

# THE GREATER NORTH MIAMI HISTORIAN

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PHOTO BY JEAN PIERRE FAUTEUX

## PUBLIC WORKS WITH PARKS AND RECREATION SCORES AGAIN

The City of North Miami's float in the Orange Bowl Parade created history for the third year in a row. The personnel of both the Public Works Department and the Parks and Recreation Department constructed this magnificent 52-foot long float. Great job – Well done. The "Millennium Express" train moved along pulling a large clock depicting significant historical events in the City of North Miami. The highlights on the clock covered the 1926 chartering, the 1950 Half-Century mark, the City's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and finally entering the new millennial year 2000. All of the beautiful graphic arts and displays were augmented with an array of music and music artist of star class and quality. Another historical event goes into the GNMHS files.

## THE ARCHIVE ROOM GROWS AND GROWS AND GROWS

The Archive Room hasn't really grown but the substance and material within the four walls is beginning to expand to a point where we will need more space. This quarter the ever-famous Ed Krause of the City of North Miami's Building Dept and a veritable fountain of what was, where, and when came around with a couple of photos of the old Elks Club. The Club was located on NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and was on the site of the older North Miami Riding Academy or the Albert's Dairy Property. We are always interested in old maps and Mitch 'Flash' Green knows this so he popped in with a couple of maps as well as an old 1971 North Miami Journal newspaper.

Our speaker in March, Rick Ricciardelli donated three personal badges, one was from the time when he was Chief of the Boxing Commission, and another was an Honorary Fire Chief's badge, and the other one was his badge as Commissioner of Fire and Police in the City of North Miami. Jo Anna Gardini donated an interesting assortment of the personal papers of Mrs. Mildred Mahood a pioneer, teacher, and old time resident of North Miami who later in her life was a political activist. Neil Keyes kicked in a parking meter from the time when the city had a few on NE 125<sup>th</sup> street. That makes two, soon we can have own parking lot and maybe raise a few dollars to enlarge or grow more space. Neil also kicked in a 1969 North Miami High School Annual. Our speaker in April, Dr. Elton Gissendanner donated the Gissendanner Collection, an International Collection of Newspapers and photos covering the entire history of the Interama Project.

The Library came through again with their back room overflow material. The overflow was a number of old scrapbooks that have information that needs to be evaluated, organized, and filed. If you would like help with this chore call Penny Valentine (305-891-7811) over at the Chamber of Commerce office. The Library also threw in a stack of Hopkins Real Estate plat books and aerial maps. So a "Big Thanks" to the crew at the Library. Jack Rizzo brought over a Miami Daily News Special Bulletin about TV JOES opening on March 7, 1960 with 20 employees and 8 trucks out on the road. Lee Feldman the City Manager was thinking about us.

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## RICCIARDELLI TELLS IT LIKE IT WAS

John “Rick” Ricciardelli filled the house for his talk on the “The Old Days” a period of time ranging from the late forties to the middle sixties. It was standing room only and Rick told it “like it was” to the delight of the audience. Rick took off in 1947 when the City of North Miami was inundated with thousands of returning veterans looking for homes. North Miami at that time was an oasis of vacant lots that had been created in the boom days of Twenties. A developer only had to acquire the lots and build homes. The city then a sleepy village took off in a building boom creating housing for Rick and other returning World War II veterans.



**JOHN RICCIARDELLI**

The city began to grow. As the city grew and according to Rick, social awareness grew within this group who were mostly WW II veterans. Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, and Veterans organizations popped up around the city. As families moved in, the need for schools, churches, stores, and medical facilities increased. The economic and taxable base of the town increased and the part time Town Council was overwhelmed with work. In 1952, the citizens voted out the old part time management by the Town Council and voted in a full time City Manager and Professional Staff. Building permits in City Hall were on the increase. The Youth Foundation created in 1946 was on its way to being the center of youth activities in North Dade. North Miami was no longer a sleepy little village. It was a hustling little town with a bunch of great citizens holding potluck suppers, variety shows and raffles to raise money for youth activities, churches and many other civic needs.

Rick told us about Karl Engle who had come in as Police Chief in 1945 along with a civic associate H.H. Woodsmall and with others who created the above mentioned “Youth Foundation.” This action took the local youth off the streets and by 1947 was becoming the foundation for the North Miami Parks and Recreation Department. These types of programs were making the city a safe and desirable place to live. According to Rick people left their doors and windows open and the only thing to worry about was the mosquito. Air-conditioning wasn’t an option in those days. It was an oscillating fan or an open window or both.

