

# Update



## DOWNTOWN MIAMI





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## Cover:

Downtown Miami, in 1914, looking West on Avenue "D", now known as Flagler Street.

—Photo from the HASF collection

## UPDATE

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## DIRECTOR'S DESK



You really never can go home! Returning to Miami after a twelve-year absence has brought mixed emotions. The city in which I was born and raised no longer exists. Change — the historical process — has certainly been at work in those few years. I visited Miami several times during that period and saw the growth and expansion underway. Nevertheless, in many ways I feel like a newcomer as do so many other South Floridians.

My experience in the past few years traveling around Florida as State historic preservationist has shown that an increasing number of people are becoming interested in the history of their area. I had expected to find those most interested in local history to be old timers or natives of the area. But that did not always prove to be the case. Quite often the newcomer who had moved to Florida in the past few years was more interested in the history of his new home than the native. I believe this points to a human need that is becoming more evident as the hectic pace of American life continues to accelerate.

## Disclaimer

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It is a simple need, hard to define in words but easy to feel in emotions. We all need "roots". I am not sure exactly what roots are; like most human emotions the concept is complex. Two ingredients of the heart of the concept are "understanding and familiarity". I have roots in Miami because I am familiar with the place and I understand some of the events that happened here while I was growing up. In both a historical and personal sense I am part of the history of Miami and Miami is part of the history of me!

An interest in the history of an area can help you develop roots. This becomes very important for our psychic wellbeing when it is remembered that moving many times in the course of their life is the norm rather than the exception for most people. The vast majority of people in Southern Florida are not natives and many have been residents for only a few years. By investing a little time in learning about what has happened here in the past they can begin to gain roots vicariously. Acquiring understanding and familiarity with the history of an area brings the individual a sense of place in time.

Parallel to this line of reasoning is a concept often talked about by the historian John K. Mahon (edited Bemrose's *Reminiscences*

of the Second Seminole War, wrote *History of the Second Seminole War, The War of 1812*, etc.). He often referred to the "historical or cultural baggage" we all carry with us. By historical or cultural baggage he meant the traditions, the habits, the collective experiences of our people which influence how we, individually and collectively, have done things in the past and will do things in the future. Some people take time to learn of the historical baggage (i.e., study history) while others don't. Either way it is always with us. An understanding and familiarity with the challenges, opportunities, and failures of the people that have lived before our time in South Florida can impart a feeling of communion with our fellow man. Whether aboriginal, pioneer, or man of the seventies we all have faced similar problems (housing, food, family, etc.) in South Florida. Learning of the experiences of those that have lived before us provides the individual with a perspective that enables him to understand his own place in his own time.

Incidentally, I am *not* trying to promote the old cliché "If we don't learn history we are doomed to repeat it" mainly because it is hogwash. Just because we know our past mistakes doesn't mean we are not going to repeat them. However, an understanding of the past can take the individual out of his own little world and provide him with the perspective to cope with the hectic pace of modern life.

After all of that rambling let me close by saying it is good to be home.





**MARKING TIME** by Wayne E. Withers

A continuing series on the HASF Marker Program by Wayne E. Withers, Marker Committee

The 23rd marker erected by HASF commemorating "Miami's First Telephone Exchange" was dedicated November 29, 1966, in ceremonies at the Gulfstream Room of Bayfront Park Auditorium. Later the marker was permanently placed on the side of a building at 36 N.E. 2nd Street, occupied by Southern Bell. Mrs. Leonard Muller, a long-time resident of Miami and a granddaughter of Alexander Graham Bell, was the keynote speaker at the dedication. Others on the program were local residents associated with the beginnings of the telephone system in Miami. The ceremonies had a "Gay Nineties" flair, with pretty employees of Southern Bell in costumes of the period acting as guides. A costumed barbershop quartet, the Bell Ringers, added a nostalgic note with songs from the late '90s. Southern Bell also furnished a display "Telephone of Yesterday" and laminated reproductions of Miami's first telephone directory, a one-page edition, were distributed to those attending.

The cast-aluminum marker is single faced with gold letters against a coral background, and the text of the marker reads as follows:

**FIRST TELEPHONE EXCHANGE**

*Greater Miami's First Telephone Exchange began operating near this site early in 1899. The City of Miami granted a franchise in December 1898, and the Miami Telephone Co. was incorporated in February 1899. The first switchboard was in a drugstore at Miami Avenue and Southwest First Street. The exchange was later moved to a building on the south side of Flagler Street in the block east of Miami Avenue. Lines were quickly extended to Lemon City and Coconut Grove. The company provided the first music to be broadcast in the area from the switchboard to sub-*

*scribers who listened on their telephones. In June, 1917, with some 2,000 subscribers, this company and Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co. formed the South Atlantic Telephone Co. The exchange became part of Southern Bell on Dec. 31, 1924.*

More on the marker program in the next issue of *UPDATE*.

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**PICTURING OUR PAST** by S. J. Boldrick



Traffic policemen observed automobiles and pedestrians from this control tower at Miami Avenue and Flagler Street in 1925. The building to the left is the Bank of Bay Biscayne.



This view of Flagler Street looking west from S.E. 1st Avenue on June 9, 1927, shows that the old Courthouse too is doomed as the top of the new Courthouse looms over surrounding buildings. The new Courthouse was literally built around the old building.



The old Dade County Courthouse saw ironwork pushing skyward during the 1925 building boom.



