

# Pioneering in Suburbia

## Conclusion

by Nixon Smiley

### Friends and Visitors

I have regretted that we failed to keep a log of visitors at Montgomery Drive. Many interesting people crossed our threshold. It was the most active period of our lives, while I was variously a reporter, farm and garden editor, feature writer, and columnist for *The Miami Herald*, and for seven years, from 1956 until 1963, director of the Fairchild Tropical Garden.

Many of the people who visited us are dead: David and Marian Fairchild, Gilbert and Elsie Grosvenor, Robert H. Montgomery, William Lyman Phillips, John and Phyllis Storey, Isabelle Krome, Philip Wylie, Steve and Dorothy Flynn, Thomas Brown McClelland, Francisco (Chico) de Sola, John Goggin, Dan Beard, Steve and Jane Trumbull, Ray Sheehan, Miriam Jones, George Cooper, Sr., Rollin Rogers, Stan and Martha Wayman, Betty Garnet, Harry James Smiley, Theodore Pratt, Harold E. Moore, Jr., Doug Kennedy, William and Christine Robbins, Marguerite Goggin, George H.M. Lawrence, Otto Churney, Lee and Mimi Adams, Marston Bates, Don Correll, Bill Stapleton, Tom Thursday, H.F. (Loo) Loomis, John and Irene Pennekamp, Mary George Shaver, William Muir, Charlie Brown, Bob King, Vivian Clement, Dick Dijkman, Robert Swink, Harry Bralove, Phil De Graff, Johnny Lynch, Jerry Bronstein, Kermit Gates, Bill Hutton, Frederick Zaugg, Jack Bellows, Mack and Isabel Foster, Onie Craig, Francis Lincoln, Jimmy Morris, Charlie Ward, Paul and Dorothy Allen, John T. Bills, Casper Williams, Jack Corbin,

---

This article is the third part of the late Nixon Smiley's memoirs. Part II is in the 1991 *Tequesta*, and Part I in the 1990 edition.

Marion Collier, John Denson, Melvin Andrews, Arthur Himbert, Irma Bachelor, Alice Forbes Hawkes, Loxley Arch, Ned and Marian Aitchison, John Reish, Luther Voltz, Irene Kirkland, Stanley Fredriesky, Ralph and Happy Humes, Ray Ward, George D. Ruehle, John Wesley, Gerard and Athene Pitt, Russell Pancoast, Marie Anderson (Sr.), Henry Reno, Emil A. Roure, Fred Shaw, Dorothy Muskat, Leonard Brass, Hoyt Frazure, Paul and Betty Popenoe, Thomas (Scotty) Campbell, Annie Laurie Beall, Mike and Camille Ross, Mae Kerry, Paul and Doris Reno, Fred and Louise Fuchs, Sr., Bob and Charlotte Ross, Wilson and Helen Popenoe, Larry and Penny Thompson, Gene Otto, Adolph Jordahn, Jena and Denise Lowry, Ralph and Harriet Wadsworth, McGregor Smith, Sr., Bob and Aldine Spicer, Bob Lettino, Jack Kasewitz, Ira J. Condit, Oliver Griswold, Catherine Wilson, Leicester Hemingway, Jim Dance, Belle Scheffel, Martin Zimmerman, Ann Wells, Harry Deutchbein, Robert Teitze, Eola Seemann, Russel and Dallas Lee Havighorst, Dickie Knowles, Dorothy Morris, Bob East, Everett Clay, Chick Waltman, Lelo Muller, Dent Smith, F.B. "Bee" Tippins, Helen Dopson, Mary Phillips, Dick Knight, Maria Adams, Henry Field, Dorothy Galbreath, Gene Plowden, Helen Dopson, Yiannis Antoniadis, Grace Bohne, Sara Manz, Eleanor Rogers, Wilson McGee, John Caldwell, Douglas Barnes, Ruth Self, Bill Kuenzel, Charlie Brookfield, Charlie Fernandez, Charlie Baker, Catherine Kelly and Norbert Hansen.

Their fond memories linger, the only comfort we mortals can offer the dead—we the temporary survivors.

Despite our failure to keep a log of visitors, we have no trouble remembering those who came to help me mark my fortieth birthday. In the middle of the afternoon on Sunday, August 19, 1951, we saw a familiar car following the winding driveway through the pines and palmettos from Montgomery Drive. In it were George and Helen Beebe, Steve and Jane Trumbull. We had been in our new house just a little longer than a month.

As it turned out, this was a surprise party arranged by Evelyn, Jane and Helen. I had marked my fortieth birthday that Friday, and now, as I look back, it was the most difficult birthday of my life. Up to that time I had accomplished very

little. My newspaper writing was mediocre, and I seemed to be making no noticeable improvement. I feared I might have reached the highest level of success I was to enjoy, and consequently the future prospects for myself and for my family seemed bleak indeed.

George Beebe, who had just succeeded Lee Hills as managing editor of *The Herald*, and who was my boss, got out of the car carrying a fifth of bourbon. Trumbull followed with a case of cold beer. The women carried boxes of food. And so began our first party at Montgomery Drive, one we would not forget, for we had a great time, drinking and eating and laughing at each other's stories. Only once did the party threaten to get out of hand.

Karl and I had started digging a pond at the bottom of the swale, scattering the spoil about a rocky area near the house where we intended to plant grass. I recently had bought a dozen sticks of dynamite that I was using to blow out stumps and to dig holes in limestone for planting trees. Trumbull, who liked big noises—especially after he'd had a few drinks—suggested we tie half a dozen dynamite sticks together, sink them a couple of feet underground where we wanted the pond and explode them. Presto, we would have a pond.

"We'll make a hell of a hole—and one hell of a noise," said Trumbull. "Let's do it."

"It'll blow the dirt to hell and gone—and we'll have the neighbors calling the police," I replied, refusing to go along.

If I had agreed, Trumbull would have set off the dynamite, which would have jarred the neighborhood like the explosion of a hundred-pound bomb. Our shaken neighbors would have called the sheriff's office, and we would have faced possible arrest for disturbing the peace—and possibly for property destruction. Although Trumbull was aware of this, he thought the superlative event would more than justify the risk. We settled for a quieter celebration. My birthday didn't rate that kind of bang.

Among the fondest recollections of our early years at Montgomery Drive were the visits of David and Marian Fairchild. We had been unable to get a telephone, but the Fairchilds were not people who telephoned before visiting anyway, believing that in the afternoon after a certain hour your house should be open,

as was the Kampong. On a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, one of us would look up to see a gray Ford coming up the driveway among the pines and palmettos. Marian always drove. I don't recall ever seeing Fairchild behind a steering wheel. The white-haired plantsman would slip from the car seat, steadying himself by holding onto a shoulder-high staff as he looked about.

"What have you planted since we were here last?" he would ask, or "What are you planting now?"

I believe Fairchild enjoyed catching us in our work clothes and busy with some outdoors activity, something he could inspect and comment on. After a short stroll we would go into the house. Although Evelyn sought to guide him to a comfortable chair, he always preferred a broad-bottomed straight chair. He would sit upright, resting his arms and hands on the chair arms. After his death, I introduced visitors to it as the "David Fairchild Chair." After several years I noted, with dismay that many visitors, newcomers to Florida, had never heard of David Fairchild.

I have wished many times that I had foresight to make notes immediately after the Fairchild's visits, but I began taking notes only after I started writing a column and was in constant need of material. After Fairchild's death, Marian continued to visit us. I was always attentive and eager to catch anything that I could make a note of for some future use.

David Fairchild was always admonishing people to grow plants as a hobby. "Plants never talk back to you," he said.

The implication was that plants, although living things, were totally passive and never put your ego at a disadvantage. I used to marvel at Fairchild saying a thing like that, because he was himself so extroverted. He loved having people around him. I don't recall ever seeing him at any gathering where he wasn't a center of attention. Like John Gifford, he used to lecture me whenever I called on him, especially if I found him in his potting shed, planting seeds or potting plants to distribute to anybody who would accept them with appreciation and promise to grow them.

Perhaps he wanted to make a disciple of me—somebody to follow in his footsteps. He seemed to sense that, despite my



age, I was still impressionable in a world that I sought to know better and which I wanted to write about in a knowledgeable, vivid and emotional way. Toward the end of his life Fairchild worried to think that his days were nearly over, and he wanted to impart to me a little of what he had learned in a lifetime of observation and experience, inspiring me to look about myself with curiosity and perception, exercising to the fullest my senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. To enhance the quality of his sight, he carried a ten-power pocket lens. He gave countless numbers of these lenses away, particularly to children. One day I dropped by his study to see him after I had written an article that pleased him. As a compliment he pulled out a drawer of his desk and handed me a long-used lens.



