

Update

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK
REFERENCE LIBRARY



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COVER

Isabella Peacock gathered pioneer Coconut Grove families together for a Sunday School picnic in the late 1880's. (Photo courtesy of the Munroe Collection.)

UPDATE

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

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How'd you like to win a trip to Dry Tortugas? A weekend in St. Augustine or Marco Island? Or would a week at a summer cottage in North Carolina, with a supply of groceries, be more your style? Winners in our big membership contest can choose from this list; HASF will pick up the first \$200 of the check for two people. But read on.

For some time your Board of Directors has been aware that the membership in HASF is well below its potential. Museum experts say ideally that 25% of our revenue should be derived from memberships; only 15% of our revenue comes from this source. Furthermore, we have hopes within the next few years of moving into larger quarters, but larger quarters require more exhibits, and we hardly can afford enough good exhibits even now. So, looking forward to a larger percentage of an even larger budget, where does that leave us? It leaves us with a pressing need for greater participation in HASF by the public, or, in short, more members.

Our peerless membership chairman, Bud Altmayer, assisted by a committee, has been busy putting together a plan for enlarging our membership. We now have nearly 900 members, and the proposal is to double that

figure, half the increase by April 1 and the remainder a year later.

The Board of Directors has approved the plan, and to get it rolling the Board has accepted a quota for itself of ten new members by each Board member by April 1. To sweeten the pot, Bud and his accomplices have worked out an incentive program. First, each new member joining for \$25 or more gets a bonus — a fine package of material including several publications on hurricanes, reproductions of the 1902 Miami telephone directory and the 1904 city directory, a key chain, and some numismatic items.

Best of all are the incentives for the campaigners who get new members. The entire membership of HASF is expected to take part, and when you realize what you can win we fully expect a hot race. First, each new member nets the seller a credit at the gift shop of \$1. Ten new members, for example, could land you that \$10 book you've hungered for.

To qualify for the grand prize, the winner must sell twenty new memberships. The person bringing in the most new members over 20 wins his choice of Dry Tortugas, Marco, St. Augustine, or North Carolina, details to be worked out with the winner.

CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT

A Florida history course with emphasis on the South Florida area will be offered by the Miami Springs Community School (751 Dove Avenue) each Wednesday night from 7 to 10 P.M. beginning January 7, 1976. The regular fee of \$5 is waived for persons receiving Social Security benefits. For complete information phone 885-3585 any school day from 2 until 10 P.M.

LIBRARY GIFTS August-September 1975

Negative back files of Murnor Studio, Coral Gables. From Mrs. Harry J. Murray.

This fine collection of portrait negatives includes several thousand items and is indexed. Among the subjects are many prominent Dade County residents from the twenties and thirties.

Picard, Bernard. *Ceremonies et Coutumes Religieuses des Peuples Idolatres*. Vol. 1, pt. 1: *Qui Contient les Ceremonies Religieuses des Peuples des Indes Occidentales*. Amsterdam, J. F. Bernard, 1723. From Mrs. Theodore C. Buhler.

This early account of the customs of American Indians includes sections on Floridian and Caribbean aboriginals. It is illustrated with a number of woodcut engravings.

Our thanks, also, to the following donors: Mrs. Fay Ansbrough, Mrs. Louis Bow, Mrs. Theodore Buhler, Mr. George Coslow, Mrs. Bertha Gans, Mrs. Vincent Gilpin, Mrs. Edgar Jones, Ms. Theda Lassoff, Mr. Robert B. Lee, Miami-Metro Department of Publicity and Tourism, Dr. Thelma Peters, Mr. Art Smith, Mrs. Gerald Songer, and Miss Patsy West.

DIRECTOR ATTENDS CAROLINA SEMINAR

Our Museum Director, Randy Nimnicht, spent two weeks recently at a historical association seminar at Columbia, South Carolina.

MATHEWSON OPENS PROGRAM SERIES

by Zee Shipley

R. Duncan Mathewson, archaeological consultant, opened the Association's program series October 7, 1975, with an illustrated lecture on archaeological procedures used in the salvage of the Spanish galleon *Atocha* in the Florida Keys near the Marquesas.

Mathewson, after graduation from Dartmouth and graduate work in Edinburgh and London, served as co-director of the Volta Basin Research Project rescue excavation program for the Ghanaian government from 1964 to 1970 and as Government Archaeologist and Director of Excavations for the Institute of Jamaica. This included the excavations at the Port Royal site. He joined Treasure Salvors as consultant in 1973.

During the past two diving seasons he has developed a procedural model for the

recover of data which can be applied to any shallow-water wreck in the Caribbean. Because underwater conditions in this area differ greatly from other marine archaeological sites, new methods are essential to overcome problems of tides, currents, tropical storms and varying geological features. With the staff photographer, Mathewson has developed a photo-mosaic technique so that artifacts can be photographed *in situ* before they are brought to the surface. In a number of slides he showed us exactly the way the bronze cannons were positioned on the ocean floors, and how divers using a grid are photographed over the artifacts. From these measurements of the two groups of cannon and the space between, it could be determined that the distance between the groups was the known dimension of the beam

of the *Atocha*. When the first of the nine cannons was brought to the surface, it was positively established that this was indeed the *Atocha*.

Mr. Mathewson views underwater archaeology as a time capsule, revealing sociological data about what was actually happening at the time of the wreck as opposed to what was remembered and written about later. Another striking observation is that the datable items at the wreck site offer a more precise record than excavations on a land site.

As a result of Mr. Mathewson's theoretical and practical guidance, the salvage of the *Atocha* is a working model of how recovery can be done to maximize the preservation of artifacts while recovering the treasure sought by the investors. Visiting archaeologists, geologists, and anthropologists will be



R. Duncan Mathewson, an archaeological consultant, examines a bronze cannon recovered from the Spanish galleon *Atocha* in the Florida Keys. Photo from the HASF Collection.)

able to observe the salvage operation during the 1976 diving season.

