In 1981 the Youth Conservation Corps planted over 500 trees and established a nature trail through the hammock.

The Arch Creek Memorial Park, named for Carl Mertes, a Miami police officer shot and killed in the park, was officially dedicated on April 25, 1982, with 700 people in attendance. A \$225,000 museum/nature center was also dedicated at this time. The museum was designed as a replica of a late 1800s Florida

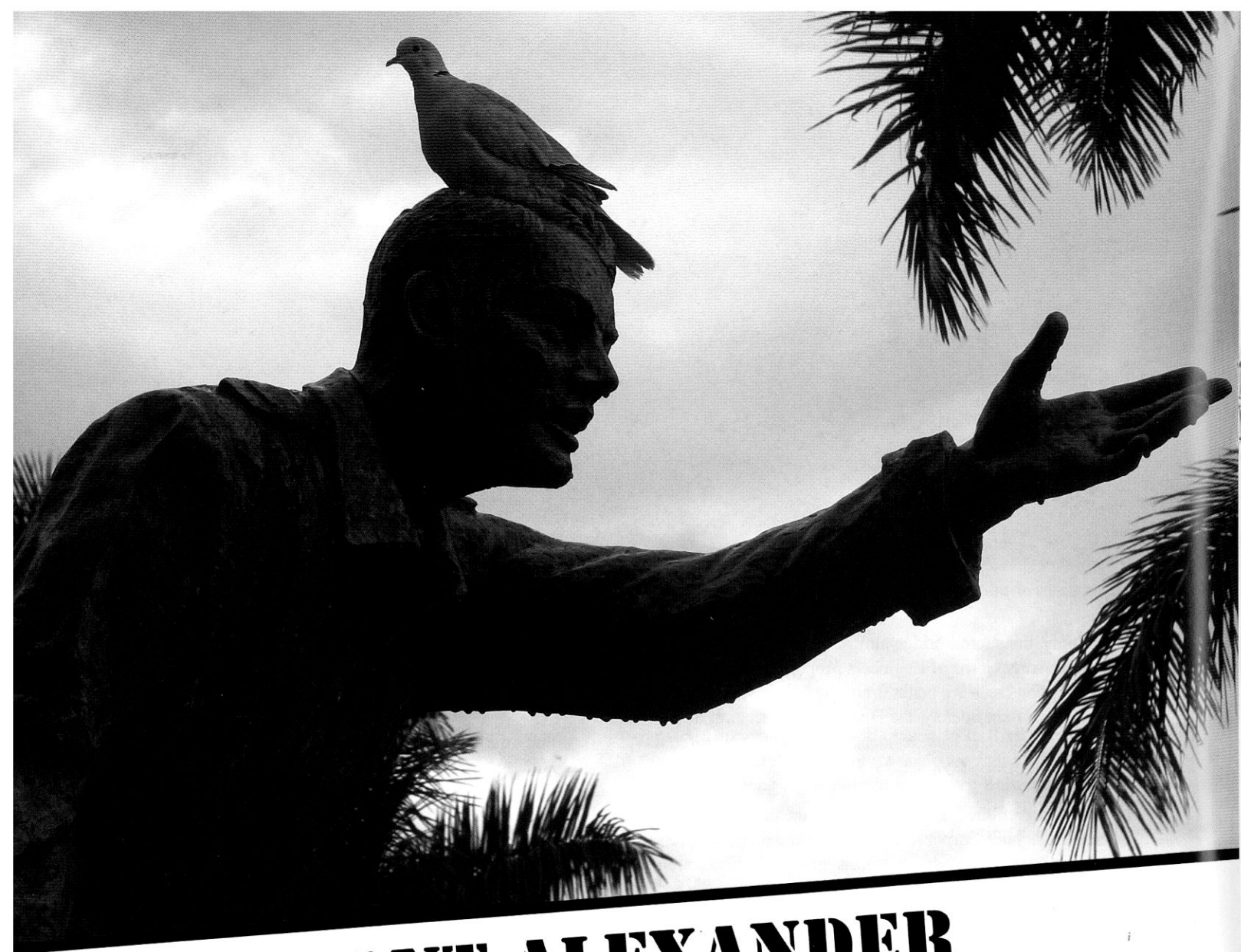
"cracker" style house. The museum contains displays that illustrate the natural and archaeological history of the Arch Creek area.

At that time, members of the Arch Creek Trust, Inc. raised \$20,000 to be used toward building a replica of the natural bridge. In 1986, a ground breaking ceremony for reconstruction of the Natural Bridge took place. Artist Lewis Van Dercar was hired for the task. He tried to duplicate the same look of the old natural bridge, by using buttermilk on the stone surface to give it an aged appearance. Two years later it was completed and a dedication ceremony for the reconstructed bridge took place on March 9, 1988.

The park continued to grow. In 1992, through the help of the Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management, Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, one and one half acres were added to the north side of the park. Since then, a beautiful butterfly garden has been developed in the north side of the park.

Many visitors come to the park for educational programs, walks, bird and butterfly watching, and even for picnicking. As they experience the beauty of the park, and feel the gentle breeze wafting through it, the gentle whispers of the limestone will tell stories of tears and triumphs, wages and war, peace and passion, loyalty and love.

- SFH



# LIEUTENANT ALEXANDER RAMSAY "SANDY" NININGER JR.

BY MARY ZAKIS

From the North bank of Fort Lauderdale's New River, the bronze likeness of Lieutenant Alexander Ramsay "Sandy" Nininger, Jr. casts a silent gaze upon the tranquil waters below. Dedicated to Lieutenant Nininger's memory on Memorial Day, 1994, the statue is the work of Hallandale sculptor Enzo Gallo. A native of southern Italy, Gallo immigrated to the United States with only five dollars in his pocket. The year was 1934. That same year, a young Sandy Nininger presented his high school sweetheart with a topaz stone set upon a silver band. Almost sixty years later, when

asked to design a statue honoring Lieutenant Nininger, Gallo said he would be proud to do so as a sign of thanks to the nation that had given him so many opportunities. Surrounding the marble base of Gallo's creation is a mosaic tile mural dedicated to over three-hundred Broward residents who lost their lives in our nation's wars. Passersby, perhaps on their way to the nearby performing arts center or children's museum, stroll past Nininger's monument without a second glance. We often come upon memorial plaques, statues and monuments without pausing to contemplate their



significance. We often fail to ask ourselves, “Who was this young man and what price did he pay for this tribute to his memory?”