North Miami was always known for its pure water supply and by the early fifties was being pushed to its limits when developers like Gaines, Nichols, CNN, and Cravero completed over 900 homes in the “West Side.” The Town had planned ahead and “Rick” had a good word for D.W. Jones, the water Department Superintendent who by 1950 while the population was burgeoning punched 6 wells in the ground and had water lines running into the West Side. The Water Department under Jones won the “Best Water in Florida” award 10 years in a row. Under a little pressure from other participating Cities the City voluntarily dropped out of competition in order to let others win. They returned five years later and scooped up the trophy again.

One of veteran’s organizations that took to the forefront of social and political restructuring in the town was the Am-Vets. Its origin was in North Miami’s West Side. In the late forties and early fifties the West Side was on the other side of “No-Where” with no direct access across the Biscayne Canal to the East Side. Rick Ricciardelli then a popular musician on Miami Beach found out his homemade amplifier for the band had other uses, like campaigning. Rick and others organized the Am-Vets and it eventually became the largest Post in the United States with Rick holding office on the national level.

In 1949, Rick was elected to the Town Council with a big vote coming from the Vets in the West Side. The West Side was to be joined to the East Side by a bridge in 1951. The bridge was a result of an early campaign promise by Rick. He campaigned for the bridge and worked hard to acquire the Rights of Way and to get the Bond Issue (\$98,000) passed for construction. The J. “Rick” Ricciardelli Bridge now stands as the main doorway between West Side and East Side and it opened the corridor for West Siders to city Hall. In the same year and through political maneuvering the Broad Causeway and the Ricciardelli Bridge opened and provided a corridor from the West Side to Miami Beach. Rick said that he thought the bridge could have been called the

## LAFE ALLEN'S TOWN ALSO KNOWN AS THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Originally the City of North Miami Beach was called by the name of Fulford. The name came from one of the early settlers Captain William H. Fulford, a Coast Guardsman who served in the area during the Spanish American War. He liked the area so well that after the war he settled in the area on a ridge that he had observed during his time with the Coast Guard. It was always high and dry and when the government made the land available it has been noted that he was the first one to move. Some may tell you it was "Fulford by the Sea" but that was to come later with the Subdivision development in the 1920's.

From those days in the early 1900's, Fulford blossomed into a small prosperous community of farms with a general store, a School, a Post Office and a Rail Road Station. The "Pearl" of the little community, however, was the Alabama Hotel built by R.E. McDonald. People came from all over the county for the Chicken Dinner served at "Bama" Hotel. It was not unusual for some of the folks down in Miami to team up (horse and buggy) on Sunday and ride up to the Bama for a noon time dinner or an early supper. McDonald was a sharp Real Estate entrepreneur and a businessman. He also built a vegetable packing plant on the railroad and filled the trains going north with vegetables. McDonald became an integral part of community politics as the years moved on.

New comers were slowly coming into "Fulford by the Sea" later developed for more reasons than the chicken dinners at the Bama. One of those newcomers, a fellow by the name of L.R. "Lafe" Allen, came to Miami in 1912 to buy an interest in the Miami Metropolis the local newspaper. The Metropolis was the forerunner of the Miami Herald. This venture, however, did not materialize but Allen liked the community and stayed on. Others have described Allen as an idealist, an opportunist, a journalist, and a human dynamo of activity. He started his career in Las Vegas working for a printer and his weekly newspaper. Three years later he began his own newspaper; a daily and morning paper called the Las Vegas Examiner. His later travels and investments took him to New Mexico where he started another newspaper and where he introduced the Associated Press, a first for New Mexico.

Lafe Allen was not the kind of a person to stay idle and thus, not being able to buy into the "Metropolis" he looked around for another venture. About 1917 he drew up plans for what he called "The Perfect City." that encompassed more than four thousand acres. It was only a paper plan. He needed to find a good ridge to place it on. Fulford appeared to fit the bill. In his travels around the country he became aware of the architectural innovations and city plans that were in use. Brigham Young's plan of Salt Lake City had impressed him. The 132-foot wide main streets that Brigham Young had required to turn double teams of oxen around were an integral part of his plan. His main streets were at 125-feet and the business streets at 100-feet and finally the residential streets at 80-feet. His transportation plan was totally designed for an automobile oriented society.