**L to R: Harold F. Loomis, Wilson Popenoe, Robert H. Montgomery and David Fairchild, major supporters of Fairchild Tropical Garden showing the Thomas Barbour Medal for “vision and unselfish devotion to the preservation of that vanishing Eden, South Florida,” and the Robert H. Montgomery Medal, “for distinguished achievement in the world of palms and cycads.” Montgomery and Fairchild were awarded the Barbour Medal in 1948.**

"Always carry this with you," he said. "It will help you to see."

I carried the lens for several years after Fairchild's death. Then one day I left it at home. That day burglars broke into our house, and the lens was one of the many irreplaceable valuables taken.

Marian was approaching 80 when her children convinced her she should give up driving. After that she visited us with the Grosvenors—Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, editor of *National Geographic*, and his wife Elsie, Marian's sister. I remember one Saturday afternoon, we saw a Cadillac creeping up the driveway toward the house. Sitting beside the uniformed chauffeur was Dr. Grosvenor, while in the back seat were the sisters—daughters of Alexander Graham Bell. Grosvenor and the Bell sisters had been out for a drive and they decided to drop in. Grosvenor was apologetic for the informality of the call. Very proper and tending to be formal, he would never have dropped in without telephoning ahead. But not the Bell sisters. They made no apology nor did they care if we were not dressed to receive them as might have been demanded by their reputation, age and dignity. They came in, took the seats offered them on the breezeway and made themselves very much at home.

Would they have a drink? Yes, thank you. Bourbon and water. But nothing for Grosvenor, a teetotaler. From the kitchen, where I went to prepare the drinks, I could hear the voices and the laughter of the sisters. But if Grosvenor spoke, his voice was lost in the distance. We sat and drank and talked, and the sun was going down and our glasses were getting dry. The sisters decided that one could hardly fly on one wing. Although the idea was not original, it brought some laughter and got quick action from the host, much to the concern of Grosvenor. He felt they were imposing on Evelyn and me. He complained to Mrs. Grosvenor that Evelyn might want to start supper or that we might be planning to go out.

"Well, Evelyn's an honest person," said Elsie. "She'll tell us to go if she must—and we'll depart gracefully."

Although she spoke with a certain firmness, there was a tone of kindness in her voice that seemed to put her nervous husband at ease. He sat perfectly relaxed while the women

finished a second drink. By the time they were ready to go, he had gotten into a talkative mood himself. I had asked him a question about *National Geographic*: What was the circulation of the magazine in 1899, the year Alexander Graham Bell, its founder, turned the magazine over to him to edit?

"The first printing I took to the post office in my arms," he replied, "and that was no very great task."

"Gilbert, we must go," said Elsie, rising.

The famous editor shut off his conversation and got to his feet.

"As you say, Elsie," he said, "but I could talk a little longer."

As the sisters grew older, they took fewer drives into the countryside until the trips stopped altogether. Marian Fairchild died in 1962, surviving Dr. Fairchild by eight years. Elsie Grosvenor followed her sister two years later. Dr. Grosvenor survived his wife but a year. "His death was no surprise to those who had known him," I wrote in his obituary, "for it was not expected that he would long survive his wife Elsie."

Although Colonel Montgomery and Nell visited us at Montgomery Drive, I can't remember any occasion when they came together. Evelyn does, but she has been unable to mention anything that strikes a familiar chord in my memory. I remember too clearly one time when Evelyn and I were invited to lunch at the Montgomery home. It was a sunny spring day, and we were to eat on the patio beneath a large banyan tree. Nell and Evelyn were in the kitchen, helping the servants prepare lunch. Colonel Montgomery and I waited in the patio, enjoying the scenery and the extraordinarily fine weather that has made Miami famous. Montgomery was not one to go out of his way to keep a conversation going, and I, although no great hand at making conversation myself, thought I should try.

"That rooster," I said, referring to a proud bronze cock that stood on a pedestal on the edge of the patio, "seems to be standing watch."

"Ralph Humes did that," said Montgomery. Humes was noted for his animal sculpture. "Do you like it?"

"Yes, very much," I replied.

"What would you pay for that rooster?"

"What would I pay?" I was caught by surprise. At that time I would have been hard pressed to raise 10 dollars to pay for anything. When I did not reply immediately—I was trying to think of an appropriate answer—Montgomery added:

"Would you pay 25 dollars?"

That was a lot of money to me in the early 1950s. "No," I replied too honestly, "I don't think I could afford to pay that much."

"Nell paid five hundred," he said with a dry chuckle that was characteristic of him.

A moment later Nell came out of the house accompanied by a servant, and they began setting the glass-topped table where we were to dine.

"Nell," said the Colonel, chuckling dryly again. "Nixon says he wouldn't pay 25 dollars for Ralph Hume's rooster."

I was flabbergasted. Nell looked at me with a mixture of surprise and (I thought) disapproval. Perhaps the way I looked at that moment, with the agonizing pain of embarrassment spread over my face, had something to do with the way Nell responded. I have never forgotten that moment.

It was typical of Colonel Montgomery's sense of humor. He didn't care how much his wife had paid for Ralph Hume's rooster. But he probably thought she had been "taken" and wanted to kid her. Nell, who understood him, held nothing against me for my stupid remark; she knew that her husband had thrown out the bait and I had swallowed hook, line and sinker.

Around five o'clock Evelyn, Karl, and I drove into our place from a trip to Homestead. A note addressed was stuck in the kitchen door, which all our friends knew was the entrance we used most.

"Colonel Montgomery died this afternoon," I read aloud. "Nell hopes you will write the obituary.—Dickie Knowles."

Mrs. Knowles, the widow of a one time prominent Coconut Grove physician, was a close friend of the Montgomerys.

Three years after Nell lost the Colonel, she married Alvin R. Jennings who likewise had lost his spouse. Al had an important position with Lybrand, Ross Bros. & Montgomery, now Coopers & Lybrand, in which he soon rose to head. He and

Nell lived at Llewellyn Park, West Orange, New Jersey. They came to Miami only on vacation, and Nell flew down for meetings of the Fairchild Tropical Garden's board of trustees. While the large Montgomery estate was maintained, the house was closed and shuttered much of this period. It was during the winters that Nell missed Florida most. Here is an excerpt from a letter she wrote to us one Christmas.

"From where I am sitting I can look out the window where everything is buried beneath the snow—and the storm is still raging. How I long this morning to be back in sunny Florida, among the tropical trees and palms. With all this snow and cold weather, it doesn't seem at all like Christmas. . . ."

Despite a long acquaintance with Nell, I have found her to be one of the most difficult of all the persons I have known to put on paper. It's too easy to write superficially of her vivacious and boundless energy. Although Nell generates countless ideas while pursuing a project—some of them perhaps outlandish



**L to R: Nixon and Evelyn Smiley, Al and Nell Jennings, at the Fairchild Tropical Gardens 40th birthday celebration, 1978.**

to others—she has a knack of discarding all but the best when she's ready to make a final decision. I've thought that she throws out ideas just to see what the reaction will be, perhaps to shock others into thinking. After many years of living with her, Al shakes his head in wonder. "I'm amazed," is about all he can say.

I once tried to gain a better understanding of Nell by talking with her mother, Isabel Foster. I learned that Nell was graduated from Miami Senior High School and attended Sullins College in Bristol, Virginia, for two years. (It had not occurred to me that Nell ever attended school. What would they have taught her?)

"Nell was bright in school," said her mother. "She always had intelligence and understanding above her age. She won awards in most of the contests she entered."

At Bristol her essay on the best way to raise money to build a hospital won top prize.

"Nell's been trying to finance something ever since," said Isabel.

During the Florida land boom of the 1920s, Nell went into the real estate business and made money, but it was mostly on paper.

"After the boom Nell had nothing but a new Chrysler. We really had hard times for awhile. But Nell was never one to get discouraged. If someone gave us a big fish, Nell would say, 'Let's invite somebody.' And we would invite two or three friends although we might not know where the next meal was coming from."

Nell had lots of friends, and she was always nice to people. "After she grew up, Nell liked to give parties and to attend other people's parties. If she saw people not having a good time she took charge, introduced them around and tried to make them feel at home even if it was not her own house. She wanted everybody to be happy. Nell was quick to say yes when she was asked to help somebody—too quick, I've always thought. But she's kind-hearted. She could never say no. I'm not that way. I say I'll think it over; I'll let you know."

Isabel could not remember ever seeing Nell relaxed.

"She was always driving. In school she was always a

leader. She led all other kids in selling tickets. She had a lot of enthusiasm for whatever she was doing. Nell could sell milk to a cow."

Nell's drive and selling ability have had enormous influence in the development of the Fairchild Tropical Garden—and, I must add, she has greatly influenced the lives of my family.

