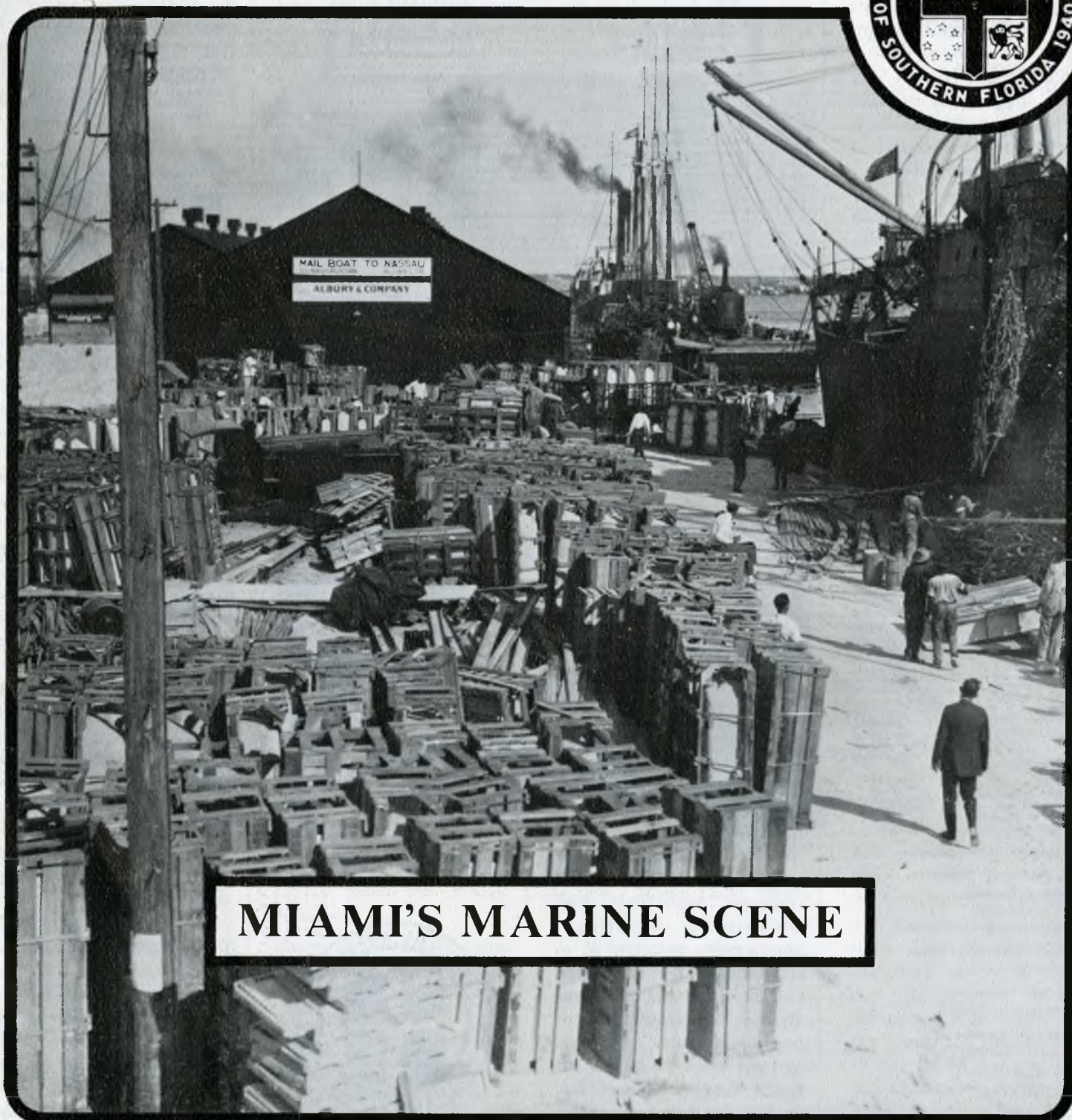


# Update

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**MIAMI'S MARINE SCENE**

## UPDATE

UPDATE, Bi-Monthly Publication of the Historical Association of Southern Florida.

3280 South Miami Avenue,  
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## COVER

Part of the boom-time congestion at Albury's dock was bathtubs, seen in this photo taken October 27, 1925.

(Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library).

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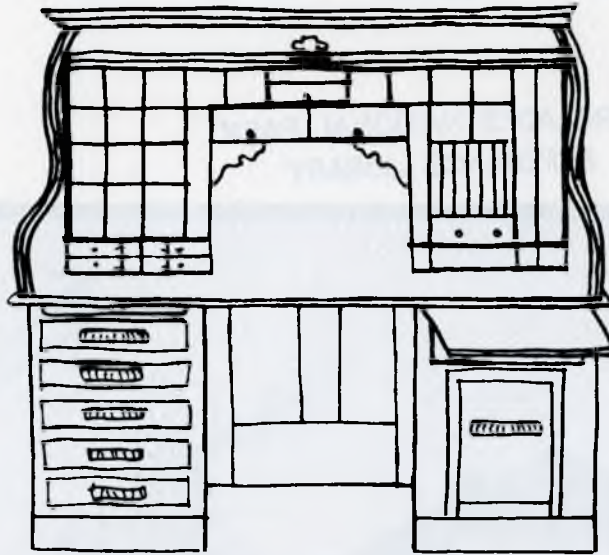
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## DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Randy F. Nimnicht



Our research library has acquired equipment for copying and caring for photographs in accordance with professionally accepted standards, thus using the remainder of a grant from Junior League of Miami, Incorporated. HASF's photographic collection is a very important historical resource, since photographs often provide the researcher with otherwise unavailable information about such mundane topics as housing, clothing, and transportation.

