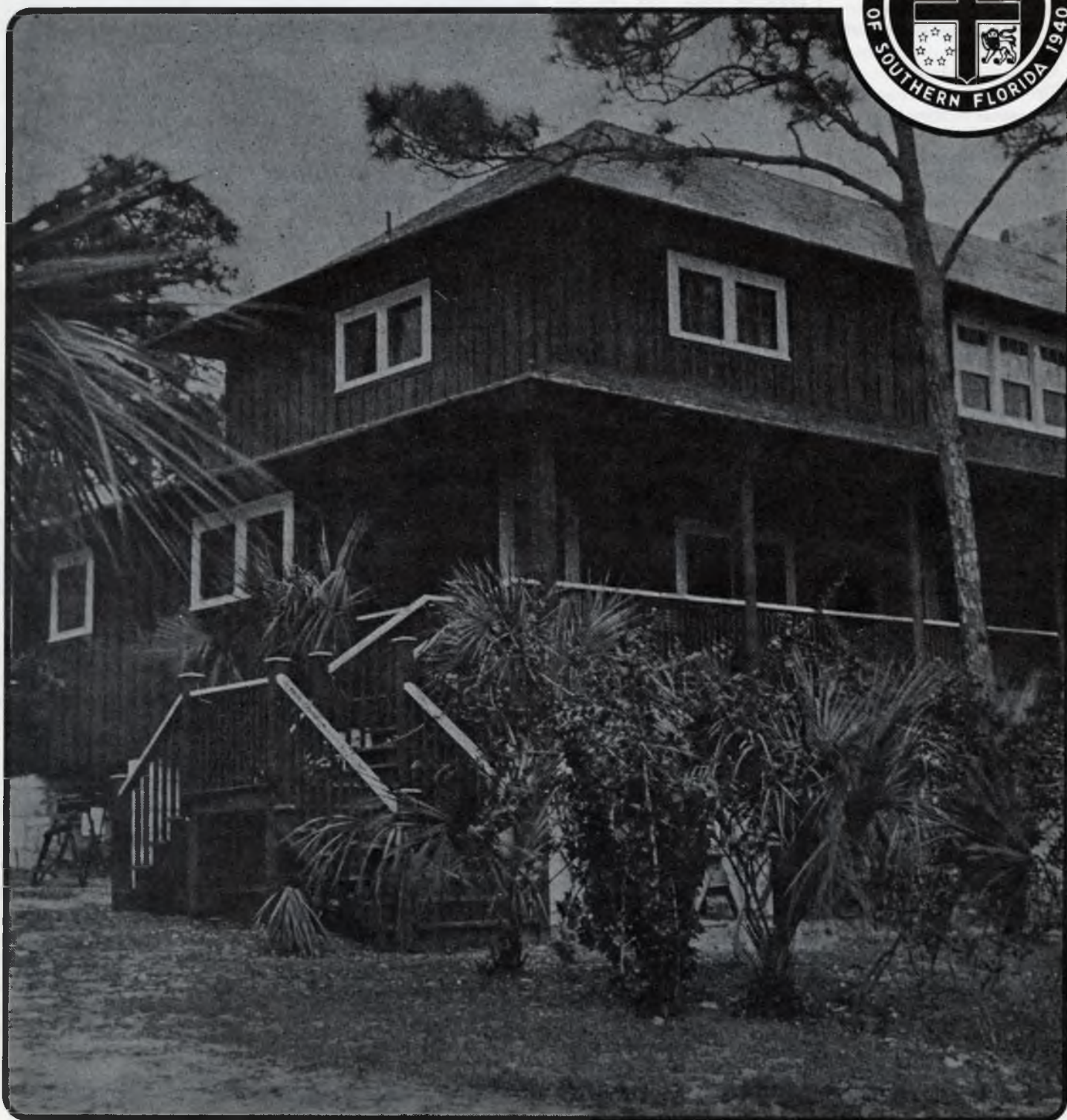


Update

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK
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Cover photo:

The Pagoda in the early 1900's housed students and offices at the winter campus of the Adirondack Florida School.

—Photo courtesy of *Giulio Blanc*

UPDATE

UPDATE, Bi-Monthly
Publication of the
Historical Association
of Southern Florida.
3280 South Miami Avenue
Building B,
Miami, Florida 33129

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**"As for the future, your task is not to forsee, but to enable it."
Saint-Exupery**

Here we are with the third issue of *Update*. We knew from the beginning that a historical publication on a popular level would complement our time-honored scholarly journal, *Tequesta*, which since 1941 has been one of our most impressive achievements. It seems we were correct. The response to *Update* from the community, the schools and those in the history field has been gratifying. We hope we will be able to continue to bring South Floridians interesting articles about our favorite subject, but we need your help.

The HASF and the Historical Museum receive no money from any public or government agency. Every dollar we spend we raise in the community from interested foundations, groups and people. Everything from the ten-dollar membership to the large foundation grant is used to promote South Florida's history, whether by museum displays, publications, speakers, educational programs, markers or special help to those interested in historical research.

Since relocation a little over a year ago to our new museum, we have broadened our horizons and realized some of the dreams we had from the beginning, but expanded programs require expanded budgets. New memberships, increased support from our faithful present members, additions to our Memorial and Gift Fund, and additional backing from private foundations will solve our problems and will ensure the future of *Update* and other exciting projects, as well as enabling us to expand our present programs.

There are many South Floridians that still think that we have no history, or that history has no place in our modern world. We need community support from those who believe as we do that our history has a message worth selling. Let us hear from you.

Arva Moore Parks
President, HASF

FROM THE EDITORS

The response to the editors' request for articles has been satisfactory. Perhaps some of the contributors have been holding off to see whether *Update* is here to stay. We hasten to reassure you that it is, at least for an issue at a time.

In compliance with what we perceive to be a widespread popular demand, we list some of the mechanical requirements we'd like to see observed by our faithful contributors.