Colonel Montgomery, founder of the Fairchild Tropical Garden, died in 1953. The next year Dr. Fairchild died. Because no one dared to step forward to fill the shoes of these men, the garden plunged into a crisis. Just before his death, Montgomery arranged to employ the garden's first paid director, Paul Allen. Allen was a botanist who had been superbly trained at the Missouri Botanical Garden and who had spent several years working with tropical plants in Central America and Panama. Nell went to Arthur Vining Davis, chairman of the Aluminum Company of America, and convinced him to build a fine contemporary house. It was designed by Russell Pancoast. But the botanical garden's finances were in poor shape, and none of its wealthy trustees felt like putting up the funds to continue its development in the way Montgomery had done.

Colonel Montgomery had enjoyed a sizeable income from two professional firms—his law firm, with offices in New York and Washington, and his auditing firm, which was international in scope. Knowing that after his death his income would stop, Montgomery left only \$25,000 to the Fairchild garden. This, together with other gifts the garden had received earlier, gave it an endowment of under \$200,000. Income from this fund was insufficient to cover the garden's operating expenses, so it depended on dues in the Fairchild Tropical Garden Association, the sale of surplus plants, and on the Ramble, an annual rummage sale that resembles a super flea market. Nell had started the Ramble soon after the Garden's founding in 1938 to raise money for special projects. By the 1950s, it had become the best known benefit of its kind in the county—a major social outing that attracted thousands of people to the garden to buy last year's clothes cast away by the wealthy, second-hand books, old furniture, antiques, plants, refreshments, a superb lunch and, for a fee, a chance to ride over the grounds on the "Rambler," a small, open-sided bus similar to vehicles that had operated at



the 1938 World's Fair in New York.

While Paul Allen had a brilliant mind, his experiences in administrative work and in dealing with people had been negligible. Moreover, he knew nothing of finances nor had he any knowledge about raising money, the garden's greatest need. His responsibilities were much more than he had bargained for, and so he grew frustrated and disillusioned. Although Nell induced O. C. (Jack) Corbin, an astute executive of the National Cash Register Company, to take over the presidency of the garden as head of the board of trustees, he was unable to dispel Allen's pessimistic attitude about the institution's future. After a year in Florida, Allen resigned and returned to Honduras where, relieved of administrative duties, he resumed his work in botany while teaching a class at the Pan American Agricultural School.

In the meantime Allen and his wife Dorothy, a botanical artist, had become our close friends. While we could sympathize with Paul's multitude of problems, we had no worthwhile suggestions, for we were equally baffled. However, our friendship with the Allens, and hearing Paul's long discourses about his problems, proved to be of enormous although unforeseeable benefit. For in 1956 Nell and Jack Corbin asked me to become acting director of the Fairchild Garden "for one year." My job: to contact the directors of other botanical gardens, as well as any plant scientists who might help, and come up with a list of recommendations beneficial to the future of the Fairchild Tropical Garden. In the meantime I was to help Corbin find a permanent director. My job, it seemed, would be to find out how other botanical gardens "made it" and to see if some practical and worthwhile program could be worked out for the Fairchild Garden. The position was to be part-time as well as temporary, and it was expected that I should retain my job with *The Miami Herald*. This meant getting permission from someone in authority at the newspaper. I was dubious, but Nell believed in going to the top. She decided that she and Corbin should call on John S. Knight, the publisher.

Jack Knight greeted their proposal with skepticism and lack of enthusiasm. "I don't like having my staff raided," he said in the brusque manner for which he was noted when anything displeased him. Nell was not to be discouraged, and she and

Corbin left Knight's office, they had an agreement to let the garden borrow one of his writers on a part-time basis for one year.

The part-time, temporary position lasted exactly seven years, from July 1, 1956, until July 1, 1963. This was one of my most productive periods. As I look back, I feel that I may have contributed more to *The Herald* as well as to the Fairchild Garden, during those years than at any other time in my life.

Metropolitan government was a necessity for rapidly growing Dade County, with its 26 scattered municipalities. It was approved by the voters in 1956, but its first years were trying ones. Thomas Jefferson was right: government is always an enemy of the people, while too much government becomes a tyranny. Experts on every conceivable governmental activity were employed, most at high salaries, to plan what was thought best for Dade County. Many good things came out of Metro; the new form of government made many bitter enemies. The county also wound up with a lot of departments, decisions and bureaucrats that irritated, frustrated and stymied citizens.

One evening as I drove home from work, I noticed that our street sign, "Montgomery Drive," had been taken down and replaced with a number, "S.W. 120 Street." Upon arriving at *The Herald* next morning, I called until I reached the person in charge of the changes and asked him what was happening.

"We're simplifying," he replied. "All street names in Dade County are coming down. Henceforth we will use only numbers. For efficiency, you see. That's the trend in city planning."

"I see, I see," I said. "That means all the old names are coming down—Krome Avenue, Kendall Drive, Silver Palm Drive, Sunset Drive."

"Yes, where these streets are in the county," he said. "Numbers are to be universal."

Usually whenever I encountered anything so disagreeable as this name changing, I wrote a story that told what was happening and waited for public reaction. This usually brought the desired results. But my interest in the street name changing was so personal I hesitated to use columns of *The Herald* to fight it. I decided to go to higher authority and find out who had authorized the name changing. First I called Charles H. Crandon,

former county commission chairman and an enthusiastic supporter of Metro—at least he had been before Metro became a reality. Crandon was incensed.

“I was responsible for that name when I was commission chairman,” he said. “Let me make some calls.”

In the meantime I called a couple of Metro commissioners I looked upon as friendly. When I could not reach the Metro commission chairman by phone, I wrote him a letter.

An hour after I had called Crandon, he called back.

“Well, Brother Smiley,” he said, “I think I’ve got everything cleared up. I learned that the commission did authorize putting numbers on all streets, but it was the commission’s intention that the names would remain as they are.”

A few evenings later I returned home from work, I found new signs along my street. The numbers had been replaced by the name “Montgomery Drive,” with smaller lettering, “S.W. 120 Street” underneath. Nobody since has tried to change the street names.

Throughout our years at Montgomery Drive, Evelyn was hostess and cook for countless visitors, and most of them were interesting in one way or another—some of them extraordinarily fascinating. Although neither of us is extroverted, we managed to make our guests comfortable and their visits memorable by inviting people who could entertain each other. Many who met at our house became life-long friends. We were richly rewarded by the human experiences. The setting of the house in the landscape and the successful way we had decorated the interior, especially the living room, was invariably a pleasant surprise to persons visiting us for the first time. Evelyn was a first-rate cook whose apparent relaxation in the kitchen and in the serving of food gave others the deceiving impression she had gone to negligible trouble. This was true whether she prepared dinner for 10 or a hamburger party for 40. What the guests didn’t know was that she had spent much of the day in the kitchen preparing for the evening. While I was director at the Fairchild Garden, we often had guests for lunch. Florida lobster was inexpensive then, and Evelyn made a salad that was popular with everyone. On one occasion her lobster salad played a part in the background scene of a sensational political story that

made nationwide headlines, created a minor crisis in the White House and got me called out of bed far in the night by John S. Knight.

Among our luncheon guests one fall Saturday in 1956 was Harry Bralove, owner of the Shoreham Hotel in Washington. We had served drinks before lunch, and the guests were relaxed when we sat down to eat—and very talkative. The conversation got around to the presidential campaign, then going strong between President Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson. Bralove repeated a disturbing conversation he had overheard between his son, a physician, and another doctor. President Eisenhower, who had undergone one operation, was to undergo another, but the announcement was being withheld until after the election in November. Bralove said he got the feeling from the conversation that the operation would be serious. After our guests departed, I called *The Herald's* news editor, related what I had heard and suggested that the paper's Washington bureau check out the report. The editor got in touch with Washington, but there was nobody at the White House in a position to comment on Saturday. The editor decided to use the story anyway. It proved to be a serious mistake as well as an awful embarrassment for *The Herald* and for me. The story got nationwide circulation before Eisenhower's doctor issued a statement declaring the report false. Jack Knight, in Akron at that time, called me at midnight on Sunday to learn where I got the story. I explained I had given it to the editor with the suggestion that he check before using it. I thought Bralove would be sore with me because his name had been used in the story without his consent, but the blase' hotel operator enjoyed "making the politicians squirm," as he described the experience.