Miami Avenue and N.E. 1st Street has long been an important commercial address. The New York Department Store shown in this 1925 view later became Cromer-Cassel. In 1933 the store name was changed to Mark's, later to Richards.



## PIONEER PICTURES by Dorothy Dean Davidson

At eleven o'clock on the night of April 1, 1904, an excited little girl scrambled down from the Florida East Coast railroad train and, for the first time, set her five-year-old foot on the soil of the Magic City, then but a village of two thousand people.

I was that little girl and with my mother and father and two younger brothers we packed ourselves into a three-seated carriage "with fringe on top" and were pulled along by a livery-stable nag named Nellie in the direction of our new home.

As we left the station in the bright moonlight I looked back and will never forget the picture I had of that railroad station. It was one story, frame, with wide openings to let the breezes through, and it was painted yellow as were most of Mr. Flagler's hotels and stations. This station, long forgotten by many, was located near present N.E. Second Street and Sixth Avenue, handy to the public docks.

In 1904 this area was at the edge of town. Our driver took us toward town along old Avenue B, past the Green Tree Inn, the San Carlos Hotel and the Halcyon Hotel, this latter built of native coral rock with a red tile roof. Nearer the river was the enormous Royal Palm Hotel surrounded by tropical gardens. Here during the season — January to April — the long porches and corridors thronged with rich and famous visitors. At the docks, where the bay and river met, fine yachts were tied up and fishermen gathered at sunset to record the catch of the day. Look now at the commercial configuration of the Dupont Plaza Hotel, the glaring apron of concrete where the gardens used to be, with the expressway soaring near by, and ask yourself what Progress is.

*Dorothy Dean Davidson (Mrs. Robert M.) is the daughter of S. Bobo Dean, who moved to Miami in 1904 as joint owner with B. B. Tatum, of the Miami Metropolis, a forerunner of the present Miami News.*

But to get back to April 1, 1904.

It was nearly midnight when the carriage stopped in front of our new home on the corner of Biscayne Boulevard and N.E. Second Street where the Colonial Hotel is now located. The house looked very fine to me. The first floor, of white coral rock, was well up off the ground for hurricane protection. The second floor was clapboard. There was almost no yard but the road was narrow and just across that road was a fringe of seagrape trees and the Bay itself. Today's beautiful Bayfront Park was not even a gleam in anyone's eye in 1904.

The Bay had a path of moonlight shimmering across it and not an island, bridge, causeway or even a boat anywhere in sight. The faraway fringe of mangroves marked the Ocean Beach, as it was called then, and to me that was a place of mystery. I still remember the smell of the bay, a salty seaweedy smell that vanished in the 1920s.

The next morning I made my first friend in the neighborhood, Betty Nettles Quarterman. Twenty-five years later as Mrs. Arthur Pancoast she became the fourth president of our Junior League. But on this day she was a long-legged, black-eyed girl, a little older than I. She made a house for me in a seagrape tree and invited me to join her friends for the swim in the bay every day at four o'clock. All the neighborhood joined in these swims. Our neighborhood families included the Lefflers, Romfhs, Quartermans, Burdines, and McDonalds.

It was a wonderful life. The only flaw in it that I remember was the mosquitoes. It was my household chore to keep the punk piles burning — little saucers of mosquito powder which sent up smoke and odor repulsive to mosquitoes. We placed these saucers underneath the dining table, the beds, and just outside the front and back doors.



The Flagler-yellow railroad station was located at present N.E. Second Avenue and Sixth Street from 1898 to 1913. In 1904, when Mrs. Davidson arrived in Miami, the station was at the edge of town and handy to the public docks.  
—Photo from the HASF collection



The bay at the foot of present S.E. Eighth Street was the popular swimming hole for families living south of Miami River in the early 1900s.  
—Photo from the HASF collection

We used mosquito nettings over our beds and sometimes put newspapers under our clothes.

I remember how we learned about using newspapers this way. Mr. B. B. Tatum, who with my father owned the evening paper, invited us for a drive around the town. The Tatum carriage was the most luxurious in Miami. The back seat was a semicircle with a little door at the back and two steps that let down. I sat on a stool immediately behind Mr. Tatum. He was wearing a black suit of shiny material. Then I noticed that the space between the back of the shoulders was a different shade of black, and a different texture. I raised my hand to touch this patch and a swarm of mosquitoes surrounded us. Mr. Tatum explained to us that he had on a newspaper vest under his coat and was not aware

of the mosquitoes on his back. That day we were so uncomfortable from the mosquitoes that our drive soon ended.

But the following Sunday Mr. Tatum invited us to go again. This time we had newspaper protection under our clothes and also a smouldering saucer of punk on the floor of the carriage. We drove through Brickell Hammock to the Punch Bowl, supposed to have been one of Ponce de Leon's innumerable Fountains of Youth. That day my father observed how nice it was on the south side of Miami River and said to Mr. Tatum that he wanted a home there, "where my children can grow up in the country and we can have a cow and chickens."

In 1906 we did move to what we called Southside, and we lived in a house on an unpaved road





Smith's Casino at the south end of Ocean Beach (now Miami Beach) was a popular place to swim and picnic in the early 1900s. Bathers arrived by ferry and could rent swim suits and towels at the Casino.