1. Articles should be typed if at all possible. Use one side of the paper. Allow margins of an inch all around, and double space. Indent your paragraphs five spaces. Use standard 8½x11" paper. Larger or smaller sizes do not manage well.
2. The top line should be your title, centered on the page. Then, beneath that, show the author's name, preceded by the word "by".
3. If you run to more than one page, as many contributions will, try to finish a paragraph on the page on which it starts. Number all pages except the first. Put your name up in the corner of each page. This helps the editors, since your pages are certain somewhere along the way to become separated. Count your total words and enter the number on the upper right-hand corner of Page 1.
4. Near the bottom of each page except the last, center the word MORE. This tells the editors and the printers to look for further pages. Insiders like to use the symbol ### at the end of the article to signal "that's all".
5. Photos are welcome, desirable, needed. The author should have a photo source in mind. Write proper information for a cutline on the back of the photo or use a separate sheet of paper. It is important to show to whom the

picture should be credited.

6. Do not staple pages together.
7. If you think it desirable or necessary, include a sentence or two about yourself (the author) on a separate sheet of paper.
8. Deadlines for the receipt of author's copy at the Museum are the 15th of the second preceding month; that is, the April material is due on February 15th.

We have seen "The Time-piece", published by the Collier County Historical Society. Coincidentally with *Update*, the CCHS publication is also Vol. 1, No. 1. We plan an exchange, hoping that mutual benefit will result. Are we reaching any other historical society having a publication you'd care to exchange with us? If so, just send yours along addressed to Editor, Historical Association of Southern Florida, 3280 S. Miami Avenue, Building B, Miami, Florida 33129.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks very much for sending me a copy of *Update*. It is a very attractive publication and filled with all kinds of fascinating information. I am sure I will enjoy this and future copies.

Sincerely,
Beverly Phillips
County Commissioner
Metropolitan Dade County

I believe you have hit upon a real need with *Update*. This is the sort of publication we could use more of in the state since it will serve the lay public in general who are interested in history.

Randy F. Nimnicht
Historic Preservationist
Department of State
Tallahassee

RANSOM SCHOOL by Giulio Blanc



The two-story living room of the Pagoda was decorated with a Dade County pine tree for Christmas, 1902. Daily prayers and student plays took place here. —Photo courtesy of Giulio Blanc

Perhaps the greatest memorial and honor that a man can receive is to have his work, whatever it may be, perpetuated and expanded upon after his death. So it was with Paul Carlton Ransom who, afflicted with a terminal kidney ailment, was advised by doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore in the early 1890s that he had “a few more years to live” and should “go south and forget all about it.” Ransom did go south; in 1893 the young Harvard- and Columbia-educated lawyer abandoned his lucrative practice and left his Buffalo, New York, home for a voyage to southern Florida. The Ransom expedition got as far as Titusville on the Florida East Coast Railway and from there took a Rockledge-bound steamer; at the latter town they boarded another ship and headed for Lake Worth, changing vessels at Juno and Palm Beach. It was late in February of '93 that Ransom stopped in Coconut Grove on his way to the Keys. This Yankee was charmed by the rustic beauty of the Grove; later he

A native of Havana, Cuba, Giulio Blanc has lived in Coconut Grove for almost a decade and graduated from Ransom School in 1973; he now attends Harvard College.

was to say, “To work in the beautiful surroundings of the virgin forest and the tropical sea — did God ever give man more than he is giving me!” It was thus love at first sight. When he reached Key West, he purchased, after negotiations with a Grovite friend, Kirk Munroe, several acres of land in Coconut Grove overlooking Biscayne Bay.

Paul Ransom went back to Buffalo after his cruise but was very anxious to return to Coconut Grove and settle on his property; he finally did return in 1896, when the first building had been completed. Called “Honeymoon Cottage” as a tribute to a couple of young newlyweds who spent some nights there, the bungalow was built of lumber brought up from Key West by schooner and materials salvaged from shipwrecks. The site was named Pine Knot Camp for the great forest of Dade Pine that covered it; originally it had been called “Honeymoon Camp” again in honor of the newlyweds previously mentioned, but Ransom’s mother, a staunch Victorian lady, thought the name “improper” and so it was changed. After 1896 things began to move as rapidly at Pine Knot Camp as they were farther up the road at the mouth of the Miami River. Ransom taught part of the year

at the Hill School in Pennsylvania and in the harsh winter months returned to Coconut Grove with friends and students. This “migratory” business stirred up some ideas in Ransom; he had baffled doctors and seemingly improved greatly, and thus the “Adirondack-Florida School” was born in 1903. Styled “the first migratory boarding school in the country,” it operated in the fall and spring at Meenagha Lodge in the Adirondack region of New York and in winter at Pine Knot Camp. Together with several teachers and Alice Carter Ransom, his wife of but a few years, the educator instilled into a small group of boys a love of the outdoors and a sense of community responsibility. A family atmosphere prevailed at the school and Ransom drew up a code of honor which the students pledged to respect. The southern campus centered around the breezy “Pagoda,” built of Dade County Pine and coral rock taken from the property. This two-story building was used to house students, offices, and the main Common Room. In the latter, prayers were said every morning and the students put on plays for special occasions. Paul Ransom did not recover from his illness and finally died in 1907, but his school survived and prospered, thanks to the efforts of his widow and

interested teachers and parents. Ransom’s idea never died, and the Adirondack-Florida School went on to produce writers, aviators, inventors, diplomats and many men who helped make Miami a great city.

In the late forties the trustees decided to locate the school permanently in Coconut Grove and sell the northern campus, the migratory concept having become too expensive and outdated. But Ransom’s basic philosophy survived and guides the school to this day. Now it is called Ransom School and has more than three hundred students, several dozen teachers and administrators, and beautiful modern buildings. On December 22, 1973, the Historical Association honored Mr. Ransom’s school by presenting it with a commemorative marker. Earlier last year the Florida Department of State placed the Pagoda and Ransom School on the National Register of Historic Places, but perhaps what was being honored was not so much the past, but the present, the fact that the school is still around today, much changed of course, but still the direct result of the hard work of an early pioneer whose motto was “*Meine Truesball war mein Gluek.*” (My affliction became my happiness.)



In 1903, this alcove off the living room at the Pagoda was equipped for studying and led to dormitory rooms. —Photo courtesy of Giulio Blanc

UNCLE BILLY, EARLY MIAMI BOOSTER by Adam G. Adams

Sixty years ago when there was heady excitement in Miami concerning the city's future, the enthusiasm of a Georgia-born banker, William Stuart Witham, was unsurpassed. Uncle Billy, as he was known to everybody downtown, was a kind of one-man Chamber of Commerce.