My connection with the Fairchild Garden brought many visitors to Montgomery Drive whom we otherwise might never have had the opportunity to know. Among our guests from time to time was Dr. William J. Robbins and his wife Christine. Robbins was director of the New York Botanical Garden. He had lived a colorful life, which continued after his retirement in 1957. He served a term as president of the American Philosophical Society. He was for a time assistant director of the National Science Foundation, and he served for several years as

treasurer for the American Academy of Sciences. He was a member of the boards of trustees of Rockefeller University and the Fairchild Garden. He and Dr. George H. M. Lawrence of Cornell University were instrumental in helping to launch the Fairchild garden's research program. In 1962 he was influential in convening at the Garden an international conference of plant scientists to discuss the status of tropical botany at a time when the population not only threatened to grow faster than the development of new food supplies, but whose expansion threatened the extinction of large numbers of plant species. The possible role of botanical gardens in the solution of these problems was a major topic of discussion. The meeting was attended by plant scientists from all over the world. As a result the garden received a sizeable grant from the National Science Foundation for the development of a research center at the Montgomery Foundation. This building, housing a technical library, herbarium, and research facilities, bears Dr. Robbins name.

Bill Robbins was one of the most entertaining and enlightening story tellers I have ever known. We looked forward to his visits. He could take over at a dinner party and hold his audience enthralled. He not only had a broad background of experiences, but possessed an enormous fund of scientific knowledge and a wide acquaintance among outstanding individuals. Robbins not only was a dominant individual, who talked with a dry, smileless sense of humor, he combined a vivid imagination with the rare gift of the raconteur. I have tried to repeat his stories without success; my audience lost interest. It was the convincing way Robbins told a story or recounted an experience that made it fascinating—or perhaps Robbins was as fascinating as were his stories.

Robbins' great ambition was to make some important discovery that would emblazon his name in the annals of science. He did achieve an important breakthrough in soil sciences while teaching botany at Auburn University a short time after winning his Ph. D. degree from Cornell. He traced the poor showing of crops in some soils to a deficiency of certain minerals. But Robbins won no fame for his discoveries. His greatest achievement at Auburn may have been—with the help of his wife Christine—the birth of son Frederick Robbins, who in 1954

shared the Nobel Prize in medicine and physiology with J. F. Enders and T. H. Weller for their successful growth of polio viruses in tissue culture and an improved method of polio detection.

Bill Robbins worked for years in his own special laboratory at Rockefeller University, where he sought to uncover the secrets of how plants use sunlight and a combination of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen to manufacture sugar. While his researchers led him off into a number of other interesting sideshows of scientific mysteries, he never came close to cracking the big nut that was his dream. He virtually died in his laboratory at the age of 88.

As I have said, I could never retell a Robbins story and make it interesting, but I recall one that is worth trying. While Colonel Montgomery was making a collection of conifers (pines and their relatives) for his estate at Cos Cob, Connecticut, he and Robbins became close friends. Bill and Christine, and Bob and Nell frequently played bridge together at the home of one or the other. As a result of this friendship, Robbins made it possible for the Colonel to collect rare conifers in other parts of the world that would have been difficult without the help of the head of a renowned botanical garden. Some years ago during one of his visits to Florida, Robbins told me the following story:

One evening while Robbins and Montgomery were killing a few moments in small talk before dinner at Cos Cob, the subject of investments came up. It was during the Great Depression and Montgomery was buying stocks and bonds—especially municipal bonds—at enormous discounts and holding them for an expected return of prosperity when he hoped to see them regain their full value. To Robbins this was a frightening kind of speculation that required great knowledge of the securities markets, an area where he himself felt abysmally ignorant.

“I’d be afraid to put a dime in any stock or bond now—especially municipal bonds,” said Robbins. “I know I’d lose my shirt.”

Montgomery laughed at Robbins' lack of confidence. Then, after a moment of reflection, he said, in a kidding way:

“Bill, if somebody gave you a bundle of these ‘worthless’

securities, what would you do with them?"

"Colonel, if somebody whose knowledge of the market I respected should make me a gift of such securities—which I'm sure will never happen—I would hold onto them. For I don't think a friend would give me anything that was worthless. And if he had confidence in the securities, so would I."

A few days later Robbins received a "bundle" of securities made out in his name—a gift from Montgomery. Although their current market value was slight, their potential value was several thousand dollars.

As he had promised, Robbins held onto them, spending only the income. Over the years he saw the stocks that Montgomery had paid "peanuts" for rise in value and split many times, while bonds that Montgomery had bought for a tenth of their value returned to par.

"Those securities made it possible for Christine and me to travel and to enjoy life in a way we could never have done on my income from other sources," said Robbins.

And that, I think, is the best of Robbins stories, although I may be the only one—certainly one of the few—to whom he ever told it.

Among the delegates to the 1962 conference on tropical botany at the FTG was Sir George Taylor, director of Kew Gardens in London. Sir George, a native of Scotland, bore a striking resemblance to a farmer I had known in Crowder whose name was Sands. Both possessed the same swarthy complexion and the same dark brown eyes, with the same expression. During dinner conversation at our house, I was unable to resist asking Taylor if there had been any Sands in his family background.

"Not that I know of," he replied, "although there could have been because the name Sands is very common in Scotland. But if your Mr. Sands had the same swarthy complexion that I have I probably can give you an explanation."

During the heyday of Moorish power in the Mediterranean, said Sir George, the Moors maintained colonies in the major seaports of Scotland, mainly for the purpose of trade.

"Many of these Moors married local women, leaving their bloodlines behind when they departed," he said. "I have Moorish



ancestors, and I venture to say that Mr. Sands did too.”

Our most frequent out-of-town visitor for several years was Dr. Harold E. Moore, Jr., botanist and palm authority of Cornell University. Hal sometimes stayed with us, sometimes with other friends. While in town he invariably visited Montgomery Drive where he made himself at home. In the spring of 1954, we planned a Sunday outing in Everglades National Park. Hal was staying with friends. He arrived in a rain.

“You probably had given up the idea of going,” he said, raindrops flying from him as he entered the house.

“Looks bad,” I said. “Maybe you don’t like to go on picnics in the rain.”

“Me? I like the rain,” replied Hal, laughing in a boyish way. “I was afraid you folks didn’t like rain.”

“I don’t like getting wet,” I admitted, “but I’m willing to risk it. Maybe it won’t be raining in the park.”

“It probably will be,” said Evelyn, who, like most women, tended to be more realistic about such things than her husband. “But we can eat in the car if it’s raining.”

Before you could repeat Everglades National Park twice, we were carrying the picnic supplies to the car—a gasoline stove, wieners and buns, some vine-ripened tomatoes from our garden to serve as a salad, oranges for dessert and coffee.

We arrived at the park in a steady drizzle. We saw only two other cars. The people in them, we suspected, were as loony as we were. Even the birds were grounded, and we saw but one alligator. If anything was happy it was the frogs. We stopped at a hammock then known as Paradise Key. At that time, the road wound through the middle of the hammock, with half a dozen picnic tables set up under spreading lysiloma trees. We moved a picnic table into the open to avoid the heavy dripping from tree branches. On it we set up our picnic stove. While Karl held an umbrella over me, I lighted the stove. Soon we had coffee perking and wieners roasting. We ate with as hearty an appetite as if we had been normal people.

And what did we do after eating? We strolled the hammock trails, admiring great live oaks whose branches were covered with dripping resurrection fern, bromelads and orchids. At other places we stopped to see if it was possible to identify a

tree by studying its trunk—perhaps a species of eugenia, mastic or pigeon plum. Of foremost interest to Hal, of course, were the very tall royal palms that had pushed their tops 30 to 40 feet above the green hammock—so tall, in fact, that they could be seen for many miles around, providing an unmistakable landmark for anyone who might become lost in the surrounding Everglades.

Eventually we found an old road that took us along the border between the evergreen hammock and the sawgrass. Inside the hammock it had been dark. Outside there was more light under a drizzly, gray overcast. Most things here were close at hand, and Hal could nip a tiny flower and examine it under a hand lens, making it reveal its relationship to plants he knew, if not its specific identity.

Although the Everglades may appear to be mainly sawgrass, a small patch can be a veritable botanical garden where countless species, including orchids, thrive. Having an incomplete knowledge of South Florida's native flora, Hal saw many plants with which he was unacquainted. But being a botanist, he knew the family and usually the genus to which the unfamiliar plant belonged. He just didn't know the species because he had never seen it before.

Sure, we got a little moist, and we had to do some wading. But it was a worthwhile experience, seeing the woods on a rainy day. On an overcast, drizzly day there are no deep shadows in which small things can hide; you see detail more clearly than on a bright, sunny day.

Late in the day, we returned and built a fire to warm ourselves. After we ate supper—Evelyn served us hamburgers, as I recall—Hal lay down before the fireplace and dozed. It was another day that we have never forgotten—a rainy day in the Everglades, botanizing with Hal Moore.

Although Dr. Richard Howard of Harvard's Arnold Arboretum never slept at Montgomery Drive, he and his family did stay from time to time at the Fairchild Garden's guest house. Like Moore, Howard enjoyed botanizing in southern Florida wilds, and we tried to plan a trip to Everglades National Park or to some other interesting area each time he was our guest. On one trip, we fell into a conversation about the many kinds

of lichens we were encountering. This unusual plant, a fungus growing in symbiotic union with an algae, is found on tree trunks, rocks, old buildings and fence posts throughout the world. The many colors found in southern Florida, including reds and yellows, make the lichens visually interesting even to those who may not know the plant by name.

