

“Watch the Port of Miami”

by Arthur Chapman

The history of the Port of Miami is filled with fascinating twists, moves and controversy. From finger piers in the Miami River to the world's premier passenger cruise port, the port has mirrored the development of Miami. Constantly facing the difficulties of shallow water and the need for dredging, the modern port of today reflects on its beginnings in a plan for further expansion and development. Located in the midst of beautiful, but very shallow Biscayne Bay, no pioneer could possibly have envisioned what the future held.

In an 1842 letter concerning the joint land and sea operations during the Seminole Indian Wars, Lt. John T. McLaughlin wrote of the problems encountered while attempting to cross Biscayne Bay:

Fort Dallas, [located on the north bank of the Miami River] which has been under the occupancy of the land forces since the early stages of the war, cannot be approached within eight miles by the vessels of this squadron...our operations [had to be carried out] in canoes...¹

The Navy, which had responsibility for the movement of materials and personnel, had to row supplies to the fort on the Miami River from a base on Key Biscayne.²

For many years, the shallow bay relegated Miami to a relatively unimportant role in the development of Florida's maritime trade. South

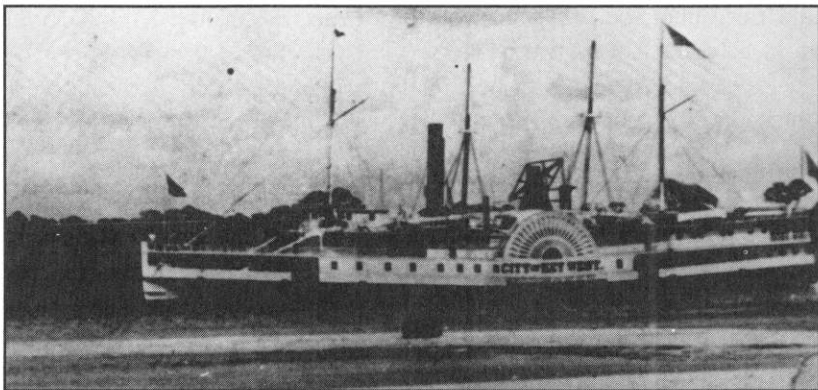
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Florida's primary port was Key West, which as a deep water port, could provide proper, safe berthing for large, deep-drafted vessels. The only berths provided in the Miami area were timber finger piers on the river that served the few residents of the area.³

There was no serious effort made to remedy this situation until 1895 when Julia Tuttle sent her legendary orange blossoms to Henry Flagler in hopes of attracting his interest to the Miami area. Julia Tuttle's ploy worked, as the blossoms dramatically showed that Miami was untouched by a killer frost that had destroyed most of the North Florida orange groves. As additional encouragement, Tuttle, along with William and Mary Brickell offered Mr. Flagler extensive parcels of land if he would extend his railroad to Miami, construct a water works plant, and provide for some other civic improvements.⁴

Flagler refused to permit the shallow bay to stop him from developing Miami. Accordingly, in 1897, he dredged a 12-foot deep channel from Cape Florida to Miami at a cost of twenty thousand dollars.⁵ Flagler expanded the same finger piers on the river and then coined the phrase, "Watch the Port of Miami."⁶

Despite Flagler's dredging efforts (this channel is still in use today) regular steamship service did not begin until May 21, 1897, when he obtained *The City of Key West* and *The Miami*. This service ran only between Miami and the deep water port of Key West. The first of these ships, *The City of Key West*, required more than 12 feet of water and was forced to anchor a mile away from Miami. Her passengers and cargo were then tendered to shore because of the shallow depth of the bay.⁷



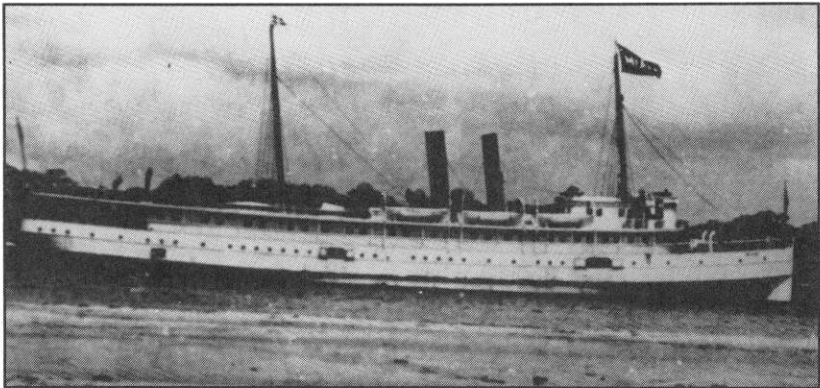
The City of Key West at the city docks, 1899. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, a gift of Arthur Chapman.)