Before he fell under the spell of the Magic City Witham had founded a chain of banks in Georgia known as the Witham Banks. He was born in La-Grange, Georgia, in 1853 but later made his home in Atlanta. Small of stature, white of mustache, he was a natty dresser, usually wearing a dark suit, a small red bowtie, and always a hat when on the street. **But in cold weather he would appear in a white Palm Beach suit and josh his friends for wearing sweaters and overcoats since he insisted it was "always June in Miami."**

Witham had his own brand of humor. He usually had a slim cigar in his mouth which he never lighted. When asked why not he would reply, "Why, then it would burn up!"

He was fond of giving terse advice. Some of his favorite statements were: "Mind your own business and in time you will have a business of your own to mind," and "Give me more than I expect and you will get more than you expect."

Witham was a founder of the Miami Bank and Trust Company in 1912. The banking house he built was at the southeast corner of N.E. First Avenue and First Street and the building stands today much as it was when built. Near the bank and also on First Avenue Witham built a five-story office building with walls of reinforced concrete. It was soon tenanted by some of the most prominent law firms of the day:

Adam G. Adams, charter member and thrice president of HASF (1951-1954), was a long-time real-estate operator. He is an authority on local real-estate history.

Hudson and Boggs, Kurtz and Reed, Payne and McElya, and E. Lee Strapp. This building was recently renovated by Joseph Weintraub, who bought it from the Witham estate. The original Dade County pine joists were found in perfect condition, much too hard for termites to destroy.

Uncle Billy made many real-estate investments, some of them in his wife's name, to the confusion of real-estate men and attorneys when this property was later put on the market. Each time he bought a lot in his wife's name Witham used a different variation of that name: Eleanor L. Witham, E. Leen Witham, E. L. Witham, Mrs. W. S. Witham, Mrs. W. Stuart Witham, or Mrs. William S. Witham. Senator F. M. Hudson, Witham's attorney, finally cleared the matter up with an affidavit stating that all these names belonged to the same person.

Uncle Billy was far from all frivolous, however. He was a devoted church member, his charities were widespread, and he generously supported educational institutions, including Young Harris College in North Georgia.

Thousands of tourists and many local persons attended, one time or another, the famous Sunday School Class of William Jennings Bryan held in the band shell in Royal Palm Park every Sunday morning during the "Season." Witham was called the "president" of this class and as such he conducted the preliminaries which today would be called a "warm-up."

Witham would ask all those from Boston to wave their hands. Then he would give them in doleful tones the weather report for Boston: "So cold the people are imprisoned in their own homes." Or Winnipeg: "The message is so blurred from freezing that it can't be read." Or Los Angeles: "No report. Lines all down."

One Sunday after he had covered the map one man in the



W. S. Witham and another Georgian, Mrs. James L. McAllister, builder of the McAllister Hotel pose with a stuffed alligator, a popular prop in photographic studios when this photo was taken in 1912. —Photo from the collection of Historical Association of Southern Florida

audience arose and said he had not heard his hometown mentioned. Uncle Billy replied, "There's no such town on the map now. It is buried under ice and snow."

Then Witham beamed at his audience and gave the weather report for Miami: "June as always, everybody basking in the sunshine."

UPDATE STAFF SALLIES FORTH

The Collier County Historical Society, Naples, opened its winter program series on December 10 with a discussion by Jerry Pardue, *Update* editor, on hurricanes of historical importance to Florida. Pardue, a weathercaster on WIOD, was introduced by Phil Thomas, a Naples weathercaster on WNOG. Both meteorologists recently retired from

the Coral Gables office of National Weather Service.

Dr. Charlton T. Tebeau, *Update* editorial consultant, will address the Collier County society on February 11. He'll talk about "The Year the Sky Fell", the boom-and-bust period of 1926.

AT THE MUSEUM

FEBRUARY

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February 5, 1974

Marjory Stoneman Douglas will speak on February 5, as postponed from January because of her illness. Her title "I Came to Miami in 1915." Mrs. Douglas has to her credit a lengthy string of books and many magazine and newspaper articles spanning a 60-year period. We are grateful to Professor Tebeau for his short-notice fill-in for Mrs. Douglas in January.

MARCH

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31						

March 5, 1974

PROGRAM MEETING 8 PM at the Museum. Dr. Harry A. Kersey, Professor of Education at Florida Atlantic University, will speak on Early Indian Trading. Dr. Kersey will tell of activities of early white traders Stranahan (Ft. Lauderdale), Brickell (Miami), Storters (Everglades, Smallwood (Chokoloskee.)

