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THE MIAMI BEACH BOARDWALK BEGINS AT 23RD STREET AND RUNS NORTH FOR SEVERAL BLOCKS. ALTHOUGH LESS CROWDED, MIAMI BEACH IN THE 1930S GAVE LITTLE INDICATION OF THE DEPTH OF THE DEPRESSION. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

ream of Roney stationery and sent their letters down from the north to be mailed with a Miami post mark.²⁴

While the tourist business did not completely disappear, it did get lean. Within a few years, the situation started to improve. The decline and revival of the beach economy is reflected in the increasing amount of dollars spent on new buildings, mostly hotels, during those years:

1925	\$17,702,532.00
1926	\$ 5,039,625.00
1927	\$ 2,491,308.00
1928	\$ 3,374,349.00
1929	\$ 7,856,951.00
1930	\$ 4,043,039.00
1931	\$ 1,947,774.00
1932	\$ 1,445,128.00
1933	\$ 2,172,515.00
1934	\$ 5,478,559.00
1935	\$ 9,487,345.00
1936	\$12,526,107.00 ²⁵

Most of this development was taking place on the south end of Miami Beach. It was a very different type from the grandeur of Carl Fisher's endeavors. Fisher was financially decimated by the bust and the stock market

crash, and by the late 1930s building on Miami Beach was taken over by developers with less capital, for tourists with less vacation money. The growth of Miami Beach followed this pattern until World War II. In the interim, architects and builders produced some of the most vivid and unique architecture in the history of Dade County.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE DEPRESSION

The Depression dealt a severe blow to the construction industry across the United States. Building activity in South Florida slowed down dramatically during the 1930s. But Miami did not lose its national appeal; it just became less accessible. Miami Beach was still a tourist mecca, but its role shifted from millionaire's playground to vacationland for those who could afford to travel. By 1935, Miami Beach was on its way back. Rather than the waterfront Mediterranean mansions and the luxury hotels of the Fisher days, smaller hotels and apartment buildings characterize the thirties decade. The clientele was now mostly part of a working middle class who managed to escape the national gloom

to "get away" temporarily to a semi-tropical paradise. A few days surrounded by the sun, swaying palm trees, and music on a starlit patio did wonders for the body and spirit of those who were weathering the hard economic times. The illusion of paradise was the setting in which the architecture of the Depression years developed. Buildings were modest in scale, but rich in expression of locale and of a new world that rejected the past and embraced the future in the name of Modernism.

TOWARDS A NEW ARCHITECTURE²⁶

Art Moderne, the popular catch-all name for a number of stylistic movements intent on creating a new vision, was in no way a local innovation. Even a national architectural vocabulary was only apparent in a broad context. Its origins go back to the European arts scene of the late nineteenth century.

Art Nouveau was a stylistic movement of the 1890s aimed at achieving a compatibility between the romantic traditionalism of nineteenth century Victorian society with the new products of the industrial revolution. Art Nouveau raised more questions than it answered, created more confusion over the relationship between the Arts and Crafts and the new Industrialism than it achieved solutions. Its sinuous, soft organic curves and subject matter were incongruous in the hard, cold medium of iron and glass. It reinterpreted existing artistic models based on natural motifs through new materials and methods, but never arrived at a constructive synthesis. Instead, the results were more effective as commentary and criticism of the contradictions between the society of the times and its artistic and architectonic representations.

The new century saw the emergence of a new design source based on machine aesthetics. World War I jolted the arts from its last vestiges of complacent traditionalism. The new movements rejected society's centuries-old rules of convention and double standards veiled under layers of applied decoration.

Forms were stripped to bare bones, their structures re-examined and the components arranged in statements of new architectural honesty and integrity. The radical, the avant-garde, the abstract, replaced historicism as artistic vehicles of expressions. Mass, space, line, plan, solid, void, light and color rather than context, story symbolism and detail were new major elements of the new aesthetics. Forms came under different labels: the German Bauhaus, the Dutch De Stijl, the Russian Constructivism all had the same back-to-basics simplicity in their architectural vocabulary as a trademark. In architecture, roofs were flat, surfaces were finished in smooth, white stucco, glass and metal, while applied decorations became non-existent. In an article written in 1908 and titled "Ornament and Crime," Viennese architect Adolf Loos had proclaimed: "Cultural evolutions means that we have to eliminate any ornament from our artifacts. It shows the greatness of our age that it is unable to produce a new ornament."²⁷ This new attitude toward design spread throughout Europe and under the leadership of men like Walter Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier, became known as the International Style some years later.

ART DECO

The new architectural austerity certainly left many admirers and practitioners of the traditional design schools unimpressed. An attempt at a reconciliation of the two factions came in the 1920s with an art form inspired by mechanical interpretations of natural forms, geometric patterns, hard line techniques and two dimensional designs. At the "Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes" held in Paris in 1925, a solution was offered—a remarriage of the Arts and Crafts movement with industrial technology. This movement was dubbed Art Deco, a shortened version of the name of the exposition where it was first publicized.

Art Deco caught on rapidly in America where the historicist tradition in the arts was too deeply ingrained to accept the radically

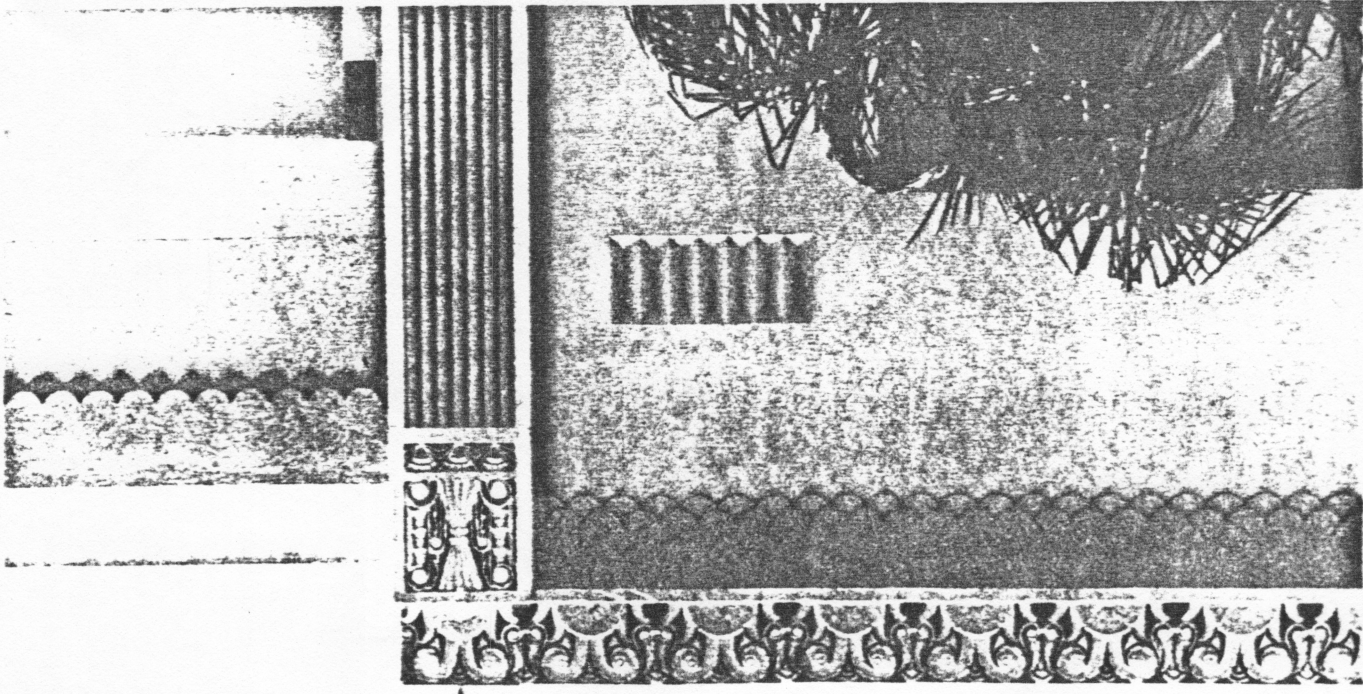
The economic shock waves of the Great Depression had a similar effect on American architecture to that of the political and social revolutions of the early years of the twenties decade on European art. Architects in the 1930's turned their attention to the simple lines and clean surfaces of the International Style, but softened the effects in order to accommodate American tastes. Partly the need for sobriety and no-nonsense in architecture during the lean years of the Depression, partly the result of the increasingly recognized European modernist influence, a new American style was emerging.

The new iconography was greatly inspired by the revolutionary technological strides in global communications and transportation since World War I. The earlier Art Deco forms expressed a keen interest in the same themes through the symbolism of its applied ornament. Designers in the 1930s instead applied the concepts of the new technology to their abstract forms and stripped off the surface ornaments. Time and speed were modern age preoccupations which now

STREAMLINE ARCHITECTURE

new concepts associated with the International Style. Art Deco was a compromise, still dependent on applied decoration for expression, but the subject matter was now highly stylized or abstracted to simple geometric forms. Building forms were angular and facades often stepped back. The architectural vocabulary used symbols from industry, machinery, geometry and speed. The Chrysler Building in New York, designed in 1928, uses automobile hood and hub cap ornamental motifs as part of its corporate architectural symbolism. But designers were experimenting with other historical themes. Mayan and especially Egyptian motifs were favored, all part of the national craze for treasures and ruins from these cultures that followed the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922. Art Deco was soon recognized as yet another variation on the long-line of decorative themes that had embellished "national" styles for over a century. Its popularity began to decline in the same cities where it had been introduced only a few years earlier. The search for a true honest expression of American architecture in the modern age was still on.

DECO DETAIL ON WASHINGTON AVENUE.



emerged as architectural motifs derived from laws of aerodynamics. The automobile, the train, the ocean liner and the airplane were primary sources of inspiration in this new architectural language. The industrial designer acquired the importance of the craftsman in former years. The streamline effect of a body rapidly moving through air or liquid was the symbol that appeared on everything including toasters, teacups, jewelry, fashions, cars, airplanes and buildings. The Italian Futurists planned cities, prior to World War I, where vertical and horizontal transportation systems at different levels and speeds became the focal elements of their designs. The German Bauhaus, the Cubists and the Dutch De Stijl, since the 1920's, had provided the abstraction, fragmentation and reorganization of forms and spaces through simple two and three dimensional compositional elements and geometrical forms. The German Expressionists contributed the bold statements of interior functional and spatial arrangements expressed as exterior design determinants. Eric Mendelsohn's Einstein Tower designed in 1919 in Potsdam, Germany, evokes in its fluid, streamlined forms elements of speed and time that transcend earthly comprehension. Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, built in 1929, used a juxtaposition of right angle and curvilinear, solid and plane geometries, flat roofs and continuous horizontal banding of windows as major design elements. These were all chief components of 1930's American Streamline architecture.

Buildings relied on massing, rounded corners, horizontal fenestration and racing stripes, flat parapet roofs and simple color schemes as decoration. The angularity of Art Deco was replaced by soft, flowing forms. Three-dimensional compositions rather than intricate bas-relief detailing became the new tools for architectural expression. Colors and textures of new materials, like vitrolite, chrome, stainless steel, glass blocks and terrazo, all played under the neon and indirect lighting popular in the Art Moderne. Such was the national climate under which the architectural rebirth of Miami Beach in the mid-thirties

flourished.

EARLY ART DECO IN MIAMI

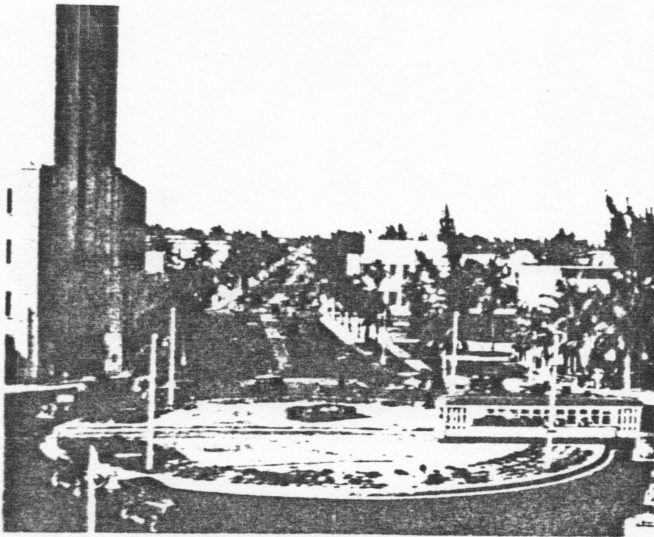
Art Deco architecture first appeared in Miami at the close of the 1920's, as new buildings were added to the commercial developments along Biscayne Boulevard. The Biscayne Boulevard Company had secured the construction of a Sears Roebuck store, which opened in 1929, as anchor building to this early shopping center area.

