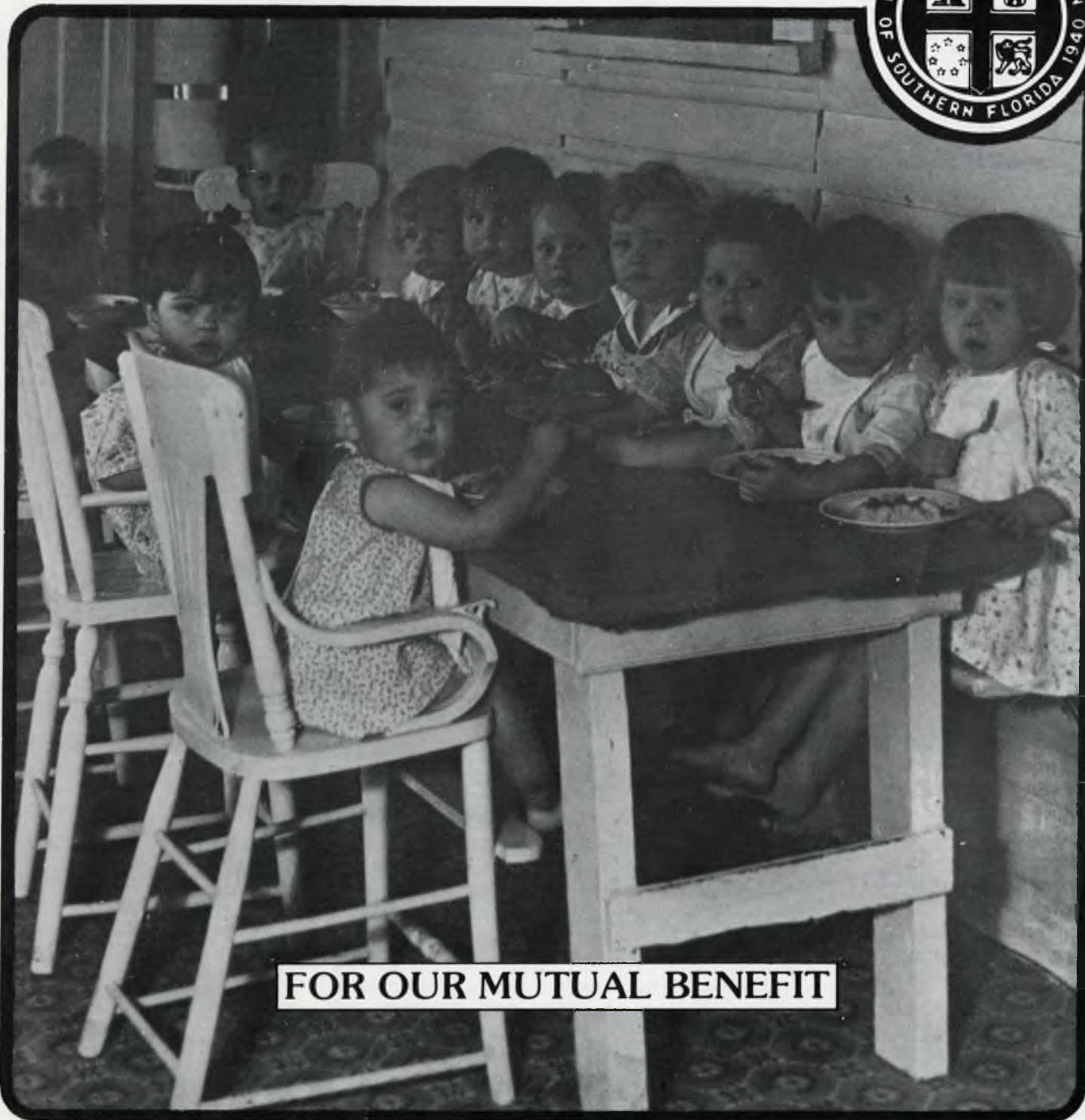


# Update



**FOR OUR MUTUAL BENEFIT**



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The Woman's Relief Association found the greatest need in Miami was for a day nursery. C. 1935. (Photo from the Woman's Relief Association Archives.)

**UPDATE**

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**ANNUAL BENEFIT HELD AT THE KAMPONG**

The HASF Annual Benefit was held on April 16 at The Kampong, the historic home of Mrs. Edward Sweeney and the former estate of the late Dr. David Fairchild.

This property was homesteaded in 1876 by J.W. Ewan, the "Duke of Dade", who came to Miami in 1874 to manage the property of the Biscayne Bay Company. Ewan owned the Ft. Dallas property prior to Julia Tuttle. His two story house was a temporary home to several South Florida pioneers including Jack Peacock, Ralph Munroe, who lived there briefly in 1881, and the Adam Richards family.

Captain and Mrs. Albion R. Simmons purchased eight acres of the bayfront land which is located at 4013 Douglas Road. Mrs. Simmons was Dr. Eleanor Galt Simmons, Coconut Groves' famous woman physician. The Simmons built a coral rock structure near the bayshore, supposedly using plans from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Following a fire, the house was replaced by a frame one. Simmons developed a thriving guava jelly business on the estate. "The Jelly Factory" as it came to be known, was a long building still situated near the main gate. The Captain shipped his products north and even as far as London. In addition, his guava wine was highly prized by local residents.

The Kampong underwent considerable change when it was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Fairchild. (Mrs. Fairchild was the daughter of Alexander Graham Bell)

The Kampong is a Japanese word for a group of dwellings, or more ap-

propriately, grouped family village. Fairchild chose this name because several buildings were present when he purchased the estate and other small buildings were added later.

After the hurricane in 1926, the original house was moved back deeper into the lot and carefully repaired. The other buildings were also carefully preserved; some transformed into a study and lab and others maintained as guest cottages. The present house is lovely and open with a stone archway into the court that frames the magnificent view of well-manicured lawns, stately royal palms and shimmering bay.

Dr. Fairchild was widely known among plant scientists throughout the world. Seeds of strange plants came to him from all lands. He landscaped The Kampong with a wide variety of these seeds and made it lush and verdant as it is today. He was responsible for the organization of the Agriculture Department's Office of Plant Introduction in Washington, D.C., and was in charge of it from 1904 to his retirement and move to Coconut Grove in 1928. He introduced so many varieties of tropical plants to South Florida which today are common in this area because of him. The Fairchild name is perpetuated now in Fairchild Tropical Garden.