—Photo from the HASF collection



The Dean children, Dorothy, Rolland and Gordon, play with their dog Prince outside their Southside home in 1906. The family kept a cow and chickens at their home and the children played "Cowboys and Indians" in the Brickell Hammock. —Photo courtesy of Dorothy Dean Davidson

two blocks south of the River. The road ran from present Miami Avenue to Brickell Avenue and there were two houses there besides ours. Father cleared the land around our house so, as he said, we could at least see the snakes before we stepped on them. We saw plenty of snakes but we soon learned the difference between the poisonous ones and the harmless ones. We must have felt pretty casual about them for we played "Cowboys and Indians" through the Brickell Hammock. We ate wild lemons, sapodillas, and tamarinds and gathered the bright orange kump-tie seeds to string for our Christmas tree.

My mother, who came from

Michigan, could hardly get over having to celebrate Christmas with so much warm sunshine and no snow. One Christmas we decorated a grapefruit tree in our yard as a Christmas tree. As far as I know she was the first person to put Christmas decorations outdoors.

In summer we had a swimming hole for the folks who lived in Southside. We went to the bay at the foot of present S.E. Eighth Street where there was a little sandy beach with crystal-clear water; there we swam every afternoon.

My father got the cow and chickens he had promised us. He took care of the cow himself and

did all the milking and mother always took care of the milk in the house, although we did have help of a kind.

Our idyllic life in Southside came to an end as the population grew. One who moved into our neighborhood was Frank B. Shutts. Now Mr. Shutts was a northern Republican and he owned the morning *Herald*. My father was a southern Democrat and he published the *Miami Metropolis*. It was natural that feuds would develop between the two papers and the two editors. When the two men ran out of subject matter for tongue lashings Mr. Shutts could always fall back on the cow and then my father would have to retort with a defense of his beautiful Jersey.

Finally we were incorporated into Miami and then the law said "No Cows." Father decided to obey. So he draped our Daisy's horns with black crepe paper and led her, fastened to his car, across the river bridge and up Miami Avenue to the Herald Building and Mr. Shutts' office. The merchants along the way stood on the sidewalks watching the final bit of drama in one of Miami's famous feuds.

When it was time for me to start to school my parents had to choose between the public school, or St. Catherine's Convent, or the private school of Miss Letty Lynch. I wanted to go to the public school, a grand two-story frame building with porches, but my mother said it was a "perfect fire trap." My mother favored Miss Lynch's but it had so few pupils that you couldn't get very far "popping the whip", and anyway, they were all girls. Of course Miss Lynch's had a genteel atmosphere and Ethel and Helen Jackson and Dorothy Waddell and Pauline Moore went there.

Mother and I compromised by my attending St. Catherine's. Behind the high wooden fence was a large play yard and, in addition, the religious ceremonies intrigued my childish mind. I found more excuses for crossing myself than any of my Catholic friends! The novelty of so much

kneeling wore off after a time, and the knees of my stockings wore out, too. In the second grade my mother let me have my wish and attend public school.

But it was still a fire trap. So mother and others formed an organization known as the Miami School Improvement Association and got the backing of my father's newspaper. They zeroed in, for one thing, on the unspeakable wooden outhouses which served as toilets. And the organization continued until a fine three-story concrete school was built. It was located where the present post office is.

Our most exciting adventure was an all-day picnic at Ocean Beach. There was no bridge across the bay so we went on a ferry. Once a year our school class would have such a day. We would be so excited that some of us would get seasick on the trip across the bay. But our stomachs would calm down as soon as we reached the long wooden dock. Then we would race along the dock and cross the island on a narrow board walk to the ocean front and Smith's Casino. Here the shrubbery was cleared away so the trade winds would blow the mosquitoes away.

In those days Smith's Casino was a brown, weathered two-story structure, open to the four winds. Behind the stairway were some dark cubicles which served as dressing rooms. There were bathing suits and towels to rent but, much to my disgust, my mother made me take my own. Until I was a teenager I thought nothing could be more sophisticated than wearing a rented bathing suit! On the second floor of Smith's was a screened cage holding a collection of tropical snakes. They belonged to a man of mystery, supposedly a German nobleman, Baron von Moser. I heard so many stories about him that I always went to look at the snakes, not that I liked snakes, but because I wanted to look at the baron, who they said once had a fabulously beautiful lady-love and "lived in sin."

A short distance south of  
(continued on page 10)



## BURDINE'S by Gene Rider



A comparison of these two early photos of Flagler Street chronicle the growth of Burdine's and downtown Miami. The Southeast corner of Avenue "D" and 12th Street (Flagler Street and Miami Avenue) was occupied by the Biscayne Hotel. A one-story entrance porch to the hotel overlooked the neighboring W. M. Burdine's, advertising dry goods, clothing and hats. In 1912, Burdine's expanded to become a five story building with an elevator. The later photo on the right shows this new building, the porch gone, and a new neighboring "skyscraper," Kress. The Biscayne Hotel has been refurbished and a billboard on the roof advertises the Venetian Isles as "Gems of America's Mediterranean." In addition, the bicycles and horsedrawn carriages of the earlier era have been replaced by automobiles and streetcars. And Flagler Street is one-way east. Burdine's eventually built its present 6 story building on the site of the Biscayne Hotel and later expanded west across Miami Avenue. —Photos from the HASF collection

With a stock of work clothes for the men who'd recently hacked a railroad through the palmettos into Miami, a few shelves of notions and piece goods for pioneer ladies and bolts of vivid calico for Seminole and Mikasuki Indians, W. M. Burdine opened the doors of the first Burdine's in 1898.

Opening day was hardly a door-busting occasion. Miami's population was about 1000 and the small frame building, on what is now Miami Avenue, was little more than a frontier trading post.