The Sears store was built at the foot of Biscayne Boulevard and Thirteenth Street, where a traffic circle, criss-crossed by trolleys, cars, and buses, marked one of the most important intersections in the city of Miami. The east-west artery connected the beaches, through the County Causeway built between 1916 and 1917, with the mainland, and westward along N.W. 14th Street through Overtown. Biscayne Boulevard connected downtown Miami with developments in the northeast area of the county.

The circle is gone, but the major focus of urban activity remains, and the Sears Tower still boldly states the significance of the intersection. The building is clipped at the corner to facilitate circulation, while the resulting plane serves as base to a seven-story tall octagonal tower. The tower was by then a



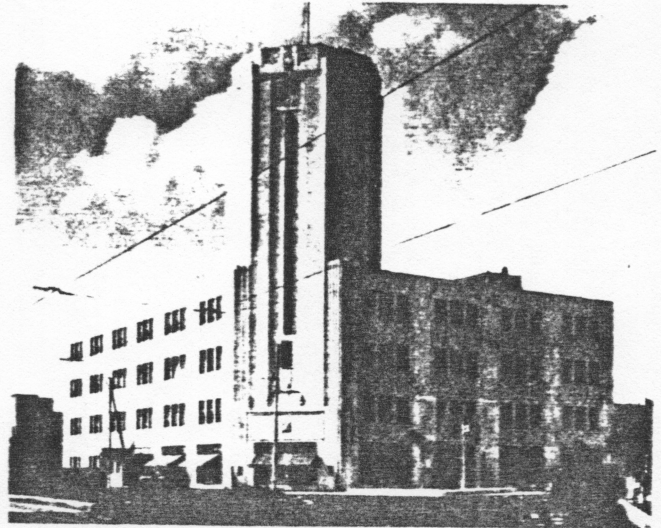
SEARS TOWER AT NIGHT. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)



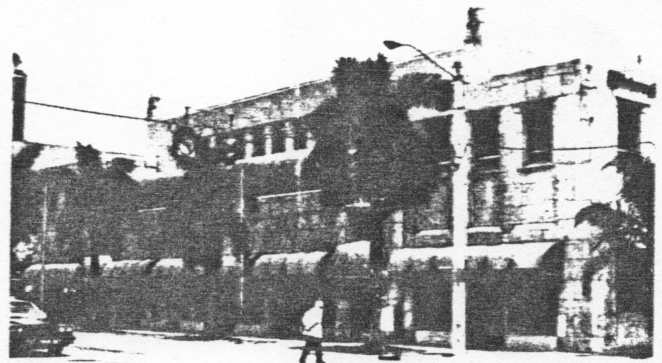
TRAFFIC CIRCLE AT THE FOOT OF THE SEARS BUILDING. THE TROLLEY CONNECTED MIAMI BEACH WITH THE MAINLAND VIA THE COUNTY CAUSEWAY. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

corporate symbol of Sears Roebuck and Co. across the country. The verticality of the low rising tower in this case was emphasized by a tall, slender sign, later replaced by a more modern Sears logo. The four story mass that spreads along both main streets has engaged fluted piers to emphasize the vertical thrust of the tower, typical of the Art Deco style. All decoration, such as the vertical fluting and the low-relief organic forms that adorn the tower, are abstracted to geometric designs. Yet at the top of the tower a circular, floral-inspired detail is reminiscent of one of Louis H. Sullivan's favorite decorative motifs for his buildings in Chicago around the turn-of-the-century. The Chicago firm of Nimmons, Carr and Wright, corporate architects for Sears Roebuck, brought to Miami an Art Deco design, Chicago style.

Just two blocks north, Robert Law Weed's Mahi Shrine Temple, now the Boulevard Shops, is an early local interpretation of Art Deco architecture. An almost classical feeling in the horizontal, symmetrical composition is offset by turrets with multi-faceted planes on the upper corners of the building. The angularity and step-back facade typical of the style are very much present. Outer corners are detailed with engaged sculpted figures of Seminole Indians. This adds a local perspective to the national vogue for native American motifs that was part of the Art Deco



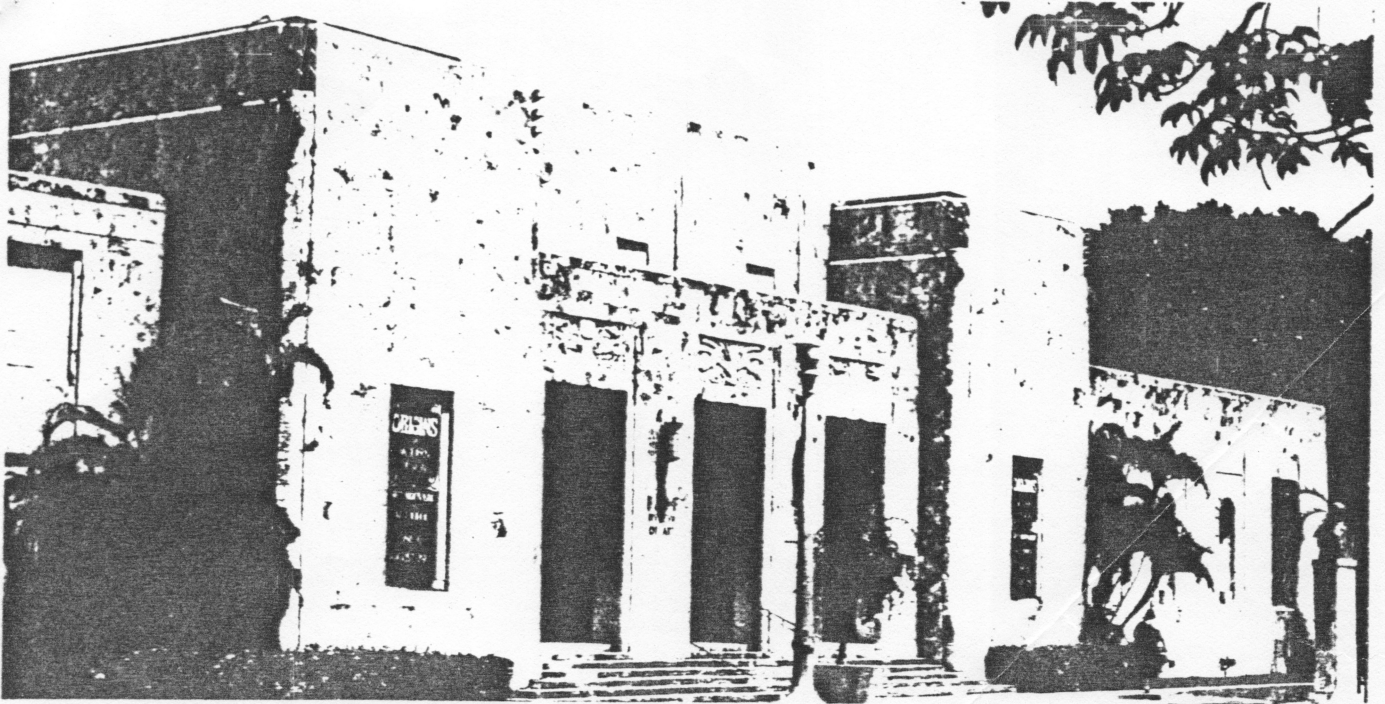
SEARS ROEBUCK, BUILT IN 1929, IS THE EARLIEST KNOWN ART DECO BUILDING IN THE MIAMI AREA. (HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA)



THE MAHI SHRINE TEMPLE, NOW THE BOULEVARD SHOPS, WAS BUILT IN 1930 BY THE BISCAYNE BOULEVARD COMPANY. DESIGNED BY ROBERT LAW WEED, IT IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST AND MOST REPRESENTATIVE ART DECO BUILDINGS IN MIAMI BY A LOCAL ARCHITECT.



BOULEVARD SHOPS, SCULPTURAL DETAIL.



THE MIAMI BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY, NOW THE BASS MUSEUM OF ART, WAS DESIGNED IN 1930 BY RUSSELL T. PANCOAST.

vocabulary. Balconies cantilever over the sidewalk, supported on stepped horizontal slabs. Cast or artificial stone imitating local coral rock is used as surface finish. Metal spandrels between the windows have elaborate low relief designs of abstracted organic forms. The building contributes to the elegance and human scale of Biscayne Boulevard as originally planned.

Another building in the forefront of South Florida's introduction to Art Deco is the

old Miami Beach Library, now the Bass Art Museum, designed in 1930 by Russell T. Pancoast.²⁶ Corners are clipped and faceted, and although the mass is long and horizontal, there is a vertical arrangement in the composition. The bas-relief applied decoration includes Columbus' three ships and airplanes. The structure is faced in keystone, a type of coral rock from the Florida Keys, quarried and cut into slabs, that became a very popular building material in the thirties decade.



BASS MUSEUM. BAS-RELIEF DETAIL.



HOTELS ALONG OCEAN DRIVE.

MIAMI BEACH ART DECO

The uniformity in style, scale and quality of design evident today in the Miami Beach Historic District area is no coincidence. It is the product of a brief, intensive period of building activity to provide accommodations for the renewed tourist influx. A relatively small number of architects, many from New York, many European born, were responsible for the hundreds of buildings that went up in Miami Beach between 1935 and 1940. Their experience with current national and international design trends made up for their general lack of formal architectural training in the classical sense. The architecture they produced, if not correct and academic, was "street wise." They could design in the latest fashion and were able to give buildings identity among their neighbors and yet fit within their tropical setting.

Miami Beach Art Deco has become a popular, acceptable term to describe the architectural products of this period in local history. The new clean sweeping masses of Streamline design were accented with Art Deco applied ornamentation, such as bas

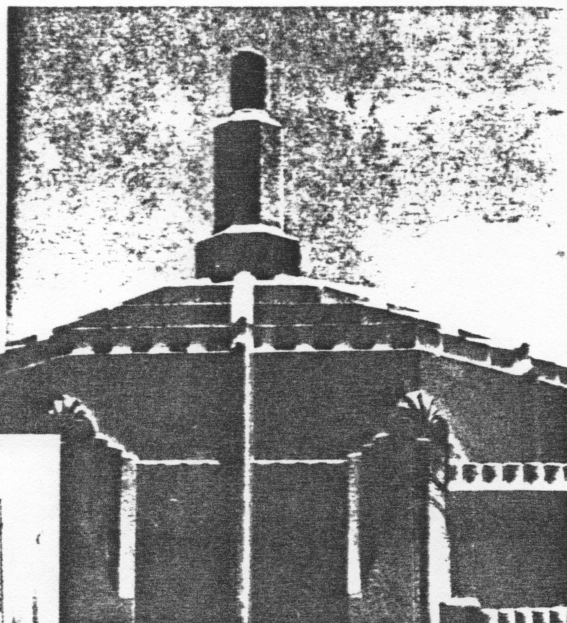
relief panels, fountains, sculpture, murals and etched glass. These decorative elements provided playful, festive allegories of tropical scenes depicting moonlit beaches, palm trees, flamingoes, fish and other exponents of South Florida's flora, fauna, land and seascapes. A central bas-relief panel at the Savoy Plaza Hotel depicts a pink flamingo surrounded by stylized lush vegetation. At the entrance of the Senator Hotel a free-standing fountain of a pelican once spewed water onto a catch basin in the form of a seashell. The etched glass windows of the Primrose Hotel include a full beach scene with palm trees, birds, fish, and a sailboat.

The spirit of travel and speed is captured in the aerodynamic forms and applied racing stripes which are the major form of decoration in hotels like the Cardozo and the Essex House while ocean travel is evoked through the use of porthole windows, pipe railings and sun decks. The Senator Hotel combines all these elements by the swimming pool, where a horizontal row of porthole openings and the distinctive railings all help to create the atmosphere of an ocean liner.