Alexander Ramsay Nininger, Jr., was born in 1918 in either Atlanta or Gainesville, Georgia. Speculation as to the exact location of his birth varies, depending on the source. The son of Alexander and Gertrude Nininger, “Sandy,” as he was nicknamed, moved to Fort Lauderdale with his family at age nine. The Niningers settled in the Sailboat Bend section of the city located west of downtown and hard by the north bank of the picturesque New River. The outdoors served as a source of entertainment for young Sandy. The growing boy spent his days fishing from the shores of the river and, when there was little else to do, using his rifle to take aim and shoot at items floating upon the stream’s current. It was along the banks of the New River that Sandy Nininger became an excellent marksman.

A gentle boy who loved to read and secretly wrote poetry, Sandy often met with the scrutiny of his father, who did not approve of these pastimes. A sickly child, Sandy sought healthful respites in the Catskill Mountains near West Point, New York. These visits may have marked the beginning of his aspirations to attend the nearby military academy.

Nininger’s high school coach, Red Sweeny, remembered the youth as boyish in looks and build. He was not a strapping specimen, Sweeny remarked. When Nininger confided his desire to attend West Point, Coach Sweeny informed the teen that West Point would not consider him for admission unless he was physically fit. While never superior in sports, Sandy Nininger persevered and, according to his coach, was the only student who did exactly as he was told. These character traits would serve him well throughout high school, at West Point and, ultimately, on the battlefield.

Nininger applied to West Point after high school graduation in 1937 and, initially, was not accepted. It was only after another nominee dropped out that Nininger secured admission to the prestigious military academy. While at West Point, Nininger chaired the lecture and entertainment committee. A music lover, he organized concerts for fellow students and, upon graduation, sought to purchase a gramophone and some records with his first pay. Nininger’s favorite record, friends remembered, was Tchaikovsky’s *Pathétique Symphony*. Referred to by fellow West Pointer Robert Rawls as a “quiet thinker,” it is possible that Nininger acquired his love of the arts from his father, an actor who also ran a local movie theater.

Lieutenant Alexander Ramsay Nininger, Jr. graduated twenty-third in the West Point Academy Class of 1941. Although war raged in Europe, the United States had not yet entered the

conflict. By November 1941, Nininger was assigned to the 57<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and was stationed in the Philippines. A month later, on December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and the United States declared war on Japan. After destroying the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese planned to win the war, in part, by simultaneously attacking Hong Kong, Malay, Singapore and the American-held islands of Guam, Wake, the Philippines and Hawaii. Lieutenant Nininger found himself at the heart of the battle to save the Philippines by halting a Japanese onslaught—or at least slow its approach. Hopefully, this mission would be accomplished and allow for the arrival of relief from the Pacific Fleet.

To accomplish this mission, War Plan Orange 3 was put into place. This strategic plan called for a tactical retreat to the Bataan peninsula. Once on the peninsula, U.S. forces were to defend themselves with artillery from harbor defenses in Manila Bay and the nearby island fortress of Corregidor. Throughout the 1930s, the plan had been studied at West Point by the academy’s prospective second lieutenants and Japanese exchange officers, alike. Ultimately, in an attempt to stop the Japanese, the Abucay-Mauban line was established under Generals Jonathan Wainwright and George Parker. It was while defending this line that Lieutenant Sandy Nininger would meet with his demise.

On February 20, 1944, Colonel George S. Clark, commander of Nininger’s forces on Bataan, provided Nininger’s father with a description of the events that led up to the young lieutenant’s death. According to the colonel’s account, on January 9, 1942, Japanese forces, under the leadership of Lieutenant General Susumu Morioka, assaulted the eastern flank of the Abucay-Mauban line. Initially, Nininger’s company, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 57<sup>th</sup> Infantry, was not engaged in combat. Their job was to cut down mangroves at the edge of Manila Bay and to prevent the enemy from either swimming or boating around the right flank of the sector. Laboring in waist-high water, the men built tall dikes. Each soldier also built an individual foxhole. Colonel Clark commented that when he visited Sandy Nininger’s sector, Nininger was always upbeat. Nininger appeared to thrive under adverse conditions that included sleep deprivation and a lack of food, water, ammunition and other supplies. It was as if Nininger had found the purpose for which he had been trained. Despite his successes, it appears that Nininger sought out even greater challenges and, because it was engaged in combat, unlike his own battalion, Lieutenant Nininger volunteered to attach himself to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.

Colonel Clark recounted that the Japanese began their assault with a series of eleven suicidal frontal attacks on Nininger’s sector. On the second night of the assault, the Japanese completed wave after wave of attacks on the front of the 3<sup>rd</sup>

Left: Nininger’s heroism has been commemorated in a number of ways, including the naming of a building at West Point and erection of a statue on the Las Olas Riverwalk in Ft. Lauderdale.

Battalion's position. The enemy created a bridge of dead Japanese soldiers in an attempt to climb over a barbed wire fortification and attack Nininger's battalion. The enemy set off firecrackers, banged on drums, screamed in the native Filipino language and engaged in suicidal actions in order to draw U.S. fire and establish the location of Allied machine gun installations. Exposed to actual combat for the first time, the men in Nininger's battalion were confused by the Japanese tactics. Along with two of his men, Sandy Nininger volunteered to hunt out snipers by going forward in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Sector. Colonel Clark gave the okay and, in a battle on the Abucay-Mauban line, Lieutenant Nininger led his men in an attack on both enemy snipers and those concealed in fox holes. Loaded down with grenades, a Garand rifle and Japanese "Tommy Gun," Nininger's first kill was a Japanese sniper in a tree. When the dead Japanese soldier fell at his feet, Nininger jumped up and yelled despite the presence of massive rifle fire. It was probably at this moment that Nininger received his first wound, an injury to his leg.

The pain from his injury did nothing to deter Lieutenant Nininger. He began hurling grenades at the enemy. Men from Company K reported that he killed about twenty additional Japanese soldiers with these grenades. After using up all of his ammunition, Nininger was injured, once again, while jumping from one shell hole to the next. Despite the severity of his wounds, Nininger waved an approaching medic away before being struck for a third time while attacking a Japanese bunker. Though spun around by the bullet's impact, Nininger managed to club and bayonet an enemy officer and two enemy soldiers. When U.S. troops located Nininger's lifeless body, the corpses of these Japanese soldiers lay around him.