The pressing need for a deep-water port could only be solved by extensive dredging and then, as now, those operations were extremely controversial. For William Brickell, it was a continual source of irritation. Flagler's men left a 30-foot spoil pile of broken marl and shell near Brickell's point obstructing the view of the bay from his home on the south bank near the mouth of the river.⁸

Another pioneer of distinction, Commodore Ralph M. Munroe, who lived in nearby Coconut Grove, also had serious objections to the dredging operations because the spoil banks that were created reduced the sailing area of the bay. In addition, there were many unlighted pilings which, although necessary for the steamer pilots, became a constant menace to nighttime sailors. Eventually, the dredged area became virtually impassable, so much so, that the long established Biscayne Yacht Club was forced to abandon its race course.⁹

Though modernization and big business were steadily making their presence known, a certain degree of independence remained in the hearts of some of the pioneers who worked on the bay. This spirit was illustrated in the early 1900s by the captain of the *Lady Lou*, a ferry that carried people between the City of Miami and Smith's Casino on Miami Beach. He steadfastly refused to sail until he had a minimum of six passengers aboard. Once, an impatient visitor, weary of waiting, offered to pay all six fares and the captain demurred. "No sir," he stated. "It's not the money I want. It's the people."¹⁰

Henry Flagler not only played an integral role in the development of a modern Miami seaport but also an important part in the



The Miami at the city docks, 1899. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, a gift of Arthur Chapman.)

development of the maritime trade in Miami. Not only did he provide for the first dredging work, but in 1900, he merged his shipping company with that of Florida's west coast railroad mogul, Henry Bradley Plant. This union led to the creation of the Peninsular and Occidental (P&O) Steamship Company, which built the new port on Flagler's property between 6th and 9th Streets on Biscayne Bay. Moreover, at a later date, the P&O instituted the first regular shipping service between Miami, Granada, and Nassau.¹¹



The P&O Steamship Company's terminal and ticket office in the late 1940s at what was to become the "old port." (Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1989-011-13728)

As soon as the port moved to the Fifth Street area, a continuing controversy began which continues today. Where should the port be located? The Flagler decision meant that some of Miami's most scenic and valuable bayfront property was utilized for warehouses, parking lots, fuel depots, and other such maritime industrial activities. Many of these uses were considered "ugly, unattractive," and "undesirable." Pioneers, such as Frank Walton Chapman and Stobo D'Pass Curry became early activists in the effort "to get the port off of Biscayne Boulevard."¹²

The development and expansion of a port for Miami was hindered by a major obstacle: the Flagler Cape Florida/Miami channel

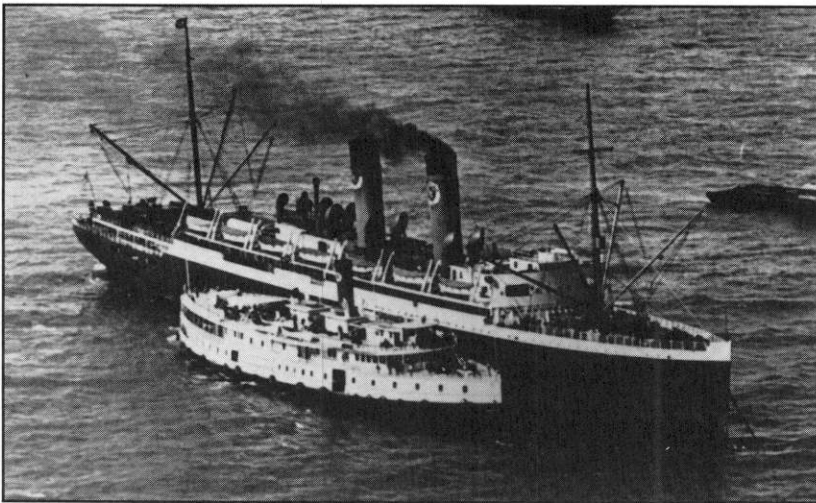
that had been dredged in 1897 was not deep enough to allow major vessels to call upon Miami. The distance from around Cape Florida to Miami also hindered marine development. These problems forced a search for another channel site.

In 1902, the Committee on Rivers and Harbors of the U.S. Congress appropriated money for dredging a new ship channel that would provide deep berths. Dredges cut a 900-foot-wide slice through the Miami Beach peninsula at its southern tip, thus creating Government Cut and Fisher Island. Spoil banks were also created and named, including the Dodge Islands and Lummus Island.¹³ On the day that the dredges were to complete their project, Miami Mayor John Sewell proclaimed a holiday. About 3,500 people came to view the historic moment. Unfortunately, the dredge broke down just as it reached the last few feet. Reacting quickly to the crisis, "Sewell tore off his coat and necktie, picked up a shovel, and made the dirt fly."¹⁴ In 30 minutes, while the people cheered, Sewell saw the first trickle of water from Biscayne Bay mingle with the waters of the Atlantic. (See cover photo.) By the next morning a free flow of water had been created between the ocean and the channel and the cry was, "Watch the Port of Miami."¹⁵

By 1926, The Voters and Taxpayers Protective League was heavily involved in the ongoing port location dispute, publishing "open letters" to all citizens and undertaking a letter writing campaign to Congress to gather support for their site plan. They had the support of none other than Major General Harry Taylor (Chief of Engineers). Along with his support, Taylor also provided written statements on where he thought the port should be located. Eventually, the issue was reduced to two possible sites: 1) "Bend of the Causeway" (today's Watson Island) which was known as the Sewell or Waldeck Plan or: 2) the "Orr Plan" which would require extensive revamping and dredging of Biscayne Bay.¹⁶

