

Tequesta

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Cover—African American workers breaking ground for the Royal Palm Hotel, March 15, 1896.

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Editor's Foreword

The 2009 number of *Tequesta* represents a departure from our traditional fare, which has offered articles on a wide variety of topics. In conjunction with the Museum's path breaking *Black Crossroads: the African Diaspora in Miami* exhibition, the most comprehensive look yet at the rich tapestry of the African American experience in Miami, the journal contains four articles addressing a wide variety of topics on black history that appeared in earlier editions of *Tequesta*, as well as the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, and *South Florida History*.

Raymond A. Mohl, a professor of History at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, authored "Black Immigrants: Bahamians in Early Twentieth-century Miami," which appeared in the January 1987 number of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, the journal of the Florida Historical Society. This insightful article by a prolific author examined the remarkable influx of black Bahamians in early Miami and the unique culture they brought with them.

The 1988 issue of *Tequesta* carried an article by Thomas K. Peterson and myself entitled, "Liberty Square, 1933-1987." A retired Circuit Court judge, Peterson, at the time of the article's publication was Coordinator of Dade County Schools and Neighborhoods Intervention Consortium. In this role, he worked closely with Liberty Square, one of the nation's first public housing projects, whose opening provided the jumpstart for the development of Liberty City. We had access to the files on every person who had resided there, and interviewed many persons who had been living in the complex since its opening. The National Archives also provided a superb source of documentation for the story.

Kip Vought was a student in classes Professor Greg Bush and I taught at the University of Miami two decades ago. In these courses, he was working on a study of Miami's Colored Town, the city's first black neighborhood, and Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), a black nationalist movement with an active chapter in Miami. From this protracted study came "Racial Stirrings in Colored Town: The UNIA in Miami during the 1920s," which appeared in the 2000 edition of *Tequesta*. The article addressed the ebb and flow of the fortunes of the UNIA in Miami.

Joyce Jackson, a professor of Ethnomusicology and Folklore at Louisiana State University, published "African American and West Indian Folklife in South Florida," in the summer 1990 issue of *South Florida History*. A prolific scholar, Dr. Jackson has focused on African American music and culture, diaspora rituals, and community displacement and women's agency. Jackson's article anticipated the growing attention the Historical Museum would devote to this topic through exhibits, seminars, and musical presentations.

American historiography paid little attention to the rich history of black Americans until the second half of the twentieth century. Since then this topic has come under intense study. The articles contained within this special edition of *Tequesta* are representative of the effort at the local level to examine the African American story. While the early issues of *Tequesta* were superb in both the quality and range of their articles, today's journal, as well as the other periodicals represented here, are far more inclusive in their scope. We, their audience, are the beneficiaries of this development.

Paul S. George, Ph.D.
Editor, *Tequesta*

Curator's Foreword

In February of 2010, the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF) will end a year-long exploration of Miami's rich black history. Components of this have included a major 2,000 square foot exhibition titled *Black Crossroads: The African Diaspora in Miami*, a monthly series of dynamic programs on topics such as Little-Known Black Communities, New Scholarship on Black Miami and African Diaspora Culinary Delights, and a full range of music and arts programming that brought Haitian and African American storytellers, a Trinidadian steel pan orchestra, Afro-Cuban and Afro-Peruvian dance ensembles and much more to attendees of our Saturday Fun Days, summer camp and school tours. It goes without saying that it's been quite a year.

Unbeknownst to most, the foundation for much of our museum's ability to develop the *Black Crossroads* exhibition and its related programming has its roots in three important publications: the museum's popular history magazine *South Florida History*, our dear old *Tequesta* (now entering its 69th year) and *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, a journal published by the Florida Historical Society.

When the museum opened its doors in 1962, few resources existed on the history of blacks in Miami. Little had been written, little had been collected and, as a result, little was being told that reflected this experience. Before judging us too harshly, please note that we were not alone in this respect. The black studies movement that was the catalyst for the teaching of new courses in black literature, history, art and other topics at the college level was born in the late '60s (in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement) and didn't fully take root until the mid 1980s. When it did, however, all three publications took note and took the lead in publishing the works of students and scholars in these emerging fields.

Four of these works spanning publication years from 1987 to 2000 are represented here in this special edition of *Tequesta*. They were selected partially because they coincide with the major themes explored in the exhibition: Communities, Struggles, Labor and Tradition, partially because they offer a good historiography of Miami's black communities and partially because they have con-

tributed much to public knowledge about these communities. Museum curators consulted them extensively in researching the *Black Crossroads* exhibition. The articles document the emergence of Miami's first black communities (Bahamians and African Americans mainly) in the late nineteenth century, examine the uphill battles they fought for access to equal housing and treatment and explore the cultural contributions their artistic traditions have made to Miami. No comprehensive study of black Miami can be completed without reading them, and, for those just delving into this history, they represent good introductions to this diverse community. This edition of *Tequesta* commemorates the contribution all three publications and scholars such as Raymond Mohl, Paul S. George, Kip Vought, Thomas K. Peterson and Joyce Jackson have made to the field in taking Miami's black communities from "little written" to "better known." Last but not least, it heralds our institution's ongoing commitment to telling the stories of all of South Florida's peoples.

Joanne Hyppolite, Ph.D.
Chief Curator