Upon his death, Sandy Nininger's remains were taken to a church in the town of Abucay, Province of Bataan, the Philippines. A chaplain, Captain Cecina, conducted a service and Lieutenant Nininger was interred in Grave Number 9 behind the church wall and a world away from the peaceful banks of Fort Lauderdale's New River. Up until the time of his own death, Nininger's father tried to bring his son's remains back to Fort Lauderdale. Unfortunately, they could not be located. The senior Nininger was also unsuccessful in reclaiming a small cross that he had given to Sandy for luck.

Sandy Nininger, once a quiet child repulsed when his father killed a hawk, was described by friends as having no feelings of hatred. Nothing in his past indicated that, as a newly commissioned, twenty-three year old U.S. Army lieutenant, Nininger would achieve a heroic reputation under such brutal conditions. But Sandy Nininger was placed in a situation where he had to act. No one can be certain, but perhaps it was Nininger's dedication to making the most of his abilities, per-

sonality, physique and circumstances that allowed him to act as he did. Music, poetry and the freedom of expression: perhaps Nininger's valor allowed others to enjoy the beautiful things that had been such important parts of his own brief life.

Despite Sandy Nininger's heroic efforts, the Philippines would ultimately fall to the Japanese. On March 12, 1942, General Douglas MacArthur fled Corregidor and, on April 9, 1942, Bataan fell into enemy hands. A month later, Corregidor fell, as well. Ultimately, more than 60,000 Filipino and 15,000 American prisoners of war would be forced into the infamous Bataan Death March. Many would not return.

The brave actions of men like Lieutenant Nininger were not, however, in vain. Their valor prevented a rapid assault on all allied bases in the Pacific and gave the U.S. much needed time to prepare for such pivotal naval battles as Coral Sea and Midway.

For his actions and bravery during combat, Lieutenant Nininger became the first American soldier to officially receive the Congressional Medal of Honor during World War II. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt awarded the posthumous honor at the suggestion of General MacArthur. The medal was presented to Nininger's father by General Walter Frank, Commanding General of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Force Headquarters in Tampa, Florida. Only seven Floridians, both native and transplanted, received the Medal of Honor during World War II.

Other honors were to be bestowed upon Lieutenant Nininger. Fort Lauderdale's Holiday Park has a roadway bearing Nininger's name. His name also graces American Vets Post #3, the U.S. Army Reserve Center's 841<sup>st</sup> Engineering Battalion Center at Fort Lauderdale's Executive Airport and the Veterans' Nursing Home in Pembroke Pines. Along with maintaining a fair record in sports and activities as well as the highest scholastic average during his four years of high school, Nininger headed his school's Key Club. Key Club International now bestows a medal bearing Lieutenant Nininger's likeness upon students who closely exhibit the standards of success exemplified by Sandy Nininger.

At West Point, the Corps of Cadets named the first Division of Cadet Barracks in Lieutenant Nininger's memory. Among the three major awards presented at each West Point graduation is the relatively new Nininger Award. This award was made possible by an endowment from Doug McKenna, a graduate of the West Point Class of 1945, and his wife. Nininger's namesake award recognizes graduates who have recently been cited for heroism and valor. Its object is to provide new graduates with an example of heroism to which





An outstanding West Point Graduate, Lieutenant Nininger was the first Congressional Medal of Honor recipient of World War II.

they can relate. The first Nininger Award was presented on September 26, 2006, to Major Ryan L. Worthan (Class of 1997) for valor exhibited in 2003 during a 12-hour battle near Firebase Shkin, about seven miles from the Pakistani border. The second Nininger Award went to Randall L. Ashby (Class of 2001) for valor in a three-week long battle during which Ashby led his men across the border from Kuwait to Iraq in 2003.

The United States Military Academy Public Affairs Office web page deems seventy 1808-1995 West Point graduates as "outstanding." Every U.S. history student is familiar with names like Robert E. Lee, George Custer, Douglas MacArthur, Alexander Haig and Norman Schwarzkopf. These men are all recognized on the web page, as is Lieutenant Alexander Ramsay Nininger, Jr., cited for his

heroism, character and commitment to the West Point ideals of Duty, Honor and Country. Nininger is considered worthy of emulation by future army officers.

Until their deaths in the 1960s, Nininger's parents kept his memory alive in their garden on Fort Lauderdale's Southeast 10<sup>th</sup> Street. There, roses were placed beside Nininger's eternally youthful portrait. Though the roses and portrait have long ago disappeared, one hopes that Lieutenant Alexander Ramsay "Sandy" Nininger's memory stays alive in each and every person who passes his statue as it gazes out upon the serene waters of his much loved New River.

- SFH





# GIVING BACK TO MIAMI: THE HERTZ FAMILY AND THE MAGIC CITY

BY PAUL S. GEORGE PH.D.

In the expansive period following World War II, Greater Miami and all of southeast Florida underwent a dramatic transformation. As Miami's population soared, new suburban developments transformed an undeveloped landscape surrounding the city into a series of "cookie cutter" subdivisions. Rising consumer purchases resulted in a booming downtown retail sector. New technological advances dramatically altered the lifestyles of area residents.

Most of the new migrants hailed from the north. Many, after earlier training in wartime Miami as military personnel, returned with "sand in their shoes." Arriving as a youth with his family in 1946, and destined to become one of Miami's leading business and civic figures in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, was Arthur Hertz. As New Yorkers, the Hertz family came in quest of warmer climes, and lived in several areas of Miami during the early years of their residency. Arriving in Miami ten years after the Hertz's had adopted the Magic City as their new home, Linda Collins Hertz, Arthur's former wife, has excelled as a mother, attorney, civic activist, and in charitable endeavors. Andrew Hertz, their youngest son, has followed in the footsteps of his parents. This profile studies the lives of a remarkable family who have made a significant impact on Miami through their accomplishments in several fields.

In 1951, five years after Arthur arrived in Miami, he graduated from Miami Senior High School, the county's oldest and largest secondary school. A superb student, he won a full scholarship to the University of Miami, which was then undergoing a period of sustained growth five years after moving to the site of the present campus in the aftermath of World War II. Even before matriculating at the University of Miami, the resourceful Hertz worked as a bag boy and a stock clerk at Tanners grocery store, an early supermarket chain. Arthur continued to work at the emporium, located on Ponce de Leon Boulevard in Coral Gables, throughout his college years, absorbing broad business and marketing lessons from this lengthy experience, lessons that have guided him as a businessman ever since.



Miami Seaquarium continues to be one of Florida's most popular attractions, 1960s.