The new darkroom has a special copying camera for reproducing photographs, often improving upon the originals. This is done with special lenses, filters, and techniques. HASF encourages individuals with historically significant photographs to allow us to copy them. We can make copies immediately, thus allowing the owner to take his precious pictures with him without waiting. A copy in the HASF library assures safe keeping for the photograph.

Fully as important as good equipment is a good storage

system, insuring efficient retrieval of the photograph from our files. Researchers can use our cross-referenced subject index to look for photos which may provide information on a given topic. We use a system based upon that at the Florida Photographic Archives in Tallahassee. Our librarian, Rebecca Smith, recently underwent a week of specialized training in Tallahassee, augmenting that which she received in graduate school. HASF owes a debt of gratitude to Joan Morris, Archives curator, for all her assistance.

Please consider whether you have photographs that HASF should add to its growing collection.



## HASF OFFICERS

### NEW OFFICERS

We welcome new officers as follows: President, George B. Hardie, Jr.; First Vice President, Jack G. Admire; Second Vice President, Finlay B. Matheson; Recording Secretary, Mrs. James S. Wooten; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Robert L. Parks; Treasurer, Walter C. Hill.

### FROM THE EDITORS

*We've received many articles from you, our loyal readers and writers, all of which will eventually be used. However, we have a continuing need for short articles or capsule comments, from 25 to 300 words. These are invaluable not only for their historic contributions but also as fillers, to make the columns come out even. Keep them coming.*

*To set the record straight, please note the following in the April issue: Page 3, below the Capitol photo, the date should be 1945. Page 7, top of Column 1, the drawing is by Carl Fisher. Page 2, the cover photo is related to a motorcade celebration, not really an opening; and on page 7, middle column, the reference should be to Indianapolis, not Minneapolis. (Your editor thought for years that these two cities were the same place!)*

*We have selected a theme for the February 1976 issue, "Early Tourism in South Florida". Also under consideration is a jumbo double-sized bicentennial issue for June 1976. If any of you have ideas or suggestions for articles bearing on these two topics, please take two steps forward.*

# THE PORT OF MIAMI

BY RADM I. J. Stephens USCG (Ret.)

Miami had a seaport some eighty years ago, at the very beginning of its history, but it was a small and minor satellite port to the booming port at Key West. Waterborne travel and commerce were then carried on by small sailing vessels, plying between Miami and Key West, where steamer connections were available to New York and the large cities in the north.

In 1896, when the railroad was finally extended to Miami, the railroad company constructed wharves and improved the existing channel around Cape Florida to a twelve-foot depth. At this time, regular steamer service was commenced between Miami and outports including Key West, the Bahamas and Havana.

Then in 1912 the Federal Government came into the picture with material help for the fledgling port by commencement of the Miami Harbor development. This resulted in the creation of the first Federal channel - Government cut - between what is now South Miami Beach and Fisher Island and extending from the ocean across Biscayne Bay to the shoreline of Miami in the downtown area.

Waterborne commerce flourished during the boom years, and many a lumber carrier was anchored out in Biscayne Bay waiting to un-

load its precious cargo of construction material so that building ashore could go forward at a very rapid pace.

Then came the "bust" and the depression. Cargo tonnage to the Port of Miami fell to less than half of what it had been during the boom years. But as the South Florida area began to rebound from the

Center. A great number of Navy and Coast Guard officers who were to form the officer complement on destroyer escorts, patrol craft, amphibious-force ships and the like received their basic shoreside training at this port site and, indeed, the old Port of Miami facilities can receive at least small distinction for

grounds" for enemy submarines, and many a valiant seaman and many essential cargoes were lost. Strangely enough, as the coastwise trade was fast disappearing during the war years, the great future potential of our port area for foreign commerce was coming into focus.

Thus in 1946, when the old port properties were handed back to the City of Miami from the Navy, those with foresight in our community recognized that our port did have a great potential, and planning for expansion commenced. It was soon obvious that the 26-acre port site on Biscayne Boulevard was hemmed in by private development, with no room for the port to grow. A decade of planning yielded about a dozen different proposals for replacing the old port which by now was suffering the pangs of deteriorating bulkheads, rusting cargo sheds, inadequate room and just plain obsolescence.

Included in these plans were proposals to expand the port to the northward by filling in the western shore of Biscayne Bay; by relocation to Watson Island, or to South Miami Beach, or to Virginia Key, or to a brand-new site in the Bay.

It was, of course, this last proposal that was finally adopted to create an entirely new port in the middle of Biscayne Bay, just south of the Government Cut channel. The site chosen was, in fact, a series of four spoil islands that had been developed during the dredging of Miami's lifeline to the sea, its main harbor channel. This so-called Dodge Island site was to be the ultra-modern New Port of Miami.



**Lumber schooners docked at the foot of Flagler Street in 1925.**  
(Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)



**Steamship docks and turning basin as seen from the Everglades Hotel roof in 1926.**

(Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)

doldrums, once again waterborne commerce picked up.

However, this new growth did not continue too long. World War II saw the port facilities on Biscayne Boulevard taken over by the Navy for use as the Submarine Chaser Training helping the war effort.