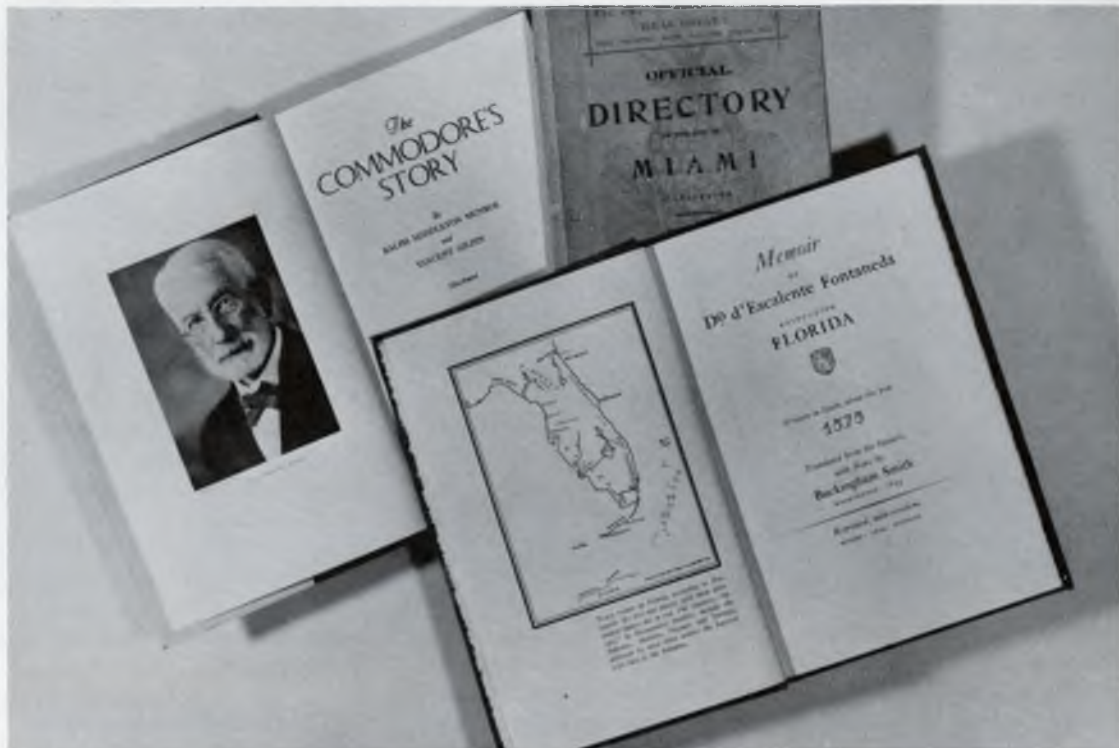
HISTORY'S NO LONGER A MYSTERY

Answers to Puzzle
(from page 11)

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PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE OF HASF ANNOUNCES REPRINT SERIES

by Irene Shiverick



The Publications Committee of the Historical Association of Southern Florida proudly announces the publication of a facsimile reprint series in cooperation with Third Century, U.S.A.

The first of the series is: *Memoir of Do. d'Escalente Fontaneda, Respecting Florida.* (Written in Spain about the year 1575, translated from the Spanish with notes by Buckingham Smith in Washington, 1854). The Association reprinted Fontaneda's Memoirs in 1944 and 1945 with revisions, footnotes, bibliography and an interpretative map. The current reprint boasts a preface by local historian, Marjory Stoneman Douglas. A unique text, Fontaneda's work is considered the first surviving European writing of this area. Authored by a shipwrecked schoolboy who lived with the Indians for over a decade, it is the sole known surviving record of the local Indian language. The Historical

Irene Shiverick (Mrs. T. T.) is chairperson of HASF's publications committee and second vice-president of the Association.

Museum's Director, David T. Alexander, has written a detailed book review elsewhere in this issue. The book is for sale at the Historical Museum Gift Shop.

The 1904 CITY OF MIAMI DIRECTORY, with an introduction by well-known historian and University of Miami professor emeritus Charlton Tebeau, is the second offering in the reprint series. Appearing with the Bicentennial Seal on its title page, as do all the books in this series, this 1904 edition is a treasure of early Miami photographs. It also contains Miami firsts in the professional and business field. Our facsimile reproduction was made from a copy on loan to us from the private collection of Gaines R. Wilson, Honorary Life Member and Founder of the Historical Association of Southern Florida. The committee is most grateful to be able to reprint this rare edition and to make it available to the public in early 1974.

A third addition to the series is *The Commodore's Story* by Ralph M. Munroe and Vincent Gilpin; the latter is a dear family friend and admirer of the Commodore. This is the fascinating

account of early pioneer life on Biscayne Bay and Southern Florida. Munroe, a renowned yachtsman, writes of boating in the middle and late 19th century and of Coconut Grove, the setting of the Barnacle, his historic home. Through the efforts of the Historical Association's President, Ms. Arva Parks, and Senator Robert Graham, the Barnacle is now owned by the state of Florida. It will be opened as a museum in 1974. Patty Munroe Catlow, the Commodore's daughter and a resident of the Grove, has written an informative preface for this reprint edition.

The Commodore's Story was originally published in 1930. A facsimile reprint was issued by Historical Association of Southern Florida in 1966.

Several other books are under consideration for the facsimile reprint series, one of the Association's contributions to the Bicentennial Celebration. It is with great pleasure and with the realization of the importance of our local heritage that we make these rare, historic publications available to our members and the general public.

MIAMI'S FIRST SCHOOL by Thelma Peters

In 1885 a settler near Lake Worth complained that though Dade County was almost as large as the State of Massachusetts it had no school. (Dade County in those days stretched from the Keys to Stuart.) Yet for some years landowners had been paying a half-mill school tax and from time to time a school superintendent was designated, more honorary than functional. The County Commission was thinking about schools when they ordered a census of Dade County children in 1879. They found 73 children under sixteen — widely scattered and some too young for school. They waited.

It was not until 1886 that Number One School was built. This was located in Palm Beach about a mile north of where Flagler was later to build his Royal Poinciana Hotel. From seven to twelve pupils were in attendance that first year.

The next year there were public schools in Lemon City and Coconut Grove and soon School Number Four at Elliotts Key. Mrs. Brickell petitioned for a school at the tiny settlement at the mouth of the Miami River. She was refused — not enough children.

Then came Miami's first boom. In one fateful year, 1896, Miami went from near zero population to 2,000. Hundreds of workers came into Miami to work at clearing streets or at building the Royal Palm Hotel. This was Shacktown year. People lived in shanties or tents or built their own A-frames from palm leaves. The most comfortable accommodation was aboard Captain Vail's Floating Hotel tied up along the north shore of the Miami River.

Julia Tuttle hurriedly put up a large frame dormitory to house workers, then, refining her thinking, she jacked the structure up

three feet off the ground, added porches and created the Miami Hotel. Guests were allowed in before there were windows or doors. John Sewell climbed a ladder to get to his cot on the second floor. The diningroom, large for that time and place, 34 feet by 90 feet, served several hundred meals daily.

But still there was no school.

The railroad arrived, Miami got a newspaper, the city was incorporated, a sewer system begun, and the mechanics working on the Royal Palm organized into baseball clubs with the Plumbers regularly playing the Steamfitters. But still no school.

Then in September of that year the school superintendent, W. L. Widmeyer, who lived in Palm Beach, visited Miami to take the pulse of the people regarding a school. According to the *Miami Metropolis* he was disappointed at the lack of interest and remarked that he hated to force a school on anybody.

However, he was soon going ahead with a school, ordering desks and maps from Chicago and looking about for a suitable teacher. The first teacher hired, Miss Grace Jackson, quit before she began. On recommendation

of a board member Widmeyer wrote to a young teacher in Hamilton County and invited him to come down and accept the position at \$40 a month. He came. He was R. E. McDonald; he lived the entire rest of his life in the Miami area, though not much of it in the classroom.

There was no time in which to build a school building so the Board rented a frame store building from Mrs. Lucy D. Douthit. The Douthit family came from North Carolina, some members becoming early homesteaders in the Biscayne Bay area. The Board paid \$20 a month for the seven-month school term. On Sundays the same "hall" was sometimes used by a church congregation.