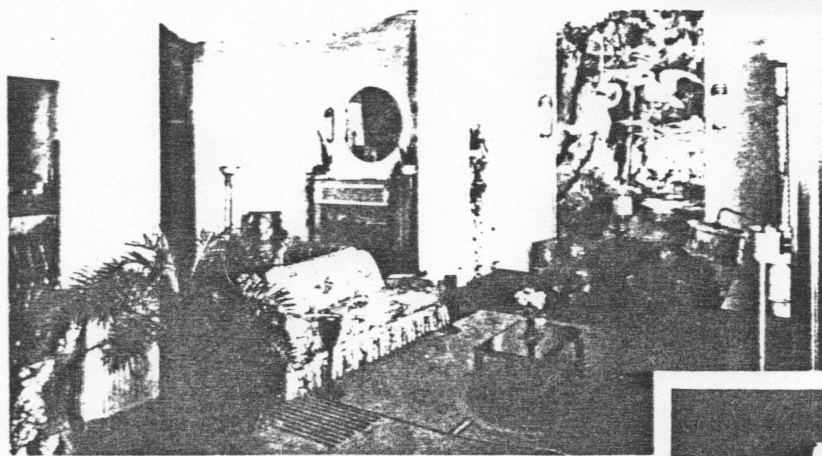
Environmental responses are seen in the use of overhanging flat canopies or "eye-



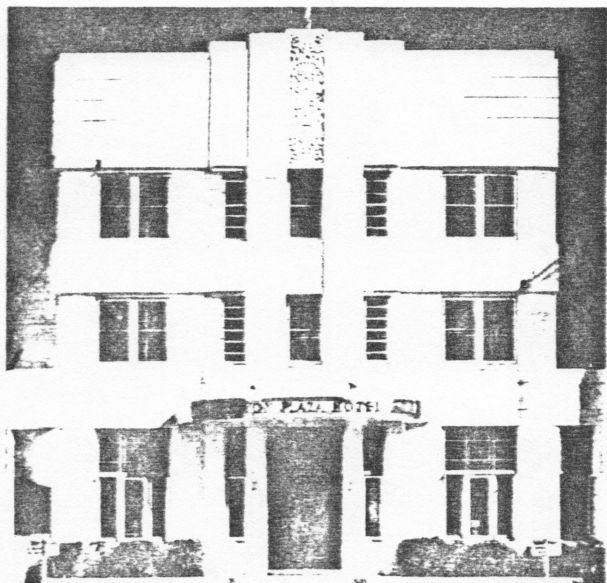
CHARLEY'S PADDOCK GRILL, NOW FRIEDMAN'S BAKERY, WAS BUILT IN 1934 AS PART OF A BLOCK-LONG COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, DESIGNED BY E.L. ROBERTSON. ◀



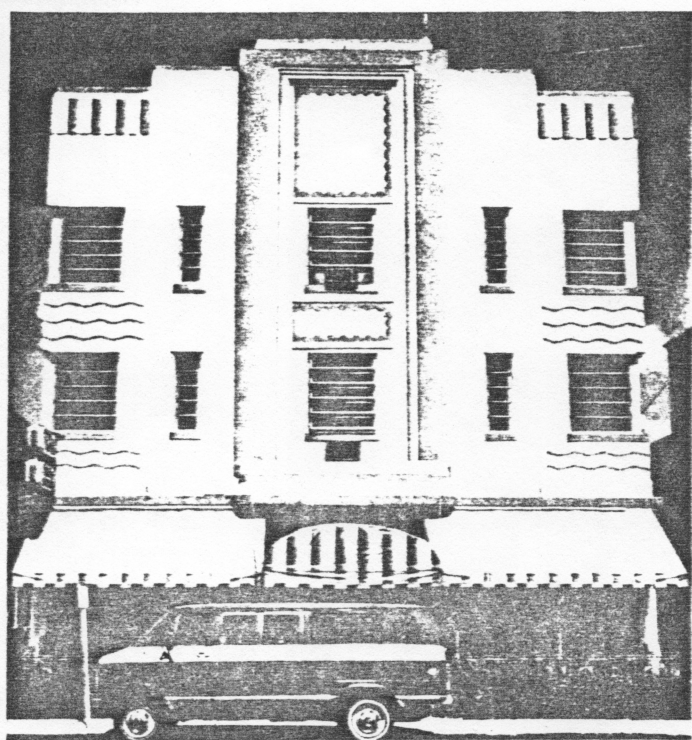
▶ BAS-RELIEF DETAIL.



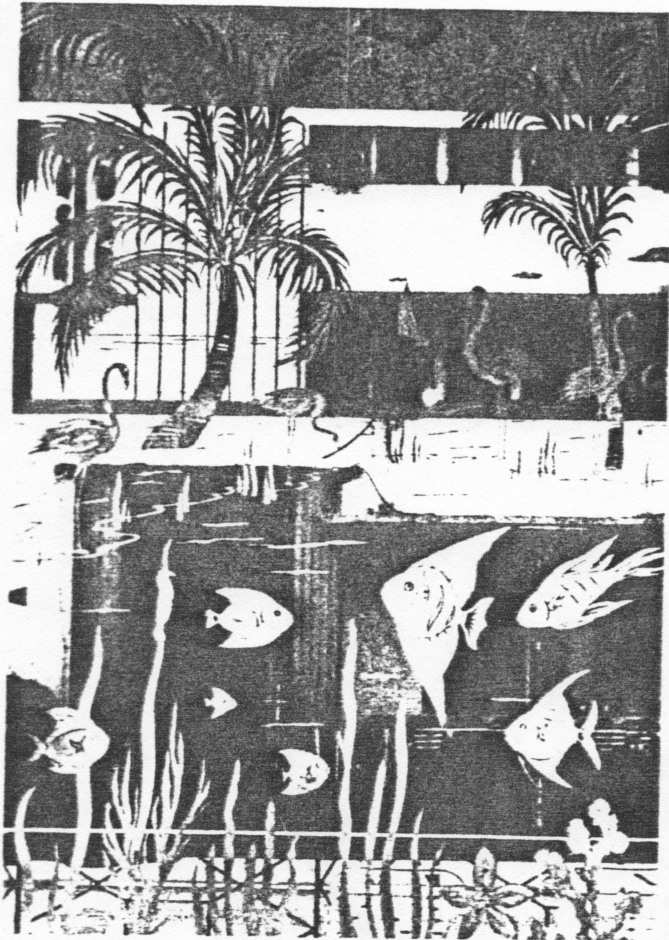
VIEW OF LOBBY OF THE SAVOY PLAZA, WITH AN EARL LA PAN MURAL DEPICTING A TROPICAL SCENE TYPICAL OF HIS WORK. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY) ◀



THE SAVOY PLAZA HOTEL, BY ARCHITECT V.H. NELLENBOGEN IN 1935, HAS A STRONG ART DECO THEME. THE BUILDING RETAINS MOST OF ITS ORIGINAL FEATURES, INCLUDING THE CANOPY OVER THE ENTRANCE AND THE BAS-RELIEF PINK FLAMINGO AT THE TOP. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)



THE WHITELAW HOTEL, DESIGNED BY ALBERT ANIS IN 1936, HAS THE BAS-RELIEF DECORATIVE PATTERNS AND STEPPED FACADE TREATMENT TYPICAL OF ART DECO ARCHITECTURE.

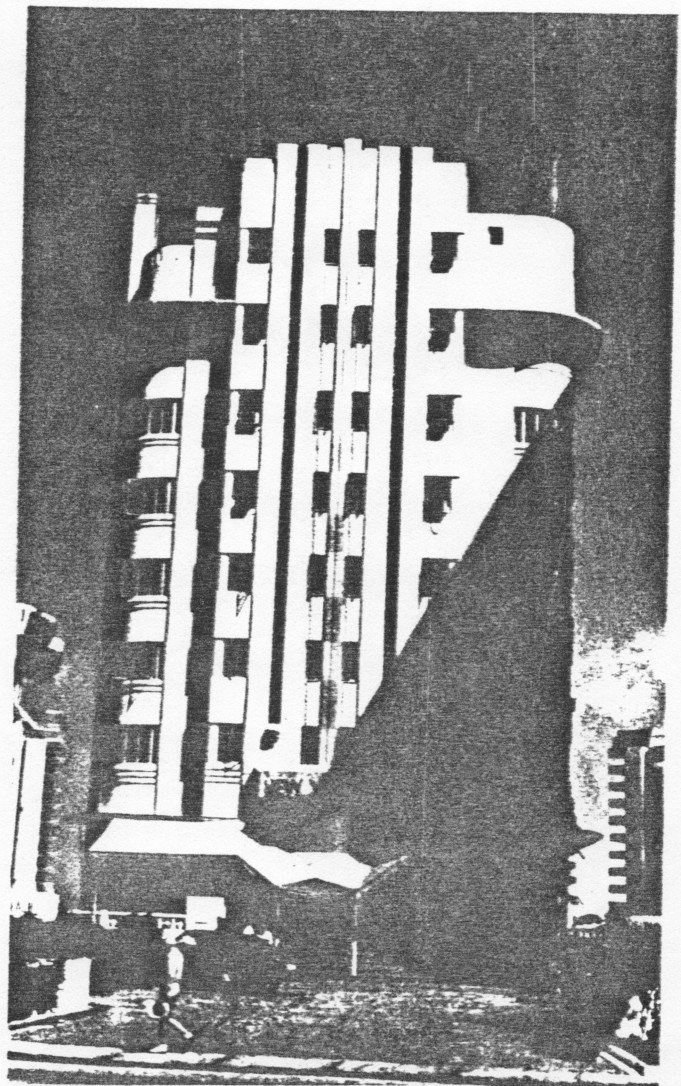


MARINE LIFE DEPICTED ON THE ETCHED GLASS WINDOWS OF THE PRIMROSE HOTEL (1935, V.H. NELLENBOGEN) GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF LOOKING ACROSS THE STREET THROUGH A FISH BOWL.

brows" over the windows to reduce the penetration angle of the sun, ground floor porches, and the building masses articulated to form courtyards. Local materials such as keystone slabs, often dyed in shades of pink or green, are popular in this period. In the Cardozo Hotel, for instance, pink stone, used for the columns and railings of the front porch, is the building's main source of decoration and built-in color. Terrazo floors in multi-colored patterns also provide some of the pastel hues that went into the design scheme of these hotels. A touch of futurism and fantasy is added through finials inspired by the space age needles or "trylons" of Buck Rogers movie lore. A number of hotels along Collins Avenue display these spires, particularly the 1100 block where four hotels in a row are topped with these towering ornaments.

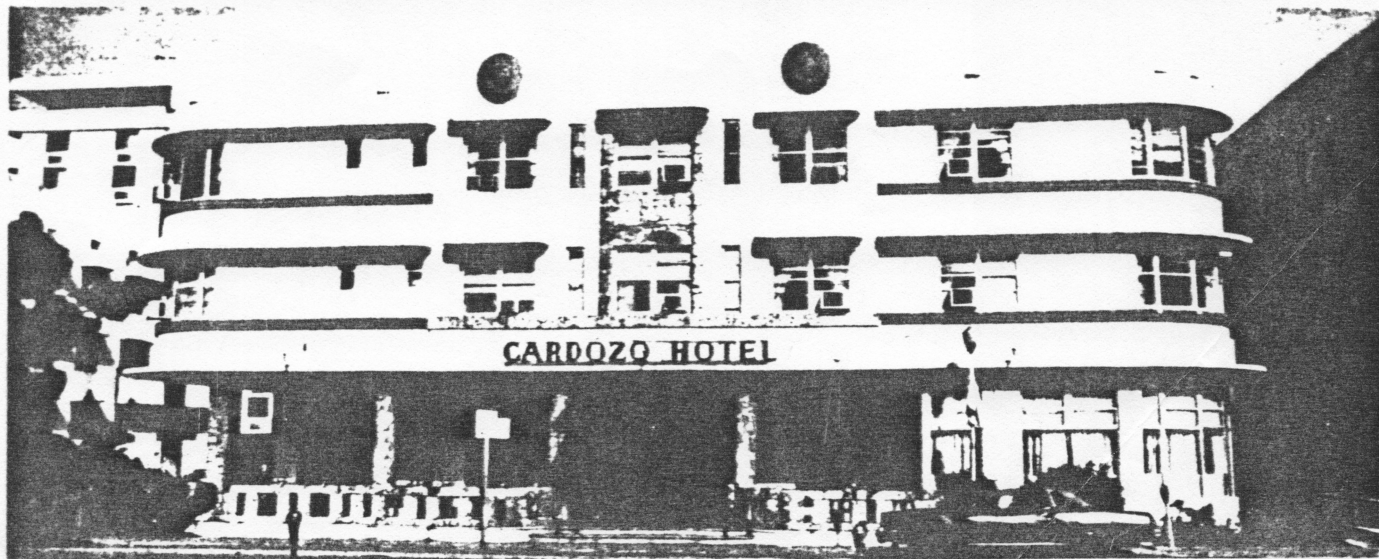
Designers were uninhibited enough to throw in even occasional highlights from the

Spanish Mediterranean style of the previous decade. Thus, a Streamline building mass with Art Deco bas-relief panels and a sloping tile roof or a colored ceramic tile detail would not be an uncommon sight. The Franklin Hotel uses a classical composition of rusticated base, body and cornice, with fanlight arched porch windows, and adds Art Deco details in the low-relief applied decorative panels. The Peter Miller, on the other hand, combines the rounded corners of the Streamline with a Spanish tile roof and window shutters. The variety of visual cues offers a random sampling of stylistic details to break the monotony of the otherwise uniformly scaled, set back, compacted urban density that emerged from this rapid development period in Miami Beach.