Of the two plans, the first site (Watson Island) was immediately available, required little dredging, and was somewhere from \$3 to \$7 million cheaper than the Orr Plan. The Orr Plan called for massive dredging and the creation of a vast new island port that would extend almost across the entire bay located on top of the Dodge Islands. It was this plan that resurfaced in the 1950s, leading to the creation of "The New Port of Miami" in the 1960s.¹⁷

The City of Miami, however, was unable to make any decision about either plan and in the midst of considerable controversy took no



Passengers in process of transferring from a liner to a large launch so that they could enter the shallow port area, 1925. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, gift of Arthur Chapman)

action on the location of the port, leaving it on Biscayne Boulevard. The city did, however, recognize its legal responsibilities by requesting the Florida Legislature to create the first Port Authority Bill, entitled, "Miami Airport and Harbor District Law."¹⁸

The port experienced a fairly steady growth with sudden spurts due to completion of various construction projects. In 1905, the opening of the first section of the Intracoastal Waterway between Miami and St. Augustine (later completed in the late 1930s, served as a catalyst for a marked increase in maritime trade.¹⁹ Another growth spurt occurred in 1912 when the Florida East Coast Railway Company completed two 25-foot-wide finger piers and re-dredged the channel to a depth of 18 feet, leading to their property on Biscayne Boulevard and Sixth Street.²⁰

After Flagler's death, the City of Miami realized the importance and value of possessing a seaport. The city therefore purchased the Flagler (or FEC Site as it was commonly referred to), and soon a number of plans were created to provide for future growth. Almost immediately some citizens began to actively campaign to relocate the port, free the existing site for commercial or park development, eliminate traffic congestion, and beautify the area.²¹

The 1920s witnessed an increase in the number of passenger ships traveling to and from Miami. On January 1, 1921, the *S.S. Georgiana Weems* instituted the first regularly scheduled service between Miami and Baltimore. On November 24, 1924, the *S.S. Apache* entered the port, inaugurating the first direct passenger service between New York and Miami.²²

During the 1920s Miami experienced "The Boom," a fantastic explosion in the price of real estate that lured large numbers of people to South Florida. As land prices skyrocketed, fortunes were made in a day. A building boom accompanied the land speculation and the lumber suppliers were hard pressed to keep up with the demand. The railroad was so swamped with incoming freight that it called for a freight embargo in August 1925 to repair overburdened tracks and prevent the train yard from being inundated with freight cars.²³ This action placed the burden of delivering lumber on ocean-going freighters.

Despite the crush of ships bringing supplies, operations at the port remained smooth until January 10, 1926, when the *Prinz Valdemar*, a Danish naval training ship which had been rigged as a floating hotel, ran aground at the entrance of the port's turning basin. Soon after, a brisk northeast wind caught her four tall masts, turning the 240-foot ship on her side and causing it to capsize. For 41 days the harbor entrance was blocked, trapping passengers and cargo in port. The passenger ship, the *George Washington*, and 10 other large vessels were firmly locked in Biscayne Bay.²⁴

To alleviate the situation, the U.S. Corps of Engineers dug an 80-foot bypass channel around the *Prinz Valdemar* that permitted some ships to edge up to the causeway and discharge their cargo. Then, as the channel began to fill with busy vessels, a steamer grounded on the outer channel, effectively again blocking the entrance to the port. Next, the weather took a sudden turn for the worse and additional ships began to run aground. Almost 45 million board feet of lumber remained undelivered and an unknown number of passengers were either trapped or unable to disembark.²⁵

Ultimately, the *Prinz Valdemar* was refloated and beached at Sixth Street and Biscayne Boulevard where it served a variety of functions for many years.²⁶ Reflecting on the grave problems caused by the sinking of the *Prinz Valdemar*, Commodore Munroe remarked, "One can only wonder why the vessel itself was not immediately



The hapless *Prinz Valdemar* effectively blocking the main ship channel with dredges at work nearby. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, gift of Arthur Chapman)

blown up.” It was another pioneer family, the Des Rocher Dredging and Towing Company that finally righted the ship and set it up along Biscayne Boulevard.²⁷

The year 1926 just got worse for the port. The devastating hurricane that struck Florida in September left the fledgling port with a collection of broken boats. The schooner *Rose Mahoney* was lying on Biscayne Boulevard along with numerous other vessels, and the new dredge that had been stationed in the bay to begin deepening the channel was now on its bottom. But the hapless *Prinz Valdemar* survived in one piece, its only damage was having been swung out of position.²⁸

The port and the maritime industry quickly recovered from this disaster. In 1931, the P&O Steamship Company commissioned the *S.S. Florida*, which became Miami’s first cruise ship to make regular trips between Cuba and Miami.²⁹ In 1932, the Greater Miami Port Association announced that the port had processed 24,168 passen-