In 1924 he was able to begin implementation of it with a close friend by the name of Joshua Reynolds. They acquired 557 acres and worked with a land developer or promoter as they were called at that time. The Florida Cities Finance Company was the chosen promoter and was owned by Edgar Linn and Merle Tebbets. One of the provisions with Linn and Tebbets was that the lots and the street plans Of "The Perfect City" be adhered to. The project was shortly underway and people were not only teaming up in horse and buggy from Miami but they were also boating up the Intra-Coastal Waterway to the landing at what is now 163<sup>rd</sup> Street. The Florida boom was on hand and the lots were being sold sometimes eight times before final recording. Most of the sales were probably site unseen. After the boom, came the bust along with the 1926 Hurricane. Between the short money and the idea that hurricanes could destroy your home or investment, the Florida Cities Finance Company was in deep trouble.

People were refusing to pay for the lots or the taxes and within a year or so the tax bills were huge. When the lots were not paid for, they reverted back to the Company through foreclosure and so did the tax bills. Allen was concerned with the collapse of his "Perfect City." He personally felt that the people should get title to their lots so he cut a deal with a great number of them. If they would pay the taxes and a pro-rata share of the balance he would deed the lots over to them. In addition other deals were made that involved the City of Fulford Tax Assessor, and the Company. The city of Fulford got donated land for parks, a City Hall site and more donated land for a power station. In return the Company got a reduced tax bill. Many of the lots and blocks were replatted and converted to acreage thus reducing the tax bills even more. In 1931 Fulford became North

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Occasionally the Society comes across a message or an editorial from the past that relates to the present. With this in mind I thought it appropriate to present this quarter's President's Message with an editorial from the Miami Shores Bulletin of August 5<sup>th</sup> 1927 and the pen of its Editor Don Henshaw. Keep in mind that the City we know as North Miami was Miami Shores in 1927. Henshaw's prediction was accurate as to Miami Shores/ North Miami not being annexed by the City of Miami. In addition the present city is growing as effectively as the community described by Henshaw. We are still creating that same "Spirit" that he refers to and we still need to meet the same challenges that he puts forth. The Society has a few more of his editorials and most of them are still appropriate to that time or ours. Read on.

# The Miami Shores Bulletin

Published Every Friday

Don G. Henshaw  
Editor

Post Office Box  
116

Violet Henshaw  
Business Mgr.

Volume III

August 5<sup>th</sup> 1927

Number 30

### " THE SPIRIT OF MIAMI SHORES "

Colonel Lindbergh has made famous the phrase used as a name for his tran-atlantic plane, "The Spirit of St. Louis", the other part of the "We" combination that battled the elements to eternal fame.

We cannot help but believe that these two expressions have something to teach all communities, and altho this may not be the proper place to preach a sermon, we are inclined to take them as a text, and talk about them a bit.

Years ago when Arch Creek was "the fourth stop north of Miami on the F.E.C." there was a very well defined and active community spirit. Nowhere in South Florida was there a more intense pride than that of the people of Arch Creek in their quiet little town, made beautiful by shaded roads, and unique by the Natural Bridge.

With the coming of real estate activity and the rapid growth in population we began to look upon our community as a residential suburb of Miami. The majority of us found our interests lay in Miami, and the greater part of our thought and activity was directed southward.

Then came the incorporation of the Town, but the majority of us looked upon it as being a means of modernizing our community, and caring for our mutual needs until Miami should find it convenient to take us over.

The prospect of Miami taking us over is extremely remote at the present; and we have all been paying greater attention to our own community in recent months as a wise and earnest administration has gone about the business of firmly establishing this as a Community of real worth.

Today, we see in the process of erection one of the most beautiful and practical public buildings in South Florida as our Town Hall; our people are taking greater pride in their own properties; we have engaged in an intelligent and comprehensive public improvement program; we see community efforts coming into being: a Boy's Chorus, the first in the State; A Masonic Lodge to help the Knights of Pythias in the spread of fraternalism; A baseball team that has entered the Greater Miami League; and perhaps best of all, an awakening on the part of the Miami people to the fact that the name of Miami Shores is not just that of a real estate development, but that of a community of intelligent, earnest, loyal, patriotic and upright citizens engaged in the pioneer American activity of building a new city.