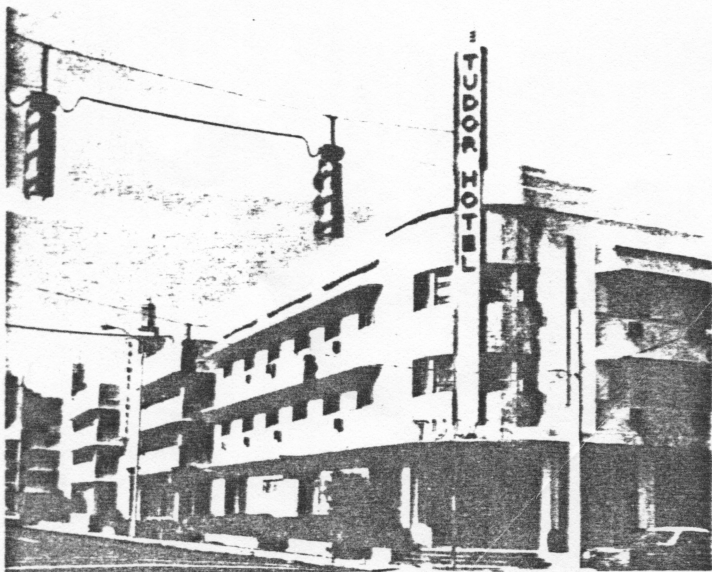


THE NEW YORKER HOTEL, BUILT IN 1940 BY HENRY HOHAUSER, COMBINED THE FINEST FEATURES OF THE ART DECO AND STREAMLINE STYLES IN A HIGH-RISE DESIGN.

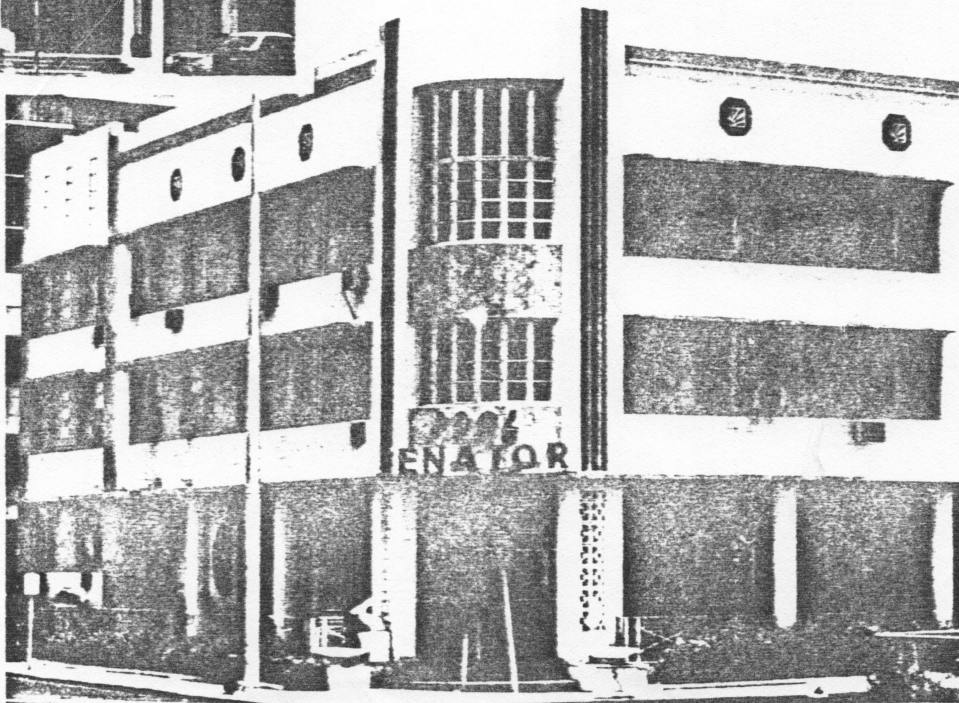
THE CARDOZO HOTEL WAS DESIGNED IN 1939 BY HENRY HOHAUSER. ITS SYMMETRICAL FACADE RELIES PRIMARILY ON MASSING, CANTILEVERED CANOPIES AND DYED KEYSTONE FOR DECORATION, IN TYPICAL STREAMLINE FASHION.

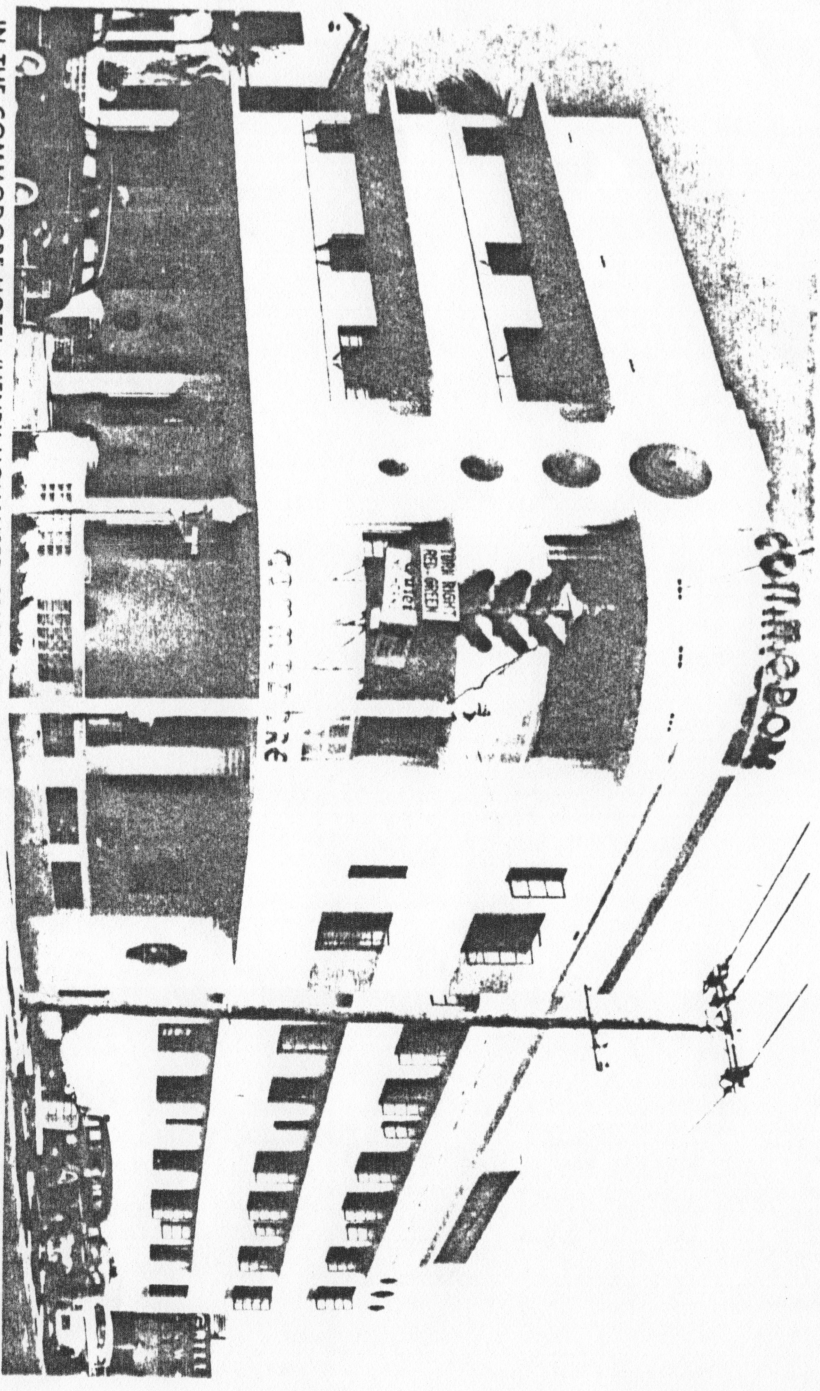


SCALE, SETBACK, CORNER SPIRES AND THE HORIZONTALITY OF WINDOWS UNDER EYEBROW CANOPIES CONTRIBUTE TO THE STREAMLINE EFFECT AND COHESIVENESS OF THE 1100 BLOCK OF COLLINS AVENUE. ◀



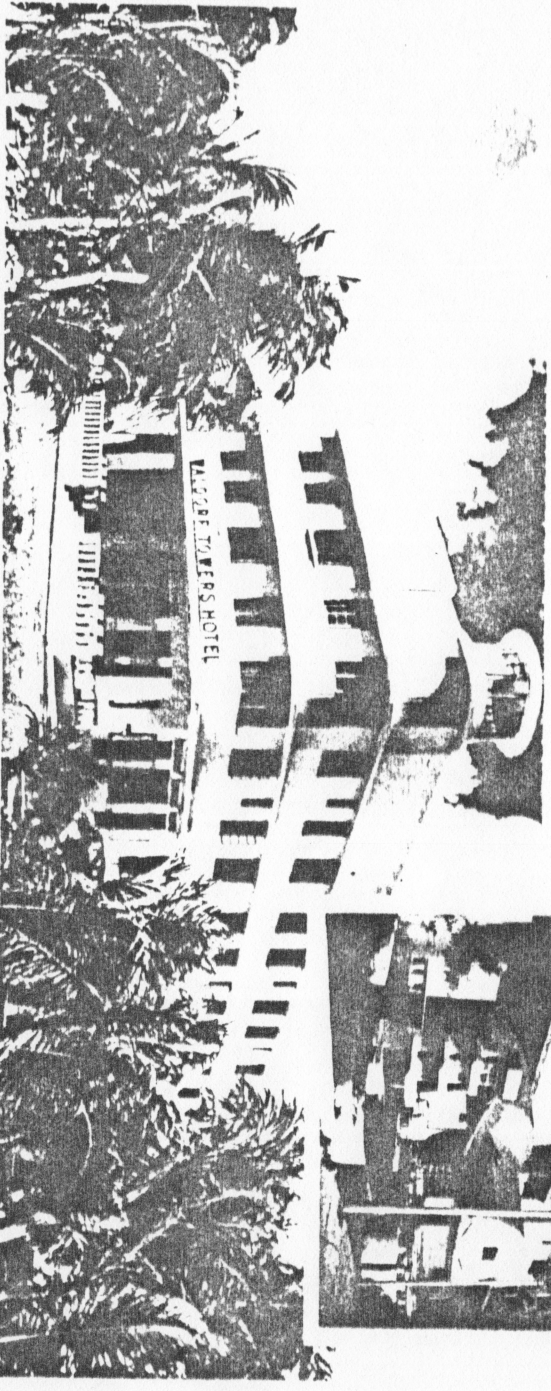
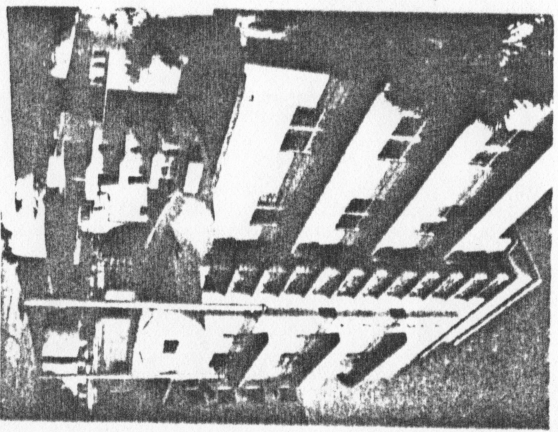
THE SENATOR HOTEL WAS DESIGNED IN 1939 BY L. MURRAY DIXON. THE ROUNDED CORNER IS COMPOSED OF A CONVEX MASS JUXTAPOSED ON A CONCAVE PLANE. PORTHOLE WINDOWS, PELICAN FOUNTAINS, ETCHED GLASS AND DYED KEYSTONE ARE AMONG THE FEATURES OF THE MIAMI BEACH STYLE REPRESENTED IN THIS BUILDING. ▶