The 1930s dredging at the southern tip of Miami Beach with Fisher Island to the right. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, gift of Arthur Chapman)

gers, which placed Miami fourth behind New York, Boston and San Francisco.³⁰

During the 1930s, the need for a larger port and a deeper access channel became more more apparent to city officials. By 1932, Miami's ship channel had been dredged to a depth of 25 feet, but still not deep enough to accommodate modern ships. Thirty steamship lines that operated out of Boston, New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New Orleans bypassed Miami. Five foreign lines expressed an interest in using Miami as a port of call. The Port Association advocated a 35-foot channel to augment Miami's Caribbean, South American and Transatlantic shipping trade.³¹

Even though the dredging was not completed by the end of the fiscal year of 1937-38, the 66,458 passengers who were processed through the port moved Miami up in the rankings to the nation's third busiest passenger port behind only New York (649,903) and Seattle (124,939).³²

During World War II, the U.S. Navy assumed control of the port as the area became a huge training camp for members of the armed forces. Because U-boats were actively engaging ships just off the coast, all cruise activity as well as coast-wide waterborne commerce was stopped. Many of the cruise ships were converted into troop transports (such as the *President Roosevelt*, today's *Emerald Seas*) while many vessels were used for all types of naval tasks.³³

The role of the U-boat and the danger presented to Allied shipping was altogether too real, especially during the early stages of the war. On February 2, 1942, the tanker *Pan Massachusetts*, carrying 100,000 barrels of flammable materials, was torpedoed off Cape Canaveral.³⁴ In May, a Mexican tanker was torpedoed, south of Fowey Rock.³⁵ One week later, another Mexican ship, the *Falo de Ora*, went down from a torpedo hit off the Florida Keys.³⁶

Civilian craft played a significant role in the conduct of the war. Some were converted to military use while others served equally useful purposes. Two Miamians, Dr. F.E. Kitchens and D.R. Smith saved 41 of the 42 men aboard the *James A. Moffet*, when it was torpedoed off Tennessee Reef.³⁷

When war hostilities ended, the Navy Department returned control of the port to the City of Miami, which recognized the need for a major expansion of the facility. The planning of this expansion met with major difficulty. The existing 26-acre site, located along Biscayne Boulevard, was surrounded by private developments that made enlargement virtually impossible.³⁸ A decade passed before any of the proposed expansion plans became a reality.

From 1946 to 1956 the port operated under authority of the City of Miami. It was during this period that the modern cruise industry was born. In January 1947, the P&O Company reinstated its cruise schedule between Miami, Havana, Nassau, and the West Indies with the *S.S. Florida*.³⁹

At the end of the 1940s, F. Leslie Fraser, a British Jamaican, envisioned the commercial possibilities of 14-day cruises in the Caribbean. He founded the Eastern Shipping Company and brought the *Nuevo Dominican* to Miami to establish cruises to the Dominican Republic. In 1951, Fraser added the *Yarmouth Castle* to his fleet. Three years later, he purchased the *Evangeline*.⁴⁰ A man of vision, Fraser concentrated his marketing efforts on popularizing 10-, 12- and 14-day cruises to various Caribbean Islands. Unfortunately, the response to this creative idea was unenthusiastic. The *Nuevo Dominica*



Above: As passenger traffic grew, congestion increased at the old Port of Miami on Biscayne Blvd, circa 1940s. Below: A number of ships and other landmarks can be seen in this 1960s photos, including *The Miami Herald* building in the background. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, Miami News Collection, 1989-011-13780 and 1989-011-13785)



occasionally sailed with as few as four passengers. Fraser's other ships often sailed with fewer than 100 passengers. Known in the industry as a man far ahead of his time, Fraser sold his interest in the firm in the late 1950s.⁴¹

One of the major reasons behind the decline of passenger ship travel during the 1950s was the rising popularity of air travel. Steamship companies operated under the same concept of travel as the airlines did—they took people where they had to go, primarily for business. The modern development of extended cruising for pleasure and relaxation was not yet a realistic venture.⁴²

As the 1950s came to a close, the issue of creating a larger and more modern port came to a head. By 1956, the port plummeted in the rankings to 35th, behind many other ports in the U.S.⁴³ To halt this decline, the City of Miami finally began preparations for a new port. Five competing proposals on where and how to construct a new port emerged: 1) expand the old port site northward by filling in the western shore of Biscayne Bay; 2) dredge and fill in the Dodge Islands; 3) build the port on Virginia Key; 4) let Port Everglades serve as Miami's seaport; or 5) build a new site on South Miami Beach.⁴⁴

Since the seaport served all 27 municipalities within Dade County, the newly formed Metropolitan-Dade County Government offered to assume the responsibilities of planning and constructing the new port. Again, as in the 1920s, the location for the port became a major issue. *The Miami Herald* lent its powerful voice and support by printing entire sections on the subject. In the June 22, 1958 issue, sites were discussed. Editorially, however, *The Herald* supported the historic Orr Plan.⁴⁵

Ultimately, Metro-Dade made the decision to support the Orr Plan. On July 22, 1959, Metro-Dade announced that the new port would be constructed on a string of small islands, spoil banks, which had been created when the turning basin and main ship channel were dredged. This decision marked the beginning of the present Dodge Island Seaport. (The Dodge Islands were named for Dr. R.L. Dodge, a prominent citizen and a member of the Port Authority that once included both the airport and seaport.)⁴⁶

In 1960, city and county officials reached a joint agreement about operating control of the port. Dade County purchased the existing port facilities for \$1.3 million and on July 1, 1960, O.W. Campbell, county manager, issued Administrative Order No. 60-5:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me. . .there is hereby created a Seaport Department that shall be responsible for the operation of the commercial seaport and coordination of the construction for the new port facilities. The department shall be organized in accordance with accompanying Chart Number 41. This administrative order is effective as of the 1st day of July 1960. This administrative order is hereby submitted to the Board of County Commissioners.⁴⁷

Thus, the birth certificate of the New Port of Miami was drafted.