"Very little is known about the lichens," said Howard in answer to a question.

I thought this strange. A plant so interesting should have attracted the attention of many scientists.

"Why hasn't somebody made a thorough study of the lichens?" I asked.

"The right kind of odd-ball hasn't come along to get interested in them," replied Howard.

I've thought of Dick Howard's statement many times since and have wondered if the "right kind of odd-ball" ever came along to devote his life to the study of the lichens. They should offer some fascinating rewards—although perhaps not financial ones.

I have told in *On the Beat and Offbeat*, under "A Bullish Bear in Wall Street," how Dent Smith made his money, when everybody else was either broke or going broke during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Dent moved his family to Florida in 1949 and settled at Daytona Beach. Looking for a hobby, he began collecting palms, as he had collected trees for his estate in Ridgewood, N.J., where he had lived formerly. We met Dent in 1956 while I was director of the Fairchild Garden. He became our friend and remained so until his death in 1985 at the age of 87.

A frequent visitor to the Fairchild Garden, Dent spent much of each day studying and photographing palms. He had recently organized the Palm Society and launched its quarterly journal, *Principes*. He promoted these with the enthusiasm of a used car salesman—which he had been before discovering Wall Street. Although he could not be correctly called a "visiting scientist," I invited him to stay at the Davis House while he was in Miami. So appreciative was he for the opportunity of being able to wake up among the Fairchild Garden's palms that, besides paying expenses, he ordered a telephone installed and

paid the monthly bill. He also became a life member of the garden, the cost of which at that time was \$500.

Smith insisted on meeting all the people in Miami who had palm collections, even if their collections amounted to no more than four or five species. I introduced him to the people I knew who had shown an interest in palms. I took him to the Kampong to see Fairchild's collection, to Montgomery's Coconut Grove Palmetum, and to the Plant Introduction Garden at Chapman Field, which had a sizeable palm collection. Some of the places he had seen, but he went nevertheless, without saying he had been there. Evelyn gave dinner parties so Dent could meet "palm people," as he called them. One day he remarked that he had not met Mrs. W. J. Krome of Homestead, widow of Henry M. Flagler's chief engineer in the building of the Overseas Railway to Key West.

"But she's no palm addict," I said. "She's a tropical fruit collector."

"I'll bet she knows a lot about palms," replied Dent, "and besides, I like to collect tropical fruits, too."

We invited Mrs. Krome to Sunday brunch. She and Dent had a non-stop three-hour talk about palms and tropical fruits. Dent Smith felt greatly deprived because he never had a chance to meet Montgomery or Fairchild. He asked many questions about them; and, after Marian Fairchild gave him a standing invitation to visit the Kampong and its plant collections, he was quick to take advantage of her hospitality. He wanted to learn all he could about these two "palm collectors," as he thought of them. He especially liked to stand before some interesting palm he knew Fairchild had planted and admire it. But he was painfully disappointed to learn that Montgomery, while a collector, never himself planted palms.

"The Colonel was a collector, not a horticulturist," I said.

"But I suppose he knew a lot about palms—their nomenclature, their history," he said.

"He read the books that were available," I replied, "but as you know there were not many publications about palms while he was collecting."

I then made a mistake. I recalled the time I asked the Colonel the name of a palm in his collection from which the

name tag was missing. "I don't know," he replied. "If there's no label you'll have to ask Mr. Jordahn. That's what I pay him for—to know the names."

Mr. Jordahn was the superintendent of the Montgomery estate. Montgomery made the arrangements with botanical gardens and with individuals throughout the tropical world to send palm seeds to Miami. Adolph Jordahn received the packages, recorded names and sources in an accession book. Then Jordahn planted the seeds, first in pots in the greenhouse, later at the Palmetum (as the estate was called), or at the Fairchild Garden.

Dent was painfully disappointed to learn that Colonel Montgomery was no dirty-handed gardener.

"Shucks, I wouldn't trust a gardener with palm seeds that had come from some far distant place," said Smith. "I would have taken charge of the seeds and planted them myself."

"But the Colonel was a busy man," I said. "He had other things that demanded his time—his auditing firm and his law firm."

"Well, I've got other things that demand my time—my investments and my income tax returns, which I make out myself," snapped Smith. "But I still have time to look after my palms. And I know their names, every last one of them."

Because I had made no special effort to collect palms at Montgomery Drive, Dent had little interest in walking over the grounds. Then I told him of how when David Fairchild used to visit us he always asked: "What are you planting now?" After that Dent would always ask the same question and he would walk the grounds, as he imagined Fairchild had done. Dent discovered that I had planted a few interesting palms, including some Fairchild himself had given me; and in time he discovered that we had a fair-sized tropical fruit collection. Thus his interest in our five acres grew, and on every visit he wanted to walk over the property. But he found it impossible to appreciate the open spaces and the vistas we had made, lamenting that these areas contained no plantings except lawn grass and the pines we left when we cleared the palmettos and underfoot growth.

"I don't want to plant anything in the vistas," I said in defense. "That would spoil the landscape."

“Landscape!” he exclaimed. “Shucks, I’d fill those areas with palms.”

After my retirement from *The Miami Herald* in 1973, we built a camp on a friend’s ranch in Big Cypress Swamp. Located on an old Indian site, the camp overlooked an alligator flag marsh partially ringed by a strand of cypress, willow and red maple. A few hundred feet south, beyond a green pasture vista bordered by live oaks, was a cabbage palm hammock that was host to deer, wild turkeys and occasionally a visiting bear. Tracks of panthers were sometimes seen in the area. We liked the hammock. The moist ground was covered with a variety of swamp ferns, while the palms themselves bore three or four species of ferns, including a rich growth of shoestring fern on their old trunks. We couldn’t wait to invite Dent Smith to our camp and show him this sumptuous wilderness, particularly the cabbage palm hammock. Eventually we took him. It had recently rained, and we had to make our way slowly in a pickup truck over a wet dirt road in which there were many deep pot holes. Dent complained. Who would ever think of building a camp in a place so hard to reach? While Evelyn was preparing lunch, I walked Dent to the palm hammock.

“Isn’t this a beautiful collection of sabals?” I suggested as we entered the cool hammock. “And look at the shoestring fern. Some of those blades must be two feet long.”

Dent stopped, looked about, then turned to me.

“I don’t see anything so great about this hammock,” he said. “It’s only a collection of Sabal palmetto. Nothing rare about it. I’ve got the species in my collection.”

We went no farther. Dent had no interest in this unique setting of Sabal palmetto in the wilderness of Big Cypress Swamp. Having the species represented in his collection was sufficient.

We departed early to return to Miami. As the truck labored over six miles of muddy road toward Alligator Alley, Dent said: “What you need is a jeep—a four wheel drive vehicle. You know what I’m gonna do? I’m gonna leave you my jeep in my will.”

And he did, in the first paragraph.

Because of his wife Marta’s poor health, Dent always came

to Miami alone. He never stayed away from home longer than a few days. I sought to interest him in making trips to other parts of the world to collect palm seeds. He did make a few short trips with Stanley Kiem, then Fairchild Garden superintendent; but he refused to take long journeys that would keep him out of the country for longer than a few days.

Soon after I met Dent, I learned that he was a frustrated writer. Many years before, he had attempted to write a novel depicting his difficult life in Mexico. As a young man, he met and married the vivacious Guadalupe (Marta) Hipper y Martinez. Once while we were visiting him and Marta at Daytona Beach, he brought out the long manuscript and asked me to read the first chapter. It read more like a report by a social worker depicting the hardships of Appalachia than a novel. Dent was not interested in reading novels to see how others wrote; he was interested only in writing one. Upon retiring from Wall Street, his interest in writing led him to start a pocket-sized magazine he named *Encore*. A digest of modern and ancient authors, it was well done; and, for a time, *Encore* enjoyed some success. The inflation ignited by the Second World War put Dent out of business. He continued to talk of writing, though I sensed his disappointment in failing to write a successful novel.

As we got to know him better, he began to tell us more about his life. After he was born in Staunton, Va., in 1897, his mother—a beautiful woman—was always on the go, and he lived in many places before going out on his own at 18 and enlisting in the military service. His descriptions of his mother and her way of life made her so fascinating that one evening, over dinner at Montgomery Drive, I suggested that he should look into his early experiences for a worthwhile novel. “Your mother would make a wonderful character in a novel,” I added.

Dent looked at me wide-eyed, even shocked, I thought.

“My mother! Put my mother in a novel! My God, that would be unthinkable,” he said. “I would just as quickly go out and cut my throat.”