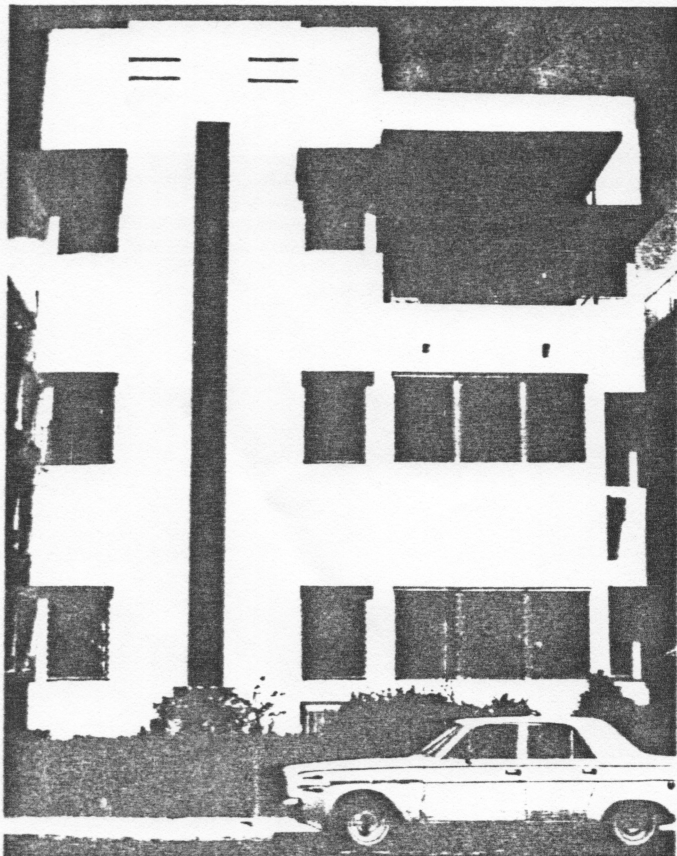
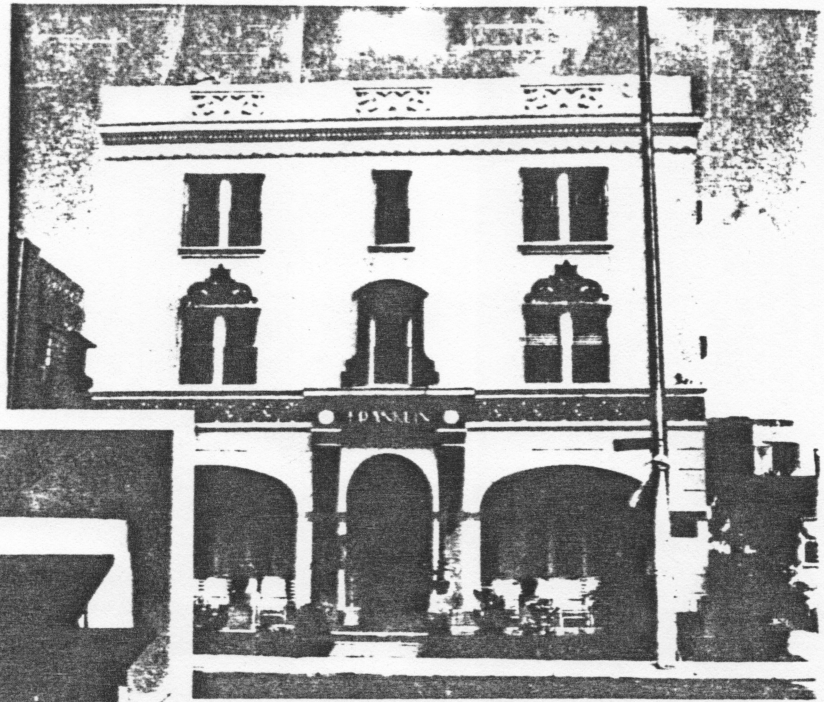
IN THE COMMODORE HOTEL (HENRY HOHAUSER, 1939) SUBTLE CHANGES IN THE DEPTH OF THE WALL PLANE AND THE INTERRUPTION OF HORIZONTAL ELEMENTS BY A VERTICAL PANEL WITH APPLIED MEDALLIONS CREATES THE ILLUSION OF A CYLINDRICAL CORNER SHAFT. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

THE BANCROFT HOTEL, DESIGNED IN 1939 BY ALBERT ANIS, HAS A FIVE STORY GLASS BLOCK STAIR TOWER. THE SAME FEATURE AND THE HORIZONTAL WINDOW CANOPY DETAILS ARE REPEATED AT A SMALLER SCALE ON THE FOUNTAIN LOCATED NEXT TO THE ENTRANCE.

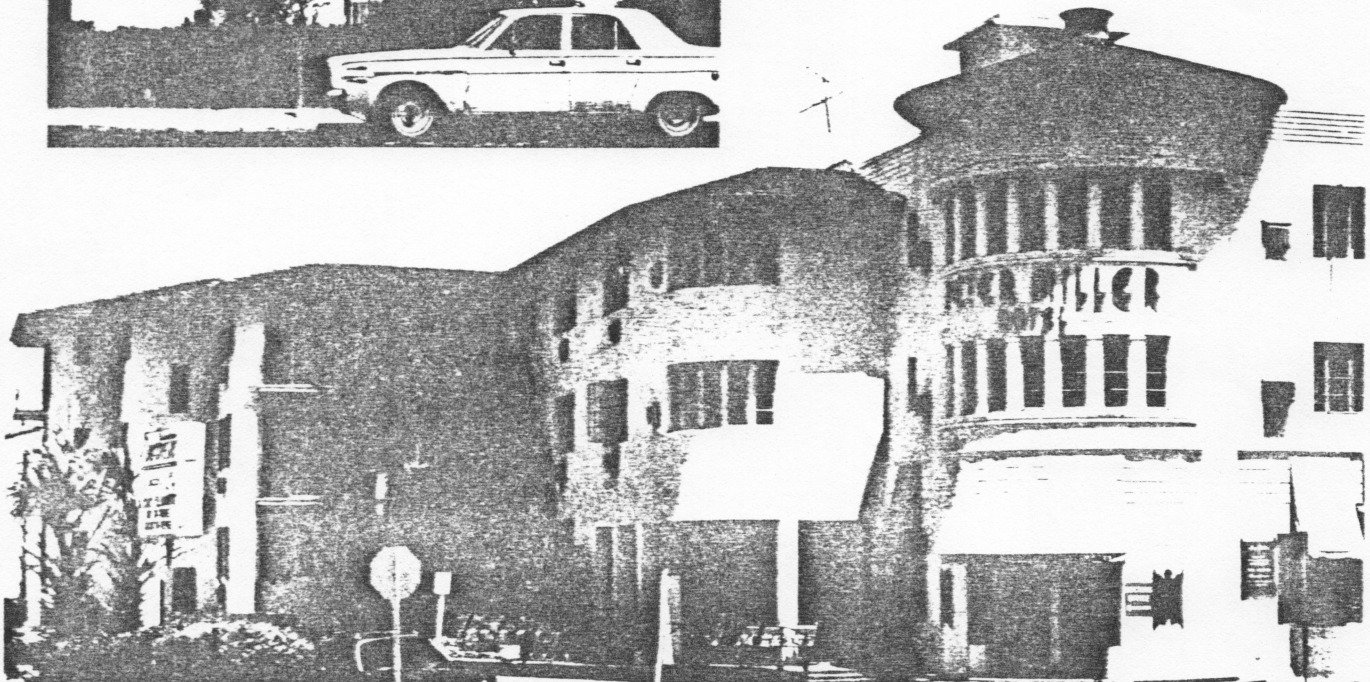


IN THE WALDORF TOWERS, DESIGNED IN 1937 BY ALBERT ANIS, FLUTING ON THE CURVED CORNER PLANE AND A CIRCULAR SOLARIUM OVER THE PARAPET CREATE THE VERTICAL THRUST OF A TOWER MASS. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

THE FRANKLIN HOTEL (1934, V.H. NELLENBOGEN) USES ART DECO APPLIED ORNAMENTS IN A MEDITERRANEAN INSPIRED COMPOSITION OF RUSTICATED BASE, MAIN BODY AND DECORATED CORNICE, AND ARCHED OPENINGS ON THE PORCH. ▶

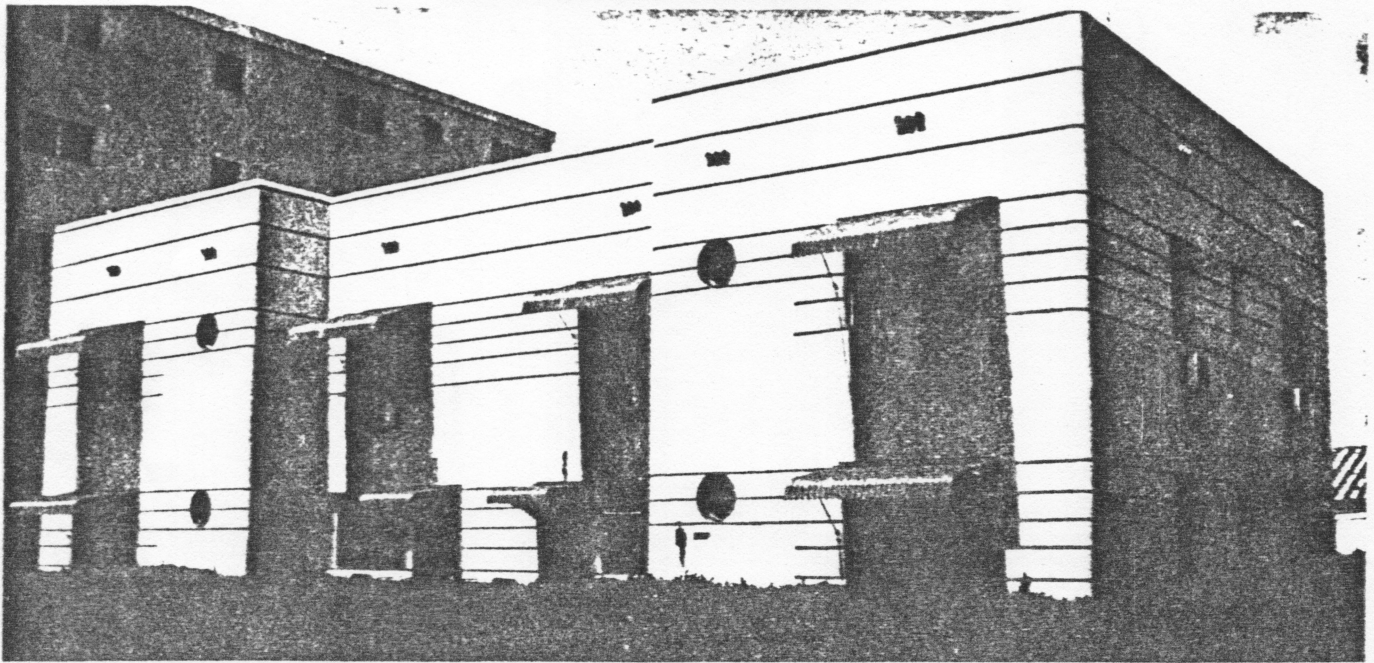


THE SIMPLE, ABSTRACTED, RIGHT-ANGLE GEOMETRY REMINISCENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE IS COMBINED WITH AN ENGAGED PILASTER OF ART DECO DETAILED CAPITAL, MOUNTED ON A BASE OF SPANISH MULTI-COLORED GLAZED TILES IN THE GALAXY BUILDING. ◀