For the first seven years, all the construction costs for the Dodge Island site were paid by Dade County. This amount totaled \$15.3 million and was here after known as “seed money.” After that, the Port of Miami was on its own, financially independent and self supporting. The seaport supported itself by selling revenue bonds and redeeming them from earned revenue. Each issue was given the highest possible rating in the municipal bond market.

The “New Port of Miami” had officially opened on October 4, 1964, when the *JFK* (a barge converted from a Navy LC-1) dis-

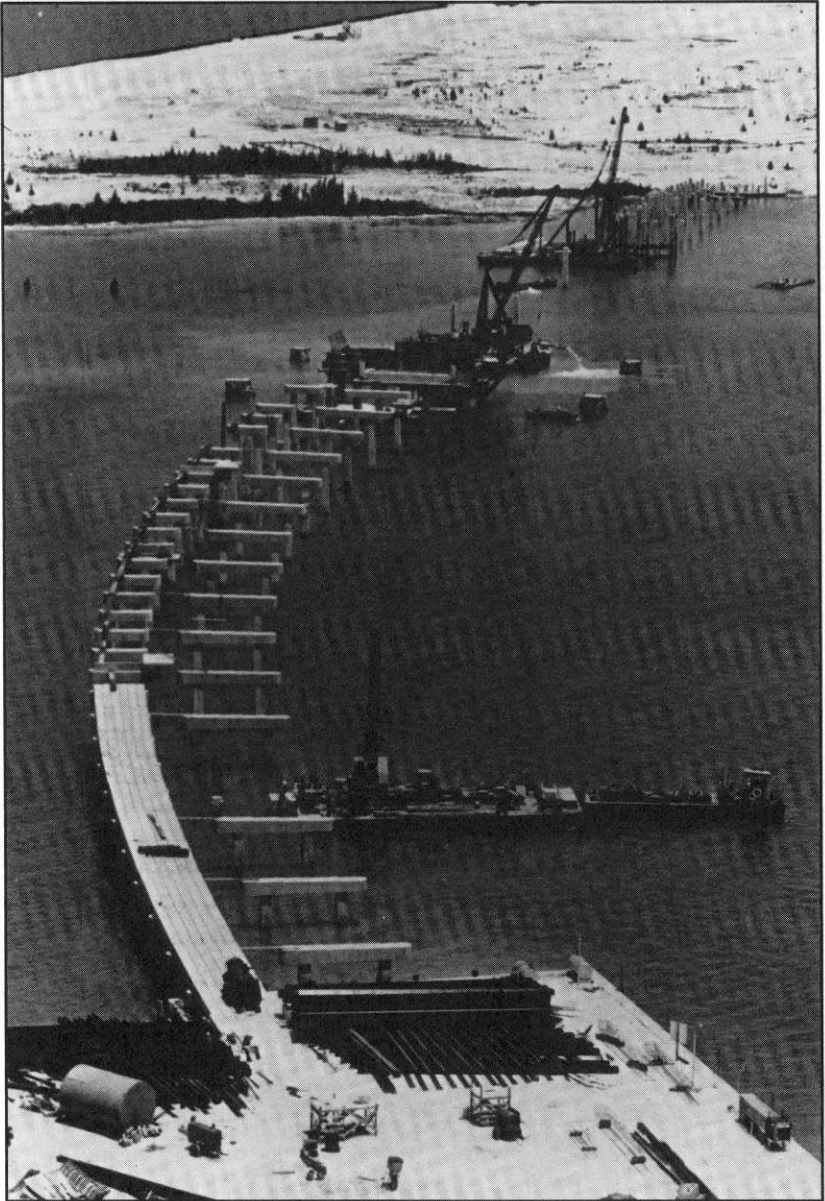


Cutting the ribbon for the new multi-million dollar Port of Miami expansion on Dodge Island, June 7, 1965. From left to right, Port Director Arthur Darlow, Commissioner Newton Green, Commissioner Joe Boyd, Dade County Vice Mayor Arthur H. Patton, Jr., and Commissioner Lew Whitworth. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, 81-99-110)



Above: Spoil islands pre-1961, which were to become the site of the new Port of Miami and below, after construction had begun, circa 1960s. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, 81-71-1 and 81-17-2)