Members of the Association are fortunate to have R. Duncan Mathewson as one of our number, and South Florida will be forever richer because of his efforts in conservation of these historical resources.

REFLECTIONS ON BLACK HISTORY Cocanut Grove 1880-1903: by Dorothy Jenkins Fields
A Selected Chronology

Mrs. Fields, a Dade County school teacher, is also a historical researcher.

1880s - Black settlement began in Cocanut Grove. It included black Bahamians as well as black settlers from the Southern states.

The community grew up on Evangelist Street, which later became Charles Avenue. This early community was known as Kebo.

It is believed that Mariah Brown was the first black to settle in this area.

1887 - The second public school was officially established in Dade County. According to regulations of the Dade County School Board at the time, it was necessary to have ten children enrolled before the



In 1898, black parents in Cocanut Grove organized a school on Charles Avenue. The Rev. John Davis (rear) was hired as an early teacher. Students are (left to right): Henrietta Fischer, Kate Stirrup Dean, Olive Roberts, Flossie Roberts Richardson, Leonard McCloud, James Henry Sweeting, Leon Roberts, Myrtle McCloud Davis, Anthony McCloud, Arthur Kelly, Johnnie Burrows, and Irene G. Sampson Pratt. Mrs. Dean is today a member of the HASF Board of Directors. (Photo courtesy of the Black Pioneer Archives and Oral History Collection, Dade County Public Schools. Photographer unknown.)

county would provide a regular school. Two white men, Joseph Frow, who ran

the lighthouse, and R. A. S. Peacock, owner of the Inn, were determined to have a

school with a regular paid teacher, so they submitted a census of ten children which included one small Frow child and two black children. School was begun in the fall of 1886 in a log cabin, and it was reported that the Negro children had no trouble whatsoever.

1892 - The Reverend Mr. S. A. (Samuel) Sampson, a black Bahamian, settled in Cocanut Grove.

1895 - The Reverend Mr. S. A. Sampson organized and built St. Agnes Baptist Church on land given him on Thomas Avenue by Count Jean D'Hedouville. St. Agnes later was moved to Charles Avenue and eventually became the

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KIRK MUNROE: Adventurer For The Children

by Erling E. Ayars

American boys who grew up in my day had favorite authors who transported them to historic times and places of long ago. Among these was Kirk Munroe. Another was G. A. Henty, whose book *With Clive in India* gave us an inkling of British military problems in "civilizing" vast hordes in India. His victory in 1957 consolidated India for the British East India Company.

Henty, Tomlinson, and James Fenimore Cooper instilled in an earlier generation of American lads a love of history, adventure, and blood-and-thunder fights with the Indians. Much of what they wrote about was acquired from second-hand sources of one sort or another.

But with Kirk Munroe it was different. He depended on very little hearsay for his stories. The times and places which figured in his books almost without exception were related to his personal experience. At the time of Munroe's death, this writer prepared a story entitled "Kirk Munroe, Adventurer For The Children." The information contained came from his own diaries and provided a brief story of his career, his explorations and his adventures.

Many noted people pass on leaving to their heirs the custody of vast collections of

Ayars, a long-time HASF member, came to Coconut Grove in 1924 to visit his parents, Dr. and Mrs. E. W. Ayars. He has been a writer for the Miami News, publisher of the Coconut Grove Times and for 45 years a life-insurance agent. He has two sons, one daughter, nine grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

memorabilia, but there often comes a time when the heirs cannot properly protect such collections.

This was the case with a complete set of Kirk Munroe's books, collected by Mr. Alfred B. Novak, now residing at Washington, Connecticut. Before he was 10 years old his father presented him with some Munroe books. Book stores in Chicago, where they resided, could not supply the full set. Young Novak's father

from Mr. Novak to HASF tells the rest of his story and the beginning of ours.

(In the process of passing on the names of his publishers, a lively correspondence developed between Mr. Munroe and young Novak. These letters Novak lent to Mrs. Munroe after Kirk's death, for possible use in a planned biography. The letters unfortunately were lost in 1935 when the Novak family moved from their Chicago home. — Editor)

Kirk Munroe was born in a one-room log cabin on the banks of the Mississippi river



Kirk Munroe rides his bicycle in Coconut Grove. An author of adventure stories for children, Munroe traveled extensively and personally met Custer, Buffalo Bill, and Kit Carson among others. His stories were based on his own experiences and from 1885 to 1905 he published at least one book a year. (Photo courtesy of Arva Moore Parks.)

suggested that he write Mr. Munroe in Coconut Grove to find out where he could obtain those he lacked. The letter he received from Mr. Munroe was written on Biscayne Bay Yacht Club stationery, so last year Mr. Novak wrote BBYC to see if they would receive and take good care of his collection of Munroe books. The HASF library was suggested as a more suitable repository.

Another letter last year

at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, September 15, 1850.

The first six years of his life Kirk spent at Fort Howard. There the mould of his career was cast in vivid frontier days. His everlasting love of the great outdoors gained in those early years is reflected in his many excursions to explore the natural wonders of the country. From his personal experiences and wide travels he took the settings of his thirty-five books for boys.

Something of the same spirit which Kirk Munroe exhibited all his life must have led his clergyman father, champion athlete of Boston, graduate of Harvard 1847, and Andover Theological Seminary 1849, to go as a missionary to the western Indians. His mother, Susan Hall Munroe, Boston society girl, enthusiastically shared with him the hardships of the frontier.

Returning east the family took up residence at Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Kirk went to public schools until he was sixteen. He disliked school and the thought of business, longing instead for the open air and the freedom of the wilderness. He decided upon a career as a civil engineer, and to gain experience before going on to school he went to Kansas to join a surveying party. This led to his surveying of routes of both the Southern Pacific and the Sante Fe railroads. The trip across the plains was full of dangerous days. Many times the party was forced to fight Indians. Kirk met Custer and Wild Bill at Fort Wallace and Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill and many others from time to time on the old Sante Fe Trail. He reached California, working for six months with surveying parties in California and Oregon. Having saved money enough for the trip he went to South America, and returning to Cambridge he entered the scientific school at Harvard.