When the war came, coastwise waterborne commerce in its normal sense virtually disappeared, and the coastwise routes became the sealanes for carrying the tools and resources of our war effort. The entire east and gulf coasts of the United States were "happy hunting

*Our author completed 37 years of service in the United States Coast Guard in 1966, retiring as rear admiral. He then became Port Director for the Port of Miami, remaining in that position until December 1972. He was President of HASF for 1974-75.*

*Continued on page 12*

# THE BISCAYNE HOUSE OF REFUGE

By Thelma Peters

One hundred years ago there was no more desolate beach on the Atlantic seaboard than Lower Florida's. That fact was dramatized in 1873 when a ship was wrecked, midway between Norris Cut and New River. The crew managed to get ashore only to find themselves stranded and unable to reach any human habitation. Eventually their plight was discovered by a beachcomber and they were rescued, but the story in New York newspapers stirred the United States Life Saving Service to action. They authorized, in 1876, the building of five identical houses of refuge spaced along the lower east coast of Florida at intervals of about twenty miles. The most southern of these, Number 5, was called Biscayne House of Refuge and was located on the beach in the area known today as Surfside.

The houses were constructed of wood and had shingle roofs. The first floor, surrounded by a wide overhang making a porch, had three main rooms and a kitchen, the latter made by enclosing the north side of the porch. This floor was living quarters for the keeper and his family. The second floor was a one-room loft large enough for twenty cots and was intended for stranded seafarers. Each house had a brick cistern for storing rainwater. Equipment for each keeper included binoculars, a medicine chest, tools and paints and brushes for making repairs, extra food rations and a log book. Each house had a 22-foot surf boat

and a boathouse to keep it in. The cost of each installation was about \$3,000.

Each house was manned by one keeper - usually with a family to help him. He was

the beach to look for wrecks and survivors. The Biscayne keeper's beat went south as far as Norris Cut and north halfway to Number 4, Ft. Lauderdale House of Refuge.



The first floor of the Biscayne House of Refuge was living quarters for the keeper and his family. The second floor loft was to house stranded seafarers.

(Photo from the HASF Collection.)



This photo of a picnic-on-the-porch was made by early Miami photographer, P.J. Coates in 1898, reputedly taken at the Biscayne House of Refuge. Porch columns and railings do not coincide with those of known photos of the House of Refuge. But it is a great picnic party, and this is exactly what did happen at the House of Refuge almost any Sunday afternoon.

(Donor of photograph, Miss Nelle Coates, niece of photographer.)

not expected to attempt to rescue a ship breaking up in a storm: he was not equipped for that. His role was to gather up survivors and make them as comfortable as possible.

Following all storms the keeper was required to patrol

In his daily log the keeper recorded weather and the number and type of ships which passed. Almost all the ships were southbound, avoiding the north flow of the Gulfstream by staying between it and shore.

Northbound ships rode the Stream and were too far from shore to be observed. The volume of shipping recorded in the early 1880s was six to eight ships daily. Some of the regular steamers were recognized and recorded by name and represented such lines as Morgan, Ward and Clyde.

The keeper was also asked to respond each day to the question, "Is the station clean?" The routine answer was yes. On May 24, 1890, the keeper, John Thomas Peacock, replied, "Middling." He explained that sacks of flour had been washing ashore from a wreck and people were gathering them up and putting them on the station porch and managing to track flour all over the place. (The seawater and flour formed a hard outer shell around each sack; the contents were usually dry and usable, although requiring an ax for opening.)

A keeper was paid \$400 a year plus supplies. It was a lonely life but not without excitement.

The best account we have of life in a house of refuge was written by Charles W. Pierce (*Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida*, University of Miami Press, 1970), whose father, Hannibal D. Pierce, was the first keeper of Number 3, Orange Grove House of Refuge, and later the third keeper of Biscayne. Charles' sister, Lillie Pierce Voss, was born at Orange Grove and her son, Dr. Gilbert Voss, of the University of Miami, has also written an account of the Pierce family experiences. (*Tequesta*, 1968).

In 1890 Captain William Hawkins Fulford was appointed keeper of Biscayne, a position he held for at least a

Dr. Peters has just returned from a working vacation in the Canary Islands.



The Biscayne House of Refuge was built in the area known today as Surfside. The keeper was responsible for patrolling the coast from Norris Cut north halfway to Ft. Lauderdale after storms. This photo was taken in 1918. Eight years later the refuge was destroyed in a hurricane and was not rebuilt.

(Photo from the HASF Collection.)

decade. Fulford was of Bahamian descent and had lived at New Smyrna before moving to Station 5. He and his wife attended church, shopped and socialized in Lemon City, a community almost opposite the bayside boat landing across the beach from the House of Refuge. The Fulfords were very hospitable and received many visitors at the station, not only their friends from Lemon City but from all the bay communities.

Some came by the way of the famous Crocodile Hole, a creek near the north end of Indian Creek, the opening to it almost concealed by overhanging mangroves but offering a chance to tie up a boat within a short walk of the beach. The beach opposite Crocodile Hole was popular for swimming and picnicking and a day's outing there usually included a walk up the beach to the House of Refuge.

Whether he was supposed to or not Fulford ran his station as a guest house for friends as well as for paying guests. Some of these were winter visitors, others local people who came to watch the turtles crawl out to nest in the late spring - always an ex-

citing life cycle to watch as well as a chance to get a good supply of eggs for eating.

The *Miami Metropolis* for January 21, 1898, reported: "Captain W. H. Fulford of the House of Refuge has had to refuse a number of applications for board as his house is full. The jolly captain and his wife make things so pleasant for their guests they always return."

Every few months an inspector from the Life Saving Service would check on the physical condition of the station and the efficiency of the keeper. In 1892 the inspector was Captain H. E. Shaw and he chose to walk along the beach from house to house in making his inspections, though usually a boat was provided for the inspector. The *Tropical Sun*, September 2, 1892, quoted him as saying that "to make this trip a howling success in pedestrianism one leg should be longer than the other and reversible."