Even with a heavy work schedule, Art excelled in school, finishing at the top of his accounting class. Not long after graduation, he passed the CPA exam. By then, he was employed with Wometco Enterprises, a rising communications company owned and managed by Colonel Mitchell Wolfson and Sidney Meyer. Wometco owned Florida's first television station, WTVJ (today's NBC-6), which began broadcasting in 1949. The South's second television station, WTVJ, broadcast from the premises of the old Capitol Theater in the 300 block of North Miami Avenue. Wometco Enterprises also operated the county's largest theater chain, Wometco Theaters. While the amiable Wolfson handled the television portions of the business, his brother-in-law, Sidney Meyer, oversaw the growing theater holdings.

With the idea that it would be a temporary job, Hertz took a position in the business department of Wometco in the mid-1950s. But the company embraced the bright young employee and opened the way for his swift rise through its ranks. Art learned the trade from the Colonel, already a legendary figure in Miami business, civic, political, and charitable circles. As a

Wolfson protégé, Hertz rose quickly from junior accountant to chief accountant. Eventually he became comptroller and, later, the executive vice president and chief operating officer of Wometco Enterprises. When Wometco went public in 1959, Hertz worked virtually around the clock for several weeks in preparation for this expansion.

Wometco kept pace with the spiraling growth of Miami and all of Florida. By the beginning of the 1980s, Wometco Enterprises was not only one of the most important businesses in the state, it was a communications giant active in many other endeavors, and with financial connections throughout the nation. It controlled six television stations, 125 movie theaters, a growing number of cable television operations, vending, ice cream, and soft drink bottling businesses, and a far-flung array of properties.

By this time, Miami had evolved from a mid-sized community with strong Southern traits and a flourishing tourist trade into an international city following the flood of hundreds of thousands of Cubans and other migrants from Caribbean and Latin American countries. Art Hertz and Wometco were among the

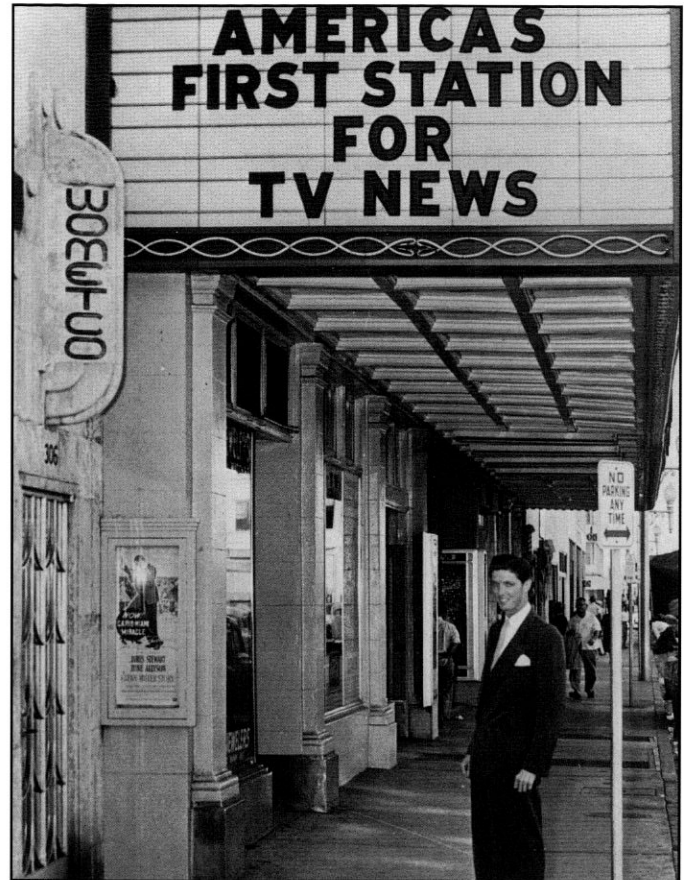


first to reach out to the new arrivals, employing Cubans in many different facets of its operations. Hertz has noted that his entire staff of accountants in 1961 were recently arrived Cubans. They were, in his estimation, “the cream of the crop” in their field. Manolo Reyes, a prominent Cuban exile, broadcast the news in Spanish for WTVJ in 1960, and, in the process, created one of the first Spanish language news programs in the United States. Wometco’s Tower Theater, standing in the heart of a neighborhood known as “Little Havana,” similarly became the first movie house in Miami-Dade County to offer Spanish subtitles to English language movies.

Miami was one of the hemisphere’s most cosmopolitan and important cities by 1983, when Colonel Wolfson died. Art Hertz was charged with selling off the various segments of the mega-company with a value of more than \$1 billion. Working closely with Michael Brown, a longtime Wometco associate, Hertz himself later purchased Wometco’s theaters, scores of Baskin Robbins ice cream outlets and the vending and amusement portions of the company, including the Miami Seaquarium, one of the state’s premier tourist attractions. The successor corporation retained the name Wometco Enterprises, where Hertz continues to serve as chief executive officer while Michael Brown serves as the firm’s chief operating officer. The enterprise has left the movie business, but Art has opened a new business in its stead: Dade Media, a flourishing billboard business, which he owns in its entirety.

Wometco’s plans to spend \$100 million in improvements and new offerings for the Miami Seaquarium have been met with setbacks arising primarily from opposition by Key Biscayne residents, fearful of worsening traffic conditions as the result of a larger facility. Despite this, the attraction offers new experiences for visitors, including its Wonders of the Seas attraction, which opened in 2006. Miami Seaquarium remains extremely popular and represents the corporation’s most important component. Andrew Hertz, Arthur’s youngest son, serves as chief operating officer of the Miami Seaquarium. Stephen, his older son, born with neurological problems, has come a long way in overcoming these challenges, thanks in large measure to the loving care provided him by his parents who have seen to it that he has matriculated in the best programs in the country for persons with his condition.

Arthur Hertz’s civic involvement is legendary! For twenty-five years, he has served on the powerful board of trustees of the University of Miami, lending his expertise and passion to an institution that provided him with a golden opportunity in his youth. During the 1980s he chaired the University’s Athletic Federation. Hertz heads the Mitchell Wolfson Foundation, which has provided \$110 million for programs and scholarships for Miami Dade College. Only recently, the Foundation awarded \$11 million to the institution’s School of Nursing to establish scholarships, assist with instructional costs, and to cover the expenses for the training of 600 new nurses.



Newsreader Ralph Renick outside WTVJ television studio, ca. 1950. HMSF, 1975-039-55.