After a year at school he went west again and worked on the exploration of the Northern Pacific railroad route from the Missouri River to Puget Sound. The letters he wrote home were published in the *Boston Advertiser* and attracted wide attention. When



Munroe's book *Through the Swamp and Glade* was about the Seminole War. Facts in the story were supplied by old soldiers and Seminoles who took part in the conflict. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

this job ended he turned to writing.

In 1876 came the disastrous battle of the Little Big Horn. The young surveyor, who had been trying for some time to induce the city editor of the *New York Sun* to employ him as a reporter, gained this coveted position by writing a series of sketches of Custer, the Little Big Horn country and the Indians of the plains. This chance assignment, thrown to him by fate, plainly marks his entrance into a literary career.

After three years as a *Sun* reporter he was appointed the first editor of Harper's "Young People," just then being launched by Harper Brothers. During the years in this position as editor he also wrote for that magazine numerous short stories based on his adventures.

In the winter of 1882-83 he made an extensive canoe trip from the Okefenokee Swamp down the Suwanee River to Cedar Key and along the Gulf Coast to Key West. Back again he paddled to the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River and from there up to Lake Okeechobee. He crossed that lake in three days under adverse conditions of storm and shortage of food and water, thence down the St. Johns to Jacksonville. The following winter he took another canoe trip through the little-known center of Florida by way of its networks of rivers, lakes and swamps.

But the third winter saw him and his wife taking a three-month wedding trip aboard their yacht *Alligator*, down the Indian River from St. Augustine to Lake Worth. The following winter they cruised up the Great Florida Reef to Biscayne Bay. Here they found the most beautiful place in Florida for a home and decided to stay.

This property eventually was acquired by another famous explorer, Dr. Henry Field, who occupies it today.

In 1885 Kirk published *Wakulla, A Story of Adventure in Florida*. That was followed in two years by *The Flamingo Feather, A Story of Indians and French in Florida*. Annually from that time until 1905 he published at least one new book, and sometimes as many as three.

His Florida stories were noteworthy for the fact that he came to know many Indians well and understood their problems. In *Big Cypress, The Story of an Everglades Homestead*, he pictured early homesteading days so that his young readers would appreciate its difficulties. In a foreword for a later edition he wrote: "Then the Indians roamed the country without legal rights of their own, this often bringing them into conflict with the white settlers."

In 1893 he attended the Chicago World's Fair, where his popularity as writer of stories for youth made him the center of attention. From Chicago he went to Alaska and traveled the whole length of the Yukon four years before the Klondike gold rush. Three books resulted from this trip. One, *Snowshoes and Sledges*, formed a guide book for the first Klondike prospectors.

IN 1903 Mr. Munroe set forth on a tour of the world which lasted a year and took him to such out-of-the-way

places as North Africa, the Sahara desert, Tibet, Burma, Siam, Java, Borneo, the islands of Japan, the interior of China, Manchuria and Korea. It was on this trip that he saw the Russian warships gathered in Port Arthur, just prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war. A few weeks later he was the guest of Admiral Togo on board the warship *Mikara* during a Japanese Fleet review by the Mikado off Kobe.

Following this visit to the Orient Mr. Munroe wrote *For the Mikado*. This book was considered of sufficient value by the Japanese that they had it translated to form a part of compulsory reading for school children. In 1917 a prominent Japanese civil engineer, Tateo Iwasaki of Kobe, Japan, son of Field Marshall K. Kawamura, visited Mr. Munroe at his Coconut Grove home and signed the guest book. Speaking of *For the Mikado*, he said: "How is it that you, a foreigner, writing of my country and my people, can say so well those things that I think deeply, but know not how to express in words?"

When he returned from Japan he was met by his wife in San Francisco, and together they explored the Canadian Northwest. Another year found him traversing little-known trails in Yucatan, Central America and Mexico. A year later he and his wife travelled Europe from end to end, and the following summer in company with two Cree Indians he celebrated his 59th birthday in the middle of a thousand-mile canoe trip to the northeastern shores of Hudson Bay.

The popularity of his books with young people was attested by the rapidity with which they wore out, and a complete set is no longer available at the Coconut

Grove Library. Munroe books were filled with manly stories, as wholesome as they were interesting, full of life and adventure, yet free from exaggeration and sentimentality. His plots were founded on facts which he was able to verify, except in the case of those books of early colonial history, when he had to rely on historians and available records. The story, *Through Swamp and Glade*, depicts the Seminole War as told to him by old soldiers and Seminoles who took part in that conflict.

Kirk Munroe was many men besides an author and an explorer. His love for Coconut Grove and its people led him to found the Coconut Grove Library. For several years he acted as librarian. He supplied many of the books from his own library. The building he built himself on a plot of ground donated by his longtime friend Commodore Ralph M. Munroe, a noted naval architect, who came to Coconut Grove to make his home in the 80s. The commodore and Kirk were not related.

The Biscayne Bay Yacht Club was founded in 1887, by Ralph and Kirk Munroe. Ralph was Commodore for 22 years, and Kirk served as Secretary-Treasurer for 33 years.

Kirk raised oranges that took prizes each year at the County Fair. With his wife, Mary Barr Munroe, he founded the Audubon Society.



The windmill tower at the rear of Munroe's Grove home served as his studio. The room at the top of his "Tower of London" was where Munroe wrote his books and entertained neighborhood youngsters with stories of his adventures. (Photo courtesy of Arva Moore Parks.)

COCONUT GROVE BEFORE THE RAILROAD

by Arva Moore Parks

Copyright 1973 by Arva Moore Parks. Reprinted from Village Post, May 17, 1973

There has probably been more written about Coconut Grove than any other place in Miami. For several generations now it has been analyzed and even eulogized by countless writers. The problem is that with all this attention many facts have been garbled, myths have been created and real heroes ignored.