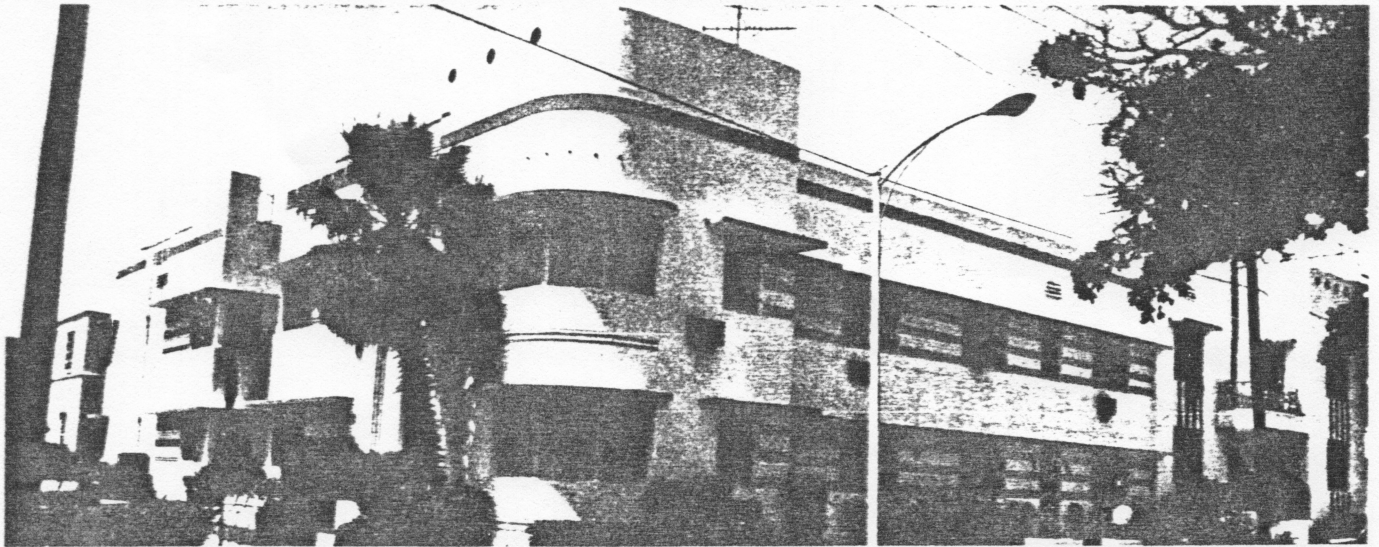


THE PETER MILLER HOTEL (RUSSELL PANCOAST, 1936) COMBINES THE ROUNDED CORNER DESIGN OF STREAMLINE ARCHITECTURE WITH THE LOW HIP TILED ROOFS TYPICAL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN STYLE.

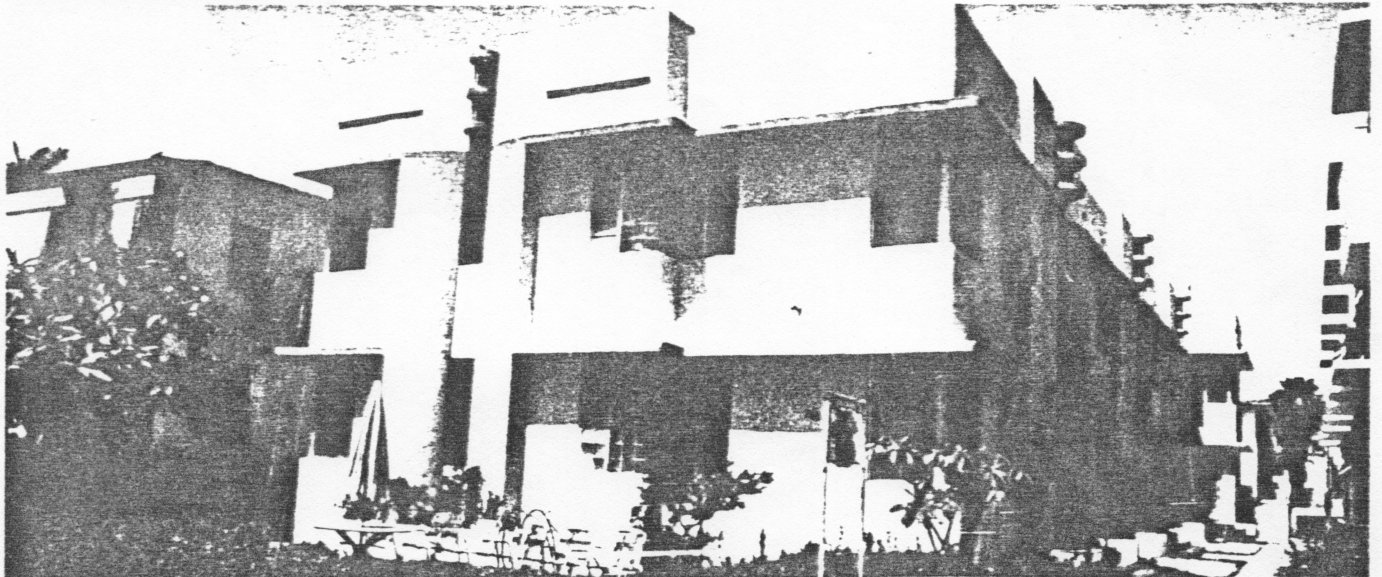
APARTMENT BUILDINGS



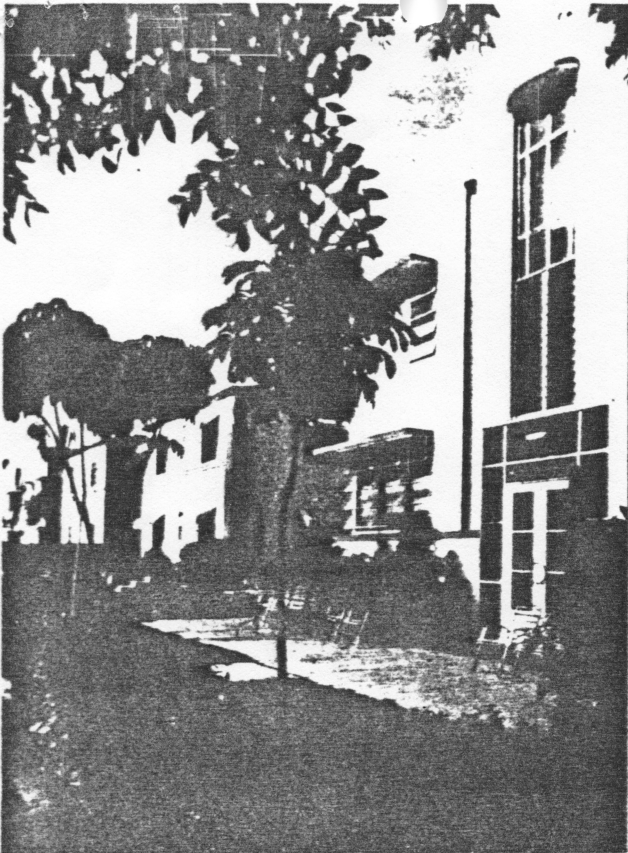
IN THIS EUCLID AVENUE BUILDING (1935, ROY F. FRANCE) SLIGHTLY ROUNDED CORNERS, HORIZONTAL STRIPES, PORTHOLE WINDOWS AND SCUPPERS ON THE PARAPET SERVED AS SUBTLE DECORATION.



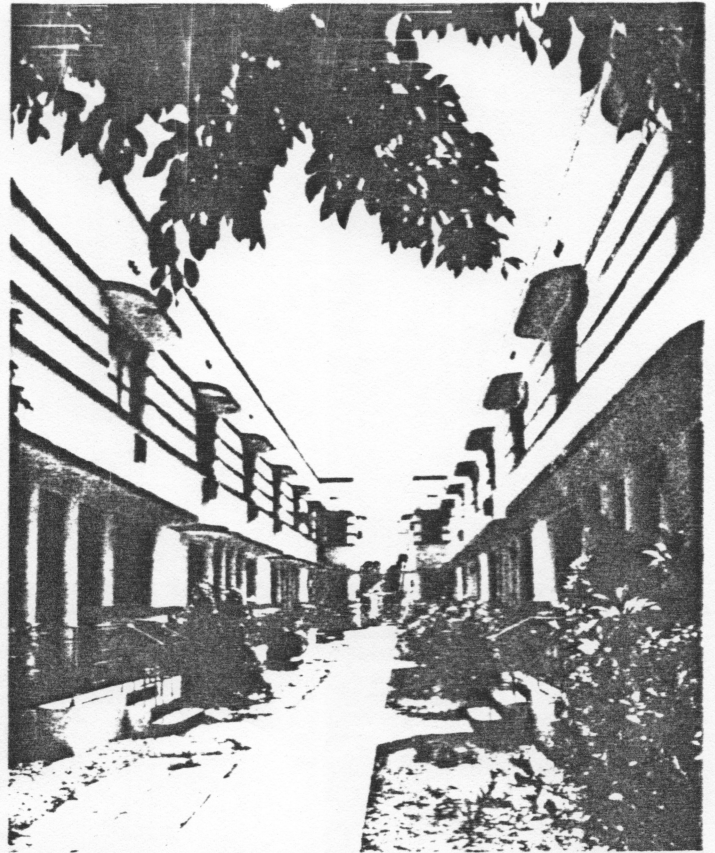
FLUTED RACING STRIPES PROVIDE A HORIZONTAL FLOW THAT TIES BOTH BUILDINGS TOGETHER. STRIPES ALSO CREATE A UNIFIED WINDOW/PLANE RELATIONSHIP AND SERVE AS DECORATIVE ELEMENTS ON DOOR SCREENS. THE SAME THEME IS APPLIED VERTICALLY AT THE ENDS OF THE BUILDING MASS TO BALANCE THE STRONG HORIZONTAL COMPOSITION. DESIGN IS BY HENRY HOHAUSER, 1938.



THE DECORATIVE THEME OF THE FACADE IS REPEATED ON THE SIDE ENTRANCES TO THIS APARTMENT BUILDING BY GENE E



THE 1500 BLOCK OF MERIDIAN AVENUE HAS A QUIETING HARMONY OF DESIGN IN SPITE OF THE VARIETY OF DETAILS AND STYLES REPRESENTED BY THESE APARTMENT BUILDINGS.



HORIZONTAL RACING STRIPES AND CANTILEVERED CANOPIES OVER OPENINGS EMPHASIZE THE DEPTH OF THIS COURTYARD.



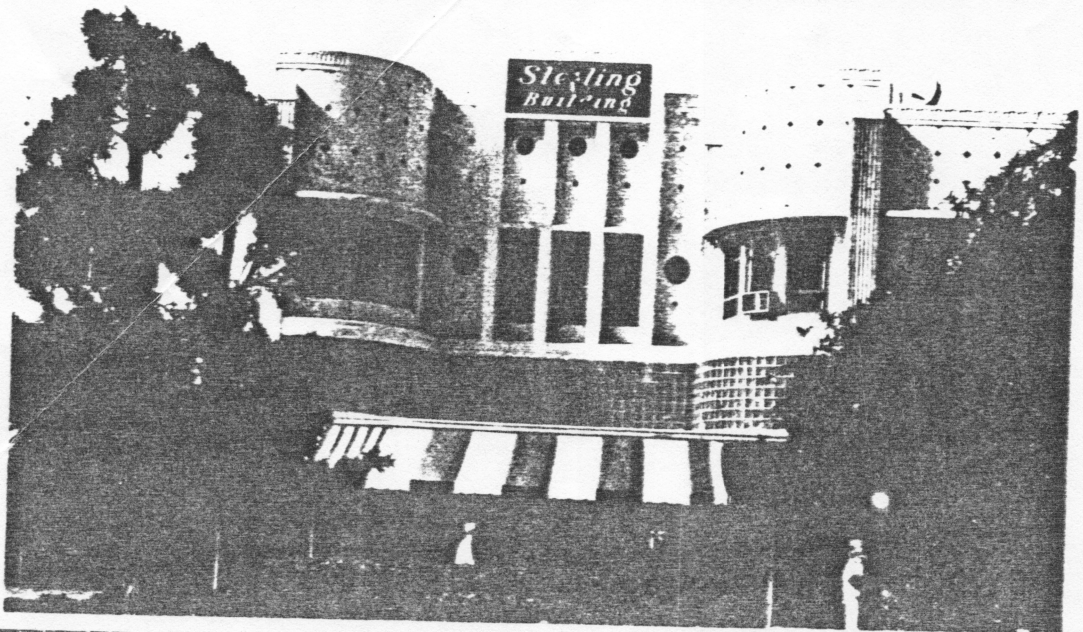
LANDSCAPING AND SUBTLE DETAILS OF SPANISH INFLUENCE, SUCH AS BALCONETTES AND THE CURVED PARAPET HIGHLIGHT THIS COURTYARD THAT SERVES AS ENTRANCE TO ALL APARTMENTS.