Construction of the highway and rail bridges to the new Port of Miami, circa 1959-60. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, 81-17-4)

charged her cargo. This barge was operated by the Miami San Juan Trailer Company, Inc. After performing in this historic event, the barge's cargo of heavy equipment was welded to her decks as a precaution against heavy seas. In December of the same year, however, the *JFK* capsized and sank anyway.⁴⁸

Coordinated Caribbean Transport, Inc. (CCT) brought in the *Freight Transporter* on November 8, 1964. It was the first true cargo vessel to berth and be worked at the new port. Another pioneering company, Norwegian Caribbean Lines (NCL), had been operating the *Sunward*, as a three-to-four-day passenger ship. On December 18, 1966, the line brought her in from Marseilles, France, to Bay 26 (Shed A), departing on the 19th. *The Sunward* was the first passenger vessel to utilize the new facility. Both CCT and NCL continue to play a major role in the development of South Florida's maritime industry. By 1983, CCT was the twelfth largest cargo line and NCL was the busiest passenger line operating at the port.⁴⁹

Shed A was the first building completed at the new port. It was a 200,000-square-foot clear span structure large enough to accommodate three football fields end-to-end. Then two more cargo sheds, 36,000 square feet each, designated as "E" and "F," were completed on the eastern end of the port for the Caribbean trade. In 1967, the County dedicated Shed B, a second 200,000-square-foot building. At the same time, the County widened the Eastern Channel to 300 feet, the South Channel to 200 feet and dredged both of them to a Mean Low Water (MLW) depth of 25 feet. During March 1973, dredging commenced for the deepening of the North Channel and turning basin to 36 feet MLW. This important dredging work, completed in December 1975, provided access for larger cargo carriers.⁵⁰

In 1965, the port placed the first of two 20,000 square foot buildings of the Maritime Office Center in use. Fifteen years later, they completed an additional five-story, 36,000-square-foot office building that interconnected with the original two.

By 1967, the New Port of Miami assumed all the functions of the old port. (Later, the old site became Bicentennial Park.) On December 29, 1968, the \$5 million first five passenger terminals were formally dedicated. Port Director Irwin Stephens, a retired admiral, proceeded with the ceremony even though the International Longshoremen's Union was on strike. At the time of the dedication, the terminal was only two-fifths complete. The total plan called for five separate "piers," each capable of handling about 2,500 passen-

gers.⁵¹ Within a year of its opening, only the Port of New York could claim more cruise passengers.⁵²

The eastern end of the island was designed for 2,000 feet of dock aprons with two roll-on/roll-off platforms serving four trailer ships at one time. The south channel, adjacent to the area just described, had another roll-on/roll-off platform that served an additional two ships. These platforms bordered a container and trailer assembly area. Adjacent to this specialized cargo area were two more cargo sheds which were specifically designed for the “stuffing” of trailers and containers. They were designed as Shed C (90,000 square feet, completed in 1970) and Shed D, expanded to 140,000 square feet in 1975. A seventh cargo building, Shed G, consisted of 138,000 square feet and became the Miami home of CCT. In 1981, an auxiliary truck maintenance building was constructed for CCT’s use in repairing their trailers, containers, and heavy equipment.⁵³

Miami’s location was a great asset for rapid growth. Miami offered the closest U.S. port to the Caribbean and most of Latin America, as well as the Eastern coast of Africa. This advantageous location created a greater profit margin for importers and freight forwarders. As the transportation costs were reduced and delivery dates expedited, there was a natural increase of profits. This held especially true for cargo that was being transshipped. In 1960, the general cargo economic impact to Dade County was \$5,512,420. By 1979, this impact had increased by thirty-fold. In 1960, 411,170 tons of cargo were processed, and by 1981, 2,757,374 tons were processed. It was also in 1981 that the port embarked on a quarter billion dollar expansion project. Marketers again picked up on Flagler’s historic phrase, “Watch the Port of Miami,” using it as a major promotional slogan.⁵⁴

In addition to this tremendous increase in cargo handling, the number of passengers increased as well. In 1960, the port processed 136,275 passengers and 1,029,687 in 1976—the greatest number of passengers ever processed in worldwide travel. By 1981, the number had increased to 1,567,709. In 1982, as a result of this heavy passenger traffic, over one-third (29) of the world’s operating passenger ships sailed regularly from the Port of Miami.⁵⁵

The port has encouraged the development of roll-on/roll-off cargo service and acted as a pioneer in this field. Because of this pioneering action, by 1983, the Port of Miami led all U.S. ports in RO/RO cargo. Because of this, the Port of Miami did not have to rely on the

Florida economy for success, as much of the processed cargo originated elsewhere. This was especially true for transshipped containers. By 1983, 36 modern trailer ships (they also carry containers) called Miami home.⁵⁶

Just as the operating philosophy of the port has pioneered new passenger and cargo methods, it has also encouraged the development of academic and scientific centers. In 1967, the Environmental Science Services Administration, now the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), selected the Port of Miami from 114 competing areas as its base of operations for oceanographic research vessels. The first NOAA vessel was the \$10 million *M/V Discoverer*. A four-building shoreside and maintenance base and an 800-foot long slip for the research ships was constructed for NOAA near the center of the south half of the port. The University of Miami's Rosenstiel Institute of Marine Sciences shares the use of the slip and some of the other facilities.⁵⁷