The years flew by. Marta died. Shortly thereafter he lost his white-haired secretary, Miss Margueriete Martin, who had stuck with him through the arduous Wall Street years, through his experiences with *Encore*, helped him to keep his financial



records and finally helped him to organize and promote The Palm Society. Then his daughter Jessie Clark died. He had lost his son Darden in the Korean War. Except for grandchildren, he was alone. Dent drove down to Miami and stayed with us for several days. He was low in spirits. We went out to some of his favorite restaurants. He was drinking more than usual. Out of character, he asked us not to invite anybody for dinner; he didn't want to talk. By the time he returned home, his spirits seemed boosted. But when we talked to him on the telephone, we knew he was still depressed. We began to fear he soon would follow those he had lost. Dent's life changed when he met a younger woman, Doris Murphy, during a trip through the British Isles. Although in his early 80's, Dent found that much life was left in the old frame. He and Doris soon were married and Dent took a new lease on life and happiness. He lived for several years, although he contracted a rare form of cancer that affected the lining of his lungs. We called him on his 87th birthday.

"I feel lucky as hell," he said. We sense he was a happy man. "Five years ago the doctors had me dying of cancer within a year," he added, laughing. "You know what? I may fool them. I may die of something else—old age, for instance."

He died in 1985 just short of his 88th birthday.

Although Dent was an expert on Wall Street, he was reluctant to give tips or to make any suggestion that might possibly be thought of as a tip.

"Nobody in the world knows what the stock market is going to do," said Dent on one occasion. "It goes up and it goes down. That's a fact. When it goes down, people who own stocks get scared and fear they're gonna lose their shirts. The only worthwhile market tip you can give anyone is to buy at the bottom of the market and sell when it's highest. But who can recognize the lowest low or the highest high. I've never been able to. I always buy stocks during a bear market, when the market is depressed. But invariably it goes lower still. I just hold onto what I've got and buy more. I, of course, like to sell when the market is bullish, when everybody's buying and pushing prices up. But it's an invariable rule that the market always goes higher still after I sell. So what do I know about the stock

market? Nothing.”

Dent did give us one tip that paid off. In the early 1960s when Texasgulf was selling for a few dollars a share, he advised us to buy a hundred shares.

“Put the certificate in your safe deposit box and forget about it for several years,” he said. “This company’s sound. It’s well managed, and it’s growing. Buy a hundred shares every time you have the money to spare, especially during a depressed market.”

Texasgulf went up and down with the bulls and the bears but we held on, buying more when we could afford it. For several years Dent would call us and say:

“Hey, did you see what happened to Texasgulf today? The bottom dropped out. Have you got enough in the bank to buy a hundred shares?”

The call got action, and we would buy another hundred shares. This continued for close to 20 years. Meanwhile the shares were split two for one, giving us twice the number of shares we originally had bought. Then, during a bull market, a French company, Elf Aquitaine, stepped in, offering shareholders a price they couldn’t refuse and took over the company. We did well, indeed; and, I hasten to add, he did well too, for he had bought Texasgulf every time he called to advise us to buy.

Two long time *Miami Herald* friends whose faces were familiar at Montgomery Drive were Steve Trumbull and Jeanne Bellamy. Both were reporters on the old *Miami Tribune*, which Jack Knight purchased in 1937 from Moses L. Annenberg and closed down. After interviewing members of the *Tribune* staff, John Pennekamp, *Herald* managing editor wound up hiring three—Steve and Jeanne and photographer Bill Stapleton. Stapleton moved on from *The Herald* to become an internationally known news photographer. Steve and Jeanne remained on the paper until they retired—and both made names for themselves. Steve, who covered the state as “Mr. Florida,” traveled, not only the highways, but most of the rivers and man-made waterways in his motor cruiser, Po Ho. His wife, Jane, went along as first mate, cooking except when “Ol’ Steve” wanted to show off a bit. Then he would take over the galley—especially if there was company to witness his “prodigious feats” as a cook. He wrote

frequently of the "gourmet" dishes he prepared from fish or game. Here is the way he started one story:

"Grab the smelling salts and start fanning yourselves, you gourmets. The old swamp rat is about to do a piece on game and freshwater fish cooking."

In succeeding paragraphs you could hear the speckled perch sizzling in deep fat and smell the wild country-chicken aroma of young rabbit frying in a black skillet resting on campfire coals, I wrote in *Knights of the Fourth Estate*.

Trumbull was never encouraged to take over the kitchen at Montgomery Drive because Evelyn, who likes order, couldn't tolerate the mess he made. If he prepared a fish chowder (which he was good at doing), he would have everything in the kitchen strewn about—pots and pans, knives and stirring spoons, the principal ingredients as well as the condiments. When unable to put his hand on something essential to the success of his recipe, he would turn the air blue with profanity. Usually the missing ingredient was before his eyes; but by the time he found it, he was unsure whether he already had added it to the chowder. Most certainly he would wind up with one or more things missing while doubling the amount of something else. But no matter. By the time the chowder was served, everyone had had so much to drink that Trumbull's delicacy might have been prepared by Oscar of the Waldorf.

Trumbull was especially good at preparing bonefish for broiling. This fish is usually thought of as being too bony to eat, but Steve had learned how to overcome this fault. To prepare a bonefish he first removed the head. Then he cut along both sides of the dorsal fin, removing it along with the backbone and laying the fish open. Upon eviscerating, washing and drying the fish, he put it on the broiler, skin side down. Once cooked, the fish was removed from the broiler and the numerous rib bones were lifted with the aid of a tablespoon and a fork. These bones lie just beneath the surface of the inner side of the bonefish. Once the fish is broiled, the bones are easily rolled up and disposed of. To eat the delicious white meat, now free of bones, lift it from the skin with a fork. The skin, of course, is not eaten—unless you are a shark.

For 20 years Trumbull traveled the back country of Florida,

the rutted roads as well as the super highways and streams. There was no worthwhile place he failed to visit or write about, including Sopchoppy, Panacea, Hen Scratch and Two Egg. Governor Fuller Warren gave him his nickname, "Mr. Florida." I succeeded him on the road upon his retirement in 1963, but never did I attempt to fill his shoes or follow his trail.

Jeanne Bellamy was born in Brooklyn of English parents. She was graduated from Rollins College, where she received one of the best backgrounds in the use of the English language of anyone I knew in the newspaper business. Jeanne is the only person I ever met who made her life plans so far in the future that as a young woman she looked forward to the time when she would be a wisened grandmotherly type with a silver-headed cane. And she was by no means dismayed at the picture she saw. She evidently had known matrons whom she admired, and realized that if she were fortunate enough to live, she would one day be one. Thus Jeanne sought early to prepare herself psychologically for that age.

In her younger years, Jeanne married a fellow newspaperman, John T. Bills, a blustery, positive and very confident Texan. Jack eventually left the newspaper business to become a successful banker and land investor. Upon his death in 1967, Jeanne found herself at a critical point in her life. Although confident she would readjust, she knew it would take time. She gathered up her little dog, a dachshund, and came out to stay with us "in the pines," as she put it, for several days. How much Jeanne's stay with us contributed to her readjustment we have no way of knowing. But she soon picked up Jack's career, in addition to her own as an editorial writer on *The Herald*, and rose to chairman of the board of Midtown (Miami) Bank. After retiring from *The Herald* in 1973, she was elected president of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. In 1977 she became president of the Fairchild Tropical Garden Association, a position she held until 1982 when she turned the presidency over to Lloyd G. Kelly. In the meantime Jeanne realized another ambition, traveling over the world, including all the continents except Antarctica—and going there probably is in her plans.

Thus Jeanne Bellamy realized her early plans of becoming a wisened grandmotherly type with dignity and charm had a lot

more distinction than she could have dreamed when she was a young and eager reporter in whom the fires of ambition and enthusiasm flared inexhaustibly.

Dr. Wilson Popenoe was the builder and first director of the Pan American Agricultural School at Zamarano, Honduras. He flew to the United States on business a couple of times a year, and he frequently stayed overnight with us, sometimes several days. Prior to David Fairchild's death, he stayed at the Kampong, but thereafter he began staying at Montgomery Drive. He never failed to arrive loaded with gifts, particularly colorful huipils, worn as blouses by the Indian women of Guatemala. Wilson liked to buy huipils (pronounced we-peels) that had been worn, rather than new ones. He frequently bought these striking garments "off the backs" of the Indians, as he put it. He would distribute the huipils among his friends, especially at whose homes he stayed, in Gainesville, Washington, or Boston as well as in Miami. He talked in a loud voice, and as we sat on the breezeway you could hear his conversation beyond the limits of our five acres. Wilson liked to be driven about Dade County to see his friends, including Mrs. Fairchild and Mrs. W.J. Krome of Homestead. If I happened to be working, the chauffeuring fell to Evelyn, who drove her Volkswagen. On one occasion Wilson accompanied me on an assignment to Lake Okeechobee. He wanted to get a haircut, so we stopped at a barbershop in Belle Glade. Wilson immediately got into conversation with the barber. Upon discovering that Wilson lived in Central America, the barber asked how much he had to pay for a haircut there.