One of Hertz’s proudest affiliations has been with the Miami-Dade County Public School system, especially the adult and vocational education division. He chaired the board overseeing its operations in the 1960s and 1970s, an era of great expansion, but also one of daunting challenges as many newly-arrived Cubans reached out for help in this area. Hertz also chaired the Miami Parking Authority, known earlier as the Department of Offstreet Parking of the City of Miami, which controls thousands of parking spaces within the City of Miami. Under his stewardship, in the first years of this decade, this agency, which now offers more than 31,000 parking spaces with annual revenues in excess of \$23 million, grew sharply in its holdings and activities.

Art headed the powerful Public Health Trust, which directs the operations of Jackson Memorial Hospital, one of the largest medical complexes in the eastern United States. In that role, he presided with great deliberateness and foresight over a fractious board charged with administering an institution with the responsibilities and budget of a mid-size city. He was especially committed to ensuring that all aspects of the hospital’s health delivery systems were open to impoverished patients who comprise a sizable segment of Miami’s population. He is proud of the board’s effort in helping to secure approval by county voters of



Linda Hertz receives U.S. Department of Justice award.

the one-half cent sales tax, which kept the hospital operating at a high level of quality.

A longtime member of the Orange Bowl Committee, Hertz, as chairman, took the lead in the tense deliberations that kept the fabled New Year's event in the venerable Orange Bowl in the early 1990s. He is probably proudest of an iconic photograph, which shows him running across the hallowed turf of the Orange Bowl in lockstep with Coach Howard Schnellenberger, whose University of Miami Hurricanes only moments earlier had won their first national championship with a stunning upset of the powerful Nebraska Cornhuskers. The date was January 2, 1984. An unabashed sports fan, Hertz has enjoyed his role with the Orange Bowl Committee. His love for sport extends to baseball, where he and a group of investors bid for ownership of a new Major League Baseball team for Miami in the early 1990s, but lost out to Broward billionaire H. Wayne Huizenga.

Art and Andrew Hertz have repeatedly offered the Miami Seaquarium for fundraisers and as a venue for non-profits in need of a locale for a gathering. In 1992, the Miami Seaquarium hosted a fundraiser to assist a troupe of cheerleaders from Trinity Valley Community College in Texas, bound for

Miami for a performance in the annual Orange Bowl parade and halftime show. The group had lost \$100,000 to a bankrupt travel agency. When Hertz learned of their plight in the pages of the *Miami Herald*, he invited the troupe to visit and lunch at the Miami Seaquarium. He explained, "I want to make sure that when people leave this area, they feel good about the community and don't think that Miami is all crime and bad things." In the early part of the new century, the Miami Seaquarium was also the venue for a fundraiser to preserve, relocate and restore the first free-standing high school in the area. The revenue raised from the event provided the seed money for the school's restoration. The wood frame building, now beautifully restored, stands in Southside Park in the Brickell Avenue neighborhood.

In 1994, Hertz and Wometco Enterprises sold the Miracle Theater, an Art Deco jewel in Coral Gables, at a steeply discounted price to that municipality, which planned to convert it into a performing arts center. Art explained, "As a businessman what would have brought the most dollars would have been the best thing. But as a (longstanding) citizen of Coral Gables ... I was thinking of what's good for the Gables." The revamped theater, which is also the home of the Actors Playhouse, has succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of its champions.

In countless other ways, Hertz has been generous in his assistance to the community, its institutions, and even individuals in need. In the 1980s, he funded an endowed scholarship program at the University of Miami, which annually assists a business school enrollee in need. Hertz has also provided generous funding to Miami Dade College for an Endowed Teaching Chair in his name (Disclosure: this writer was the recipient of the Hertz Endowed Chair from 1997-2000). Numerous recipients since then have benefited from this generous award. Many other institutions and individuals are also the recipients of Art Hertz's largesse. Camillus House, the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, Immaculata-LaSalle High School's athletics department, the Diabetes Research Institute, the Boy Scouts of America, and the YMCA, to name a few, are beneficiaries of his generosity. Art learned his lessons well from Colonel Wolfson, who maintained that "You can't harvest the crop until you put something into the ground." A history buff, Art has found the time to explore the rich history of Miami and South Florida. Along with his son Stephen, he is a Committee of One Hundred Charter Member of the Historical Museum.

Linda Collins Hertz, Arthur's former wife who maintains an amiable relationship with him, has amassed an enviable record of achievement and civic involvement in her own right. Born in Rome, Georgia, near the end of the Great Depression, Linda was the youngest of five children. A high school valedictorian, she attended Shorter College in Rome on a full scholarship. After graduation, Linda took a job with the Social Security Administration. Following a lengthy training period, she was assigned to an office in Miami just down the street from





Arthur Hertz, Eliot A Kleinberg and Howard Kleinberg at the Historical Museum's celebration in honor of Dr. George. The Roast and Toast Reception was held in March 2009.

Wometco Enterprises on North Miami Avenue. Shortly thereafter, she met Art Hertz. A whirlwind romance ensued and the couple married in 1962. The birth of their two sons soon followed. While raising their sons, Linda studied law at the University of Miami. In 1974, she graduated in the top five percent of her class. Following graduation, and now divorced from Hertz, Linda began work as an Assistant Attorney General of Florida. She later served as an appellate attorney with the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, and, in the 1980s, became Chief of a newly created Appellate Division of the U.S. Attorney's office. Her accomplishments in this office caught the attention of the nation's legal community as the Attorney General of the United States bestowed the John Marshall Award for Outstanding Legal Achievement to her in 1992. The award, the highest given for appellate work, is given annually to only one attorney who works within one of the ninety U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Department of Justice. Linda has also received awards from the Department of Justice for Superior Performance by an Assistant U.S. Attorney in 1986 and 1990. Linda later became a partner at the prestigious law

firm of Holland & Knight before retiring at the beginning of the new century.

Linda is even busier in "retirement" than in her working career. She has taught law as an adjunct professor at the St. Thomas School of Law and has involved herself in a bevy of charitable and civic organizations. An avowed history buff, Linda has been a Historical Museum member for over 20 years and has taken virtually all of the historic tours offered. Through the creation of the Orange Blossom Initiative, she has championed historic preservation. The initiative plans to place more than thirty historical markers, in conjunction with the city of Miami, throughout downtown Miami. Two markers stand at the entrance to a revitalized Bayfront Park, and two additional plaques designating the sites of the city's first school house and the earliest federal district courthouse are scheduled to be unveiled in the near future.



Linda Hertz and sons Stephen and Andrew, 1970s.