The logs of the station are preserved in the National Archives. Here are a few sample entries made by Keeper Fulford:

April 21, 1891

"Mail carrier got to station

in nearly exhausted condition. Put him to bed and made him comfortable."

July 25, 1891

"Steam yacht "Julia", Capt. Pratt, came in to anchor in 3 fathoms and reported out of fuel. We procured some assistance from the mainland and went to work sawing up pine timber with which the shore abounds and got four cords of wood."

September 25, 1894

"Terrific gales. Solid breakers within ten feet of steps."

(Following this threat of having the house washed away the building was moved a hundred feet to the west and set on new foundations. Mules and men were brought from Lemon City for this work.)

October 3, 1894

"Wife helping repair sails." (Wives and children gave valuable aid but were rarely mentioned.)

December 26, 1895

"Killed a rattlesnake 6 ft. 2 in. long in the path between the house and the landing."

When Captain Fulford retired from his keeper's job he moved to the homestead he

had begun to develop during vacations. It was located near today's Northeast 163rd Street and Route 1 and became the nucleus for a small farm community known as Fulford until it was changed to North Miami Beach in 1931.

Eventually the House of Refuge was accessible by a narrow rock road from the south, a favorite jaunt for Sunday drivers after they had crossed the bay on Collins Bridge. The station had declined in importance as a refuge for castaways but was a good place to get help for a sting by a Portugese man-o'-war.

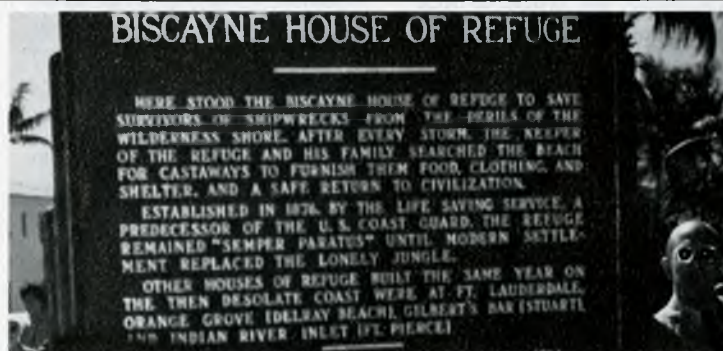
The station was totally destroyed in the 1926 hurricane. By this time the Coast Guard had taken over the Life Saving Service and the Coast Guard was operating out of Base Six in Ft. Lauderdale, intent on ending rum and alien smuggling. The Biscayne House of Refuge was not rebuilt.

One of the five houses of refuge on the lower coast (there were another five father up the coast) has been preserved as a museum: Number 2, Gilbert's Bar, located on the beach near Stuart. It is well worth a visit for anyone who would learn more about this interesting phase of South Florida maritime history.

## MARKING TIME

On Sunday, March 7, 1954, the Historical Association of Southern Florida under President Adam G. Adams unveiled a historical marker on the ocean at 72nd Street and Collins Avenue, to commemorate the site of the

Biscayne House of Refuge. An address was given by Captain S. P. Swicegood, Commander of the 7th Coast Guard District, the Miami Beach High School Band provided music, and there was an exhibit of Coast Guard life-saving equipment.



# THE UNITED STATES NAVAL STATION AT KEY WEST

By John R. Hope

The year was 1822 and James Monroe was President of the United States. The Napoleonic wars and the war of 1812 were recent history, and the dreaded Corsican just a year earlier had breathed his last in exile on St. Helena. Spain, long preoccupied in Europe, was striving desperately to reestablish sovereignty over her rebellious Central and South American colonies. In this effort Spain had the backing of the major European powers. For the first time, the young United States began to look southward and anxiously to contemplate the uncertainties of a potentially explosive situation. A year later the President was to proclaim the Monroe Doctrine, but as early as 1822 moves were under way to increase United States naval strength in the waters to the south.

It followed quite naturally that Key West with its deep channels and protected anchorages provided a strategic location at which to base naval operations. And so it was that Lt. Matthew C. Perry, skipper of the schooner "Shark", was ordered by the Secretary of the Navy, Smith Thompson, on February 7, 1822, to take possession of the island in the name of the United States.

Actually, the island of Key West already belonged to the United States in 1822 since it was nominally a part of

*Our author, a history buff and a Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Illinois, is a hurricane specialist at National Hurricane Center, Coral Gables. This is his second appearance in Update.*

Florida, and President Monroe had proclaimed the Adams-Onís treaty with Spain, ceding Florida to the United States, on February 22, 1821. However, Key West was virtually unoccupied at the time except that it was frequently used as a haven by pirates who preyed on Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean shipping. The first naval operations carried out there were directed against these pirates.

The private owner of the land in Key West in 1822 was one John W. Simonton, an American who had purchased it from its Spanish owner for two thousand dollars.

A year later the first Key West naval station had come into being with Commodore David Porter in command. Commodore Porter was stripped of his command in 1825, after he had sailed to Puerto Rico, then Spanish territory, to investigate reports that goods stolen by pirates had been hidden there. He was suspended from the Navy for six months after having been found guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer and exceeding his authority. He then resigned and accepted a commission as General of Marine in the Mexican Navy, and in that capacity he used Key West as a base to prey upon Spanish commerce. Porter left Key West abruptly in 1827 when a Spanish squadron threatened to blockade the harbor. Subsequently he was restored to good graces, spending his remaining years in the United States diplomatic service. Since Porter's day, the importance and level of staffing at the Key West Naval

Base has fluctuated with national requirements and priorities.