David Fairchild made The Kampong the heart of his family. It was a place of peace amid the hustle and bustle that lies just outside its walls. The Kampong is truly a tribute to the climate, the plants, the people and all other things that helped bring David Fairchild and all of us to Florida.

**OUR READERS WRITE**

My family arrived in Miami in September, 1920. My father transferred in his position as a Letter Carrier from the Bridgeport, Conn. post office to the Miami Post Office. I was nine years old at the time. I visited the post office with my father as a small child many times and stood in the work room pictured on the cover of the February issue of "Update" at approximately the time this picture was taken. I later entered the postal service in Miami in 1929 leaving when drafted into military service in February 1941. I found your articles very interesting and commend you on the depth and the manner in which you obtained such authentic background data by interview with those who took part in the postal service development in the Miami area. Many of them were my close personal friends during my career as a postal clerk. I recently retired from the postal service and returned from twenty-four years of career service in Washington, D.C. to make my home here in central Florida.

Harold R. Ervin  
Maitland, Florida

**MRS. MARGARET GILPIN**

Margaret Beard Gilpin, a long-time friend and benefactor of The Historical Association of Southern Florida died recently at her home in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Her late husband, Vincent Gilpin was the author of *The Good Little Ship* and co-authored *The Commodore's Story* with Ralph M. Munroe.



# THE WOMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

by Margaret Pace Burton

In Miami's early days a group of civic-minded men and women formed the Relief Society and about 1908 established a small hospital, the Friendly Hospital, in a one-story frame building on Biscayne Boulevard at Northeast Eighth Street. The project got off to a fumbling start and was soon surrendered to the City of Miami and became the City Hospital. The women of the Relief Society withdrew from it and in 1911 organized the Woman's Relief Association with 260 members. Their constitution and by-laws were drawn up with the help of Judge Henry F. Atkinson. Their purpose was to help women of the community.

Mrs. John Sewell was the first president. Also serving with Mrs. Sewell on the Board of Directors were: Mrs. P.T. Skaggs, Mrs. Frank Pepper, Mrs. Charles Brickell, Mrs. Frank B. Shutts and Mrs. Isador Cohen. Women from the various Protestant Churches were appointed chairmen as well as Mrs. Gus Muller of the Catholic Church and Mrs. Cohen representing the Synagogue.

In 1921 the Woman's Relief Association was incorporated by Judge H. Pierre Branning. Requesting the charter were the following prominent women: Mrs. E.C. Romfh, Mrs. R.C. Perky, Mrs. J.B. Reilly, Mrs. John Sewell, Mrs. G.A. Mills, Mrs. Julius Smith, Mrs. J. Roy Tracy, Mrs. E.A. Waddell and Mrs. W.B. Hinton.

As the leading charity organization in Dade County, the Woman's Relief Association employed a train-

ed nurse who covered the city on foot or bicycle and went from Ojus to Homestead. In 1911, the first Christmas baskets were filled and delivered to the needy homes. Miss Saidee Kolb, then living on Fifth Street, kept clothing to be distributed by the nurse. Miss Kolb later served as president for many years and



Miss Saidee Kolb (left), and Mrs. Johnson Pace served terms as president of the Woman's Relief Association. Miss Kolb was a founding member. Pace Park, a City of Miami park along the bayfront north of the Omni Complex honors Mrs. Pace. (Photos from HASF Collection and Margaret Pace Burton.)

was then elected president emeritus.

As Miami grew, the original City Hospital gave way to a new one which later became Jackson Memorial Hospital but the new hospital had no maternity ward at first nor did the City hire a city nurse so the Woman's Relief Association continued to provide a very important service for women and children by providing a traveling nurse.

In 1917, Dr. E.M. Jones, who was interested in providing better care for children, offered the Association a house at 27 N.W. 11th Street for a clinic and day nursery if the ladies would maintain it. They began a campaign to raise money to renovate and equip the house as a nursery and in a few months succeeded in their

goal. The new home opened February 25, 1918. Later Dr. Jones sold the Association and adjoining house and this the Association turned into a twelve-bed maternity home which was badly needed in the community until Jackson Memorial Hospital established a maternity ward. In the two and a half years the



Miss Saidee Kolb (left), and Mrs. Johnson Pace served terms as president of the Woman's Relief Association. Miss Kolb was a founding member. Pace Park, a City of Miami park along the bayfront north of the Omni Complex honors Mrs. Pace. (Photos from HASF Collection and Margaret Pace Burton.)

Association ran the maternity home, they cared for 238 maternity cases, at the same time maintaining the day nursery next door, all with no aid from either the City or the County. Mr. James Deering became interested in their work and donated \$1,000 toward it. Dr. P.T. Skaggs and Dr. James M. Jackson gave of their time and skill whenever needed.

When the Association gave up running the maternity home, the building was used for a year or so by the Salvation Army. Then the ladies of the Association took the building back and used it to expand their day nursery. By this time it became apparent that a day nursery was the greatest need and the women decided to concentrate all their efforts in this direction.

During the years between 1918 and 1923 the Association had placed nineteen children in homes for there was no adoption agency in Miami and the Association took on this service also.

Civic organizations and merchants began to discuss a Community Chest in 1924 as a means of raising funds to assist those in need. The Association agreed to become a member. As the Community Chest led to the United Fund and then to the United Way the Nursery worked closely with each agency.

Mrs. Helen M. Spitzer, widow of William H. Spitzer, one of the founders of the First National Bank of Miami, willed a part of her estate to the Woman's Relief Association. This was placed in trust with the interest to be used by the Association for its projects.

In 1941 Mrs. Charles Sulzner, a long-time resident of Miami, purchased the Z.T. Merritt home in the 100 block of N.E. Forty-First Street for the use of the Association. The Merritt family had come to Miami from Kentucky about 1891 and Mr. Z.T. Merritt had been superintendent of Dade County schools and later clerk of the circuit court. The Merritt house, a large two-story frame built of Dade County pine, was set in three acres. The Association converted this old landmark home, built in 1910, into a new day nursery.

After fifteen years in this location the Association was able to build on the same land a splendid fire proof stone building designed solely to house a nursery. This project was under the direction of

*Continued on page 9*

*Mrs. Burton, a long-time Miami resident, is the daughter of Mrs. Johnson Pace.*



# SOCIEDAD CUBA

By Wright Langley

Juan Borges Jr. knocked on the screen door and softly called out, "Cuba."