The original 25-Year Master Plan (1969) for the development and expansion of the port called for 17,000 linear feet of peripheral berthing. However, the rapid growth rate of the port was not anticipated. The 1979 expansion program called for the creation of an additional 295 acres of land and two towering container cranes (40 long tons each). In March 1983, both cranes were fully operational and the tagline of the port was modified to add "The Container Port of the South" to "The Cruise Capital of the World," a designation attained 10 years earlier.⁵⁸

One of the main catalysts for the port's growth was the 1966 decision by Norwegian Caribbean Lines to use the port as its base of operations. When NCL established its operations there, the total number of passengers was down because of adverse publicity from two cruise ship fires. The presence and marketing effort of NCL, which introduced cruises that had immediate public appeal, is credited with stopping the decline.⁵⁹

In 1966, NCL introduced the highly successful *M.S. Sunward* with one class cruising on three- and four-day cruises. In 1968, they introduced the *M.S. Starward*, the first ship to offer year-round seven-day cruises to Jamaica. Then in 1970, the *M.S. Skyward* became the first ship to make regular stops at Cap Haitian, Haiti, which subsequently became a popular cruise port. In 1972, NCL offered a 14-day cruise, the first since the 1950s. By 1975, NCL was the only com-

pany offering three Caribbean itineraries. In May 23, 1980, N.C.L. brought in the *S.S. Norway* (formerly *The France*), the largest passenger ship in the world.⁶⁰

The port's growth exploded beyond expectations. The 1961 master plan had projected 850,000 passengers by 1985, a figure surpassed 12 years ahead of time in 1973.⁶¹

The year 1973 was to become the port's new benchmark of success, attaining the nation's cruise capital status, based on the number of cruise ships that provided regular service from the facility. Three years later, the port was regarded as the cruise capital of the world, processing more than one million passengers annually. By 1979, one-third of the world's cruise liners worked out of the port and the annual passenger total climbed to more than 1.3 million.⁶²

The appointment of Carmen J. Lunetta as port director in 1979 marked the beginning of a new era. Under his aggressive leadership, the level of port activities expanded as never before.⁶³ The Twenty-Five Year Master Plan, then just 10 years old, had to be completely rewritten. Expansion moved so quickly that it was necessary for the consulting firm of Post, Buckley, Schuh, and Jurnigan, Inc. to maintain an office at the port. Mr. Blaise Lionelli, project manager for Post Buckley, soon became as well known as anyone on the Director's staff. Because of the port's exciting development, expansion and growth became everyday topics.⁶⁴

Today, the main ship's channel is 40 feet deep and can accommodate the world's largest passenger ships. Office space at the port has tripled to more than 100,000 square feet. Moreover, six more transit sheds have been completed, berthing increased by 40 percent, and a total of 20,800 feet of railway track was added. The sailors' recreational needs were also addressed with a tennis court, track, soccer field, gym, and an Olympic-size swimming pool.⁶⁵

Though the past has been bright, the future looks even brighter. The master plan at the time of this writing looks to fully developing Lummus and Sams Islands which are adjacent to the present facility, thus doubling the present cruise and cargo facilities. This plan has four distinct phases and the estimated cost for the entire project is \$230.3 million. The completion date has been set for the year 2000, but if past performance holds true, it may occur much earlier.⁶⁶

Certainly the records indicate that such rapid advancement is possible. Consider the following chart:

Year	Revenue	Passengers	Cargo⁶⁷
1981	10,339,907	1,567,709	2,757,374
1982	11,867,619	1,760,255	2,665,921
1983	14,201,008	2,002,654	2,305,645
1984	15,943,548	2,217,065	2,287,281
1985	17,135,048	2,326,685	2,333,026
1986	18,223,415	2,520,571	2,405,784
1987	19,933,197	2,633,041	2,425,937
1988	26,489,275	2,502,411	2,602,556
1989	30,035,859	3,100,055	3,206,417
1990	32,236,465	2,734,816	3,590,937
1991	36,033,262	2,928,532	3,882,284

The economic importance of this very rapid growth is not limited to maritime operations alone. It includes related enterprises such as hotels, restaurants, trucking and handling of food, related travel, etc. This economic ripple effect was pegged in 1981 at a value of \$1.76 billion. In 1986 the figure was \$3.1 billion and in 1991 the figure increased to \$5.27 billion.⁶⁸

Today, the growth and development of the port remains unprecedented. Restricted from further eastward expansion due to the Fisher Island development the port has turned its sites back to its beginnings, back to Flagler’s Biscayne Boulevard site. In any case, one statement is worth remembering today: “Watch the Port of Miami.”



The growth of the Port of Miami from the days of rail to the number one ranking by passenger count in the world is typified by this photo of the sailing ship, *Christian Radich* and the ultra-modern *Song of Norway*. (Historical Association of Southern Florida, gift of Arthur Chapman)

Endnotes

1. Letter from J.T. McLaughlin to A.P. Upshur, January 16, 1842. *Naval Records*, Information Relating to the Service of the Navy and Marine Corps, p. 109. See also National Archives, *Early Wars Branch*, Adjutant General's Office, Orders and Special Orders, Volume 10, 1837-1838 and "Notes on Fort Dallas," Records Group 94, Document File No. 44540.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Unpublished notes found in the Port of Miami File located at the library of the Historical Association of Southern Florida (HASF). Hereafter referred to as "PHF."