By 1900, with the homes and business buildings of 1,681 pioneers beginning to cluster into what is now the core of the central city, Mr. Burdine quickly saw that 12th Street — now Flagler — was to be *the* street. He promptly moved his store to 12th Street where Burdine's stands today.

The new store was larger and stocked a greater variety but the frontier character of the first store carried over to the new location.

Mrs. Albert Cushing Read (nee Bess Burdine) recalls: "Indians liked my father's store. They

*Gene Rider, a previous contributor to Update, is a long-time chief engineer at Radio WIOD. He extends thanks for assistance with this article to Ms. Mary Lennon, of Burdine's staff.*

came in single file and shopped in single file, the women carrying their papooses on their backs. All of them were very shy of the early tourists and their cameras."

Miami's growth accelerated. Schools, churches, new stores.

"My father was a community leader. He helped establish the first Methodist church and headed the school board in the early years," Mrs. Read reminisces.

When William Burdine died in 1911, his sons, John, Roddy, Freeman and William Jr; inherited the store. Roddy became president and plans were immediately made for a new building which was completed in 1912.

12th Street — now Flagler — got its first skyscraper.

It towered five stories and had an elevator.

But at first, Burdine's occupied only the street and mezzanine floors. The remainder was rented out as office space.

With the harbingers of the first big boom — more tourists, real estate salesmen, developers and speculators — the store began a subtle change.

One of the biggest transactions of that era was the sale of one complete bolt of brilliant calico to Tiger Charlie. \$108, cash, on the barrel head.

Soon after its opening, the store lost most of its inventory in a fire. Someone in the alteration department forgot to turn off an iron one night.

A new department — Fancy Goods for Ladies — was added and quickly became the busiest department.

Mrs. Read remembers, "We began the fashion shows along about 1914. We had concerts, and society ladies of the day modelled the latest fashions —"

Burdine's has undergone variations in name through the years. W. M. Burdine. W. M. Burdine and Sons. Burdine's Sons. Burdine's — The Winning Store. and Burdine's.

And Burdine's once had a Burdine as a competitor. John Burdine married Pauline Quarter-

man, and they set up a business called Burdine-Quarterman at a location nearby.

Under her own name, Pauline Burdine later ran a dress and design shop on Biscayne Boulevard near 20th Street.

George Whitten, who started as a bookkeeper and retired as Chairman of the Board in 1961, looks out over Collins Avenue from his high-rise apartment and remembers:

"I got the bookkeeping job when a lady left to go to work at Stetson College in DeLand. When I started I sat on a high stool, hunched over a high desk. There was a nice little extra in working at Burdine's then. The Air Dome movie theater was almost next door. It had no roof and all the windows of the store's east side



John Burdine and his wife Pauline Quarterman, onetime competitors of the original Burdine's, sponsored this float in an early Miami parade.

—Photo courtesy of Gene Rider



mezzanine were box seats for a free movie. We could read the titles of the old silent movies just great from our box seats in the early evenings.

The '26 hurricane. Yessir. It not only blew out all the window and door glass on the south side but all the frames too. I remember the figures. Building damage \$211,000, inventory damage \$250,000 —

Our first Miami Beach store? Where else but the old Roney Plaza right on the corner of Collins Avenue. We built our own Beach building in '52 and brought in Raymond Loewy to decorate it."

(Loewy designed the Studebaker Avanti classic about this time.)

By 1925 Burdine's had the largest volume of retail business in the Southeastern States.

The store has always been a very big local newspaper adver-

tising account. In the late '20s, about the time the Sunshine Fashions slogan was originated, Burdine's began a national advertising campaign in magazines.

One of the store's first radio campaigns was a woman's program on WQAM at 9:45 a.m. daily. The program's hostess was billed as Enid Bur (Burdine derivative), its theme was a lilting arrangement of Beyond the Blue Horizon, its content — fashion news, household hints, interviews, occasional recordings and a Burdine's shopping guide.

Twenty years later, in 1954, another Burdine radio program originated in the College Shop and was hosted by Bright Eyed and Bushy Tailed Kirby Brooks, with a little orchestra, chatter and advice on what the well-dressed college student should buy at Burdine's before going off to school.

Mrs. Read — Bess Burdine: "My brother Roddy was a leader

in founding the Miami Country Club". (Now site of the Metro-State-City Hospital complex on NW 12th Avenue). "He led the way in organizing some of the big golf tournaments of the late '20s and early '30s that brought in all the big names of golf."

George Whitten: "Dan Mahoney, Sr. (Governor Cox's son in law and boss of the News when it was the Daily News) was instrumental in getting the stadium named for Roddy Burdine when the New Year's game became such a big promotion and the stadium was enlarged. It was a wonderful tribute to Roddy and the things he did for the community."

(Oddly, the Roddy Burdine plaque has long since disappeared from the stadium and Ken Clifford, now Miami store manager, says that not even Earnie Seiler knows where to find it.)

When Roddy passed away in 1936, W. M. Burdine Jr. became president.

By 1939, Burdine's store had 265,000 square feet of fashions for the home and every member of the family. Plans were underway for a West Palm Beach store to open in 1941.

With the nation at peace, the depression fading away, the 1937-1941 era was truly a halcyon period for Miami and Burdine's.