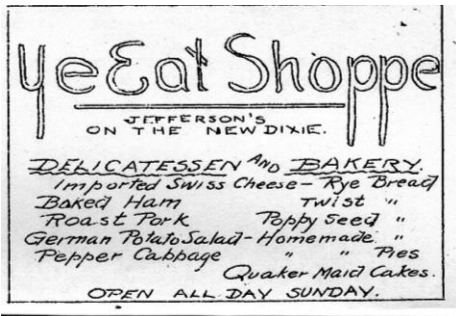
We are creating here a spirit of Miami Shores that will become a tradition in the years to come. That it may never be a spirit of injustice, intolerance, or selfishness, let us so live, each one of us, that the spirit of our people and community may become a by-word among men --- May the "Spirit of Miami Shores" be worthy of the blessings we have received at the hands of Nature in this glorious land of eternal sunshine and flowers.

**Cont. Donations**

He was on the Net sometime last month and he ran across a 1950's Post Card of the Motel at NE 163<sup>rd</sup> Street and Biscayne Boulevard in the vicinity of the present day SOLID GOLD site. He purchased it and donated to our Greater North Miami Post Card collection. If you have any old North Dade County post cards, we have a collection that you can help with.

**Cont. Ricciardelli**

Rick and Ryan Bridge, as his friend Bill Ryan had also been instrumental in the getting the bridge across the canal. Rick also gave some time to the Keystone Point Development and the Miami Aviation Country Club that preceded it; both developed by Jack Keefe a fellow councilman with Rick. Rick said, with the West Side boom and the subsequent Keystone Point addition to the City, North Miami was recognized nationally as the fastest growing Town in the United States per capita. In conclusion Rick's talk bore out that the City of North Miami has been a City Of Progress for quite sometime.



**Cont. Allen**

Miami Beach, which probably was another tool to capture the eyes of the potential retirees and residential owners from the northern clime. A North Miami Beach return address added a little class to the sender's residence. No one had ever heard of Fulford or Fulford by the Sea but everyone had heard of Miami Beach. Miami Beach was a magical word and this place must be part of the great place in the sun. Allen stuck with salvaging his plan working hard to keep it alive. The best you can say, he did it with a lot of help from the community. Today there are several commemorative sites named for him such as the City Library or the L.R. "Lafe" Allen Library and Allen Park. By 1938 he had things on the comeback trail. Today the City of North Miami Beach is a thriving, diversified community, that well could have been deservingly named Allentown.

North Miami Beach Lafe Allen Library Biographical Sketch January 1995  
Lenora Allen Hanford Who was Lafe Allen?  
The Perfect City North Dade Journal

**ROSETTA**  
**THEATRE**

*Public Theatre* *Little River*

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**PROGRAM**

TONIGHT -  
Adolph Menjou in "Serenade"  
Comedy Pathe Review

SATURDAY -  
Jack Holt, "Thundering Herd"  
"Crimson Flash" Cartoon

SUNDAY AND MONDAY -  
Billy Dove  
"THE LOVE MART"  
Comedy Paramount News  
Amateur Night

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY  
Clive Brook & Evelyn Brent  
"THE UNDERWORLD"  
Comedy Fox News

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY  
Richard Dix  
"THE GAY DEFENDER"  
Comedy Pathe Review

SATURDAY  
Ken Maynard  
"THE LAND BEYOND  
THE LAW"  
"Crimson Flash" Ko Ko Kop

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COMING

A great Spanish American War picture and a great celebration for the Spanish War Vets in this section!

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Don't Forget That the Movie Star Contest Closes Saturday March 10th, (To-morrow). You still have time to fill out the Calendar. Call for one at the box office or at the office of the Miami Shores Bulletin. CASH PRIZES & TICKETS!

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Rosetta Prices 10¢ & 25¢

Advertisement March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1923

# The Greater North Miami Historical Society



The Greater North Miami Historical Society is an organization established to preserve historical artifact, written, and oral history, ephemera, and memorabilia relating to the current City of North Miami and the areas surrounding the city.

The Society came into being when a group of interested citizens decided that the history around the Arch Creek Basin was as important to county history as is the Miami River Basin. Collections or data gathering, along with archiving are its basic tasks. The Society needs the papers, the photos, the stories, and any other documentation that is important to the historical archives of the community. The Society needs the help of the community and the friends of the community. So if you have a document, a photo or a story that you can donate or let us copy please contact us at the below address

13100 WEST DIXIE HWY  
NORTH MIAMI, FL 33161  
(305) 891-7811 FAX (305) 893-8522

**GREATER NORTH MIAMI HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
13100 WEST DIXIE HIGHWAY  
NORTH MIAMI, FLORIDA 33161**

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP  
GREATER NORTH MIAMI HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
13100 WEST DIXIE HIGHWAY NORTH MIAMI, FL. 33161**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP DUES \$10.00 ANNUAL**