The Douthit Building was located near the present Richards Store or on present Northeast First Street just east of Miami Avenue. The back yard still had pines and palmettoes but next door was a small frame drygoods store, Lovett and Laws. It was a poor location for a store, people said. Too far from the center of town. At this time the one and two-story frame buildings that constituted the "business section" were located on what is now South Miami Avenue near the river.

Because of the delay in getting school desks and in finding a teacher the school did not open until October 21, three weeks late. The *Miami Metropolis* advised pupils to arrive on time bringing slates and slate pencils or tablets and lead pencils — no ink. The same writer stated that it cost 60¢ a day to educate a child and it was well worth it because an educated man could expect to earn \$2 a day more than an uneducated man could earn.

Thirty-eight children showed up the first day. McDonald had his hands full. For one thing the word about school got around and by the third day there were 49 pupils and in three weeks 73 pupils. No two pupils had ever attended school together. They represented many states and many Florida counties. Grade placement and conducting all classes in one room were gigantic problems. It is not surprising that McDonald neglected some of his janitorial duties and let the overworked privy behind the school become the subject of an irate letter to the editor of the newspaper. The writer demanded that there would have to be better sanitary provisions for the school or no one could live within two blocks. This may have



This palm-thatched A-frame with mosquito netting door and outdoor cookstove and pantry was typical of the housing for hundreds of workers who came to Miami during the first boom. In 1896 the population went from near zero to 2,000. — HASF Museum collection.

Dr. Peters, a professional historian, is a frequent contributor to Update.



The student body of Miami's first public school pass in front of the recently completed Royal Palm Hotel as they advertise a picnic to celebrate the end of the school year in May, 1897. The photographer was P. J. Coates. — Photo from HASF Museum collection.

been Miami's first formal air-pollution complaint.

Soon a second teacher was hired, Miss Amie Mann of Daytona. McDonald was no doubt cheered by this but there was no additional physical room so the overcrowding was not relieved. At this time no one had heard of compulsory attendance laws. Truancy was common and just as well. The average daily attendance was 55.

Mr. McDonald and Miss Mann must have welcomed the Christmas vacation with a sigh of relief. Both boarded the train north, he to Cocoa, she to visit friends in Palm Beach. When they returned the shack-town business section of Miami near the river was in ashes. But their school and the drygoods store next door were spared because they were out of the way.

As a result of the fire Lovett and Laws doubled their business in millinery and shoes and the business section moved north to center on present Flagler Street.

The school year ended May 4. Somehow the two valiant young teachers had carried the school to a successful conclusion. They planned an ambitious event by way of celebration — an all-day outing and picnic at the Arch

Creek Natural Bridge.

To advertise the event the teachers, pupils and some of their friends formed a mini-parade with a carriage and two carryalls, a brass band and a large printed sign and drove about the streets of Miami.

Fortunately for us a photographer snapped the parade as it passed in front of the Royal Palm Hotel which had recently closed its shutters after a first and only moderately successful season.

Livery stables made carriages and wagons available for the twelve-mile trip to Arch Creek. The prices: 25¢ for children, 50¢ for adults. There is no report on how many attended the picnic.

During the summer of 1897 the *Miami Metropolis* agitated for a proper school building. The School Board was reluctant. Up to this time the rule had been to spend only \$200 on each school building. That would buy the materials and local citizens would provide the work. Quite obviously Miami was already beyond a one-room \$200-school.

Miami's benefactor, Henry M. Flagler, who had already supplied

each church congregation with a building lot, now gave \$1,000 toward a school. With this impetus the Board managed to raise another \$500 and the building was ready for fall opening. Its distinctive feature was a square bell tower on one side of which were two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. The location was in pine woods on the site of the present downtown Miami post office.

Mr. McDonald had acquired property at Fulford so the Board moved him to the Lemon City School so that he would be nearer his property. Veteran teacher Ada F. Merritt was moved from Lemon City School to the Miami Grammar School and made principal. There were two other teachers, both women. The entire school budget for all of Dade County this year of 1897-98 was \$12,000.



By 1903 the original Miami Grammar School had tripled in size from several additions. Ada F. Merritt had come from the Lemon City School to be the principal and a high school had begun in the cottage to the rear. — HASF Museum Photo Collection.

During the summer of 1897 all teachers of the county had to go to Palm Beach and take a teacher's examination. According to the *Metropolis* Miss Ada Merritt made the top score — 93 points. Miami was indeed getting the best. Miss Merritt was to stamp her high standards of learning and conduct on a whole generation of Miami children.

Much less is known about Miami's first Negro school, which opened at the same time that the Douthitt Building school began. The Board rented a Negro church in the Central Negro District beyond the railroad tracks. The first teacher was Mrs. A. C. Lightbourn and we know that for nearly a month during the year the school was closed because of her illness.

There are no known photos of either "first" school.

FLORIDA & THE CARIBBEAN: A Mosquito in Paradise by Ken Sellati

Horizons dotted with great billowing sails of treasure-laden galleons, golden cities dazzling in the tropic sun, unspeakable wealth and power — all these dreams danced through the soaring imagination of Sixteenth Century Europe. The genesis of these dreams were reports and more important tales that seeped back to Europe from the New Hemisphere. Vivid visions of coral-fringed isles, snow-white beaches, and groves of wind-swept palms blurred the dangers of the new environment.

Aiding the colorful blurred visions of the New World were royal governmental agencies. Spain, France, England and the Netherlands all had sizable populations of wayward unsettled citizens and soldiers. Regardless of obstacles, European governments openly encouraged exploration and colonization. In the Caribbean area early settlements languished from one year to the next. Columbus, 1493, established a 1500-member colony on Hispaniola. Nine years later only 300 survived. The royal governments constantly had to supply people and materials to the colonies. Emptying the jails of minor criminals and debtors supplied the lifeblood of the New World. People first by tens, then hundreds, and finally thousands sought their destiny beyond the oceans. Propelled by self-faith and hope, made dreamers by tales and ignorance, and powered by desperation they rose to the challenge of the age. For the most part this Carib paradise bore fruits of despair, suffering and often death. Occasionally, as if by accident, some colonies prospered.