Miami was growing but not at a hectic pace and if you hadn't been around more than a decade you were considered a tourist. The great trains — the Champion, City of Chicago, Palmland Express — blocked downtown streets near Burdine's as passengers unloaded at the old Dade-countypine FEC depot; PAA's big Clipper planes, still dripping seawater from Havana harbor, splashed down at Dinner Key (pilots such as Ed Musick and Lody Lodeeson in the cockpits) to unload Cuban and Latin American tourists for a Miami vacation and Burdine shopping sprees; the Duke was Governor of the Bahamas and he and the Duchess came to Miami, shopping at Burdine's, of course.

The ladies were wearing culottes and cloche hats; orchestras jauntily played Deep Purple, Star Dust and Begin the Beguine at the Coral Gables Country Club, the 5 O'clock, Clover and Royal Palm Clubs; FDR came every winter. Rudy Vallee played the Olympia Theater and there was a better eastward view than a library building. Burdine's Book Store and Lending Library was the unofficial library for the local literary set, the tea room was almost a private lunch club not only for shoppers but for downtown business executives as well and instead of riding escalators at Burdine's you took an elevator, operated by an Orange Bowl Princess type.

Another time in our lives, another time in Burdine's long history.

Perhaps a more genteel time.

The pace quickened. With the war ended, the second boom began.

Burdine's began expanding the downtown store.

George Whitten remembers: "When we built the west addition with bridges over Miami Avenue, the contractor started driving pilings for the foundation and after a few blows from the pile driver, they'd all disappear. Turned out there was an underground branch of the Miami River wandering around under Flagler Street and it took a lot of extra engineering to figure out a new foundation."

With W. M. Burdine Jr., Chairman of the Board, and George Whitten, President, Burdine's paced South Florida's growth through the late 1940s and all the 1950s. By 1956, the fifth Burdine's opened on what at the time seemed the boondocks on North Miami Beach's 163rd Street.

A year later Burdine's affiliated with the nation's largest department store organization, the Federated Stores. But through all its growth and the merger, Burdine's kept its home-town Miami character.

(continued on page 10)

Burdine's newspaper ad that ran in the Herald, Sunday, February 7, 1926, offered a business / pleasure foursome of coat, vest, trousers and knickers "tailored after the English manner." Salesmen in the men's department were pictured in the ad wearing their "regular uniforms" and their previous hometowns and business experience was noted. —Photo courtesy Gene Rider



## HOW GUAVONIA BECAME CORAL GABLES *by Mary C. Dorsey*

In 1898, Solomon Greasley Merrick, a Congregational minister in Duxbury, Massachusetts, was saddened by the death of his little daughter Ruth. He decided to relocate in a warm climate. Through the church directory, he contacted the Reverend Mr. James Bolton in Coconut Grove and learned that the Harry Gregory homestead of 160 acres was available for \$1100. The Reverend Mr. Merrick bought it and came down with his 13-year-old son George. Their property turned out to be a virtual wilderness, four miles from Coconut Grove, with only a crude log cabin to live in. The disappointed father considered returning home but young George, full of adventure, persuaded him to stay.

They called their land Guavonia because of the wild guavas growing there. They cleared it and planted vegetables and grapefruit. Next, the Reverend Mr. Merrick and his son built a frame house; soon Mrs. Althea Fink Merrick arrived with the other children, Charles, Ethel, Medie and Helen. It was too far for them to attend school in Coconut Grove, so Mrs. Merrick established Guavonia School in the old log cabin. It was necessary to have ten students enrolled to get a teacher. Mrs. Merrick rounded up the children from distant farm families, including those of Walter Ludlam, for whom Ludlam Road is named, and they all stayed with the Merricks during the week. The governor sent a teacher, Miss Cobb, who also lived with the Merrick family. On November 28, 1903, they celebrated the birth of Richard, the only one of the seven children born in Florida and the first white baby born in the area later known as Coral Gables.

The Reverend Mr. Merrick shipped the first carload of grapefruit out of Dade County. The exotic fruit was a luxury up

*Mrs. Dorsey is a member of HASF and Secretary of Dade Heritage Trust. She is on the Advisory Board of Merrick Manor Foundation.*

North, bringing \$14 a bushel. The plantation prospered and he gradually bought more land at \$5 an acre until it expanded to 1500 acres. Mr. Merrick and his wife were early promoters of the Coconut Grove Mission Church and he became its minister. This is now the Plymouth Congregational Church.

In 1900, the present two-story mansion was begun, being completed in 1906. Mrs. Merrick, an artist, drew up the plans. The Merricks' beloved, charming and graceful New England Colonial style was combined through her artistry with innovations compatible with the South Florida climate. This home set a trend for architectural style and construction techniques in the Southeast Florida building industry. Mr. Townsend and Mr. William de Gazell were the builders. The walls are 18 inches thick, built of limestone, commonly called coral rock, quarried from what is now the Venetian Pool. The flooring and timbers are Dade County heart pine. The wooden house built by George and his father forms the kitchen and dining room. The home is elevated four feet above the ground because in those days, before the Everglades were drained, there were seasonal floods. This caused what is now the Granada Golf Course to become flooded with 12 feet of water; people had to swim or row across amongst the alligators and snakes.

The Merrick family now changed the name from Guavonia to Coral Gables Plantation. This seemed perfect for the elegant new home because its gabled roof has coral-colored Ludowici tiles from Georgia.