Once and for all, let's get the story straight! Let's get the *dramatis personae* unwound and the real scoop on this thing called Coconut Grove and how it came to be.

The best place to begin is in the park on the shores of Biscayne Bay. If you can join a pair of perceptive eyes with a rare type of tunnel vision that allows you to see from the heart, you still can get a glimpse of what Coconut Grove offered its pioneers over a hundred years ago.

Start by looking out on the bay, by some miracle still beautiful. Ignore any signs of the present, including the spoil bank blocking your view. Picture if you can what the view was when only one structure appeared on the horizon. It was the tower of the Cape Florida lighthouse, built on Key Biscayne in 1825 by the United States Government. Go to the foot of St. Gaudens Road and you can still get this priceless view.

There used to be a natural spring of fresh water bubbling up into the bay just a few hundred feet off shore. Take a bunch of thirsty sailors, a few isolated lighthouse keepers and provide a natural channel from the outside into the bay, which was the only highway

Our author is a longtime Coconut Grove specialist. She is a former president of HASF.

to the area, and you have the reason for coming to "the land across from the light."

If you turn toward the ridge and remind yourself that half of South Florida is built on filled land, you have yet another clue to why the Grove was the first land homesteaded south of the Miami River. Go down Royal Road to the bay to get a better feeling of the ridge.



Dr. Horace P. Porter came to the Grove in 1872 and rented the Edmund Beasley home. In 1873 he opened a post office in the area and named it Coconut Grove, despite the fact that only two of these trees were in the entire area at the time. The people in this 1884 photo are unidentified visitors. *Photo from the HASF Collection.*

If you look to your left and look to your right you can follow the shoreline for a great distance. Edmund D. Beasley, the first permanent settler in the area, managed to stake his claim to a mile and a half of it. You are standing on his homestead. It extended from 27th Avenue on the east, St. Gaudens Road on the south, Grand Avenue on the north and if MacDonald Street continued south at

Grand Avenue it would be the western boundary of his claim.

No one can say for sure when Beasley arrived on the scene, but it was before 1855. In that year the United States Coast Survey team marked the point of land near St. Gaudens Road as "Beasley's Point." Maps resulting from this survey were used for many years.

Happily, when the "Barnacle;" the home of Ralph M. Munroe, a few hundred yards south of the park, opens as a state park, Beasley will become a familiar name in the Grove. This is because his well, hand carved out of solid coral rock, is there. "Beasley's Well" is his permanent memorial.

Like many early settlers, Beasley did not bother to prove up his claim with the Government until years after he settled there. This set of circumstances prompted another interesting development in the Grove's history. Enter Horace Philo Porter.

For some unknown reason, in 1872, thirty-two year old Dr. Horace P. Porter, a Yale graduate and Union Army veteran from Connecticut, came to Coconut Grove and rented the Beasley home. He lived in the Grove for only a year but during this brief stay he was able to secure a full measure of immortality. On January 6, 1873, he was able to open a post office in the area, because the Miami post office had been closed. He did not plant a coconut grove that was destroyed by a mythical hurricane. He did not have any special influence with anyone and he never even knew Edmund Beasley. Before it was over he wished he had never gotten to know Anna. He tried to claim her homestead for himself but found that she did not give up easily. She fought him all the way to Washington until she won her day in court and the land was patented to her.

Porter was not willing to tackle the untouched wilderness that was available for homesteading, so he left the area just as he found it. He accomplished only one thing — by opening a post office he had given the area its

"Alligator" Beasley, as he was often called, cleared the land on the bayfront, built a simple thatched-roof house from lumber salvaged from wrecks on the reef, planted fruit trees and pineapples and along with his Bahamian wife, Anna, made himself a home. Because he died in 1870 he has been almost forgotten by the chroniclers. The few times he is mentioned, he has not received his due.

first real name — “Coconut Grove,” changed later to its present spelling. No one has yet figured out why he chose this name because in 1882 there were only two coconut trees in the entire area and they were obviously planted by someone before Porter’s time — probably Beasley.

In 1877 the widow Beasley had the last laugh when she sold her entire 160-acre homestead to John W. Frow, the lighthouse keeper at Cape Florida, for a hundred dollars.

Another Frow arrived in the Grove the same year. Joseph Frow, who also kept the Cape Florida light, homesteaded the 160 acres west of his brother’s land. Joseph built two houses in Coconut Grove, to satisfy the homestead requirements of building a house, and the other was on a narrow strip of land on the bayfront next to the park. He spent most of his life in the bayfront property, and his children later lived in the house on Grand Avenue. This Grand Avenue property was located next to the Seven-Eleven. It was torn down a few years ago, suffering an ignominious fate like other bits of our history — it became a parking lot.

Before we get to the real civilizing of the wilderness there is one more family that needs to be recognized in the very early history of the Grove. John and Edward Pent, also members of a Cape Florida lighthouse-keeping family, homesteaded the land immediately north of Beasley’s. The Pent residence was situated high on the ridge behind the present Coconut Grove Bank. Ned Pent was one of the first “barefoot mailmen” on the bay and like his father Temple Pent, who was Dade County’s first representative in the Territorial Legislature (1845), was a respected pilot on the

reef. Matilda Pent (recognize a street name here?), John’s wife, kept a fire going at night as a beacon to those coming in from Cape Florida. At one time Virginia Street was called Pent Street.

The most interesting thing about the Pent family is that they are the earliest family in South Florida represented by descendants today. They are truly the pioneer family of South Florida.

With Beasley gone, the brothers Frow and Pent owned almost all of the Grove. Four Frow sisters and their husbands moved to the Grove

Grove on the homestead that belonged to J. W. Ewan, another great character who was known as the “Duke of Dade.” Ewan had built a two-story home and dock in the vicinity of the “Kampong”, the home of plant explorer David Fairchild, and was in the habit of allowing other people to live there while he managed the properties of the Biscayne Bay Company at Fort Dallas. The delightful story that Jack Peacock homesteaded in South Grove and sold this entire claim for fifty dollars is just that — a delightful story. Actually he

“Jack’s Bight.” A bight is the sailor’s name for a bend or curve in the shoreline. If you look at a map today you can still see this natural “bight” in spite of the filling of the shoreline in many places.