During the very first year of its existence in 1823, an outbreak of yellow fever caused the base to be declared unfit for habitation between July and October. In 1826 the naval base was moved to Pensacola, leaving only a coaling and supply station at Key West for a number of years.

the South held by the Union throughout the Civil War. Some 299 captured blockade runners were brought to Key West, depriving the Confederacy of thousands of tons of much-needed supplies. Once again the dreaded yellow fever forced the Navy temporarily to move the base to Tampa during the summer of 1864, when the death rate from the disease had reached



**Entrance to the United States Naval Station Key West 1929.**  
(Photo from the HASF Collection.)

There was little change in this status until 1852, when construction of a permanent building was begun for use as a warehouse and coaling station. However, lack of funds delayed completion of the building until the outbreak of the Civil War. This structure, designated as Building #1, still stands. Having changed hands several times, it is presently occupied by the United States Coast Guard.

The Key West Naval Base was used extensively during the Civil War by the Union forces. In 1861, Key West was designated as headquarters of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron, commanded by Flag Officer W. W. McKean. Key West was the sole port in

15 persons per day.

After the Civil War, the naval base reverted to its status as a coal depot and supply station. The next 30 years were to see little naval activity there. President U.S. Grant in 1875 did assemble a fleet at Key West for possible intervention to aid Cuban revolutionists. However, under pressure from European governments this move was abandoned, and the assembled naval forces were dispersed.

In the 1880s Lt. Robert E. Peary, later to discover the North Pole, was dispatched to Key West to build a wharf in the harbor.

When all-out war broke out between Spain and the Cuban

insurgents in the mid-1890s, the naval station at Key West suddenly became the most important in the nation as many politicians and much of the press set up an incessant clamor for United States intervention in the conflict. It was from Key West that the U.S.S. Maine began the trip to its rendezvous with destruction in Havana Harbor, an event which ended the effective opposition of those who still hesitated to draw the sword against Spain. Many who died on the Maine are buried in Key West. Hundreds of the survivors of the ill-fated ship were cared for by the Sisters of St. Marys in Key West, who turned their convent into a hospital during the ensuing war.

The first shot fired after the United States entered the war occurred within sight of Key West when the U.S.S. Nashville fired across the bow of the Spanish steamer Buena Ventura, which ship, after capture, was brought into Key West.

In 1899, according to a Key West source, the entire Atlantic Fleet of the U.S. Navy was based there.

Following the Spanish-American war the naval station entered a quiet period which was to last for more than a decade. However, some additional building did take place during this time, including a naval radio station. This became most useful by 1914 when the facility became an important and necessary communications link between the United States mainland and the Panama Canal, which passed the first ocean-going vessel in August of that year.

Considerable expansion of the naval base began with the outbreak in Europe of World War I in 1914. The station became the headquarters of the Seventh Naval District, whose primary mission was to prevent German submarines from operating in the Gulf of

Mexico. A dispensary and a machine shop were constructed and piers were built during and immediately following the war. The base was used extensively by both surface craft and submarines during the war.

As had been the case following other wars and emergencies, activities at the Key West Naval Station diminished after World War I

the complement and facilities expanded tremendously during the war. A great deal more property was acquired by the Navy, and more than \$30,000,000 was spent on new construction. More than 14,000 ships were logged into Key West during the war. Up to 15,000 Naval personnel were on shore leave there at one time during World War II. Once again the naval sta-

Sonar School. The postwar era also saw the replacement of a number of naval personnel by civilians.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, President Harry S. Truman made his vacation home in a house located on the naval base. General of the Armies Dwight D. Eisenhower recuperated from a heart attack in another house on the base during the period when he was Chief of Staff.

In 1960 naval station personnel, both military and civilian, played a major role in relief operations after hurricane Donna devastated the middle Keys.

President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of Great Britain conferred at the Key West Naval Station in 1961.

There was a brief but intense flurry of activity at the base in October and November of 1962 during the Cuban missile crisis. The area swarmed with ships and all manner of military units. President Kennedy, his advisors, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff met at the naval station to assess the crisis from that vantage point only 90 miles from Cuba.

The next decade was to see the phasing out of all naval operations at the station. Some of the facilities are used as an annex to accommodate the overflow from the Naval Air Station based on neighboring Boca Chica. The U.S. Coast Guard also occupies a portion of the base.

Only the future will determine whether events will again thrust the Key West Naval Station into the position of prominence it has held in the past. Meanwhile the deep channels and protected anchorages remain there to be used once again should the vicissitudes of the United States' foreign relations require reactivation of the Key West Naval Station.



**The United States Naval Station and Custom House, Key West, about 1905.**

*(Photo from the HASF Collection.)*



**The three towers of the radio station established in Key West by the Navy in 1908 - an important communication link.**

*(Photo from the HASF Collection.)*

until 1932 when its sole occupant was the Navy radio station with a complement of only 17 men. Notable events during this period included a visit by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William Leahy.

Feverish activity at the naval station was resumed when World War II erupted in Europe in September of 1939. From only a handful of men aboard, and about 40 dilapidated buildings in 1939,

tion played a key role in the war against German submarines. It was the home base of a number of naval craft, including submarines and a submarine tender.