A woman answered and handed him \$1.15. Borges gave her a receipt for the weekly dues of Sociedad Cuba—commonly called the Cuban Club in Key West.

its members and to aid charitable institutions."

Despite the movement of cigar factories to Tampa and decline of Key West's industry, Sociedad Cuba attracted new members and within three years opened a clubhouse at 1108 Duval

recreational privileges. If a person did not want to participate in the club and its welfare program, he could take out a non-voting, recreational membership at \$1.50 a month.

Unlike the San Carlos Institute which from its inception was active politically, the Sociedad Cuba insisted on "no politics" in the club.

The club prospered because it provided members with a variety of benefits for their dues.

"We would pay the midwife \$15 to deliver a baby," Borges remembers.

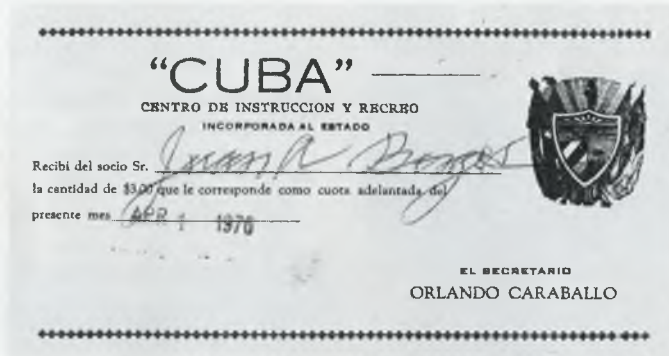
Doctors were on a retainer to provide free medical care

and pay the benefits to 28 members who were too ill to work," he continues.

However, since World War II the club has been slowly dying. Blue Cross-Blue Shield on the Navy station, paid sick leave and other "company" benefits could not be matched by the club and gradually the membership and club benefits dropped.

Today Borges collects \$3 a month from the 28 members, but the only "benefit" is \$300 to the member's beneficiary.

Sitting on the porch of his home just across Duval Street from the club, Borges watches as carpenters begin a



Receipt made out to Borges' son for \$3 to cover monthly dues of "Cuba." Club now only pays a \$300 death "benefit."

Out of the \$1.15 he collected, 60 cents was the husband's personal dues while 25 cents for the wife and 15 cents each for their two children covered them for hospital and medical care. It was the club's own hospitalization plan and the personal dues provided the husband the extra benefit of \$1.50 a day while sick or injured.

Borges pedaled his bicycle around the Cuban cigar rollers' community from Saturday until Tuesday afternoon collecting the dues of a club which once had over 1,000 members. Today there are only 28 members, the club building has been sold and the organization is dissolving.

Incorporated October 29, 1917, the club was chartered "for social, charitable, benevolent and educational purposes; and for the advancement of the interests of

Mr. Langley is a newspaperman and co-author of *Yesterday's Key West*.

Street. Members had purchased the vacant Soria Cigar Factory and alongside the elongated frame factory built a twin structure. The distinctive twin-scalloped facade disguises the two peaks of the separate structures behind. Sociedad Cuba actually started out about 1900 as a social club located two blocks away at 1317 Duval Street in what is now the Casa Blanca apartment house.

Now 80 years old, Borges recalls with a twinkle in his eyes the gala dances held upstairs in the club and along Duval Street.

"We would rope off the block and dance in the street...the Cuban military band would often come over to play for us," he recalls.

Downstairs the club had a reading room, domino tables, pool tables, a radio and shower facilities for those working out in the boxing ring.

Borges says many people joined the club only for the



Juan Borges, Jr. in front of Sociedad Cuba — Cuban Club in Key West. For nearly 48 years he has collected dues of the club organized primarily by cigar workers to provide a medical welfare system and recreation. (All photos courtesy of Wright Langley.)

and drug stores paid a contract price to give medicines without charge to the members.

In the 20s and 30s when the club was most active, he was one of four collectors who like debit insurance men had their own route and customers. His commission on collecting dues was 10 per cent.

"There was one time when all the collectors except me had the flu . . . I had to do it all

massive restoration of the building. Concrete blocks enclosing the front porch have been knocked out, the wrap around porch room renewed and inside the walls and floors refinished.

The new owners plan to convert the building into office space and tear down two newer concrete structures beside the club for parking.

Henry C. Trent, one of the owners, expects to spend some \$150,000 on the project.



# A HOME FOR THE WORKING GIRL



Cover of booklet announcing the opening of Sociedad Cuba's clubhouse in October 1920. New owners will restore building and convert it into professional office space.

Trent, who runs a Detroit health spa, bar and golf course, is very much aware of the historical importance of the building to the community.

"It was the look of the building—the uniqueness that attracted me," he says, looking back over a year of negotiating the purchase of the club and adjacent buildings for \$100,000.

Boeges likes what Trent and his partner Jerry Morgan are doing to bring back—to restore the clubhouse as it once looked.

It's both a happy and sad feeling because it's a rebirth of the building, but death of the club.

"You might say the Sociedad Cuba has no reason...no purpose...most of the members are old like me," Borges observes.

Once the club legally dissolves and debts paid, the proceeds from the \$100,000 sale will be divided among the living members—the club's final benefit.

The Young Women's Christian Association which was organized in Miami in 1919 leased, then purchased, the Fort Dallas Park Hotel on S.E. First Avenue, its headquarters until 1955. The Y.W.C.A. supplied simply-furnished, conveniently-located rooms at low prices, \$2 to \$5 a week, for young working women, most of them clerks or secretaries, whose weekly salary was seldom over \$15. The "Y.W." was home for these girls, supplying wholesome recreation, hobby classes, and the proper amount of chaperonage to satisfy parents back home. To add to its income the Y.W.C.A. leased out space on its first floor for a popular and inexpensive cafeteria, Grandma's Kitchen, where many of the "Y.W." girls ate.

The Y.W.C.A. also had programs for high school girls who were formed into clubs with various names including Pep Club, B Square Club, and the Girl Reserves. In summer the Y.W. sponsored recreational camps at the beach for both the high school clubs and the working women. These "camps" were held in a modest-priced hotel



Fund-raising rally in tent on grounds of the Y.W.C.A. March, 1921. Standing at the head table is Ruth Bryan Owen. To her left is her father, William Jennings Bryan, chairman of the rally. (HASF photo from Matlack Collection)

that otherwise might have closed for the slow summer season, usually at Miami Beach but sometimes at a rambling frame hotel on the ocean at Boynton.