Jack Peacock’s position in the early history of South Florida is probably the most secure of anyone in the early days. This is because he left a legacy of nine sons and two daughters and an imposing home on South Bayshore Drive where, in fact, he did have a homestead. When one tries to unravel the history of Coconut Grove, however, one finds his brother Charles with the greater impact. But then Jack is the one who got Charles to come to the bay.

In 1875, with true pioneer spirit, Charles Peacock sold his going wholesale meat business in London and with his wife Isabella and their three sons followed Jack Peacock to the wilderness of South Florida. At first sight, the wilds of “Jack’s Bight” were too much for the Charles Peacock family so they rented one of the Ft. Dallas buildings from Ewan. It was there in 1877 they first met Ralph M. Munroe, a young visitor from Staten Island. In 1881 Munroe returned with his young wife, who was dying of tuberculosis. But even the constant and loving attention of Isabella Peacock was no help to poor Eva Munroe. She did not survive the trip.

In 1882 the Peacocks decided to give the Grove another chance. They purchased thirty-one acres of land from John Frow that included all the land from the south border of the park, north to Grand Avenue and east to Sailboat Bay. On this large tract of land they built the first hotel on the South Florida mainland. This decision set the stage for the development

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Dr. and Mrs. Peter Thomas Skaggs and Mrs. Jessie Moore stand amid the oak trees that were in front of the Bay View House which grew into the Peacock Inn. Skaggs was an early Miami physician and Mrs. Moore started the Christian Science Church in the Grove and owned the land now known as the Moorings. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. George E. Merrick. Photographer: Munroe)

and bought land from their brother John. This added the Thompsons, Roberts, Newbolds and Careys to the scene. There are many Frow descendants living in the Grove today.

To this small settlement of fishermen, lighthouse keepers and men of the sea, all with some connection with the Bahamas, came John Thomas Peacock, an Englishman. Thanks to the wonderful description found in *The Commodore’s Story*, “Jolly Jack” has often received top billing in the Grove’s history. In 1877 he was living in the

did sell improvements he made on another piece of property on the Miami River, which is the root of this myth.

This is no attempt to take anything away from “Jolly Jack” who in his own right and with the straight facts was an interesting and important early pioneer. He served as sheriff but not the first sheriff as often written; his father-in-law, Francis Infinger, has this honor. He also was tax assessor and keeper of the House of Refuge. Because he was the lone resident in the south part of the Grove, people referred to the area as

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of the first real community in South Florida.

If you walk up toward the ridge from the park's bayfront and stand between two large oaks, which were there then, you are standing in front of the original Bay View House. A little west of these two oak trees Charles and Isabella Peacock, with help from everyone living in the Grove, built a two-story structure with a wide veranda around the first floor. Looking out from this veranda you could see the simple wooden dock that jutted out into the bay. This dock became Coconut Grove's front door!

The Bay View House would not have been a pretentious structure in another setting, because it was really more like a large home with extra rooms for guests. But in the wilderness it must have looked quite impressive.

In a short time their many guests had filled the original Bay View House to overflowing as, one by one, more buildings were added. By 1895 the small Bay View House had grown into the Peacock Inn, a whole complex of buildings which included an impressive three-story building with handsome porches and distinctive dormer windows.

The real impact of the Peacock Inn was more than the size of the buildings, the reputation for fine food or the fact that it became the town center. (When the post office was reopened in 1884 it was at the Inn with Charles Peacock as postmaster.) It was the special qualities of Charles and Isabella Peacock that attracted a remarkable group of people to the bay. More than that, the atmosphere of warmth and good humor and the willingness of both Peacocks to help their guests in any way caused many of

them to stay and make Coconut Grove their permanent home.

First came the blacks from the Bahamas to work at the Inn. The first to come, Miss Maria Brown, lived on the Inn property. When more and more black Bahamians began to arrive, a small settlement was built a short distance away on the land sold to them by Joseph Frow. This area that was first called "Evangelist Street," later became Charles Avenue, after Joseph Frow's son. Today Charles Avenue probably has

influential were Ralph Munroe, Kirk Munroe and his wife Mary Barr (no relation to Ralph; she also suffers from mixed-up identity), and Miss Flora McFarlane. They all built houses in Coconut Grove.

In February 1887 the men of the community decided to have a Washington's Birthday celebration. A regatta was held, fifteen boats participating. After the event, everyone had Charles Peacock's famous fish chowder at the Inn. As a result of this affair, the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club was organized a

Isabella Peacock despaired because there was no house of worship in the area except for a small Catholic chapel up the Miami River on William Wagner's homestead. By 1887 she had collected enough donations from the guests at the Inn to build a Sunday School building in the Grove.

In the early days it used to be visible from the Inn because it was the only building on their property across what is now McFarlane Road. Two years later (1889) it became the first public school building in the



Charles and Isabella Peacock built the first hotel on the South Florida mainland in 1882. Originally known as the Bay View House, it grew from a two story house with a wide veranda into the Peacock Inn, a complex of buildings that served many Miami pioneers. (Photo from the HASF Collection.)

more historic buildings left than any other street in Miami; for example, Maria Brown's house is still there. Many descendants of these early pioneers, such as the Stirrups, Burrows, Roberts and Andersons continue to live there. These first families of Charles Avenue have contributed many outstanding professional people to the community.

A very sophisticated group of northern visitors, many of them friends of Ralph Munroe, also began to come to the Inn. Some of the most

few months later by Ralph and Kirk Munroe. Charles Peacock, of course, was one of the charter members. This club is still in existence in the Grove and now has a clubhouse on the bay about a mile east of the park. Ralph Munroe's boathouse, a replica of which still stands on the property, was the first clubhouse. Incredibly, the BBYC has held a Washington's Birthday Chowder Party every year since 1887! How can people say that South Florida has no old traditions?