"Fifteen cents," replied Popenoe.

"Fifteen cents!" exclaimed the barber. "How in the world can a barber live if he charges only fifteen cents for a haircut?"

"How much do you charge for a haircut?" asked Wilson.

"A dollar," replied the barber.

"And how much do you pay for a pound of beefsteak?"

"About a dollar."

"Well, the barber who cuts my hair," said Wilson, "pays fifteen cents for a pound of beefsteak. So, in a relative way, you guys charge the same for a haircut and pay the same price for beefsteak."

The barber was unconvinced.

John Harrell, Jacksonville lawyer, friend and sometimes adviser, visited Montgomery Drive only once, while he was in Miami to attend a lawyer's convention. He ate dinner with us, and we drove him back to the Doral Country Club, where he was staying. I had met Harrell in 1969 during a Pan Am flight to London. Ed Ball, manager of the Alfred I. Du Pont estate and chairman of the Florida East Coast Railway, had invited us to visit his castle at Ballynahinch in western Ireland, and we were more or less looking for each other.

"I thought you'd be riding in the first class compartment with Mr. Ball," said Harrell, laughing after we shook hands.

"That's where I expected you to be," I replied.

During our conversation, while drinking Drambuie on the rocks, I learned that Harrell planned to stop over in London for a couple of days before going on to Dublin where he was to join us for a cross-country drive to Ballynahinch in Connemara District. This was Harrell's first trip aboard, and he intended to visit the Inns of Court in London, Britain's famous resident schools of law.

I knew little about the Inns of Court. But after hearing Harrell describe it as the birthplace of English common law and constitutional law, I wished I had made arrangements to stay over in London myself. When we reached London, however, Harrell and I discovered our luggage had continued on to Brussels. We would have to wait about three hours, until the plane returned, to claim it. So Ball, who always carried his own small black suitcase, invariably containing a fifth of his favorite bourbon, continued on to Dublin while I remained in London with Harrell.

Harrell was born on a farm near Gibson, Georgia, in 1893. Upon graduation from high school, he read law under the tutelage of a friendly judge and was admitted to the bar. He eventually wound up in Jacksonville, where in time he developed a good practice. Ball was among his clients. He was still going to his office in 1987 at the age of 94. Although he was no longer able to work as fast as he had done at an earlier age, his mind was still sharp and his knowledge of law—particularly Florida property law and estate law—was unsurpassed. For the past several years, Evelyn and I have tried to visit him regu-

larly, and he insists on taking us to lunch at the River Club, atop Jacksonville's tallest skyscraper, overlooking the beautiful St. Johns.

After registering at a hotel, we took a taxi to the Inns of Court. Naturally I made notes, for I was always hungry for material to fill my column. I think the column I wrote after our visit to the Inns of Court equals any other I ever turned out, and I present it here:

"In the heart of London, off the beaten tourist path, is a gem of a little church, of Romanesque and Gothic design, that was built by the Knights Templars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is one of the few buildings that escaped the London fire in 1666, and is today among the finest examples of Norman architectural influence in England. I was shown this church not by a buff on the antiquities of England, but by a Cracker lawyer from Jacksonville, John Harrell, who had never been abroad in his 76 years until his trip to London. To Harrell, Temple Church stands on hallowed ground, not so much because of its religious connotation but because it occupies the heartland of the Inns of Court, where was born and nurtured the laws that today give English speaking people throughout the world the safeguards of freedom.

"Harrell is a man with little formal education. He never attended law school but made his way in the law through hard study and with shrewd native intelligence. He, of course, liked to read the history of law. Such reading brought him close to the origins of English law, as well as close to the men who wrote these laws. And in his reading he also became intimately acquainted with the four resident law schools that constitute the Inns of Court—Inner Temple, Middle Temple, Gray's Inn, and Lincoln's Inn. Two of the greatest men in English law, Edward Coke and William Blackstone, were products of Middle Temple. Blackstone's *Commentaries* laid the foundation for American law and justice, and for years after the Revolution served as the American lawyer's bible.

"Although Harrell hadn't concerned himself with Temple Church's architecture, he knew its history well. After the fall of the Knights Templars, the church came into possession of another Catholic order, the Knights Hospitallers. King Henry VIII took possession of the church in the sixteenth century when he



closed Catholic institutions in England. And in 1608 James I gave the church to the lawyers—the benchers of Inner Temple and Middle Temple. Harrell was immensely impressed by Temple Church, but he was more obviously affected when we visited the elaborate, centuries-old hall of Middle Temple, half a block distant. Here Harrell was standing in the same hall where Coke and Blackstone studied, as did Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh. So did those who helped write or influence the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. So well acquainted was Harrell with Middle Temple—a building he had never seen—that he was able to point out immediately a table that had been made during Queen Elizabeth I's time, of a tree cut from her forest and floated down the Thames to the Inns of Court. And Harrell's enthusiasm knew no bounds when he began reading the names of hundreds of famous judges and lawyers that lined the walls—names he had come across in the history of English law.

“Harrell and I left the Inns of Court with much to reflect upon. Here was the cradle of constitutional law—freedom of speech, equality under the law, the right of trial by jury, the protection of the individual from the burden of guilt until he is proven guilty. Here liberalism in the writing and interpretation of laws governing human freedom was defended. And the men who were graduated from these schools went out to fight the powers of the English kings, and to win. The influence of the Inns of Court on the world has been beyond measure. No people with an English law background had ever tolerated dictatorship for any length of time; no English-speaking people have let themselves become subjected to fascism or communism. And Harrell and I agreed that if Karl Marx had been born in England, rather than in Germany, his political thinking would have been influenced by the tradition of the Inns of Court—and therefore the world would be much different from what it is today.”

For several years, John D. Pennekamp wielded such power and influence in Dade County that he became known as “Mr. *Miami Herald*.” He started on *The Herald* as city editor in 1925 and remained with the paper for more than half a century. Although higher ranking editors came and went, Publisher Frank

B. Shutts looked upon Pennekamp as the one responsible for getting out the paper. Shutts, with the backing of Henry M. Flagler, had founded *The Herald* in 1910. A founder of the prestigious law firm of Shutts & Bowen, he disavowed knowing anything about newspapering. "I have Penny," he liked to say. After John and James Knight bought *The Herald* from Shutts in 1937, Pennekamp was elevated to managing editor, but his responsibilities remained much the same until 1941, when he became editorial page editor and the writer of a daily column, "Behind the Front Page."

An editor and columnist of very positive opinion, Pennekamp was ever ready to take on implacable opposition without fear of consequences. He fought court-protected gambling operations in Dade County and won. Not even threats of jail by an irate judge stopped him. After a circuit judge found him and his paper guilty of contempt, he took the case to the United States Supreme Court and won. Everglades National Park became a reality only as a result of his unrelenting battle against its bitter critics. He conceived the idea of metropolitan government and fought successfully for its approval by Dade County voters. For a time he enjoyed more prestige than did the Knight brothers.

I was in my late 20s when I became a police reporter on *The Herald*. With a grammar school education and little grass roots experience, I had no easy time of it. I had come to Miami in 1935 to take a minor job with the Associated Press, whose night office was in *The Herald* building. Foreseeing a limited future with the AP, and wanting very much to be a newspaper reporter, I got permission in 1938 to work one day a week for *The Herald* as a learner without pay. For nearly two years, I worked variously as a reporter, copyreader and on the rewrite desk. (On rewrite you take legmen's stories over the telephone. Occasionally a reporter will dictate his stories in almost perfect form so that little or no changes are necessary. Others may give the rewrite man only notes, which he must turn into a readable story.) On January 1, 1940, Pennekamp hired me—with reluctance, I thought—as a regular paid employee of *The Herald*. Several years later he admitted he had done so in a weak moment.

"I doubted you could make it; you were too old," he said,

“but I could see that you were determined to try.”

Pennekamp believed that the time to enter the newspaper business was while you were in your teens, that you should grow up working on the different beats and in the various departments, gaining experience in turning out stories under the pressure of deadline, or, when necessary, to be able to dictate stories to a rewrite man in virtually perfect copy. Getting a job with *The Herald* I look upon as being one of the three most important events in my life, the others being my birth and my marriage. The direction of my life was dramatically changed.