The original garden of the Fort Dallas Park Hotel, which filled the southwest corner of the intersection of S.E. First Street and First Avenue, became an outdoor basketball court for the Y.W. recreational program where girls in prim white middies and black bloomers scrambled for the ball while playing "girls' rules". Under the pressure of the Boom the basketball court gave way to an addition to the Y.W.C.A. building. Today the entire building is gone and its site is a parking lot and a hangout for Miami's

thousands of pigeons. The Y.W.C.A. had the support of the Miami churches and of many prominent Miami residents. In 1921 William Jennings Bryan headed a fund-raising campaign and in a period of five days raised \$46,673 to pay on the mortgage for the building. Though today the Y.W.C.A. in its impressive building on the Miami River is having financial difficulties the purpose of the Y.W.C.A. continues, that of serving the needs of women. T.P.

**1877  
IN  
1874**

*The Key West Citizen* in an Earl Adam's column, "Do You Know?" reported the following:

"Back in the years 1874 and 1875 there were 13 benevolent societies organized here with a total membership of 1,887. Such societies and orders were one of the city's marked features in those years.

"Most of the organizations have long since passed out of existence. They had such names as: 'Rising Star', 'The United Order of True Reformers', and the 'Baron Commandery'."



The Fort Dallas Park Hotel on S.E. First Avenue was converted to the Y.W.C.A. about 1920. (HASF — from an old postcard)





## THE HOUSEKEEPERS' CLUB OF COCONUT GROVE

By Gertrude M. Kent

Have you visited the little white Sunday School built in 1887, that is on the grounds of Plymouth Congregational Church? If so, you will know that in 1889, it was rented as a public school and to add to its historical importance, The Housekeepers' Club was started in this building on February 19, 1891.

What was it like back in that era? Let me quote from an article about the Club that appeared in Harper's Bazaar on April 16, 1892: "Away down on the east coast of Florida, three hundred miles south of St. Augustine, is the pretty little settlement of Coconut Grove. It is situated on the banks of Biscayne Bay, one of the loveliest sheets of water for winter cruising and fishing that it is possible to conceive of for those who are not afraid to go beyond the daily mails and telegraph wires; for at present there are no railroads or steamboats; not even a wagon road connecting us with the outside world. Sail boats only; but plenty of those and good ones too which is very necessary, as the nearest market or source of supply is Key West, a hundred and fifty miles to the south."

The originator of the Club was the school teacher, Miss Flora McFarlane. When she fully realized the loneliness of the pioneer women, she sent out a general invitation for the mothers to meet after school to form a club. Six responded. Miss Flora was chosen president with Mrs. Kirk Munroe, secretary and Mrs. Joseph Frow, whose husband was a former keeper of the Cape  
*Gertrude M. Kent, author of "The Coconut Grove School in Pioneer Days 1887-1894", is a former Club member and longtime Grove resident.*

Florida Light, treasurer. The other founders were the wife of the owner of Peacock Inn, Mrs. Charles Peacock, her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Charles John Peacock and Mrs. Benjamin Newbold.

They decided to meet every Thursday. Dues were fixed at ten cents a quarter. The object of the Club was:



The original clubhouse for the Housekeepers' Club was built in 1897. The dirt road in front led through hammock to South Bayshore Drive. The land was donated by Commodore Ralph Munroe and Henry Flagler gave one hundred dollars toward the building fund. (Photo courtesy of The Woman's Club of Coconut Grove.)

"First to bring together the mothers and housekeepers of our little settlement and by spending two hours a week in companionship to learn to know each other better and thereby help each other and

Second, to add to the new Sunday School Building Fund."

To accomplish the latter they decided to make small articles of clothing that could be sold. It was also voted that some member should read aloud household articles at each meeting while others were busy with needle and thread.

It was also voted that some motto should be chosen each week, something that would help us in our daily life and remind us of each other. The first one was "Lend A Hand."

How do you think they decided to vote on new members? By simply asking

for a show of hands? Oh, no, it was by secret ballot—black and white beans were distributed and when counted woe unto the unfortunate soul that was unlucky enough to get black beans!

The first annual Tea took place on June 4 from 5 to 7 o'clock. There were 23 present—each member being

outstanding cooks of the Club. The entertainment that night (admission 25 cents and children — half price!) was a Broom Drill performed by the Pine Needles Club. This was a group of nine costumed young girls that Mr. and Mrs. Kirk Munroe had trained to do a military drill with brooms.

After the Fair, the Club was able to turn over to the new Sunday School Fund the sum of \$86.70. That August, Mrs. Charles Peacock called for a special meeting. The significant motto chosen for this day was: "Do noble things, not dream them all day". What noble things were they doing? The minutes state:

"The Housekeepers met on this day instead of the 18th for the purpose of providing dinner and tea for 18 men who came to work on the new church land". Com. Ralph Munroe gave the land.

So now, in its second year of existence, the Club had achieved its goal of building a larger Sunday School for the community. From now on it would be called Union Chapel (open to all denominations). It took two more years of the members' hard work to pay off the debt.

In 1897, the Housekeepers built their own club house at a cost of \$800.00. Com. Munroe also donated this land and Henry M. Flagler gave a check for \$100.00. Besides donations of money the members vied with each other to help. Mrs. Alfred Peacock made an autographed quilt while Miss Flora donated five acres of the land she had homesteaded. The Club sold chances on the acreage which was won by F.S. Morse. He gallantly turned the deed back to the Club for resale. But the civic mind-

The following winter the first Fair was held on March 12, 1892, in Kirk Munroe's bathhouse. The doors were opened with great ceremony by Miss Flora at exactly 2 o'clock. There were five tables of articles that could be bought including one that held the mouth watering display of food prepared by the



ed Housekeepers decided to give the acreage to the Miami Road Fund. (The work on the new road to Miami had begun on Sept. 4, 1896). H.C. Budge representing the Miami Road Fund also decided to raffle off the land. He sold 100 chances at a dollar each — the land was worth \$25.00 an acre.