Grove. A few years ago the Ryder Corporation presented it to Plymouth Church and moved it to their gardens. Today it has been painstakingly restored by church members — a true Grove treasure.

Leaving the park and crossing McFarlane to the other side of the street puts you in the spot where many of the first institutions in South Florida began. Imagining may become a little more difficult away from the bucolic atmosphere of the park, but there are still a lot of tangible

remains to aid in the search for the past.

You will see an iron fence surrounding a granite slab marking the grave of Eva Munroe. When Charles and Isabella Peacock gave Ralph Munroe three acres of their land as an inducement to build a home in the Grove, he moved her from her former resting place near Ft. Dallas. Hers is the oldest marked grave in Miami.

Next door, where the DeGarmo American Legion Post is today, was the site of the picturesque Union Chapel that was built in 1891 on land donated by Ralph Munroe. It later became Union Congregational Church and then Plymouth Congregational. Here black and white settlers worshipped together until 1895 when the Reverend Sampson formed the St. Agnes Baptist Church near what is now Thomas Avenue. It later became Macedonia Baptist, now situated on the corner of Charles Avenue and

Douglas Road. This was the first black institution in South Florida and the first Baptist church.

The Coconut Grove Library, with its quaint sign that has hung there from the beginning, is a beautiful new structure which incorporates a small peaked-roof building that is a replica of the original library building constructed in 1901 with funds donated by Kirk Munroe on land provided by Ralph.

The first library was started in 1895 by the "Pine Neddles" who were led by Mary Barr Munroe. They organized the Coconut Grove Exchange Library, which operated out of a second-floor room of Charles Peacock and Son's store, which used to stand on the corner of South Bayshore and McFarlane.

The new library building is the best example in the Grove of successfully combining the old with the new. One hopes that this can be an example for others who wish to change

important existing buildings.

Almost behind the library, facing the bay, was the most influential organization begun by the early pioneers. The "Housekeepers" Club, now known as the Women's Club of Coconut Grove, was started in 1891 by Flora McFarlane. It was the institution that raised most of the money for "village improvement and uplift," held cultural events, sponsored most of the social events, championed numerous causes and provided the greatest leadership. Here the sturdy pioneer women that grew up at the lighthouse and on the shores of Biscayne Bay without benefit of formal education mingled with women who had grown up in formal drawing rooms and private academies. Together they indelibly stamped the Grove with the distinctive spirit that has survived to our time. The present building was constructed in 1921 on almost the same site as the original in 1897.

This is how Coconut Grove

came to be. It has survived all these years because enough people cared about preserving it and were prepared to stand up and be counted when it was threatened. Our age is not the only time that Coconut Grove's future was in doubt. In fact, many predicted its demise when Henry Flagler brought his railroad to Miami over seventy-five years ago!

Before you leave this place where history, one hopes, will continue to walk, discard your historic tunnel vision and your introspective eyes and take a long, long look at the cold hard reality of the present. Listen for the honks of a thousand passing motorists and the rhythm of the whispers that say, "We need more lanes — need more lanes." Count the rusting beer cans on the bayshore and watch the technicians figuring the *Ecoli* rating in the bay. Stand in the ominous shadows of the buildings that threaten to darken the whole picture. Is it still worth fighting for?

GIFT SHOP SUGGESTIONS

Cocoanut Grove by Beautiful Bay Biscayne. Cocoanut Grove Development Co., Inc., 1911?

Coconut Grove also had its real estate promoters, as this pamphlet from the HASF library attests. It urges the prospective buyer to invest in a five-to-ten-acre lot, build a house on part of the land for from \$500 to \$2000, and plant a grapefruit grove on the rest. The trees are to pay for the financial outlay in five years. This enthusiastic description of the area portrays, of course, a perfect Eden on earth. —R. S.

Conch Cooking. Key West, Florida Keys Printing and Publishing. \$2.50

Here is a guide to traditional Key West cooking, telling what Conchs eat, and when. Recipes are interspersed with commentaries on the evolution of this island's culinary arts. Many of the dishes reflect the uses made of locally available foods, others the influence of Cuban settlers. *Conch Cooking* is available both in the HASF library and the gift shop.

—R. S.

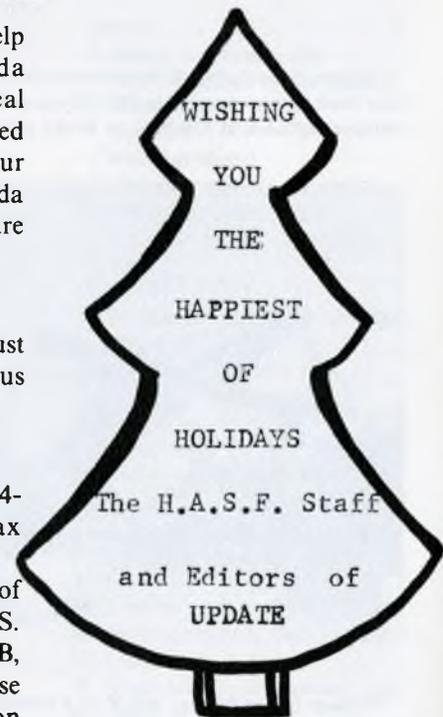
PATSY'S PLEA



How would you like to help preserve South Florida History? The Historical Museum is in desperate need of metal shelving to house our collection of South Florida artifacts. Sixteen units are needed!

Buy a unit Today for just \$36.00 . . . and help us preserve *your* history.

Call us at 854-3289 or 854-4681 or mail in your tax deductible contribution to: The Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 3280 S. Miami Ave., Building B, Miami, FL 33129. (Please designate that your donation is for shelving).