THE BARNETT BANK BUILDING (ALBERT ANIS, 1940) TO THE LEFT OF THE PHOTOGRAPH, HAS A POWERFUL SENSE OF MASS REINFORCED BY CURVED CORNERS AT BOTH ENDS OF ITS BLOCK-LONG LINCOLN ROAD FACADE, AND AT THE TALLER CENTER, WHERE THE MASSES CURVE TO EXPRESS A RECESSED ENTRANCE. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

LINCOLN ROAD

LINCOLN ROAD SCENE.
(ROMER COLLECTION,
MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC
LIBRARY) ▼



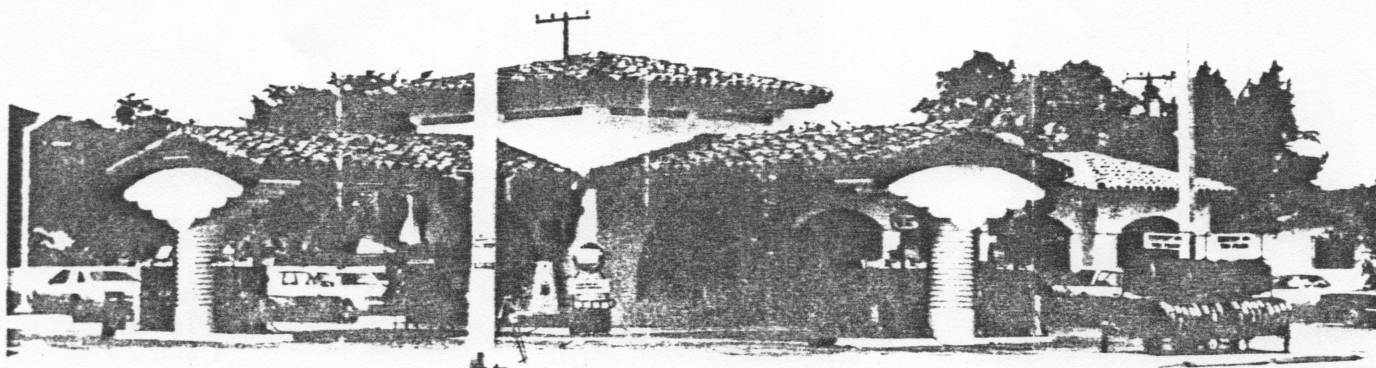
THE STERLING BUILDING ON LINCOLN ROAD WAS REMODELLED IN 1941 BY V.H. NELLENBOGEN. THE FACADE IS BROKEN INTO A SERIES OF HORIZONTAL BANDS; FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, A PARAPET WITH INLAID BLUE GLAZED TILES, A ROW OF WINDOWS, A CONTINUOUS BAND OF GLASS BLOCKS, AND THE COMMERCIAL WINDOWS ON THE GROUND FLOOR, JUST BELOW THE PROJECTING FLAT CANOPY. ▲



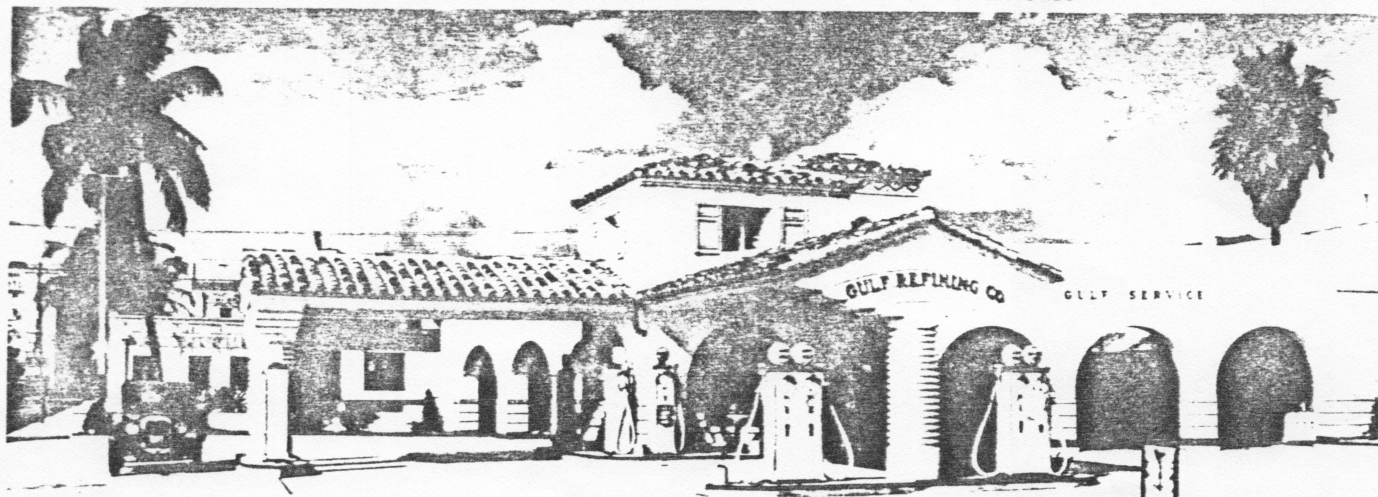
GAS STATIONS



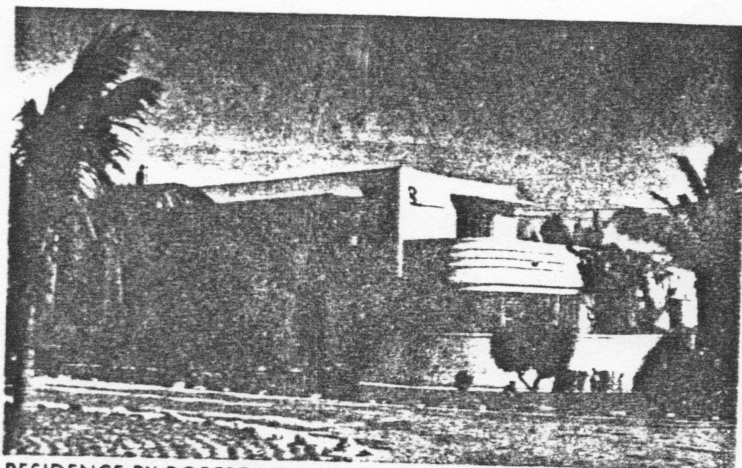
THIS FLAGLER STREET GAS STATION HAS A STRONG STREAMLINE DESIGN, BASED ON THE TRIANGULAR SITE IT OCCUPIES. IT WAS BUILT IN 1941.



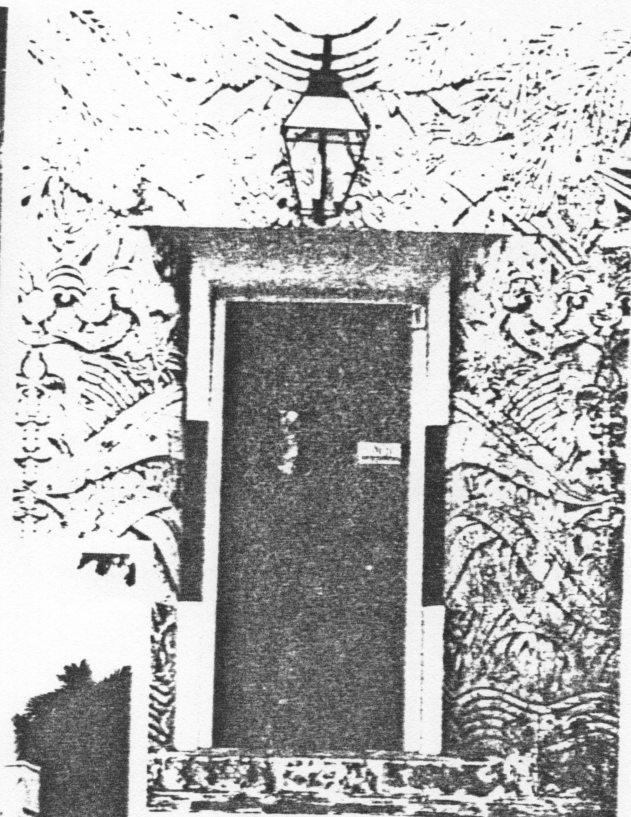
GAS STATION ON CORAL WAY, BUILT IN 1938 BY LESTER AVERY AND CURTIS HALEY, AFTER A PROTOTYPE STATION DESIGN BY RUSSELL PANCOAST. THE DESIGN COMBINES A MEDITERRANEAN ROOF WITH ART DECO FEATURES.



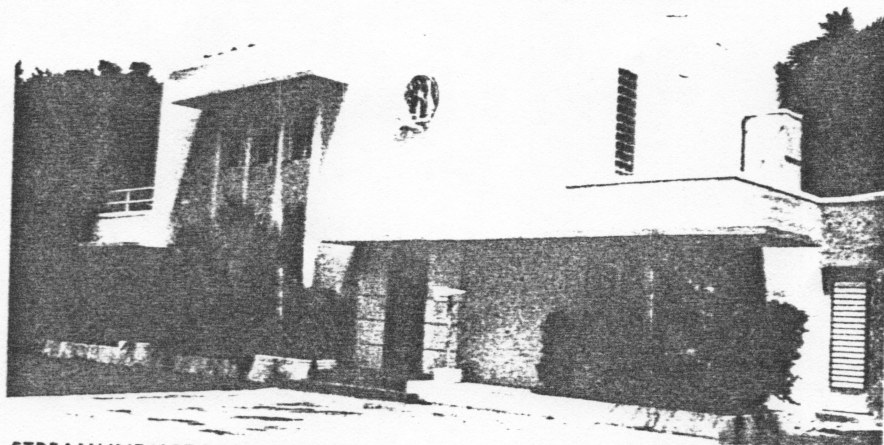
FROM THE SAME PROTOTYPE AS THE CORAL WAY STATION, THIS STATION STOOD ON 5TH STREET ON MIAMI BEACH (FERENDINO, GRAFTON, SPILLIS & CANDELA)



RESIDENCE BY ROBERT LAW WEED IN 1935, BASED ON HIS DESIGN FOR THE FLORIDA EXHIBITION HOUSE AT THE 1933 CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

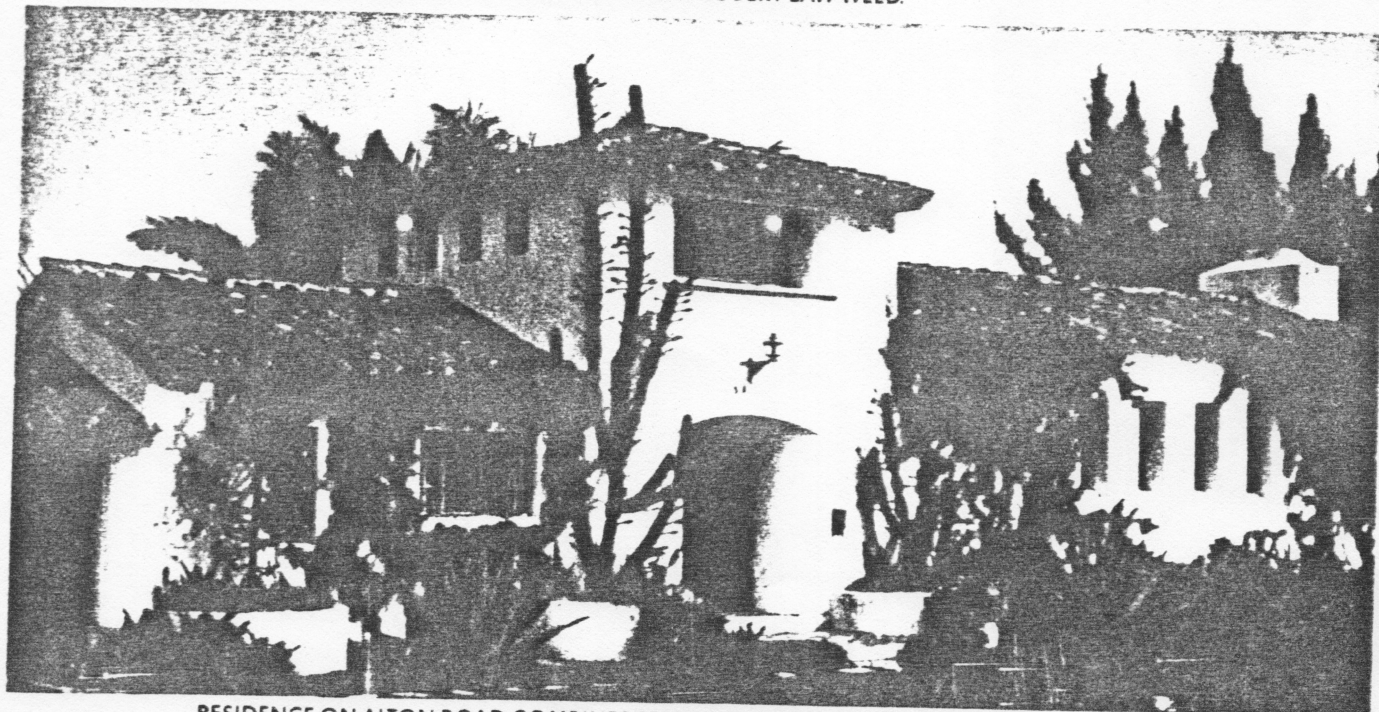


ENTRANCE DETAIL OF CARVED KEY-STONE BAS-RELIEF.