No history of the Housekeepers' Club would be complete without relating an incident that involved Capt. Dick Carney whose practical jokes were legion. The Club gave a dance which attracted almost every family even as far away as Lemon City. But let Com. Ralph Munroe tell it — "Of course the babies had to come along, being put to sleep in a room devoted to them for the evening. In the midst of the festivities Dick slipped off to the 'nursery' and finding, as he hoped, the caretaker absorbed in watching the dance proceeded to exchange most of the infants, putting them not only in each other's places, but in each other's clothes as well. Eventually the mothers danced themselves out, gathering up the slumbering youngsters and sailed away home, where most of them arrived about in time for the next day's work. Daylight brought scenes of consternation and wrath, all over the Bay, that are better imagined than described. Kirk Munroe was there, and told the story to Owen Wister, who soon afterward incorporated it in a novel *The Virginian* thus giving it an international circulation."

In 1905, the tenth Annual Meeting of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs was held in Miami. One of the most interesting items of business was the introduction of a motion by the first Mrs. John Gifford of The Housekeepers' Club which

read "that the Federation endorse the proposal to make a Federal Forest Reservation of Paradise Key in the Everglades in order to preserve the unique stand of Royal Palms, this being the only spot in the United States where these palms are growing naturally".

The outcome of this proposal was that in 1915, the State of Florida deeded to the Florida Federation Women's Clubs 960 acres of land which



The Housekeepers' Club presented spectacular pageants in a number of waterfront estates to raise money for the new clubhouse. Neptune and the Mermaids were the featured stars of this early 1920s production. (Photo courtesy of The Woman's Club of Coconut Grove.)

included Paradise Key. To this was added another 960 acres — the gift of Mrs. Henry M. Flagler. Thus was Royal Palm State Park created and maintained by the Clubs until 1947, when it was deeded by the Federation to the Everglades National park.

In 1916, the Dade County Federation of Women's Clubs was organized. Mrs. Kirk Munroe, a founder of The Housekeepers' Club, had the honor of being elected the first president because of her leadership through the years in conservation. She had led a continuous crusade against the senseless slaughter of egrets to furnish white plumes for women's hats. She had no compunction about snatching the plumes from any stylishly attired club visitor. She also had joined

her husband in his fight to espouse the plight of the Seminole Indians.

Once when she and Flora were driving down on an inspection trip to Royal Palm State Park they were chagrined to see the beauty of the landscape marred by signs posted along the way. They unhesitatingly tore them down. Their logic was "These people didn't have permission to put up these signs so we don't have to have permission

money the Club staged spectacular pageants in the luxurious estates that lined the ridge overlooking the Bay. So many wealthy people lived there that it was dubbed "Millionaires' Row". The wealthy, the famous, and artists all rubbed elbows with the local folks at the Club affairs.

On June 14, 1923, The Housekeepers' Club sponsored the first troop of the Girl Scouts of America in Dade County under the leadership of Mildred Emerson Crawford. Troop I called themselves The Alligators.

The phenomenal growth at this time was due to a fantastic real estate boom and when it collapsed everything came to a halt. The final blow was the record hurricane that struck in September 1926 followed by another in October.

Mrs. S.J. Kent, a faithful member for 51 years, was president when this happened. Her report stated: "The Clubhouse was unroofed with resultant water damage to everything including the piano. The Memorial Shelter which had been built on the site of the old Peacock Wharf where Miss Flora landed in 1886 was swept away. The waters of the Bay came within two feet of the Club steps".

The hurricanes were followed by bank failures and the 1929 Stock Market Crash which completely ended the tourist trade. We were already in a depression before it became nationwide. So it was 1942 before the Club was able to pay off the debt incurred by the hurricane damage. The honor of burning the mortgage was given to Mrs. Florence P. Hayden who had loyally served the Club since 1897. It was her

to tear them down".

Also in 1916, the Clubhouse was sold. World War I prevented any building. The Housekeepers met again in Union Chapel or in homes to work for the Red Cross and plan entertainment for the sailors stationed at Dinner Key.

In 1920, the present Clubhouse was built under the leadership of Mrs. Effie Lawrence. In spite of the fact that 96 loads of rock were donated as well as other material and labor the total cost was \$15,000. Enthusiasm for the new Clubhouse was not dampened by the huge debt of \$13,742.23 which during that first winter was reduced to \$9,500. A record number of 84 members joined the Club. Once again the Club was the hub of the social life in the Goove. To raise

Continued on page 12



## OFF THE BEATEN PATH: Travel in South Florida by Mary C. Napier



Sailors in Miami during World War I paid a quarter for round-trip fare from Miami to Coconut Grove. (Photo from HASF Collection)

### PART TWO

The railroad provided other unofficial transportation. The late Sahlin, who later became a world-recognized artist with paintings in the Smithsonian, in his young days in 1906 worked on a construction gang building the railroad between Homestead and Jewfish Creek "fastening ropes around the trees to pull the dredges along". He recalled with a chuckle how "four fellows used to get on a railroad handcar — the kind you pumped up and down — on Saturday night and come into Homestead to get drunk on hair tonic." He said Flagler, a strict tee-totaler, would not allow any liquor to be sold south of Homestead while the railroad was being built. Food for the construction gangs had to be brought on flatcars to the rail head and then be carried on foot perhaps two miles more over very muddy ground. Sahlin said that in order to get workers for the construction gangs Flagler had distributed handbills on the Bowery and other places where bums hung out in New York reading "Come to Florida where it never shows."

Thompson, who used to work for the old Drake Lumber Company, in 1912 clerked

in the store at Anderson Corner in 1912. He said that in those days if you wanted to go anywhere in south Dade you either walked or rode a bicycle, and the walking was rough. "You'd buy a pair of shoes, wear them four weeks and have to have them re-soled, wear them four weeks more and then throw them away. The rocks just ate them up."

His wife, Mildred Gossman Thompson, born in the Redland district in 1901, says that Dr. Tower, the first physician in the area, used to ride a bicycle to make housecalls.

About the same time in the Allapatta area Mrs. Metz recalled a grocery store that sent a man around on a bicycle to take orders for later delivery with a horse and wagon. And to go from Allapatta to church in Miami by horse and wagon took all day for the round trip.

Thompson says the customers at the store at Anderson Corner also walked or rode bicycles. A very few came with horse and wagon. He remembers, too, having to drive a horse and wagon into Princeton once a week to get ice for the store — a 200-

pound block packed in straw or sawdust. His first motorcycle did not have any lights, and the first tractors were powered by steam. Oiled roads came to the Redland area about 1915-16.