The plantation was almost self sufficient, but sometimes the Merricks had to go to town for supplies. Richard recalls the little old trail through the woods along what is now Coral Way to Le Jeune Road where it forked off. To the right, it led to Coconut Grove and to the left, to Mi-

*(continued on next page)*



The Rev. Solomon Greasley Merrick and his son George built this frame house in 1898. The dirt road running in the front is the present Coral Way. Pine trees were cut down to provide a wide enough path through the woods for the furniture to be brought to this forerunner of Merrick Manor. —*Photo courtesy of Mr. Richard Merrick*



Miss Cobb, a teacher sent by the governor, posed with the students of the Guavonia School, established by the Merricks for their children and those of other farm families. —*Photo courtesy of Mr. Richard Merrick*



The present Merrick Manor was designed by Mrs. Merrick, an artist, and set trends in both architectural styling and construction techniques in South Florida building. Today, the mansion looks much as it did in 1939, when this photo was taken. —*Photo courtesy of The Dade Heritage Trust, Inc.*



ami. The Merricks hitched up their old white mule to the wagon or buggy and this mule never had to be told where they were going. He always knew, during the week he'd go to Miami; on Sundays, he'd look back, see them all dressed up for church in the buggy, and turn off to Coconut Grove. Once, the family had visitors who had to catch the train in Coconut Grove. They were afraid they would miss it, so they all banged their feet on the floor of the buggy to make the mule hurry up but he didn't go one bit faster!

In the 1920s George Edgar Merrick founded beautiful Coral Gables, giving the city its name and most of its land. In the words of George's sister Helen Merrick Bond, Coral Gables was and is "the living heart-mother-father of your city." But time has not been kind to the mansion. About 1934, Mrs. Merrick and her daughter Ethel converted it to a boarding house and since then it has been known as Merrick Manor. Ethel tried to present Merrick Manor as a memorial to the city of Coral Gables in 1954 but it was refused because of threatened lawsuits by neighbors. Further efforts to acquire the founder's boyhood home for the city failed and Merrick Manor was about to be sold at auction. In 1966, Mr. W. L. Philbrick, founder and president of Merrick Manor Foundation, bought and preserved the mansion.

Today, a dozen well-known civic groups from children to senior citizens are unselfishly working together with Merrick Manor Foundation. They are dedicated to the faithful restoration of the Merrick family home and hope to have it completed as a showpiece for the Bicentennial of 1976. They will make the words of Helen again ring true, "Well done, old home, Father of our city — We will buy and care for you and again rejuvenate your old age — We will make you a light unto our city!"

#### NEW IN THE LIBRARY by Thelma Peters

In a history library the "best" books are often old and out of print. Recently HASF was enriched by a gift of 100 such from the private collection of Marjory Stoneman Douglas.

Marjory's travels in the Caribbean began in the '30s and the books she bought here and there reflect her own catholicity of interests at the time. Later she bought books to aid her research on all recorded hurricanes of the West Indies, an in-depth study which culminated in her book, *Hurricane*, published in 1958.

The collection is especially rich in books about the French West Indies and Haiti. Thirteen of these are in French. Books about Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic are in Spanish. The British West Indies are well represented by such books as *The Gorgeous Isle* (Nevis) by Gertrude Atherton, *Journey to Accompong* (Jamaica) by Katherine Dunham, and a delightful little one, extremely rare, *In Old Roseau* (Dominica) by William S. Birge.

The books include history, travel, medicine, folklore, social customs, nature, dancing, drama, poetry, fiction, and even calypso and voodoo. The oldest was published in 1838 by the American Anti-Slavery Society and describes the changes in the West Indies following the emancipation of slaves in 1837. But two others, published in our century, tell of earlier times: *Lady Nugent's Journal*, an eye-witness account of Jamaica in the 1800s, and *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, a travel diary of brave Scot who made a trip to the West Indies in 1774.

These books are now on the shelves of the museum library and ready for you to use and enjoy. Like our other books they are not available for circulation.

#### HOUSE BUILT TO LAST CENTURIES by Hampton Dunn



William Jennings Bryan was the best salesman a town ever had.

Coral Gables paid the great orator and thrice candidate for President of the United States \$50,000 a year to stand beside the Venetian Pool and make such claims as this: "You can wake up in the morning and tell the biggest lie you can think of about the future of Coral Gables, and before you go to bed at night, you will be ashamed of your modesty."

But Bryan himself lived in Miami, several miles away from the boom-town city of Coral Gables. As early Miamians go, he was virtually a pioneer, having built a fine mansion at 3115 Brickell Avenue (photo) in 1911. This, of course, was many years before Coral Gables was ever dreamed of. And it was five years before James Deering built the magnificent Vizcaya on land adjacent to Bryan's place.

The statesman called his place Villa Serena. It's a two-story house of Spanish-type architecture, with all sorts of living space in it, including five bedrooms. All the big names used to visit the Bryans in Miami, including President Warren G. Harding.

Mrs. Bryan said she looked around Tampa and Orlando and elsewhere before she discovered Miami and the lovely homesite in what was then known as Brickell Hammock.

Mrs. Bryan told about the solid concrete structure with steel rods, when she wrote in 1931 that "Mr. Bryan said he would build there a house that would last for centuries." She was proud that the house just before that has survived two ferocious hurricanes that had struck Miami in the 1920s.

The Bryans bought the tract of land on Biscayne Bay for \$30,000. When it last changed hands in 1971, it brought \$275,000.

#### WANTED

*Tropic Magazine*, illustrating outdoor life in tropical Florida. Any and/or all issues. (ceased publication in the late 20s) *HASF President's Newsletter*.