4. *Ibid.*; See also Helen Muir, *Miami, U.S.A.* (New York: Holt & Co., 1953), 69.

5. *Ibid*; See also James E. Buchanan, ed., *Miami: A Chronological And Documentary History* (New York: Oceana Publishing, 1978), 4-5.

6. *Ibid*. In 1981, the Port of Miami embarked on a quarter-billion-dollar expansion program using this quote and developing it into a marketing/promotional slogan.

7. *Ibid*.

8. *Ibid*.

9. *Ibid*; See also John Sewell, *Memoirs and History of Miami, Florida* (Miami: The Franklin Press, 1933), 14.

10. Interview with Estelle Chapman Fay, Lamar Louise Curry and Lenore McLean. Notes are in the possession of the author. Here after referred to as "Interviews."

11. PHF.

12. Interviews.

13. PHF, South Florida Maritime History folder in file, 2.

14. *Ibid*. Sewell is honored with a historical marker located in Seaman's Park at the port.

15. *Ibid*.

16. PHF, Greater Miami Port Plan.

17. *Ibid*.

18. *Ibid*.

19. *Ibid*.

20. *Ibid*; See also Florida State Planning Board, *Miami and Dade County* (New York: Bacon, Perry & Daggett, 1940), 3.

21. PHF.

22. *Florida State Planning Board*.

23. *Ibid*.

24. *Ibid*.

25. *Ibid*; See also Samuel J. Boldrick, "The Ship That Stopped The Boom," *Update* (June 1975), 8-9.

26. Kenneth Ballinger, *Miami's Millions* (Miami: Franklin Press, 1936), 119.

27. Interviews.

28. PHF; See also Boldrick.

29. *Ibid*.

30. PHF; Greater Miami Port Association, Port of Greater Miami (Miami: Greater Miami Port Association, 1932), 1.

31. *Ibid*, 7-8, 20.

32. Miami's Chamber of Commerce, "Relative Standings, Port

of Miami Fiscal Year, 1937-1938." See also PHF.

33. I. J. Stephens, "The Port of Miami," *Update* (June, 1975), 3. See also the "Petition for Amplification of Greater Miami Port Project" (Document 470, 76C, 1st S), (Miami: City of Miami). These documents detail the military importance of the port as well as its importance in terms of international trade.

34. James E. Buchanan, ed. *Miami: A Chronological And Documentary History* (New York: Oceana Publishing, 1978), 35.

35. *Ibid.*, 36.

36. PHF

37. *Ibid.*

38. Stephens, 3-12.

39. PHF

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.* Fraser was a true maritime pioneer who helped to create the modern cruise industry.

42. Hugh B. Cave, *Wings Across The World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1945), 163-174.

43. PHF; "Decrepit Port is City's Now," *Miami News*, October 18, 1956; "Neglected City Docks Have Turned Away Ships for Lack of Space and Facilities," *The Miami Herald*, December 16, 1956; "Miami Neglects Marine Port, Boots Its Port Plan Again," *Miami News*, February 6, 1957; "Ocean Port Neglected, It Rates 35th in U.S.," *The Miami Herald*, December 16, 1956, 6G.

44. Stephen Trumbull, "Port Plans Bring Hot Arguments," *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 1956; "What is the Proper Role of Miami's City Docks?" *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 1956; "Key Site Again Eyed For Port," *The Miami Herald*, February 6, 1957.

45. Juanita Greene, "New Port Waits at Crossroads," *The Miami Herald*, April 26, 1956; "What's To Do About Miami Port," *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1956; "City Faces Challenge on Seaport," *The Miami Herald*, April 19, 1959; Paul Einstein, "Port Battles Slug In Open," *The Miami Herald*, May 8, 1959.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Metropolitan Dade County, Administrative Order 60-5.

48. PHF, Port Handbook.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

51. PHF, Greater Miami Port Plan and Port of Miami History, 2.

52. PHF, Port of Miami Fact Sheet, 1980, 3-9; JoAnn Werner, "Port of Miami Opens \$5 Million Terminal," *The Miami Herald*, December 30, 1968.

53. PHF.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*, Norwegian Caribbean Lines, travel brochures and travel agenda for the *M.S. Starward* and history of NCL, 1-6.

57. PHF.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

61. PHF, Port Fact Sheet 1980, 9.

62. *Ibid.*

63. M.R. Stierheim, "Appointment of Seaport Director Memo," January 16, 1979. Carmen J. Lunetta replaced Captain Robert Waldron who retired in 1978. The other directors were Admiral Irving J. Stephens, Arthur Darlow and Charles A. Olsen.

64. PHF, Port Fact Sheet 1980, 4.

65. *Ibid.*, Port Fact Sheet 1980, 4-5; See also Annual Reports.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Ibid.*