Colonists bound for the eastern Caribbean faced an energetic enemy, the Carib Amerindians, who retarded settlement of the eastern Carib isles until the middle 17th century. On the larger

isles, a docile, peaceable people, the Arawak Amerindians passively slipped into extinction. For the colonists, the Amerindians were a secondary survival issue.

Choosing a permanent settlement site is often dominated by relatively narrow considerations. For sea-frightened pioneers, constantly on hurricane watch, the leeward side of an isle or inlet was the natural site for their germinating ambitions. Unfortunately, the wind-phobic mosquito also shared the same ecological niche. Survival in paradise was not for the lazy or get-rich-quick conquistadores. Many soldiers discovered that farming was not a simple art, nor were native foods compatible with their increasingly blurred dreams of Utopia. Many tried desperately to return to their unhappy yet accustomed life styles of the motherland.

A cloud of death swept from colony to colony like a cottony cumulus cloud blown across the Caribbean. Malaria, yellow fever and viral sleeping sickness were ever-present threats. While each disease had a different pathogen, they did have one common factor, the mosquito. Not just any mosquito but rather blood-thirsty pregnant females. The developing eggs required the nutrients from mammalian or avian blood. Once developed into larvae a moist, swampy environment was needed. From the wiggling larval stage to adulthood was but a matter of days. The female would pick up the pathogens from one person and transfer them to their next blood host. Manmade cisterns or water ponds were ideal mosquito-breeding areas. Ultimately man supplied the pathogens and then created an environment conducive for a mosquito population boom. It would take centuries for man to learn to drain ditches and stagnant pools, then to stock the waterways with small mosquito-devouring fish, such as the guppy or, in southern Florida, the gambusia. These fish often consumed their weight in mosquito larvae every few days.

Both Amerindian and European fell victim to wave after wave of fevers. By the early 1600s it was evident that a sustained European population could not survive in the West Indies. By this time most of the Amerindians also succumbed to the white man's fate. However, the rules of Darwinian evolution prepared African humanity for a home across the sea. With the growth of sugar cultures throughout the West Indies, the black man proved his superior adaptability to tropical climes. Island after island was transformed as European and Amerindian cultures were mingled with those of West Africa. Genetic mutations and centuries of fever experience tempered the African response to these pathogens.

Over the years, through intermarriages or otherwise, a semi-resistant indigenous population arose. Europeans owning land or in commerce found it safer to be absentee landlords, visiting the isles of the sun only for immediate business. Some evidence of the intensity of the yellow fever outbreaks could be gleaned from British military records. During the War of Jenkins Ear (1741) the British forces, approximately 12,000 in number, laid siege to Cartagena, Colombia. The fever killed more than two-thirds of the force. Another British military report indicates that between 1795 and 1799 more than 31,000 sailors and troops died of yellow fever or yellow jack fever in the Caribbean.

In 1881 a Cuban physician, Dr. Carlos Finlay, traced the fever to mosquitoes. Very little was gained from his work prior to the Spanish-American war. An American physician, Dr. William Gorgas, recognized Finlay's efforts and began to eliminate conditions favoring the mosquito. In 1902 another American, Dr. Walter Reed, identified the microscopic pathogen. The last major outbreak of yellow fever in Rio de Janeiro (1894-1906), was 95% fatal to its victims, the death toll being more

than 28,000. In Rio de Janeiro no deaths have occurred since mosquito control began.

Thus the West Indies, by virtue of mosquito-borne diseases, became an annex of West African culture. European culture survived only by hybridizing with African cultures. Demographics and cultural traditions prove the importance of a mosquito in paradise.

ABSOLUTE ACCURACY

History is full of little tidbits that surface from time to time. Here's one I fancy.

A tireless stickler for absolute accuracy, British mathematician Charles Babbage felt his hackles rising when he first read Alfred Lord Tennyson's newest poem, "The Vision of Sin." In it a line reading,

"Every moment dies a man,
every moment one is born."

This line irritated him, so he wrote to Tennyson, "It must be manifest that if this were true, the population of the world would be at a standstill. In truth the rate of birth, of course, exceeds that of death. I suggest, therefore, that you amend your poem to read,

"Every moment dies a man,
every moment one and one sixteenth is born."

—C.T.T.



Mr. Sellati is a local high-school teacher. He has contributed numerous articles to local and state publications.

THE DIRECTOR'S DESK by David T. Alexander



SOME REFLECTIONS ON AN EAGLE

On exhibit in the gallery of the Historical Museum stands a remarkable bronze eagle. Fully lifesize, the strikingly modern bird looks back over its shoulder, as if in contemplation of some past glory. This is as it should be, for this sculpture is a memorial to two of the Historical Association's past friends and benefactors, the late Russell T. Pancoast, FAIA, and the late Bernard Davis, founding President-Director of the Miami Museum of Modern Art, who originally donated the eagle in Mr. Pancoast's memory.

Close examination of the piece reveals the name of the sculptor, W. Glasmacher. The eagle was cast, according to the rest of the incised inscription, in Berlin at the Lauchhammer foundry, being number seven in an apparently limited series. One would think that further information about the sculptor, his other works and the period in which he was active would be easy to find, given these basic data. Not so, as careful research has revealed.

In February, the Museum Director searched the biographical encyclopedias in the great library of New York's Metropolitan Mu-

seum of Art for data on this sculptor. Works in English, French and German were consulted. All had a uniform format, all went from GLASGOW to GLASNER in the alphabetical listing. As time was short, the Director left a request for further information at the librarian's desk.

A reply was received this month. Diligent research by the Metropolitan's staff could find no trace whatever of "W. Glasmacher." Publications familiar and obscure failed to note Glasmacher or any work he might have done. German works especially were researched, without avail.

Who, then, was this sculptor? How could an artist capable of such magnificent work have dropped from sight so completely? The age of the sculpture is not known. Bernard Davis believed it to date from the 1890s. Indeed, several surviving eagle designs for coins and medals resemble the modernistic style of the piece to a marked degree, in particular a three-mark coin of 1910 commemorating the centenary of the University of Berlin. Again, the general style is distinctly reminiscent of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The fidelity with which the design follows the proportions and

details of the subject argue a high degree of skill by the sculptor: the jutting beak, the piercing eyes and the splendid detail of the scales and raptorial claws of the splay feet. It seems certain that so able an artist must have created many other such examples of his great ability. The black marble base, scarred somewhat from moving through the eventful decades, the spotty patina from exposure to years of Florida salt air, tell us very little. Shortly before his death, Mr. Davis revealed that he had acquired the eagle in Communist Poland, among other art works offered for sale by the Polish government. This rang a bell with a suggestion of Miami Artist Ken Hughs, that Glasmacher might have been active in the National Socialist state's *Kunstammer*, the totalitarian Chamber of Arts which attracted a number of artists wishing success at whatever price. The downfall of the Nazi state might therefore explain the apparent eclipse of this sculptor, also the presence of his work in an area conquered by the Red Army.