Vol. 1-4 (1953-1956)

Vol. 14, no. 1 (Jan. 1966)

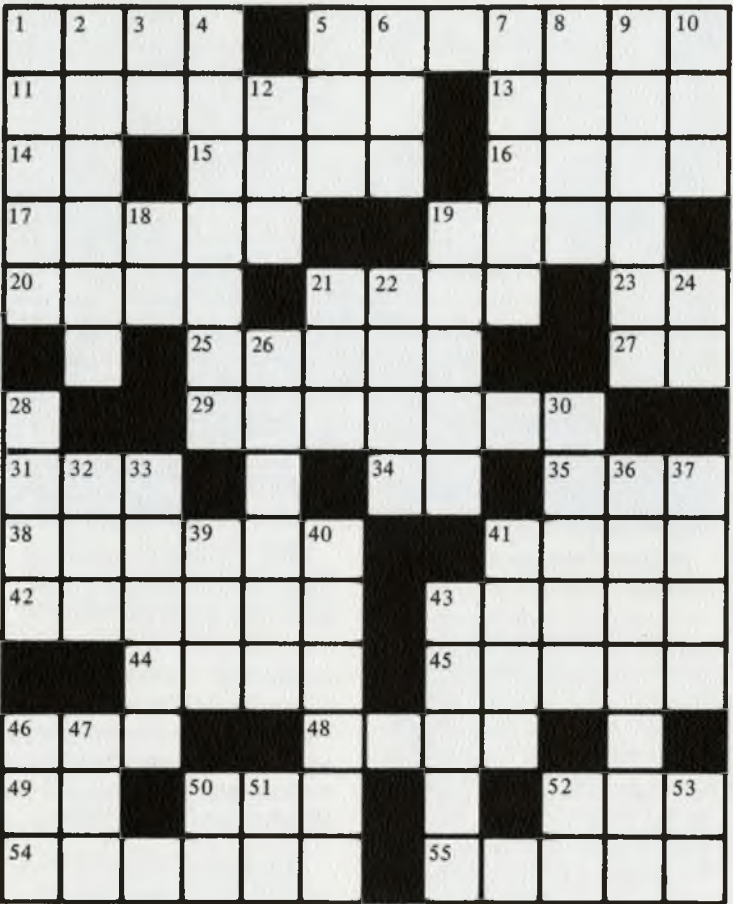
Mckay, D. B. *Pioneer Florida*. 3 vols. Tampa; Southern Publishing Co., 1959.

Ranson, Robert. *Chronology of the Most Important Events Connected with Florida History during Four Hundred and Seventeen Years, 1513 to 1930*. St. Augustine: R. Ranson, 1930.

Postcards depicting Caribbean places and subjects.



# HISTORY'S A MYSTERY



- ACROSS**
- 1 One kind of estate
  - 5 Massacred at Indian Key
  - 11 Title for HASF's president
  - 13 Minerals
  - 14 501
  - 15 Bay Biscayne was one, 1900
  - 16 Breakwater
  - 17 Tops in Florida, or awry
  - 19 \_\_\_ wear sold by Sewell Bros.
  - 20 Voice of the surf
  - 21 Poor focus
  - 23 Site of New Yr. game
  - 25 Famous S. Fla. highway
  - 27 Where many Miamians vacation
  - 29 New Englanders
  - 31 Second Seminole \_\_\_\_\_
  - 34 Plural suffix
  - 35 British mystery writer
  - 38 Literary judge
  - 41 \_\_\_ saur
  - 42 A. V. Davis Co.
  - 43 Gritty
  - 44 One of two Floridas 1776
  - 45 Dade County government
  - 46 Food counter
  - 48 Early aerial photographer
  - 49 \_\_\_ Romfh, early banker
- DOWN**
- 1 Warning system
  - 2 Famous resident of Ft. Myers
  - 3 Before noon
  - 4 Early Black "City"
  - 5 \_\_\_ American Day
  - 6 \_\_\_'s Club E. Flagler landmark
  - 7 Early Miami photographer
  - 8 Curling or No. 5
  - 9 Owned first furniture store
  - 10 Key Biscayne from Miami
  - 12 One way to serve conch
  - 18 City on the Mo. River
  - 19 Pioneer work animals
  - 21 Taboo
  - 22 To be fond of
  - 24 Long, long ago
  - 26 Sightseers' goal Miami River 1900
  - 28 New hi-rise in Dallas Park
  - 30 \_\_\_sville, Dade's wettest community
  - 32 Timetable Abbr.

(continued from page 5)

Smith's Casino was a long row of huge granite rocks known as the jetties. These rocks protected the Government Cut. This was the place where we all loved to play, climbing over the wet rocks, slipping, helping one another, being slapped by waves, seeing who would dare to get the farthest from shore. I don't know

why we were allowed to play there. It was infinitely more hazardous than wearing a rented bathing suit!

Such are some of the memories of my childhood. I can only wonder at the memories which my grandchildren will have. Certainly they won't include a cow named Daisy.

(continued from page 7)



This Burdine's newspaper ad ran in the Miami Metropolis, Saturday, October 18, 1913. In the late '20s Burdine's began advertising in national magazines and in the early '30s sponsored a daily woman's radio program.

Burdine's Dadeland opened in 1962 about the time George Whitten retired.

"Didn't quite make 50 years. But some Burdine employees have. There are a couple of early Burdine hands still living. Willie Hepburn, the porter, is still around. And there are others."

Last year Burdine's opened its Orlando store, Number ten.