The Orange Blossom Initiative led Linda to The Villagers, Inc., the oldest historic preservation organization in South Florida, where she currently serves as vice president and will take over as president in 2010. The Villagers raise money through home and garden tours and other programs for historic restoration and preservation projects, as well as for scholarships. The Villagers in turn led Linda to Dade Heritage Trust, another high profile, historic preservation group that works to preserve the county's rich built environment, and for which she serves as a trustee. She is also on a committee dedicated to the erection of a statue of Julia Tuttle, the Mother of Miami, which will arise near the confluence of the river and the bay in downtown Miami in 2010. Many other organizations have benefited from the work of the indefatigable, unflappable Linda Hertz who has focused, since her retirement, on "interest and causes meaningful to me, such as women's interests, local history and historical preservation, children and healthcare." Linda has been drawn to these causes, she explains, because she wants to help "make it possible for the following generations to have what I would have liked to have."

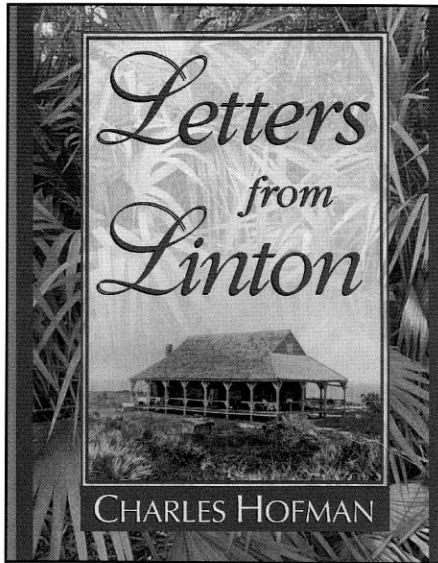
Andrew Hertz is following in his parents' footsteps through a deepening involvement in business and civic worlds. After earning a degree in advertising from Syracuse University, Andrew headed to Los Angeles and the world of film before returning home to work in the family businesses. He quickly earned an MBA from the University of Miami while beginning work at the Miami Seaquarium. In 2003, Andrew became gen-

eral manager of the attraction, and has overseen its expansion and renovation ever since. Andrew's civic and business involvements include a seat on the Orange Bowl Committee, and on the board of directors of the Florida Tourist Association. Like his parents, Andrew remains bullish on Miami and believes its best days are still ahead of it.

With all of their accomplishments, the Hertz family can hold their heads high, but not too high because this is a unit filled with humility and graciousness. Arthur Hertz believes his greatest accomplishment has been providing his sons with the support and education that has enabled them to reach the levels they are at today. An unabashed champion of Miami, he believes the Magic City is the "greatest place in the world for me." Linda Hertz found Miami "a sleepy Southern city" when she arrived, but a "vibrant, international" place today. For this reason, she finds it even more important "to preserve and remember Miami's past and reflect on how far we have come." We've come far owing in large measure to the accomplishments and unselfish efforts of the Hertz family and other committed Miamians.

- SFH





**Charles Hofman, *Letters from Linton***

Delray Beach, FL: Delray Beach Historical Society, 2004.  
222 pages, Paperback edition,  
\$19.95.

*Reviewed by Joe Knetsch*

*Letters from Linton* are a collection of letters to relatives in Germany from two pioneers of early Delray Beach, originally known as Linton, Adolf and Anna Hofman. The editor of the volume, Charles Hofman, is the grandson of these pioneers and has graciously turned their letters into one of the more readable volumes of this type available. These letters are filled with charm and important information concerning pioneering conditions in southern Florida, and an intimacy that transcends their sometimes mundane subjects. The editor has wisely remained in the background throughout this volume and lets the letters speak for themselves. Mr. Hofman's light touch is to be congratulated, and this reader appreciates the intrusions only when necessary to explain events or people. His illustrations, taken mostly from the Delray Beach Historical Society's collections, are well chosen and timely.

The Hofman letters provide a side of pioneering that is often overlooked. They

give intimate family details, but at the same time are not overburdened by family trivia. The reader sees both the male and female side of pioneer life, the loneliness, the friendliness between neighbors, the endless, difficult work in the fields grubbing out palmetto roots and other underbrush and the self-reliance of all when faced with dangerous situations. The reader will also experience the love and devotion of two people to each other and their growing family. For two immigrants off the boat from Germany, southeast Florida, with its heat, mosquitoes, palmetto bugs, snakes and assorted wildlife, represented a new, unnerving situation. Unlike a number of their fellow countrymen, however, these migrants persevered and eventually flourished in the bright sunshine of Delray Beach.

These letters provide fascinating details of life in the wilderness of early Florida. The House of Refuge and the wonderfully benevolent Andrews family who provided many helpful hints for survival in the subtropics sparkle in this narrative as important influences on Anna Hoffman's early life in America. The continued help of neighbors in almost every facet of life, from midwifery to burial, is one of the more lasting impressions derived from this volume. Another interesting element of the Hofman letters is the constantly changing situation of the family as the town and state grew around them. The letters tell the impact of the railroad, both for good and bad, and the rush of people to Miami, especially during the Spanish-American War. These letters detail the destructive force of two hurricanes that made nearly direct hits upon Delray in 1903 and 1928. They also give us important information regarding the land boom of the 1920s and how this remarkable family adapted to the rapidly rising values found in the real estate market. From frontier to boom times these letters provide us with added insights into the history of southeastern Florida.

Adolf and Anna Hofman were highly literate people, as demonstrated in these letters. Gentle humor abounds in some of the letters, as when Adolf writes his father that he will see some of his uncle's inheritance

when the German breweries go out of business. Anna's appreciation for the beauty of her new surroundings' comes through frequently in her letters: "Everywhere, billowy sea oats bowed by the ocean wind, nodded busily as we made our way across the soft sand, at times pale gold, at times pale tan beneath the shafts of sunlight. I think I shall never tire of so vast an ocean and so wide an expanse. Now I know why Adolf needed to make his adventure here to this boundless land, to stretch his arms and reach out as far as he could to realize his dreams."

This love of their new home and its beauty never left Anna and Adolf as they helped to transform it into the modern city of Delray Beach. Their civic activities, pride, and strong ethical background remained with them as they moved through their lives as reflected in these fascinating letters.

This is a rare, entertaining volume. Few of the letters bore the reader, and each one develops more of the history and character of its authors. Reader's will feel as if they are members of the family. Mr. Hofman has done an excellent job of determining just the right letters to include and provide the reader with just enough information to understand their meaning and impact. The editor's comments are light and informative, never intrusive.