Mrs. Thompson's father, Mr. Gossman, owned the first automobile in the area a Metz that had to be hand-cranked. People sometimes got broker arms hand-cranking cars.

Another south Dade pioneer, Mrs. Blanche Symmes Ford, says her father, Capt. F. W. Symmes, also had a car but never learned to drive it. "He attempted it but never could get over pushing down on the brake and yelling 'Whoa', thinking he was reining in Billy and Betty, the ponies who used to pull the family buggy."

But one of the neighbors had a truck and a group would get together and have him drive them into Miami on a shopping expedition. Blanche has a delightful photograph of all the ladies dressed in their Sunday best, big hats and all, sitting stiffly in two rows of straight chairs in the flatbed truck.

Other people had cars, too — including George Merrick. Mrs. J. D. Sibert, who came to Miami as a baby

in the early 1900s, says "George Merrick was such a speed demon he used to drive forty miles an hour. My mother made me and my sister get off the road and hide in the bushes whenever we heard his car coming."

One resourceful car owner was the late W. T. Price, who came to Coconut Grove in 1913. At that time one train a day ran between Miami and the Grove and any one going into Miami shopping had two choices — he could spend the night in Miami and take the train next day, or he could carry his bicycle on the train and ride it home. Price conceived the idea of running a bus over the route. In his earlier days he had been a blacksmith, so he welded two buckboard wagon seats onto a Model T chassis and covered it with an awning like the surrey with the fringe on top. A picture of the bus is at the Historical Museum — also in Mr. Price's office at the Coconut Grove Bank, where he has been chairman of the board of directors.

There was one other way to get from Miami to Coconut Grove — a ferry which ran once a day. There was also a ferry from the foot of Flagler Street to Miami Beach.



Dressed in their Sunday best, South Dade residents prepare for a trip to Miami. They sat on chairs in a flatbed truck for the ride. (Photo from HASF Collection)





Certificates such as this were presented to those daring passengers who would risk life and limb for a ride in an airplane. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. George D. Ford.)

All the old timers like to tell how Flagler Street was paved with wooden blocks that popped up in hard rains. As the blocks got wet and started to swell, because of concrete curbs they could not expand sideways so they went up. If the rain was a real gully-washer the blocks might even wash down into the bay where someone would retrieve them in a rowboat and they would be driven back into placer with a sledgehammer until the next hard rain.

About the time the novelty of the first automobiles was wearing off, the first aeroplanes came. Blanche Ford still has her certificate. Mr. and Mrs. Bounds recalled

that a favorite form of amusement used to be to go to the airport and watch people taking plane rides at \$5 for five minutes. First time passengers frequently got so airsick that as soon as the plane landed they would make a dash for the restroom — sometimes not making it in time.

Margery Stoneman Douglas arrived in Miami on a very hot day in September 1915 wearing a blue serge dress because that was what a gentlewoman travelling out of New York was supposed to wear on the train. She also remembers taking a jitney for 5¢

Yes, Miami, even if you don't get your rapid transit, you've come a long way, baby.

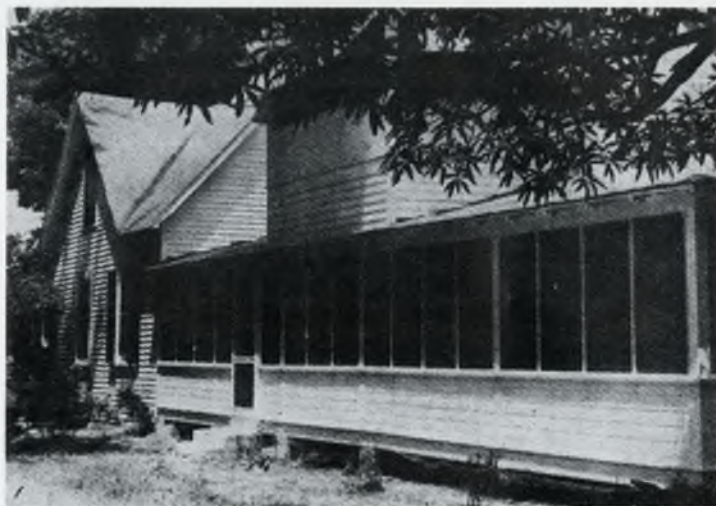
## HASF OFFICERS SELECTED

The Annual Meeting of the Historical Association of Southern Florida was held on April 13. A report on the year's activities and a discussion of the proposed new building in the cultural complex were on the agenda. In addition, the 1977-1978 officers and members of the Board of Directors were introduced.

Leading the Association for the coming year are R. Layton Mank, president; Marie Anderson, first vice president; Larry Peacock, second vice president; Lewis M. Kanner, treasurer; Lucie Cogswell, recording secretary; Eudora Wooten, corresponding secretary.

Seven prominent Miami residents were elected to serve three year terms on the Board of Directors. They include Samuel

Boldrick, president of Dade Heritage Trust and Librarian in the Florida Collection of the Miami-Dade Public Library; Louis J. Botifoll, a native of Cuba and vice-chairman of the Board of the Republic National Bank of Miami; Mrs. Hazel Reeves Grant, a former Dade County school teacher and daughter of the founding editor of *The Miami Times*; Dr. Joseph H. Fitzgerald, longtime Miami resident and physician in private practice in Miami; Joseph N. Pero, Jr., businessman and descendent of Miami's first mayor, John B. Reilly and Royal Palm Hotel builder, Joseph Albert McDonald; Dr. William M. Stokes, vice president of Miami Dade Community College New World Campus; and Jonathan Thompson, marketing manager of *The Miami Herald*.



In 1941, the Association purchased this frame home in northeast Miami and converted it into a day nursery. The home was built in 1910 by Dade County School Superintendent Z. T. Merritt. Mrs. Merritt's daughter was school teacher Ada Merritt. (Photo courtesy of the author)

*Continued from page 3*

Mrs. Johnson H. Pace, who served as President for nineteen years. Mrs. Charles E. Enterline, now President, was the Building Chairman. The facilities and furnishings at 150 N.E. 42nd Street are geared to meet the needs of children from the ages of two through kindergarten. The ample grounds surrounding the building provide excellent tree-shaded play areas for the 110 children. A fine staff provides an environment designed to stimulate social, emotional and educational development. All children served are from low income families whose mothers must work to meet their needs.