Although activity at the Naval Station subsided somewhat when World War II ended, it did not decrease to the extent that it had following World War I. There was much new construction, including a number of housing units for Naval personnel and buildings to house the Fleet

# THE SHIP THAT STOPPED THE BOOM

By Samuel J. Boldrick

The *Prins Valdemar* was launched in 1886 at Helsingør, Denmark, as a naval training vessel. By 1925, after a clouded war career, the *Prins Valdemar* was part of the flotilla racing to keep Miami's booming construction industry supplied.

Frantic real estate activity in the early 20s created a glut of freight cars waiting to be unloaded. Finally the Florida East Coast, Miami's only railroad at the time, could accept no more cars in its storage yard and declared an embargo. Builders, faced with this embargo, looked to the sea. Anything that could float was pressed into service carrying building material to Miami.

The *Prins Valdemar*, a barkentine, arrived with a million and a half feet of lumber. After unloading, it was planned to tow her to a berth near Miami Beach's Fleetwood Hotel where she would be fitted out as a hotel and casino. At the dockmaster's request, a portion of her ballast was discharged at Municipal Pier. Additional portholes were cut in her hull to allow better interior ventilation of lower decks. On January 10, 1926, at 11:30 a.m., en route to Miami Beach, the *Prins* ran aground. The tugs abandoned her, planning to pull the vessel off at the next high tide. Requests for assistance to passing tugs and to a Coast Guard cutter went unheeded. A brisk northeastwind caught the vessel's tall masts; top-heavy from lightened ballast, she listed, allowing the sea to pour into her open portholes. The weight and force of this water rolled the

*Prins* on her side, masts and hull completely blocking the port channel. A score of ships were bottled up in port and although word was sent out halting other ships en route to Miami, by the time the channel was reopened

was decided to dredge under the keel so that schooners could get close and by means of lines raise the ship so that the portholes could be plugged. When the water was pumped out the ship would right itself. The *City of*



The *Prins Valdemar* overturned after running aground in the port channel on January 10, 1926.

(Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)



After a bust career as a naval training vessel, a clouded career and service as a cargo ship, the *Prins Valdemar* became a landlocked building and served as an aquarium restaurant in the late 1940's. (Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)

more than 45 million feet of desperately needed lumber was riding at anchor outside the harbor.

Various methods of refloating the ship were considered. Dynamite was avoided since the resulting twisted wreck would be just as costly and difficult to remove. Acetylene torches proved to be too expensive. Finally it

Portland attempted to raise the ship and failed. The days dragged into weeks and Miami's boom showed signs of weakening.

During the time that the harbor was closed, passengers and cargo were transferred by tender from ships lying off Miami Beach to the piers. Some vessels used old South Channel, but most were deep-

draft ships heavily laden with cargo and this channel was too shallow.

At the Masonic Temple, Miamians were treated to three benefit performances of vaudeville and a history of the *Prins* in pageant form, originally intended for opening night of the hotel-ship, proceeds going to assist the cast, sailors and others who manned the vessel. In the meantime a row developed between the crew and ship owners over payroll accounts.

The *Prins Valdemar's* masts were removed and a shallow channel dredged around the hull. On February 4th at 7 a.m. the Baltimore & Carolina freighter *Georganna Weems* was the first ship to leave Miami harbor. First to enter was the *Louisiana*, a Gulf & Southern freighter. Because of the shallowness of this temporary channel, groundings continued. The schooner *Hesper* went aground near Pier 3 on February 10 and closed the harbor for a day until tugs removed her at high tide. February 12 found the schooner *Newsome*, seams open, with a heavy cargo of lumber, sunk near Fisher Island. The Clyde Lines' *Pawnee* was aground alongside and the schooner *George W. Truitt, Jr.* grounded nearby, closing the harbor for another day. On February 16 the tanker *Fueloil* grounded near the *Prins*, closing the harbor for part of a day. (The port of Palm Beach was closed for a few days by a grounded ship at this same time.)

Finally on February 21, 1926, after 41 days, hydraulic jacks, hoisting dredges, and lines which ran to shore raised the hull while barge loads of sand filled the hold as ballast.



The *Valdemar* was towed to the foot of Fifth Street and rode at anchor as a true ship. Ironically, during the great hurricane of 1926 she was the only ship in Miami harbor to ride out the storm undamaged. In 1928 she was converted into a floating aquarium. A steel bulkhead was placed around the vessel in 1937; then she ceased to be a ship. Floated six feet above high-water line and with the cofferdam filled in, the *Prins Valdemar* became a landlocked building, being used as an officers' club by the Navy during World War II. After the war an aquarium was opened on the lower deck and a restaurant on the upper. By 1949 the *Miami Herald* was referring to it as an "eyesore" and on October 14, 1952, the *Miami News* reported on a full page of pictures "Once Graceful Sea Beauty Ends Career in Scrap Pile".

## HISTORY IS NO LONGER A MYSTERY

### ANSWERS TO PUZZLE

**ACROSS:** 1) LIGHTHOUSE 10) DEER 11) MAGIC 14) MIAMI 16) ADA 17) OS 19) RIATA 21) EU 22) MTA 24) LISTERS 26) RD 28) EE 29) TAMIAMI 33) LAW 35) ON 36) PLANT 38) MA 39) ETE 41) ANCON 43) SITAR 45) ULUA 47) CORMORANTS

**DOWN:** 2) ID 3) GEM 4) HEIR 5) TRAIL 6) OMITS 7) UA 8) SGA 9) EIDER 12) CAUSEWAY 13) TOMATOES 15) MAILMAN 18) ST 20) ATE 23) ARM 25) EEL 27) DIP 30) ANTIC 31) ALARM 32) INCUR 34) AM 37) TOLA 40) ETO 42) NUN 44) AR 46) AT

The crossword in the February issue was perhaps the most difficult we've published. Did any of you complete it?—Ed.