PICTURING OUR PAST S. J. Boldrick



Flossie Stiles took this photo of a party given in 1918 at the corner of Grand Avenue and Main Highway in Coconut Grove by Mrs. A. L. Isaac for Ann Shannon. Can you help us identify the ladies?



Coconut Grove's finest! The motorcycle squad of the Coconut Grove police force lined up one morning in 1925. If you can identify any of these officers please call Sam Boldrick at 579-5001 or Becky Smith at 854-3239.



William G. Castleberry and H. E. Crawford took time out from building McFarlane Road on October 23, 1925 to pose for the *Illustrated Daily Tab*. (All photos courtesy of the Romer Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library.)

HOLIDAY GREENERY Patsy West

Our northern residents now living in South Florida often feel homesick during the holidays because of the absence of snow on the ground and Christmas greenery on the door or mantle. Whereas we can do little about the snow, there are a few ideas on the greenery which have been used by the natives to soothe their nostalgic feelings.

In one of the earliest accounts of Christmas in South Florida, the pioneer family employed an orange tree as their Tannenbaum and hung their presents from the fruit-laden branches.

Wreaths may be constructed of short-leaved pine over a wire clothes-hanger frame. The small pine cones which festoon the boughs of this native are an exceptionally attractive addition to the

Patsy West is our curator and Update staff artist.

total effect. A bright red ribbon will complete this fragrant arrangement.

Another popular wreath is made of seagrape leaves. Using a cardboard doughnut, staple the leaves (either left natural or sprayed gold or silver) around the circle, overlapping as you go. The more leaves, the fuller the wreath.

The large pine cones from the long-leaf pine create a beautiful wreath or swag when wired onto a framework (such as chicken wire). They may be dipped or sprayed fashion colors to match decor. Children often enjoy sprinkling the tips of the cones with "glitter".

A very attractive swag can be made with Florida holly/Brazilian pepper (which seems to have taken over every vacant space in South Florida), pine, or the shiny-leaved sapodilla. A palmetto frond or two with sprays of the native French mulberry or other bright fruiting bough is also very ornamental.

The introduction of many exotic plants into our area in the last 50 years has given us thousands of seed pods for dried arrangements and different greenery to experiment with in creating our festive decor.

Try your creative talents this year and have a Green Christmas.

Continued from Page 11

foul. The glorious moonlight sails on *Wabun* with happy company. The all-day trip down the Bay, fishing or crawfishing, or just swimming and beach combing. Vincent was always very generous with inviting folks for a sail. He was happy and jolly and his hearty, infectious laugh still rings in my ears.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| ACROSS: | DOWN: |
| 1) BIMINIS | 1) BEARSCUT |
| 8) HAM | 2) IVY |
| 10) EVERGLADES | 3) ME |
| 12) CAY | 4) IRA |
| 13) LIEN | 5) NG |
| 15) AR | 6) ILLEGAL |
| 16) ELL | 7) SAILS |
| 17) AL | 8) HEN |
| 18) PS | 9) AS |
| 19) GANGSTERS | 11) DELTA |
| 22) OCEAN | 12) CAPONE |
| 23) ALEE | 14) ELSER |
| 24) NU | 17) AREA |
| 25) SHELL | 19) GAS |
| 28) OAR | 20) ANHINGA |
| 29) ETC | 21) ELOPE |
| 30) IS | 26) ESTE |
| 31) IMP | 27) LIQUOR |
| 33) ONT | 32) MUSEUM |
| 34) QUEEN | 33) ONION |
| 36) ORANGE | 35) NORTH |
| 39) US | 36) OJUS |
| 40) JULIA | 37) RUNT |
| 41) FOES | 38) ALTO |
| 43) UNTO | 41) FT |
| 44) TRUANT | 42) SAY |
| 46) STONES | 45) NT |
| 47) MYTH | |

BOOK REVIEW



The Good Little Ship, by Vincent Gilpin. Sutter House, Lititz, Pennsylvania, Third Edition, 1975. 64 pages, \$4.95. For sale at our gift shop.

Reviewed by Patty Munroe Catlow

The Good Little Ship is back on our shelves. The attractive format of this third edition will entice boatmen to look between the blue covers. Here are described the design, abilities, and joyful rewards of one of my father's favorite ketches, the *Wabun*. Later she was sold to Mr. Gilpin who owned her for nineteen years, and she him! He used her in northern and southern waters with complete satisfaction and pleasure. He spent a great many years sailing either in his own boat or with friends, cruising thousands of miles from Maine to the West Indies, but he loved the Florida waters.

Vincent had a deep, sensitive, keen feeling for boats and the sea, and he loved these as few people honestly can. His opening paragraphs explain some of this love better than I can.

Our reviewer was born in Miami in 1900, the elder child of Commodore Ralph Munroe. She lived at "The Barnacle" until 1932, when she married William R. Catlow, Junior, and went north, returning to Miami in 1964.

"When you gather the necessities of life on a small boat and cast loose with a roving commission, you enter into a new and wonderful freedom, unknown on shore. You slip away from the everyday world into the space and silence of wide waters; you move without gasoline; you sleep without hotels; you choose your distance from other men.

"All ports are open to you, and you don't have to explain yourself to anyone. You may travel all night and sleep all day; eat one meal or five; dress as you please, or not at all. You may read or talk or lie on your back and dream of the clouds and the stars, with none to comment."