In 1973 the United Way asked the Woman's Relief Association to operate a second nursery on N.W. 75th Street. This nursery is also served by a trained staff. A fine program is planned to meet the needs of working parents and the children it serves.

The sixty-six year old Woman's Relief Association reflects the lives of the many great and dedicated women who have guided its growth from the simple beginning to

one of the finest nurseries in the South. In addition to the other women who pioneered in its efforts, Mrs. William Gramling, Mrs. Glen Frissell, Mrs. T.V. Moore, Mrs. J.H. St. John, Mrs. R.S. Kolb and Mrs. A.H. Adams were active in its program. These years also reflect the lives of the many families fortunate enough to be a part of the daily routine of the Nursery. For years the Miami Junior Woman's Club provided financial assistance to the nursery as well as countless hours of volunteer work. Many churches and civic groups, as well as merchants and businessmen, have greatly assisted. Parents, whose children were - and are - cared for by the Day Nursery are grateful for the protection, education and deep love and affection given to each child who enters its doors.

We are sure that when those dear ladies formed the Woman's Relief Association they did not dream that Miami would become the Magic City or that their beloved Association would provide a means of relief to that great City and to its neighbors for all these years.



## EARLY CHARITY NOT SO SWEET

by Thelma Peters

South Florida was slow starting and so were its institutions. In 1885 Dade County which included all of today's Palm Beach and Broward Counties, and more besides, had a population of only 333 according to the state census. Even twenty years later the state census recorded only 12,089 people living in Dade County, scarcely enough to fill the end zones of the Orange Bowl. Yet among this sparse and scattered people were the poor, sick and elderly who were often desperate for help.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century the county sheriff had the responsibility of caring for such unfortunates - to find homes for orphans, to arrange for care of indigent ill in an area where there was no hospital and not always a doctor, and to bury the "paupers". Direct assistance to a "pauper" was never more than a few dollars. County Commissioners were never big spenders on an annual budget that did not even reach \$3,000 until 1889 and then included the schools.

Sheriff William Mettair during the 1880s was called on to bury an elderly woman who had come to South Florida with a gangrenous leg in a final effort to save her life. She died without funds and with no known relatives. Mettair buried her in the pinewoods of Lemon City. Many years later when the land was ready for development and the coffin had to be disinterred for removal to the Miami City Cemetery Mettair identified the corpse by the silver quarters he had placed on the eyes. Coffins often were crude affairs hastily nailed together and only sometimes covered on the outside with black cloth and lined on the

inside with white cloth. Public records show that the county allowed 60 cents for the wood to make a pauper's coffin.

In the early part of this century the county established a "poor farm" on county property near Ojus where there was already a convict camp for convicts who worked on the roads or were leased out to farmers for 50 cents a day. The poor farm was a ramshackle frame house run by a Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins who did the cooking, washing and nursing for about a dozen people too old or incapacitated to work. Dr. John G. DuPuis who served as doctor for the poor farm described it briefly in his book on early medicine in Dade County. He said when it appeared a person was about to die a grave was dug near by so as to be ready when the time came.

The county commission minutes of March 1907, mention an appeal from a black youth reported to be in the final stages of consumption and the commissioners asked Dr. W.S. Gramling to examine him. When the doctor found he was too sick to be moved to the poor farm the commissioners voted to allow the youth \$6 a month, nothing more. At this time there was no hospital in Miami except one run exclusively for the employees of the Florida East Coast Railway. Sometimes the very ill were taken to Key West by boat, or to St. Augustine by train, sometimes on a cot placed in the mail car.

While public assistance for unfortunates was minimal at best in the early days, private and volunteer help came from churches, civic clubs, labor unions (which were just beginning in Dade County), and the mutual aid societies sometimes called lodges.

Sometimes the plight of a destitute person was announced in the newspaper. For example, on March 29, 1907, the *Daily Miami Metropolis* in its Colored Column reported: "Mr. H. Hatcher of South Miami is ill and the attention of the public is solicited. Your assistance is needed." People helped people, directly, personally, in the way pioneers in new communities have always had to do.

A group of civic-minded Miamians, including the Reverend Father Friend, in 1908 founded the Friendly Hospital and housed it in a small frame building located at what is today Northeast Eighth Street and Biscayne Boulevard. It was soon taken over and run by the City. Though the original building sprouted a few additions it

was always poorly arranged and inefficient to operate. In 1918 the City built the new City Hospital on twenty acres of public land northwest of downtown Miami which had been used as a public dump. City Hospital in 1924 became Jackson Memorial Hospital.

At first the City Hospital had no maternity ward. Babies were born at home, often with a midwife rather than a doctor in attendance. One of Miami's oldest charitable organizations, the Woman's Relief Association founded an early maternity hospital. The story of this important charitable organization is told elsewhere in this UPDATE by Margaret Pace Burton, long a member of the Woman's Relief Association.

*Dr. Thelma Peters is the author of the recently published history, **Lemon City Pioneering on Bay, 1850-1925.***

## SEMINOLE/MICCOSUKEE ART SHOW

Steve Tiger, Josephine M. North and Mary Gay Osceola were the three top winners in the Harvest 1976 Seminole/Miccosukee Art Show.

Son of Miccosukee Tribal Chairman, Buffalo Tiger, Steve Tiger is perhaps best known for his musical compositions "Space Age Indian"

Steve Tiger the artist, expresses himself through surrealistic works of fantastic color, bold designs reflecting his Miccosukee traditions, and sensitive pen and pencil drawings of his native people. His talents realized by the Tribe, he was commissioned to complete a series of major works for a proposed tribal museum. Today, his works may be viewed at the Miccosukee Village Museum on the Tamiami Trail. Steve was featured on television in the National Geographic

documentary in February entitled "The New Indians".

A Seminole artist from Hollywood, Florida, Josephine M. North exhibited pen and ink sketches depicting native Indian life. Many of her sketches were reproduced in series of notecards. Her work was awarded second place at the HASF Seminole/Miccosukee Art Show.

In 1960, Mary Gay Osceola, third place winner, was the first Seminole Indian to be recognized as a professional artist. Her major works include mural paintings in the Miccosukee Restaurant, Tamiami Trail, and the Seminole Arts and Crafts building, Seminole Reservation, Hollywood, Florida. Ms. Osceola exhibited watercolor sketches at the Harvest Art Show.