# REFLECTIONS ON LOCAL BLACK HISTORY: STEVEDORES

By Dorothy J. Fields

Stevedores are important community workers. They load and unload cargoes that travel by ship.

Historically, the crew of a vessel loaded and unloaded its cargo and stores, but as sailing ships gave way to steamships, which carried far more cargo, the need arose for

for jobs. Shipowners liked having a large casual labor force which was hired when ships were working.<sup>1</sup>

In 1918 there were several steamships transporting cargo to Miami. The steamship "Van" carried freight and passengers between Miami and Jackson-

at 3:00 p.m. the next day.<sup>3</sup>

Loading and unloading cargo required stevedores to be agile and able bodied. In the early days cargoes had to be carried to the wharf and stacked on pallets to facilitate transfer to and from the ship.<sup>4</sup> Such work was strenuous and often dangerous, depending on the weather conditions or type of cargo.

Today, the responsibilities and duties of the stevedore have changed. The term *stevedore* refers to the person who is responsible for the storing of cargo in a vessel. He may be responsible for the work and safety of possibly 250 men. He gets his instructions from the pier superintendent.

*Longshoremen* are now responsible for moving cargo by hand or machine under the direction of the stevedore.<sup>5</sup>

Cargo ships deliver important items to communities.

Stevedores and longshoremen are important workers in this community.



Stevedores prepare to load cargo on this ship docked in Miami. Cargo was moved by hand truck to the wharf and stacked on pallets to facilitate its transfer to the ship.

(Photo from the HASF Collection.)

more men to handle this increased volume. Also, because shippers paid high rates for delivery, it became necessary to expedite ships through ports; besides it costs over \$1,000 a day to have a ship tied up in port. Thus evolved a land labor force to handle cargo for outgoing shipments and to deliver newly arrived cargo into the hands of consignees.

As the need for labor on the waterfront increased, oddly enough, so did the scramble

ville. Another, the steamer "Brandon", was limited to freight service between Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Still another ship, the S.S. "Thames", was limited to freight, to and from Jacksonville.<sup>2</sup>

Leaving Jacksonville every Saturday at 1:00 p.m. the "Thames" arrived in Miami the following Monday at 7:00 a.m. Awaiting the ship's arrival in Miami was a labor force composed mostly of black men. These men would be required to unload the incoming cargoes and load the outgoing cargoes in time for the ship's scheduled departure

*Mrs. Fields, researcher in local black history, is a Dade County School teacher.*

1. "Stevedoring Occupations", *The Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance*, revised ed., p. 736.
2. Advertisement, *The Miami Herald*, Tuesday, May 14, 1918, p. 7.
3. Advertisement, *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1918, p. 7.
4. *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, volume I, third ed., p. 432.
5. *Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocation Guidance*, revised ed., volume II, p. 757.

# BOOK REVIEW SECTION



Circle of Life: The Miccosukee Indian Way, by Nancy Henderson and Jane Dewey. 64 pages, \$4.72. Messner Publishing Company, New York, 1974.

Reviewed by Jean Berman

The Miccosukee boy, a member of the original conservationists, is taught early to hunt and fish only for animals needed for food. This he knows because, poetically, the Breathmaker (God) has abundantly provided the earth with animals, fruits, vegetables, and other foods. Just as easily does he adapt to the modern use of machinery, evident in the way he handles, maintains, and repairs the airboat. This fast, efficient means of transportation rapidly carries him across the sawgrass in the Everglades to the raised land or hammock where he lives with his family.

Thus begins this up-to-date account of neighbors living in the Everglades, whose traditions and history far predate the history of the white man. Happily, the authors talked with and listened to the Miccosukees, who contributed accurate information of their people. The viewpoint of the Indians is sympathetically expressed,

*Our reviewer is librarian and media specialist at David Fairchild Elementary School.*

and the advantages to all of us to keep their traditions alive are apparent as the story is told. Their heritage is a rich one and their culture realistic for their needs and beliefs. The attempt they are making to adjust to the white man's world is one that should be encouraged. Their idea is of "continuing to work with whites, but not try to be like them. They will try to understand the white world but preserve the Miccosukee heritage." In our turn, we should respect this idea and aid them in their attempt to accomplish this goal.

The book is written in fast-reading prose for the intermediate-grade reader. It clearly tells of a neighbor's way of life. As the title describes, *The Circle of Life*, which includes the four points of the compass, if followed not in the squared-off manner, but circularly, as 'the whole universe spins this way'.

The movement includes an explanation of the history, customs and religion, comprising the center around which the Indians build their lives. A description of their housing and their clothing and their serviceability for their needs is included in this clearly written account. The importance of the sewing machine in their lives and how it influenced their economy is also indicated.

From the white culture that is crowding in upon the Miccosukees, the action of the white man and the requirements of his government are presented as they appear to the Indians. The matriarchal family life also shows the value and importance of the traditions that keep the tribe functional. The grandmother is the transmitter of much lore through her storytelling.

Education for the young has its special problems when there are two cultures that must be considered. The Miccosukees are active in attempting to do their best for their children; there are tribal plans for secondary-school classes on the reservation.

The black-and-white photographs, which have excellent captions, add much to the text. There is no index, which detracts somewhat from the book's value. Though the text is compact, it does run the various topics together, making it inconvenient to find specific information.

Despite the many problems that confront the Miccosukee, the tone of the book is hopeful; it may well arouse both interest and concern in the children who read the book.