Other new stores are planned in Florida's growth centers.

- 33 Miami or Little
- 36 Beg
- 37 Toy
- 39 Aunt in Little Havana
- 40 Girl's name
- 41 Popular bridge-table topic
- 43 Owner M. B. bathing pavillion
- 46 Wager
- 47 \_\_\_ Merritt, early teacher
- 50 To windward (naut.)
- 51 3.14159
- 52 Dallas or Lauderdale
- 53 Origin of many Beachites

The Burdine story is much like the Miami story. Build, build, raze, start over, expand — vertically if there isn't horizontal room, set the pace — the theme continues. And through it all, retain the elusive something that makes it Miami — and home town Burdine's.

Mrs. Albert Cushing Read — Bess Burdine — whose Admiral husband flew the Atlantic in the Navy's NC4 long before the Lindbergh flight, from her apartment in Coconut Grove:

"Change. Change and more change. Everything has changed so much."

She paused.

Then, no longer pensive, "But it's still Miami — and it's such a privilege to live in this wonderful South Florida —"

There's much of the Burdine story in those words.

(Puzzle Answers on page 11)



**BOOK REVIEW SECTION**



**THE FLORIDA COOKBOOK**  
by George S. Fichter. E. A. Seemann Publishing, Inc., Miami, Florida 1973. 205 pp, \$6.20 incl. tax.

Reviewed by India Sue Barbee

If Florida's history could be made edible Mr. Fichter's "The Florida Cookbook" could surely serve as the main course. Our cooking is as varied as our heritage. Recipes for freshwater catfish (Southern), Paella Valenciana (Spanish), fried akees (Caribbean), our own edible sub-tropical fruits and a little Yankee wilted lettuce cover a range as diverse as our cultural roots.

One of the great joys of South Florida living is the climate,

*Ms. Barbee is Administrator of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida.*

which permits gardening most all year. But what does one do with a kumquat or a chayote after one has grown it? Simple! Make chayote pancakes and top them with kumquat preserves! And what's to be done with all those bananas your trees have simultaneously produced while all your neighbors are on vacation? Look under "Bananas" in your "Florida Cookbook" for a start. Banana bread, perhaps, or ice cream or salad. Nine different ways to use the little devils including Flaming Rummed Bananas for the more adventure-some. For this is no ordinary cookbook, full of blanchings and steamings! It is light! It is airy! Its main ingredient is good recipes, to be sure, but it is tastefully spiced with useful information about the origins, growing habits, appearance and culture of the main recipe ingredients. The pineapple, for example, is of the same plant family as Spanish moss, and okra is kin to the hibiscus. The large section on tropical fruits might well persuade you to share your yard with a jaboticaba or versatile orange tree now that you have the recipe for Orange Pie with Whipped Cream. This recipe is from Testa's in Palm Beach and is one of several included which are credited to Florida's better-known restaurants. There is a chapter devoted to the preparation of seafood

and one on cooking outdoors which includes several tips on fire building, fuel, and how to avoid that common mistake of fledgling outdoor cookers, charring.

In this day of soaring food prices it is good to know that one can live by the land in Florida better than in many places. An abundance of all-season vegetables, tropical fruits and seafood are at your door or favorite store, as the jingle goes, and this sunny yellow cookbook can help you get the most eating enjoyment from them.

**HISTORY'S NO LONGER A MYSTERY**

**Answers to Puzzle**

ACROSS: (1) REAL (5) PERRINE (11) ADMIRAL (13) ORES (14) DI (15) BANK (16) MOLE (17) ASKEW (19) MEN'S (20) ROAR (21) BLUR (23) OB (25) TRAIL (27) NC (29) YANKEES (31) WAR (34) ES (35) FEY (38) CRITIC (41) DINO (45) METRO (46) BAR (48) HOIT (49) ED (50) UP (52) FAN (54) TAPPIE (55) HETTY  
DOWN: (1) RADAR (2) EDISON (3) AM (4) LIBERTY (5) PAN (6) ELK (7) ROMER (8) IRON (9) NELSON (10) ESE (12) RAW (18) KA (19) MULES (21) BAN (22) LIKE (24) BC (26) RAPIDS (28) WCA (30) STILT (32) ARR (33) RIVER (36) ENTREAT (37) YOYO (39) TIA (49) CATHIE (41) DIET (43) SMITH (46) BET (47) ADA (50) UP (51) PI (52) FT (53) NY

**UPDATE SHORTIES**

Pedro de Aviles Menendez, founder of Saint Augustine and the greatest Spanish naval strategist of his century, landed at Tequesta near the mouth of the Miami River in 1567. About the same time a short-lived Jesuit mission was established at Tequesta by Brother Francisco Villareal.

The Pre-Columbian Amerindians of South Florida were the Tequesta and the Calusa. The Tequestas occupied an area approximately from Pompano Beach to Cape Sable.

At the time of the European arrival there were six major Amerindian groups in Florida. In the panhandle lived the Apalachee groups numbering around seven thousand. Their eastern neighbors were the Timucuans, (approx. 14000) they occupied the northern and central areas down to a line between Tampa and Cape Canaveral. Both the Apalachee and the Timucuans practiced mixed farming with supplemental hunting.

From Tampa to Florida Bay on the west coast lived the Calusans, and eastwardly lived a collection of small groups, including the Ais, Mayaimi, Jeaga and Tequesta these numbered about sixteen hundred. These Amerindians of south Florida were primarily a seed gathering and hunting culture.

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