We may one day find out with certainty. An appeal to the Cultural Affairs Attache of the German Embassy may bring further details to light. Perhaps there will be some kinship between our eagle and the one atop

the Ramon Franco monument facing the Air Ministry building in Madrid, Spain, studied by the Director during his November visit to Spain. This monument to the heroic flyer, first to fly from Spain to Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the 1920s, features a huge bronze eagle atop a soaring pillar, very much in the Glasmacher style. A foreign commission, perhaps. It is possible that one of the readers of *Update* may shed further light on this question, and assist in resolving one of the several research questions resting on THE DIRECTOR'S DESK.

ACQUISITION

Three new portraits have joined the line-up on our portrait wall. One of our favorites is a painting of Commodore Ralph Middleton Munroe, painted by his relative, Louis Benton.

A quite colorful addition is a portrait of the late Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, given to us by the Museum of Science.

Unveiled on Saturday, January 19 was a portrait of pioneer educator, Miss Julia Fillmore Harris.

Other additions to our growing portrait collection are eagerly sought. Our facilities for preservation, restoration and exhibit make the Historical Museum a logical choice for such donations.

BOOK REVIEW SECTION

**ADVENTURES ON THE AIRBOAT TRAIL**

by Ida Haskins. Miami: E.A. Seemann, Inc. \$3.95

Reviewed by Sarah Shiverick

This is a story about three boys, Jim, Rob and Brent, who went on an exciting hunting trip in the Everglades.

It was Jim's first trip to the Glades but Rob and Brent grew up around there. Jim got sick and lost. Then somebody stole their fuel. They met an Indian squaw, Sihoki, who led them to a dugout so they could find a way to get fuel for their airboat, the JOLLY JOLT.

While looking for a village they came to an island. While they were making dinner Jim went out exploring. And did he make a discovery! He found an airstrip!

The boys hid behind some bushes when a plane landed. The pilot and some other men were unloading guns. They met some other men, Teek, Hass, and Chaney. They had stolen the JOLLY JOLT and come down here to pick up the guns for rebels training in the Everglades.

The boys had to think fast. What they did as soon as the plane took off makes exciting reading.

When the boys returned home they had learned a lot from their experience in the Everglades. They learned many Indian customs such as the alligator dance, and the campfire rituals, and they

made lots of friends.

This book offers action, excitement, and much information about the Indians, the animals, and the Glades.

Our reviewer is the teen-age progeny of Mr. and Mrs. T. T. Shiverick. Irene is chairman of our publications board, while daughter Sarah attends South Miami Junior High School.

**MEMOIR OF Do. HERNANDO d'ESCALENTE FONTANEDA RESPECTING FLORIDA**

(Written in Spain, about the year 1575.) A Facsimile Reprint by Historical Association of Southern Florida, Miami. 1974

Reviewed by David Alexander

World War II was raging. The fledgling Historical Association of Southern Florida, only just organized and incorporated, found itself swept up in a world at war. The founding membership, though highly motivated, was neither numerous nor wealthy in a community just beginning to emerge from difficult years of Boom, Bust and Depression. Fortunately our organization boasted members determined that the Association should survive and grow. Among these was the late David O. True, historian, student of early maps and discoveries. David True, although reduced in circumstances by those factors so often suffered by historians everywhere, possessed a keen, searching mind. He had had a kind of predecessor in the American diplomatic service of the Nineteenth Century, the great Buckingham Smith. Smith, while stationed at pitance wages with the delegation

to Spain, occupied his spare time in seeking out and copying for translation ancient manuscripts illustrating the Spanish colonial history of the Southeast. His education in Saint Augustine made him especially interested in the very early explorations of Florida. In the General Archive of the Indies in Sevilla, he found the manuscript of the *Memoir of Do. Hernando d'Escalente Fontaneda respecting Florida*, written in Spain about 1575. Fontaneda, a schoolboy returning to Spain, had a not uncommon misfortune. His ship was wrecked on the inhospitable Florida shores, and he was to spend about seventeen years among the Indians of Southern Florida. His subsequent *Memoir to the King of Spain* recorded the life style, diet, language and a series of general observations and recommendations concerning the Florida Indians. Indeed, much of what has survived of the little-known Calusa and Tequesta languages is traceable to the eye and pen of the former captive Fontaneda.

The printing of this slim volume, combined with a letter of Hernando de Soto, totalled only one hundred copies in 1854. Buckingham Smith, like other historians, faced budgetary limitations. Needless to say, these "original" reprints are unavailable today. Therefore David O. True hit upon the idea of another issue, this time with map, bibliography, and extensive footnotes and annotations, plus corrected translations, with the full Spanish text of the original manuscript. This reissue would at once indicate the serious scholarly intent of the new Historical Association, provide a valued tool for researchers, and hopefully raise operating funds for the organization. In all of these, he was successful.

After a number of printings, this second English edition was allowed to pass out of print. After some years, the Association's work came to command a price in accord with its high re-

gard by historians. 1975 will mark the probable four hundredth anniversary of the manuscript. It seemed to this Museum Director that this period, coinciding with the beginning of Bicentennial excitement, would provide a perfect setting for the Association's next issue of Fontaneda. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, historian, author and long-time observer of David True's researches, kindly agreed to write a new foreword to this issue, a foreword concerning the life work of the originator of the World War II edition. Mrs. Douglas provides us with a characteristically warm, readable, human insight into the life of David O. True, his trials, tribulations and great victories. Patsy West of the Historical Museum staff prepared a beautiful new jacket design for the new edition, which suggests the circumstances of Fontaneda's shipwreck and captivity.