This is "local history" that deserves a wide audience. There are simply too many facets of the frontier experience included to allow this study to remain restricted in its circulation. The Delray Beach Historical Society is to be commended for publishing this wonderful volume and for making it available to the general public. The *Letters from Linton* should stand on every library shelf next to the Charles Pierce papers, edited by Don Curl many years ago as a chronicle of pioneer life. Let us hope others will follow in the footsteps of Charles Hoffman and bring forth more letters and stories like those found in this entertaining and essential volume.

- SFH



Tropees marvel at one of the interior spaces inside Casa Casuarina on South Beach.

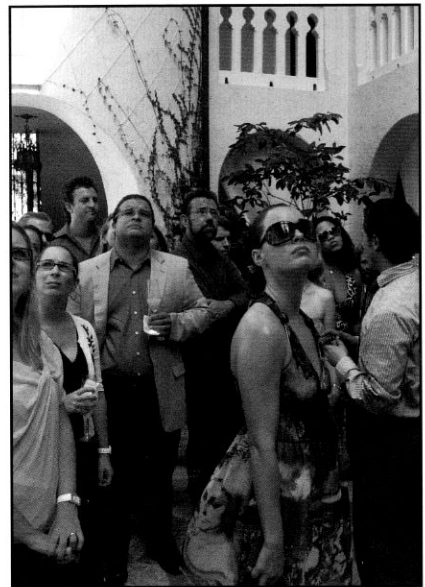
## Versace Coutour

It was an afternoon of high fashion and high fun on Saturday, April 18th as the Young Professionals (Tropees) of the Historical Museum enjoyed an exclusive tour of the landmark Versace Mansion on Miami Beach's famed Ocean Drive. Fifty-eight guests enjoyed champagne and mimosas while being swept away in the lavish oasis, formerly home to couture fashion designer Gianni Versace and now the swanky Casa Casuarina, a members-only private club and luxury boutique hotel.

"We were allowed extraordinary access to the mansion, which is a true historic icon in South Florida," said Lauren Dowlen, Chair of the Tropees. From the opulent bedrooms and meticulously detailed bathrooms, to the 24-karat gold flecked pool and exotic Moroccan Lounge, museum members and guests were able to marvel in the mansion's splendor.

The mansion was built in 1930 by architect, philanthropist, author and political reformer Alden Freeman as an homage to the oldest existing house in the western hemisphere, the "Alcazar de Colon" in Santo Domingo. In 1992, on a trip to Miami, world-renowned fashion designer Gianni Versace encountered Casa Casuarina for the first time and, although it had fallen into great disrepair, he purchased the mansion. Versace restored the property and made significant changes to propel Casa Casuarina to international fame.

"It was an exciting opportunity to learn more about the history of such an incredible landmark," said Emilie Goldman, Vice Chair of Events for the Tropees. "The mansion was impeccably restored to retain the original character of Alden Freeman's vision in 1930, which can be seen in each hand-laid stone and in the exquisitely carved coral rock and limestone throughout the property. It is a masterpiece in our own backyard," Goldman added.



From the center courtyard the group's attention is fastened on the unique architecture.





Dr. Edmund I. Parnes, Historical Museum Chair of the Board, presides over the elections of officers at the Annual Membership Meeting.



Distinguished panelists discuss the important role and source of inspiration the museum had in their careers.

## 69th Annual Membership Meeting

April 23, 2009

In anticipation of a great milestone, the Annual Meeting set the pace for our big 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2010 by offering the a little taste of the living human connection that are deeply interwoven from our past into the present.

Over 125 members, guests and trustees enjoyed a panel of distinguished authors and historians who have personally played a vital role in the museum's history. The distinguished panelists included:

**Arva Moore Parks**, renowned author, historian and former President of the Board of Trustees of the museum has had a long and illustrious association with us.

**Dorothy Jenkins Fields, Ph.D.**, historian, author and former museum educator, went on to found The Black Archives, History and Research Foundation of South Florida.

**Marcia Jo Zerivitz**, whose groundbreaking exhibition, *Mosaic, A Jewish History of Florida*, premiered at the Historical Museum in 1990. Many of the artifacts in that first exhibit later formed the core of the collection at the Jewish Museum of Florida in Miami Beach, where Marcia serves as the Founding Executive Director and Chief Curator.

The panel was moderated by none other than HMSF's Resident Historian, "Mr. Miami," Paul S. George, Ph.D. Dr. George has tenure of over 20 years with the museum and keeps Miami's histories alive each day as a professor at Miami Dade College and through the popular historic tour program.

After the day's business of election of officers and remarks by our Chair Dr. Edmund I. Parnes, guests were invited to enjoy lunch in our lobby catered by Lovables. It was a great party, but as we said, it is just a taste to prepare you for next year's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Consider yourself invited!

## MEMBERS' CORNER

In this *Member's Corner* we want to take a moment to sincerely thank each member who supports us at every level. Some have just begun their relationship with the Historical Museum of Southern Florida and others have been friends for many decades. We appreciate each member because you choose to support us each year.

In the first listing below we wish to acknowledge and thank those individuals who began a new membership or reinstated a past membership during the period of 12/7/08 to 7/13/09. This is not a complete list of our membership. The full listing of our members appear in *Tequesta* each year.

### **Committee of 100 Charter Member (\$1,000)**

We extend a very special thank you to our newest and most prestigious level of membership, the Committee of 100 (C100). We truly appreciate the generous support afforded to us by this esteemed group. The list below welcomes those who recently joined the C100.

Mr. and Mrs. Jon M. Batchelor  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter L. Bermont  
Mr. Samuel J. Boldrick  
Ms. Betty S. Brody and Mr. Paul Frascella  
Ms. Nancy J. Davis  
Roland H. Moore, Esq. and  
Mrs. Truett Moore  
Dr. and Mrs. Edmund I. Parnes  
Dr. and Mrs. Michael N. Rosenberg  
Ms. Elizabeth J. Smith  
Mr. and Mrs. Dudley A. Whitman

### **Fellow Member (\$500)**

The Fellows are the oldest fundraising group of the Historical Museum; they continue to be a cornerstone of our museum. We acknowledge the latest Fellows below:

Ms. Vanessa Byers and  
Mr. Harlan Woodard  
Mrs. Betty B. Chapman  
Mr. Richard W. Ebsary  
Mr. Warren E. Gill and  
Mrs. Muffy Clark Gill  
Mr. Garrett Herman and Mr. Tom Herman  
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Hirsch  
Ms. Bonnie Hoffman