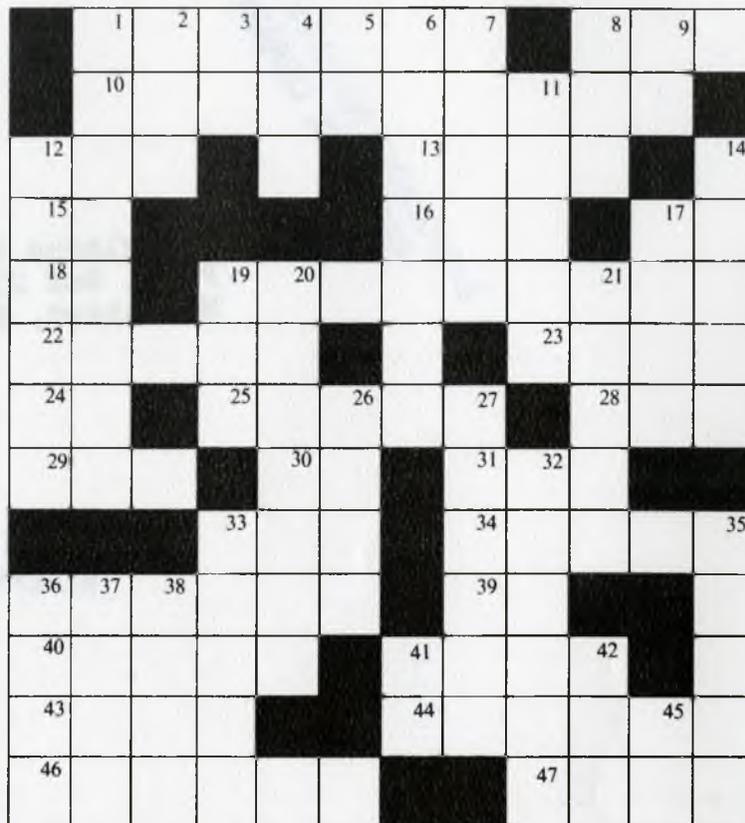
My father, Ralph M. Munroe, developed a relatively small shoal draft sailboat in the 1880s, and later it became known as the "Resto-type". Several of these, with variations, were built and proved to be able, safe, and comfortable cruising boats off soundings and coastwise. Their shallow draft allowed the hulls to lift and be buoyed up by the waves and currents. Add to this the simplicity of arrangements and equipment, rigging and sails. One had a beautifully maneuverable boat even when single handed.

It is interesting and timely that this charming and informative little book has returned when it seems that a much greater interest in shoal draft has appeared in the sailboat world.

I knew Vincent Gilpin from childhood, and delightful memories come back to me. It could be said that he was almost a second father to my brother and me. Memories of our family boats cruising together; the companionship, experiences, fair weather and

Continued on Page 10

HISTORY'S A MYSTERY



ACROSS

- 1 Rendezvous for rumrunners
- 8 Rumrunners' sack of booze
- 10 Site of moonshiner's still
- 12 Cat or Rum
- 13 Hold on a debtor
- 15 Army Regulation
- 16 House wing
- 17 First name of 12 down
- 18 An add-on
- 19 Bad guys during Prohibition
- 22 Where rum was run
- 23 Harbor for rumboat
- 24 Greek letter
- 25 Long racing boat
- 28 Used with 25 across
- 29 And so on
- 30 Common verb
- 31 Little demon
- 33 One of the Gt. Lakes
- 34 -- of the rumrunners
- 36 Florida symbol
- 39 Enforcer of Prohibition
- 40 Mrs. Tuttle to friends
- 41 Enemies
- 43 Golden Rule preposition
- 44 AWOL
- 46 Large ones make jetties
- 47 Fountain of Youth, for example

DOWN

- 1 Access to Biscayne Bay
- 2 Mrs. Stranahan or the Halls of
- 3 State (with zip code)
- 4 Gershwin
- 5 National Guard
- 6 Like rumrunning, not lawful
- 7 Red in the sunset
- 8 Good stewed with dumplings
- 9 Since
- 11 Airline
- 12 Notorious racketeer of Palm Island
- 14 Popular Miami pier, '20s
- 17 Region
- 19 Needed by rumboats
- 20 Water turkey
- 21 Run away
- 26 "This" in Little Havana
- 27 Rumboat load
- 32 Where history is preserved
- 33 Vegetable
- 35 Another name for Haulover Cut
- 36 Early community near Fulford
- 37 Undersized
- 38 Range between soprano and tenor
- 41 Dallas or Lauderdale
- 42 Speak
- 45 New Testament



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The Boy Scout movement claimed much of his time from 1910 when the first Troop was formed in Miami, and Kirk assumed a leading role. Dan Beard, national Scout leader, was his friend and on one visit signed the Munroe guest book. Among other names to be found in that book were those of members of the first Boy Scout troop. Kirk always followed the progress of those young fellows who belonged either to the Audubon Society or the Boy Scouts.

Kirk Munroe was a great story teller. The windmill tower at the rear of his home was fitted up in a novel fashion, into what he chose to call "The Tower of London." In the small room at the top he

wrote his books. Many Coconut Grove boys used to climb to the study with him to listen to his accounts of pioneer days. There was not a single boy in the community who did not feel right at home in his company.

This writer was well acquainted many years ago with two of the lads who frequented the "Tower of London" for the story hour. They were the late Walter Peacock and George B. Hardie, Sr. The son of one of them, George B. Hardie, Jr., is now president of the Historical Association.

Death came to Kirk Munroe June 16, 1930, at the age of 79.

At his memorial the late

Rev. J. Delman Kuykendall said: "He was an explorer of the unusual, adventurer in the byways and highways of life, eager seeker of the lore of the universe, safe mentor and organizer for human happiness and loyal friend of all men."

Continued from Page 3

Macedonia Baptist Church. It is now located on the corner of Douglas Road and Charles Avenue.

1896 — November 20.
Irene G. (Pratt) Sampson, daughter of the Reverend Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Pratt, was born in Coconut Grove.

1897 — Colored Literary Club of Coconut Grove organized in Odd Fellows Hall on Charles Avenue.

1898 — School organized by black parents. The Reverend Mr. John Davis was an early teacher at that school.

1899 — E. W. T. Stirrup, a black Bahamian, settled in Coconut Grove.

1903 — January 13. Colored Masons organized. Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Florida chartered Offspring Lodge # 252 in Coconut Grove. Appointed officers: W. M. Counts, Master; R. W. Allen, Senior Warden; W. M. Miles, Junior Warden.