If I felt closer to Pennekamp than I did to any other person for whom I ever worked it may have been because I looked upon him as a father figure. Although I can't say I idolized him, my respect for him, mixed with trepidation, was enormous. Since he was the one who had hired me and to whom I looked upon as my boss, I felt a personal loss when he left the newsroom for the ivory tower of the editorial office. After that I seldom saw him except as he passed through the newsroom on his way to or from his office. The years passed. Meanwhile I was drafted into the military during the Second World War.

The 1950s arrived. One day I entered a downtown restaurant for lunch. No table was available. Although I saw John Pennekamp eating alone, I dared not invite myself to sit with him. I was about to leave and look for another restaurant when he motioned for me to join him.

I recently had written a story about Corkscrew Swamp and the National Audubon Society's efforts to save from timber cutters that Collier County wilderness of 400-year-old cypress trees and bird rookery. Pennekamp, having read it, said he had talked with John Baker, Audubon president, who praised the piece.

“You'll probably hear from him,” said Pennekamp.

Next morning I found a note from Pennekamp in my newsroom mailbox, asking me to see him. I bounded up the stairs and went to his office. He was writing a column about Corkscrew Swamp and wanted additional information. Fortunately I could give him what he asked.

For the next several years, I was one of *The Herald's*

principal writers on conservation, as well as being farm and garden editor, a general reporter and a feature writer. In 1956 I became director of the Fairchild Tropical Garden. During the next seven years, I gave "half" a day to *The Herald* and "half" a day to the Fairchild Garden, which meant that I was working 12 to 14 hours a day much of the time. John Pennekamp and I lunched together frequently; and he and his wife Irene were from time to time dinner guests at Montgomery Drive. After Irene's death John preferred to be invited for lunch. For many years Evelyn and I were alone in the world; we had no close adult relatives either of us felt like calling upon for assistance or comfort in the event of a personal disaster. It was of enormous consolation to Evelyn to know she could call on John Pennekamp. She knew without any doubt that John was our sincere friend, that no matter what happened, at what time of the day or night, she could call on him and receive the comfort and proper directions one needs in a personal crisis.

I don't recall that Pennekamp ever dialed my telephone to invite me to go to lunch with him. He expected me to call him. I learned that the hard way. One day I called Pennekamp about some matter the subject of which I no longer remember. "I'm busy now," he replied, rather brusquely. "Let's talk it over at lunch—if you don't have other plans." We did go to lunch. Afterward, he said:

"Let's do that again."

I replied that I would like to, and then, too timid to call him, I waited for him to invite me. The invitation never came. One day I met him on the stairs of the old *Herald* building on South Miami Avenue.

"Say, I thought we were going to have lunch sometime," he said. "What happened?"

I saw he was serious. In fact, I sensed he was a bit miffed—or was he hurt?

"I-I was waiting for your invitation," I replied, embarrassed.

"Never wait for my invitation," he replied as he continued on his way. "Give me a call."

A couple of days later, I worked up courage to call him; and he accepted my invitation. From that time on I did the

calling, and he accepted my invitation when he had no other plans, which he often did. We took turns paying the check. I was to learn it was Pennekamp's practice to let friends invite him to lunch. Enjoying a liberal expense account, he was quick to grab the check. But John Pennekamp was always bossman. You did the inviting. He was pleased to accept your invitation if he had no better options.

Pennekamp was one of the few I have known who had been a bossman all his adult years—in his case since he became city editor of the *Cincinnati Post* at 22. He had very positive views about his own life, about the world in which he moved and of his spiritual future. He was one of the few—perhaps the only one I ever knew—who would have liked to relive his life without making any changes. He said this to Evelyn and me once while the three of us were having lunch at Montgomery Drive. He was unable to look back and see where he had made any mistakes he would want to correct, nor had he done anything in his life of which he was ashamed. He did admit he would have liked to possess more wealth. On the other hand, he always had enough for his family to live well. He was a Catholic who never discussed religion, and I never heard anyone discuss religion in his presence.

Virtually all his luncheon friends were Protestants, and I don't recall any who did not like one or two drinks before lunch. Pennekamp observed Lent by giving up his drink, an enormous sacrifice. He gave every indication of being a person who had no doubt of his own salvation.

Pennekamp was succeeded as editorial page editor in 1958 by Don Shoemaker, but he continued writing his column "Behind the Front Page." Because Pennekamp was "elevated" to associate editor, a large percentage of *Herald* readers continued to look upon him as the one who made the decisions. His prestige remained high, and he continued to receive honors, among them having a park named after him—the John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Years passed. He reached his 70s I heard no mention of retirement. In 1973 I decided to retire at 62. A few weeks before my retirement, Pennekamp and I were having lunch at *Hasta Mañana*, his favorite eating place because of the special attention he received. Over drinks we

began talking about my upcoming retirement.

"I don't know why you want to retire," he said. "You're at the peak of your writing career, and you've got a good following. You have no reason to retire." (This was the only compliment John Pennekamp ever paid my writing.)

"I want to retire while I'm on top of things while I still have my health," I replied.

Knowing he was approaching 76, I asked him if he had no plans to retire.

"No," he replied, "so long as I can drive to the office." He usually got to his office at six in the morning and was through for the day by 11.

Draining his glass, Pennekamp signaled our waiter to bring another round of drinks—his usual bourbon, a martini for me. Then, in a moment of what was for him an unusual personal revelation, he proceeded to tell me why he had not retired and why he had no plans to do so. His story began when he was succeeded by Shoemaker.

"Although I was elevated to associate editor on *The Herald's* masthead, there was no increase in my salary," he said. "For the next several years my salary remained the same although inflation soared after we became involved in the Vietnam War. One day Jack Knight dropped into my office and sat down. He was in one of his expansive moods, and he talked at length about what he said were some of *The Herald's* accomplishments during the time I was editor. He then added that he had looked over salaries recently and was surprised to see how low mine was. He apologized for 'the oversight,' as he called it, and promised to make amends. Then he left."

Pennekamp paused to sip from the fresh drink that had been placed before him.

"When I saw my next pay check I thought some mistake had been made," he continued. "My pay had been virtually doubled."

This time he paused to drink deep from his glass.

"Up to that time I might have thought of retiring, but after that big salary increase I couldn't. I have 10 grandchildren to be educated, and I want to save enough to help them through college."

Pennekamp retired on his eightieth birthday, January 1, 1977. He lived only a few months afterwards. The story of John Pennekamp's years on *The Herald* is told in my book, *Knights of the Fourth Estate*. John was the first person to whom I gave an autographed copy. I did so with fear and trembling because, for while he was given more space than anyone else in the 340-page book, he sometimes comes through as a controversial figure. I thought he would be sore with me about the uncomplimentary things I wrote, although they were factual. For Pennekamp was dogmatic in his belief that newspaper people should maintain a united front and never criticize one another publicly. Much of the critical material came from Jack Knight who, although he admired Pennekamp as a "great editor and fighter for what he thought was right," knew his faults all too well. I was much relieved when Pennekamp thanked me for the copy and tossed the book on his desk without opening it.



**Recipients of the Thomas Barbour Medal for vision and unselfish devotion to the preservation of that vanishing Eden, South Florida. L to R: John Pennekamp with spouse Irene, Jeanne Bellamy, with spouse John T. Bills.**



Although I was retired, we continued to have lunch together, and he continued to visit Montgomery Drive. John was especially fond of the seafood salads Evelyn made of shrimp, crabmeat or lobster stuffed in an avocado half. The book was never mentioned. One day while lunching at Hasta Mañana with Pennekamp and three of his friends, including Mayor Bob Knight of Coral Gables, *Knights of the Fourth Estate* was mentioned.

“What did you think of that book, John?” Pennekamp was asked pointedly while we were having drinks.

“Haven’t read it,” replied Pennekamp flatly.

I couldn’t have been more relieved. I knew his cronies, who tolerated no criticism of Pennekamp, were looking for a chance to give me a roasting.

One morning several days later, I opened *The Herald* to Pennekamp’s “Behind the Front Page” to discover he had devoted his column to a review of *Knights of the Fourth Estate*. Never have I felt more uneasy. I was certain he had taken the book apart, to say nothing of the author. But to my surprise, Pennekamp was highly complimentary. He made no mention of any of the critical things I had said about him.

Lest the reader get the idea that I wrote only critically of John Pennekamp in my history of *The Herald*, most of what I said was highly complimentary. What I did say in criticism was true. Pennekamp was hard-headed and intolerant of opinions differing from his. His friends could do no wrong, his enemies no right. He was deeply suspicious of politicians, civic leaders and, especially, do-gooders. To Jack and Jim Knight, he seemed to go out of his way to make enemies for himself and for his newspaper. Never reluctant to take a stand, once he did so he was absolutely fearless. That takes nothing away from the fact that Pennekamp was one of Miami’s outstanding newspapermen. I don’t know of another person who had as much influence on the area’s future, unless it was Castro.