Mr. and Mrs. Jay I. Kislak  
Dr. and Mrs. Paul E. Plasky  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Traurig

### **History Buff (\$100)**

Mr. Timothy Keable  
Ms. Tere Blanca  
Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Bustle  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Callander  
Mr. Jorge C. Cano and  
Mrs. Soledad Schneegans Cano  
Ms. Evelyn Carr Williams  
Ms. Barbra Cohen  
Mr. Jorge Gonzalez  
Mr. and Mrs. Al Hanley  
Mr. and Ms. Daniel Hoffman  
Mr. and Mrs. Bryant Kirkland  
Mr. Hank Klein  
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Mayo  
Mr. and Mrs. Angel Medina  
Mr. and Mrs. David Morgan  
Mr. and Mrs. Lewis F. Murphy  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Nero  
Mr. and Mrs. Manny Padron  
Mrs. and Mr. Mary Munroe Seabrook  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Shapiro  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Smith  
Ms. Kelly Toole-Berger  
Mr. Alexandra Villoch  
Ms. Judy G. Wiggins

### **Family (\$65)**

Mr. Mehmet Akcin and  
Ms. Jackeline Postigo  
Ms. Andrea Askowitz and  
Ms. Victoria Azpurua  
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Avdakos  
Ms. Marilyn Blaisdell  
Mrs. Joan Gill Blank  
Mr. and Mrs. John Carroll  
Mr. John F. Clark and Ms. Esther Alonso  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Crane  
Mr. and Mrs. Jose De Leon  
Mr. and Mrs. Disque Deane  
Ms. Caroline Defreze and  
Ms. Elizabeth Allegro  
Mr. and Mrs. Ricardo Del Giglio  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Ferguson  
Mr. Nahum Fernandez  
Mr. Gerald Foulds  
Mr. and Mrs. Gerardo P. Garcia  
Dr. and Mrs. Jose E. Garcia  
Mr. and Mrs. W. Tucker Gibbs  
Ms. Debbie Griner  
Ms. Jennifer Hill and Mr. Paul Baldauf  
Mr. and Mrs. John Hodge

John Holcombe and Belkist Padilla  
Ms. Patricia Hyde and Ms. Gale Degener  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kenin  
Mr. and Mrs. Tony Lesesne  
Mr. Robert A. Lesperance  
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Mark  
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Martin  
Mr. Joseph M. McDermott and  
Mr. Jose Leon  
Mr. Christopher Moon and  
Ms. Jennifer Glazer Moon  
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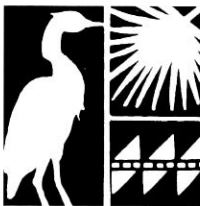


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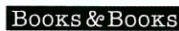
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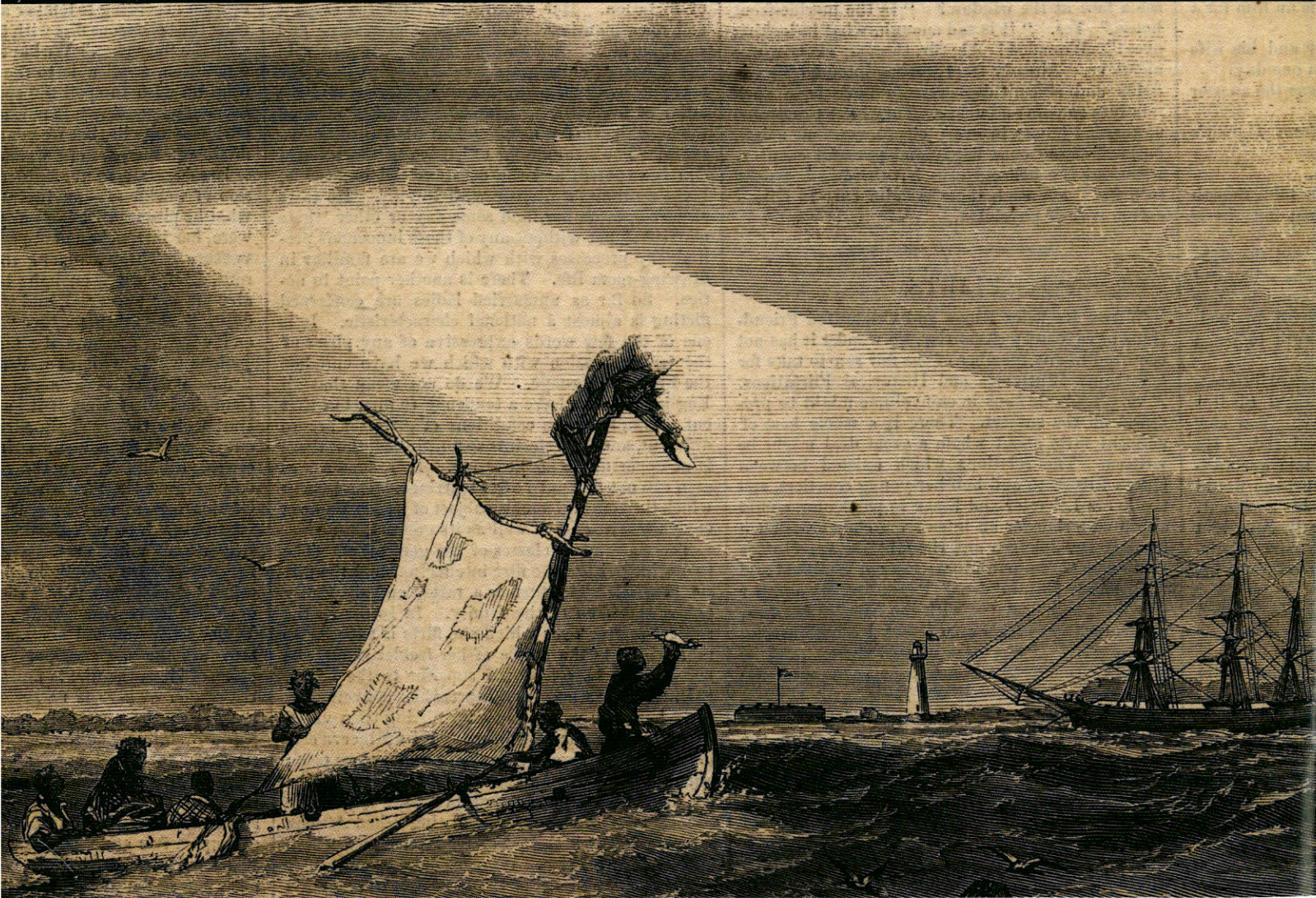
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