Guide to the Everglades by Mike Smith and Virginia Matusek. Tampa, Trend House, c1975.

This tour book could be subtitled "A field guide to man in the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp." It is replete with advice on towns, roads, trails, and wilderness preserves to visit, giving thumbnail histories, information on facilities, and suggestions for survival, whenever appropriate. Not to be left at home.

It is available in the museum library and gift shop.

-Becky Smith

## WANTED

The museum would be grateful for the donation of any of the following books:

Ober, Frederick Albion. *The Knockabout Club in the Everglades*. Boston, Estes and Lauriat, 1887.

Robertson, Fred L. *Soldiers of Florida in the Seminole Indian Civil and Spanish-American Wars*. Florida Board of State Institutions, 1903.

## MILITARY ROAD MAP AVAILABLE

1856 Military Road Map of South Florida, as Ordered by the Hon. Jefferson Davis, Miami, Bob Lamme, 1975.

The Davis map is one of the most detailed and accurate early maps of the lower peninsula. This reprint is in color, with a summary on the back of the accompanying Ives report, a geographic description of the area. For perspective, the map includes an overlay of major present day roads and cities.

This map is available for perusal in the museum library and purchase in the gift shop.

## GULF COAST CONFERENCE

The sixth Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference will be held in Pensacola, Florida, October 2-3, 1975. The topic is "The Cultural Legacy of the Gulf Coast, 1870-1940." The conference is co-sponsored by the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, The Escambia County School Board, Pensacola Junior College, the University of West Florida and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

# PICTURING OUR PAST

By S. J. Boldrick



The Prins Valdemar arriving at Miami Harbor in 1926. (Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)



The S. S. Chatham led a parade of ships to mark the opening of Miami's deepwater harbor on December 13, 1927. (Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)



A sunny February 13, 1932, found the Arandora Star at Municipal Docks and the Goodyear Blimp drifting by. (Photo from the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)

# HISTORY'S A MYSTERY

By Larry Winebrenner

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	
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43			44			45			46	
	47									

**ACROSS**

- 1. Key Biscayne's oldest building
- 10. Small animal: key \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_ city
- 14. Eleven across
- 16. Famous Miami schoolteacher
- 17. Bone
- 19. Lasso
- 21. Diphthong
- 22. Dade bus service
- 24. South Dade farm implements
- 26. Red \_\_\_\_\_ (abbr.)
- 28. Kind of engineer (abbr.)
- 29. Famous Florida trail
- 33. Written rule
- 35. Columbus quote: "Sail \_\_\_\_\_!"
- 36. What South Dade farmers do to thirteen down
- 38. Pa's partner
- 39. Summer (Fr.)
- 41. Console
- 43. Hindu stringed instrument
- 45. Hawaiian game fish
- 47. Aquatic birds

**DOWN**

- 2. Card
- 3. Opal or diamond
- 4. Hereditary successor
- 5. Tamiami \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Leaves out
- 7. Ursula's monogram
- 8. Student Government Association
- 9. Sea duck
- 12. Rickenbacker \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. South Dade crop
- 15. Famous barefooter
- 18. \_\_\_\_\_ Petersburg
- 20. Consumed
- 23. "Man with the Golden \_\_\_\_\_"
- 25. Snakelike fish
- 27. Ocean or pool event
- 30. Caper
- 31. Kind of clock
- 32. Bring upon oneself
- 34. Initials of sixteen across
- 37. East Indian weight
- 40. World War II area
- 42. Barry College votary
- 44. Land measure
- 46. Initials of star of 1920 Miami Beach-located film, "End of the Pavement"

Larry Winebrenner is a professor at Miami Dade Community College - North Campus.

Answers on page 9



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## PORT OF MIAMI

*Continued from page 3*

At this time, however, the Port of Miami changed ownership. Since its beginning, the port had been a City of Miami property and operation. But in 1957, the new Metropolitan Dade County form of government came into being and with it a broader realization of common services for the Greater Miami community. For one thing, it was finally recognized that our seaport served all of Dade County and not just the City of Miami. For another, it was evident that Metropolitan Dade County would have a broader funding base than the city alone, and it was obvious that this would be an important factor in the days ahead.

So in 1960 a joint agreement was signed between the

City of Miami and Metropolitan Dade County which provided that the county would take over not only the existing operation of the port but also the responsibility for the construction of the New Port of Miami on Dodge Island. One of the provisions of the agreement was that once the facilities of the New Port were adequate to take care of all the cargo and passenger business of the

port, the old port properties on Biscayne Boulevard would revert to the City of Miami for non-port usage. (This was done several years ago, and today, of course, the city is developing the old port site into an extension of Bayfront Park under its master plan for the bayfront.)

During this same year (1960), construction of the New Port began. This entailed the bulkheading and filling by

dredging of the new site; the construction of the Dodge Island bridge; the construction of an extensive road and dockside pavement system; the installation of essential utilities such as sewers, underground electric power lines, water lines and telephone services. Once this was accomplished by about the mid-1960s, construction was commenced on the cargo buildings, the passenger terminal facilities, the office buildings and the like.

Today, the New Port of Miami is still expanding with additional construction going on almost continuously. The port needs of the community are being met in good fashion and our clean, modern, functional seaport is world renowned. Behind it all are eighty years of history, logical development and growth. A bright spot, indeed, within our community.



**Freight dock on the Miami River at old Avenue E - west of present Miami Avenue. Vegetables from Cutler and Elliott Key were unloaded here for transfer to the railroad. Note crating material for tomatoes on dock. c. 1898. Royal Palm Hotel in background. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)**