The latest updating of Fontaneda's *Memoir* will be the first of a series of reprints by the Historical Association of Southern Florida. This series, described elsewhere in *Update*, bears the distinction of an official Bicentennial Project, in cooperation with our local agency, Third Century U.S.A. The series, led by Fontaneda, will provide evidence of the determination of the Association to place itself in the mainstream of the more lasting, productive and serious activity commemorating the second century of American Independence.

The Memoir of Do. Hernando d'Escalente Fontaneda Respecting Florida will be available through the Historical Museum of Southern Florida after the New Year at \$3.00 in paper back, with foreword by Marjory Stoneman Douglas and cover by Patsy West. Allow two to three weeks for delivery through the mails.

David T. Alexander is Director of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida.

FLORIDA'S ROLE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Secretary of State Richard "Dick" Stone, in whose division of state government most preservation activities fall, spoke at the monthly program meeting of the Historical Association at the Museum of Science auditorium on December 4. Special guests for the occasion were members of the Dade Heritage Trust, the Dade County Historical Commission, and the Villagers, all close allies with the Association and each other in preservation activities in southern Florida.

Secretary Stone began by emphasizing the necessity to identify and protect historic sites, natural features, and buildings in advance of rapid development of real estate and road building. The object is not to stop development but to plan it so as to protect and preserve historic remains. Indian habitation sites may be excavated for the information the artifacts may reveal about the past; if they prove sufficiently important they may be marked for preservation. Historic sites must be identified before they are threatened. There are now some 5,000 historic sites on the state's inventory, 700 of them added in 1973.

The state organizations, especially the Division of Archives, History and Public Records, headed by Senator Robert Williams, work with the National Register of Historic Places and with local organizations to achieve a coordinated program. Right of way for highways and acreage designed for development may be surveyed ahead of

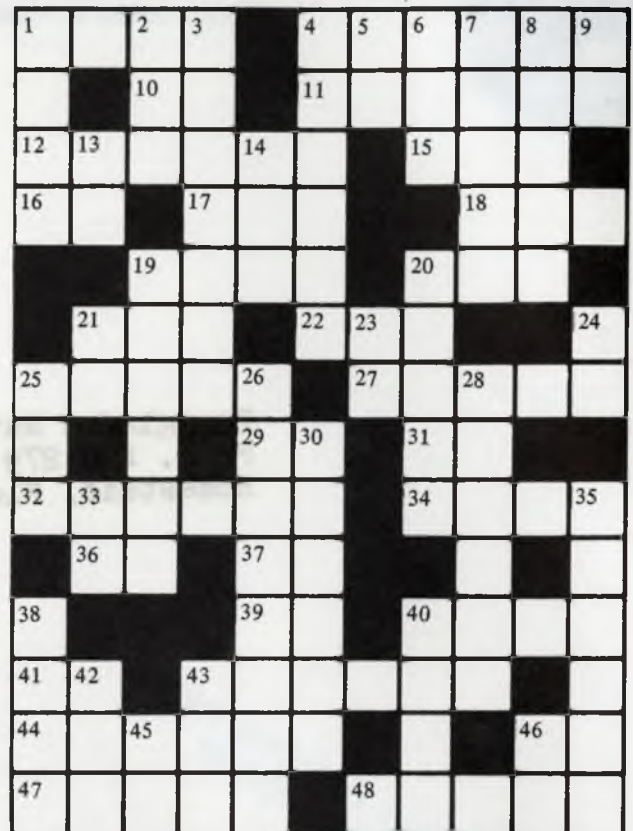
any planned work to determine if any historic sites worthy of study or preservation may be involved. The agents of the division conducted eighteen field studies in 1973, ten of them archaeological sites which they excavated. Seventy other sites were marked for investigation before damage should be done to them. He urged that local interests take the initiative in bringing the attention of the division to projects thought to deserve attention.

Secretary Stone also urged that thinking go beyond the making of museums into historic buildings. Many of them can and should be restored and used. Florida has made some first steps in this direction, along a trail so prominently blazed by Savannah, Georgia. He then called attention to the extensive restoration and preservation programs at Saint Augustine and Pensacola and reported that Fernandina and Key West are launching similar projects. It is being realized that beyond the purely sentimental and cultural values of these projects they prove profitable in attracting, entertaining and educating visitors.

Responding to a question about the basis of his interest in cleaning up the Miami River, Mr. Stone explained that he is a member of two state agencies from which he derives authority and responsibility. The Department of Natural Resources is charged with preservation and enhancement of those resources. The Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund own and manage state lands and other properties which include the bed of the river and the water above it. His personal interest in this particular stream leads him to use the state agencies and to enlist the support of private individuals and institutions for a cleanup campaign.

- C.T.T.

HISTORY'S A MYSTERY by Thelma P. Peters



ACROSS

- 1. Kind of paving blocks, early Miami
- 4. _____ Haulover
- 10. You and I
- 11. _____ Cohen, early merchant
- 12. Old name for Delray
- 15. Noise
- 16. Miami's West Coast rival
- 17. Get free of
- 18. Golf Accessory
- 19. Expected social behavior
- 20. Coll. course
- 21. Garland
- 22. Inlet
- 25. Biographical info
- 27. Related to 28 DOWN
- 29. One of 2 or more
- 31. Kilometer
- 32. Fort _____
- 34. _____ Island
- 36. Possessive I
- 37. Tensile strength
- 39. To _____ or not to
- 40. Miami River had one
- 41. Professional nurse
- 43. Assassinated in Bayfront Park, 1933
- 44. Secret
- 46. Not out
- 47. Author of The Barefoot Mailman
- 48. New England poet who

wintered in S. Fla.

DOWN

- 1. Priority on an early homestead
- 2. _____ up (confess)
- 3. Early name for Florida City
- 4. _____ boys, real estate hucksters, 1925
- 5. While
- 6. To tease
- 7. Prepares for publication
- 8. "No Back Talk" _____, boomtime developer
- 9. Elder
- 13. In absentia
- 14. Cause of 1974 crisis
- 19. First mayor of Miami
- 20. Crandon and Greynolds
- 21. Weight
- 23. "Live _____ up!"
- 24. Article
- 25. Unusual
- 26. Car accessory
- 28. Transportation update
- 30. State
- 33. Before noon
- 35. Give in
- 38. A stage property
- 40. Dade Youth _____
- 42. National business organization
- 43. Bear's or Government
- 45. Central America
- 46. "As _____"

(Answers Page 5)



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