# I REMEMBER THE RED CROSS WHEN As told to Robert C. Stafford

A large upstairs room at the Dade County Red Cross Chapter headquarters buzzed with gentle voices and the sound of sewing machines.

The volunteer production ladies were in their Wednesday session. There was much to talk about, because among the ladies were 391 years of South Florida memories, and in addition the National Red Cross convention, May 22-25, in the Fontainebleau Hotel was fast approaching and they were making blue "pop over" aprons to be worn for that occasion.

Mrs. Mary Massey, speaking with a soft Georgian drawl, said she had lived in Greater Miami the last 53 years. Stopping her sewing machine with a quick hand on the fly wheel, she went on:

"My husband, LeRoy, and I lived at the Ives Dairy on Ives Dairy Road. The road is still there but the dairy has gone. Ives Dairy was the first certified dairy in South Florida, we were told. My husband drove a truck for them.

"I'll never forget the 1926 hurricane. I guess nobody will who lived through it. Mrs. Ives advised all of us to get out of our houses and get into a rock pit that was close by. We sat there in water up to our waists from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. We were all scared but nobody lost his head. There were eight little children with us and I never heard a whimper out of them.

"I remember seeing some of the houses turning somersaults and bursting into pieces. Our house was the only one not knocked off its pillars. You know all the houses sat on blocks of wood off the grounds. Our roof blew off, though.

"Ives Dairy Road was completely blocked with fallen

trees. Some people said they could taste salt in the air, but I think we were too far inland from the ocean for that. There were lots of frogs in that pit but no 'gators, and we were glad of that."

Mrs. Massey returned to her self-imposed task, one she has contributed to Red Cross the last 11 years. She is typical of the volunteers who



The Dade County Chapter of the Red Cross assisted in relief efforts following Hurricane Donna, 1960. In a Miami warehouse volunteers are readying food for the storm victims.

have served in so many roles in the community and supported the organization since its formal founding here March 12, 1917.

It began as the Miami Chapter of the Red Cross Society and served the counties of Brevard, St. Lucie, Palm Beach, Broward, Dade and Monroe. A month later it became the Southeastern Florida Chapter and remained that until it took its present designation as the Dade County Chapter just prior to 1924.

World War I, of course, was the first of the chapter's major projects.

Red Cross production volunteers started sewing and knitting in that war, and they are still doing it. Mrs. Kathleen Gibbons, of Cooper City, current chairman of the production ladies, recalls making and helping fill ditty bags in World War I, as a girl in New York

(Indeed, this reporter learned to knit and laboriously constructed little squares, presumably to be made into scarves for our boys "over there", as a schoolboy in Windermere, Fla.)

With her husband, Arthur, Mrs. Gibbons, a native of Northern Ireland, came to Greater Miami and joined the Red Cross here in 1935.

"This production group began as the White Temple Methodist Church sewing club," she said, a bit of brogue still in her speech. "We helped the Red Cross from time to time and then when we were needed, we came into the organization in a body. The White Temple Church was at N.E. Second Avenue and Third Street. It later joined Trinity Church and went out of existence.

"We worked hard in World War II making 'Bundles for Britain' and later we folded surgical dressings. We were given work space in one of the big stores. I think it was Richards." Mrs. Gibbons' first Red Cross work here was in the Miami Springs office, she recalled.

The Dade Chapter assembled a report from its October 20, 1918, directors' meeting to illustrate its World War I activity:

Number of families of men in service during the year: 117; medical attention secured (number of cases): 31; clothing furnished (number of cases): 8; nurses furnished: 5; relief in loans (number of checks): 73; number of families to whom loans were made: 31; amount of money expended in relief loans: \$1,190.43.

In 1918, in a two-month period, 1912 servicemen were served at the chapter canteens.

Mrs. Winifred Radel remembers knitting a sweater a week in World War II, understandably a period of peak activity for the American Red Cross everywhere. "We knitted and rolled bandages and cried when bad news came," she said.

Mrs. Radel arrived in Miami in 1922. "We lived on the corner where the Congress Building now stands, N.E. First Street and Second Avenue," she continued. "I attended St. Catherine's School. It's changed now. My father was George Secrist. He was a hotel man from Indianapolis. My husband, Henry, was in the TV and radio business."

"We had good times. I remember we crossed the bay by ferry and went swimming in the ocean in Miami Beach. We changed clothes in Smith's Casino."

She has strong memories of the killer hurricane of 1926. "I was just scared to death," she said, shivering. "The wind was awful. It whistled so loud I couldn't hear myself think. One of our windows blew out and Papa took a bedroom door off its hinges and nailed it across the window to keep out the wind and rain. We liv-

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husband who was the originator of the Hayden Mango.

There are four Coconut Grove churches that had their beginnings in the Club: The Christian Science Church in 1896, Plymouth Congregational Church in 1897, St. Stephens Episcopal Church in 1910 (paid 25 cents a meeting for rent) and Bryan Memorial Church in 1915.

In this year of 1977 the Club is 86 years old. To keep pace with the changing times the name was changed April 4, 1957, to The Woman's Club of Coconut Grove.

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ed then in a frame house at N.W. First Street and Sixth Avenue. We were very lucky. Nobody was hurt."

The chapter whas been involved in great disasters near and far throughout its history. One of the first was the tornado in April, 1925, which killed hundreds and left thousands homeless.

The 1926 hurricane has been compared with the Chicago fire and the San Francisco earthquake in destruction. It had winds of more than 150 miles an hour and its tidal surge of more than 11 feet left 811 dead, 6,381 injured and more than

43,000 without homes. The Dade chapter, in one day, accepted 15,000 applicants for disaster relief.

There were the 1972 earthquake in Managua, Nicaragua, and the 1974 hurricane in Honduras, and finally the 1976 earthquake in Guatamala and other Central American areas. Chapter volunteers and staff worked around the clock on those tragedies.

In the 1960s the Cuban refugee program was a major effort and the Dade chapter also played an active role in the Bay of Pigs prisoner ex-

change. Another major project came with the Vietnamese refugees.

Nearer home were the 1965 fire on the cruise ship Yarmouth Castle, at sea off Miami, and the Eastern Airlines crash in the Everglades in December, 1972.

Today the Dade chapter, with headquarters at 5020 Biscayne Boulevard, has four branches, 39 staff members and more than 3,000 volunteers, offering services or programs in the fields of military families and veterans, disaster, nursing, health, safety, youth, transportation, hospitals and nursing homes.