STREAMLINE/ART DECO RESIDENCE IN MIAMI, BUILT IN 1938 BY ROBERT LAW WEED.

RESIDENTIAL DESIGNS



RESIDENCE ON ALTON ROAD COMBINES STREAM LINE FEATURES WITH A SPANISH TILE ROOF.

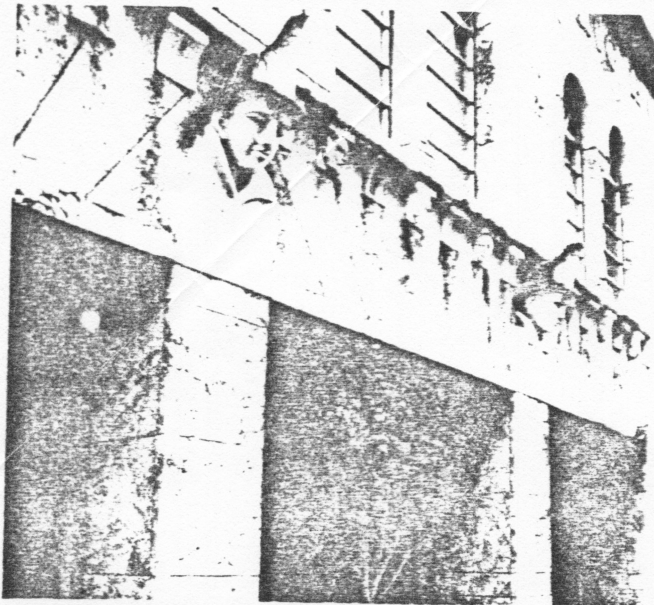


THE MIAMI BEACH POST OFFICE (HOWARD L. CHENEY, 1933) HAS THE MASSING CHARACTERISTIC OF STREAMLINE ARCHITECTURE, BUT IN CLOSER DETAIL IT HAS MEDITERRANEAN TILE ROOFS AND A ROMAN INSPIRED ENTRANCE ROTUNDA, WITH A SHALLOW DOME AND W.P.A. MURALS.

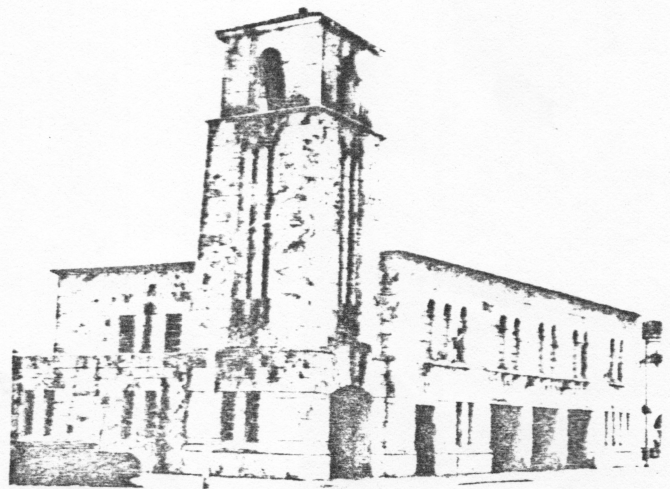
DEPRESSION MODERNE ARCHITECTURE— SOBERING TIMES

The New Deal programs that gave work to thousands of unemployed across the country produced a well defined art form that only recently has become recognized and appreciated. Under the Public Works Admin-

istration a new building vocabulary emerged, still based on the Moderne forms of rounded corners and Streamlined designs, but in a more sober tone. This became manifest in the incorporation of more traditional elements and classical features, reinterpreted in the Moderne idiom. In the Miami Beach Post Office a Roman inspired rotunda with a shallow dome gives the building a definite association



THE SCULPTURE, BY JON KELLER, DEPICTS THE STRENGTH AND ANGULARITY THAT CHARACTERIZES THE WORK OF DEPRESSION MODERNE ARTISTS.

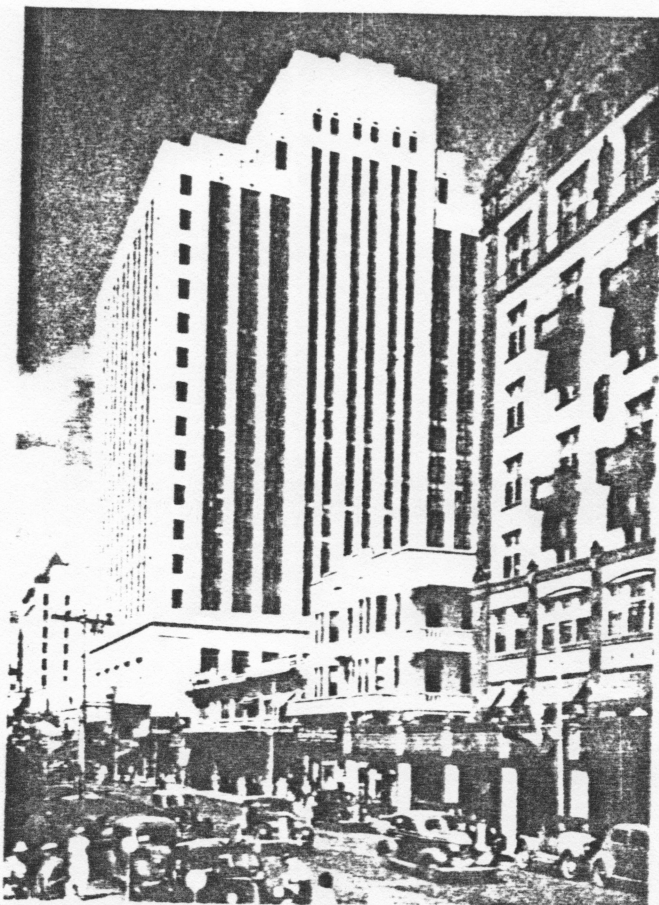


THE CORAL GABLES POLICE AND FIRE STATION (PHINEAS PAIST AND HAROLD STEWARD) IS DESIGNED IN A MEDITERRANEAN IDIOM AND FACED IN KEYSTONE, BUT DECORATION IS SPARSE AND SIMPLE, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE TOWER AND THE SCULPTED BUSTS OF FIREMEN.

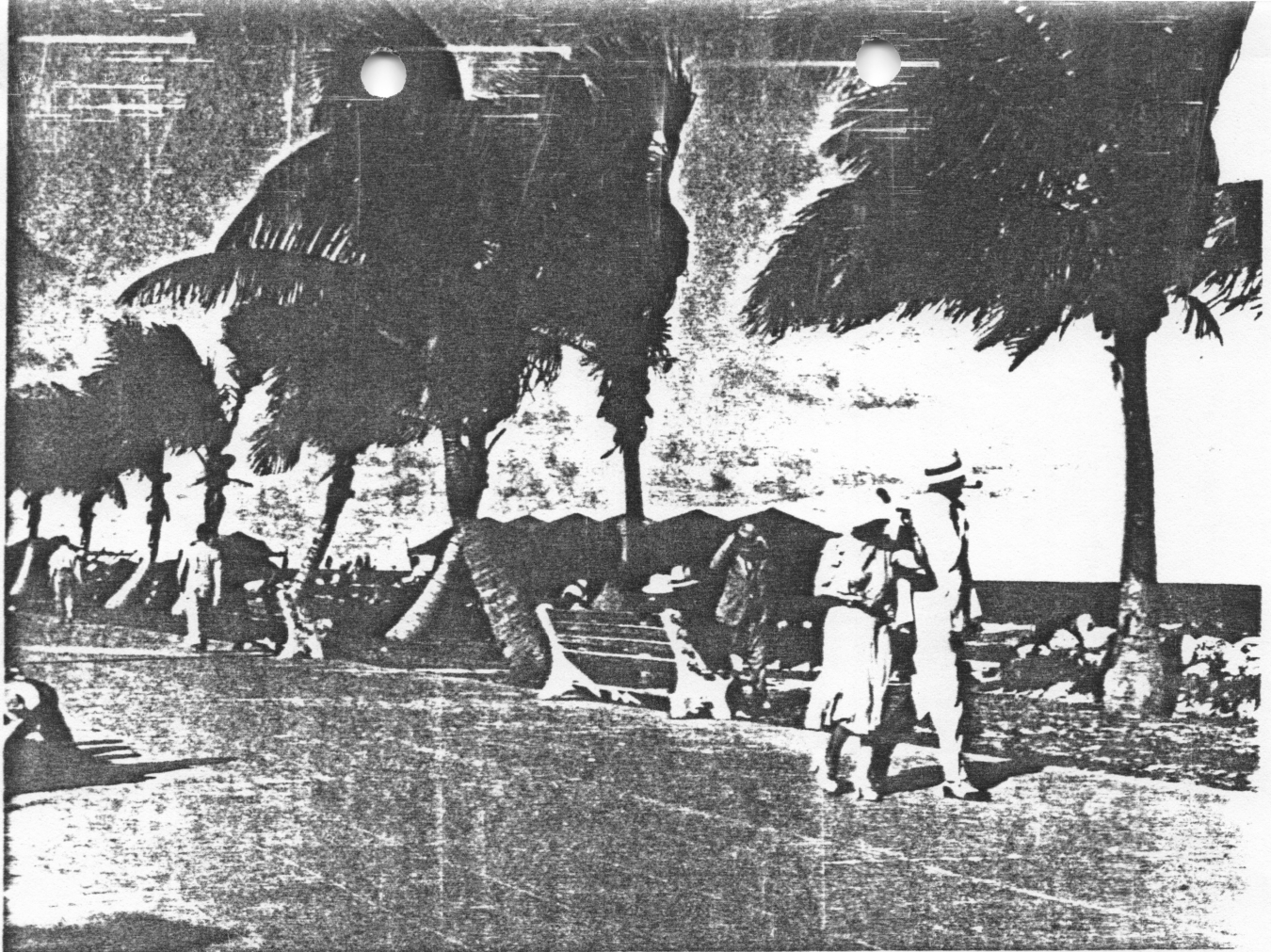
with classical architecture. The Coral Gables Police and Fire Station retains the strong Spanish influence, but the design is considerably more reserved than the earlier Mediterranean buildings of Coral Gables. The most significant decorative elements are the carved busts of firemen over the garage doors of the fire station. The expression and the profound angularity of the faces is typical of the Works Progress Administration's art form, intent on depicting the hard working American putting the country on its way back to economic prosperity.

A similar sobering influence was visible in private buildings, as the new idiom spread through the architecture of the late 1930s. The Alfred I. Dupont Building is one of Miami's most outstanding works of Depression Moderne architecture. The elegant stone facing on the exterior and the exquisite materials and craftsmanship of the interior demonstrate that luxury and fine quality had not gone out of style, they were just displayed in less flamboyant fashion than during the previous decade.

Although the Dupont building was a private project, in its ornamental elements it reflects the style established by the government buildings of the era. Their designs displayed an appropriate seriousness in view of the mass hardship and suffering inflicted by the country's economic picture. That austerity, however, was lightened and made hopeful by the application of the WPA art works whose themes consciously emphasized a national pride and strength of character. In addition to employing out of work artists, the project served its purpose well by addressing a dejected national psyche that needed to be reminded of the fundamental vitality of the country.



THE ALFRED I. DUPONT BUILDING, BY JACKSONVILLE ARCHITECTS MARSH AND SAXELBY, GAVE THE SITE OF THE OLD HALCYON HOTEL A WHOLE NEW LOOK IN 1938. IN TYPICAL DEPRESSION MODERNE FASHION, THE DESIGN USES A RESTRAINED ART DECO VOCABULARY IN A CLASSICAL THREE PART COMPOSITION. THE BRONZE BAS-RELIEFS AND HAND-PAINTED WOODS OF THE SECOND STORY LOBBY GIVE THE BUILDING ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR INTERIORS IN DOWNTOWN MIAMI. (ROMER COLLECTION, MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)



(ROMER COLLECTION. MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

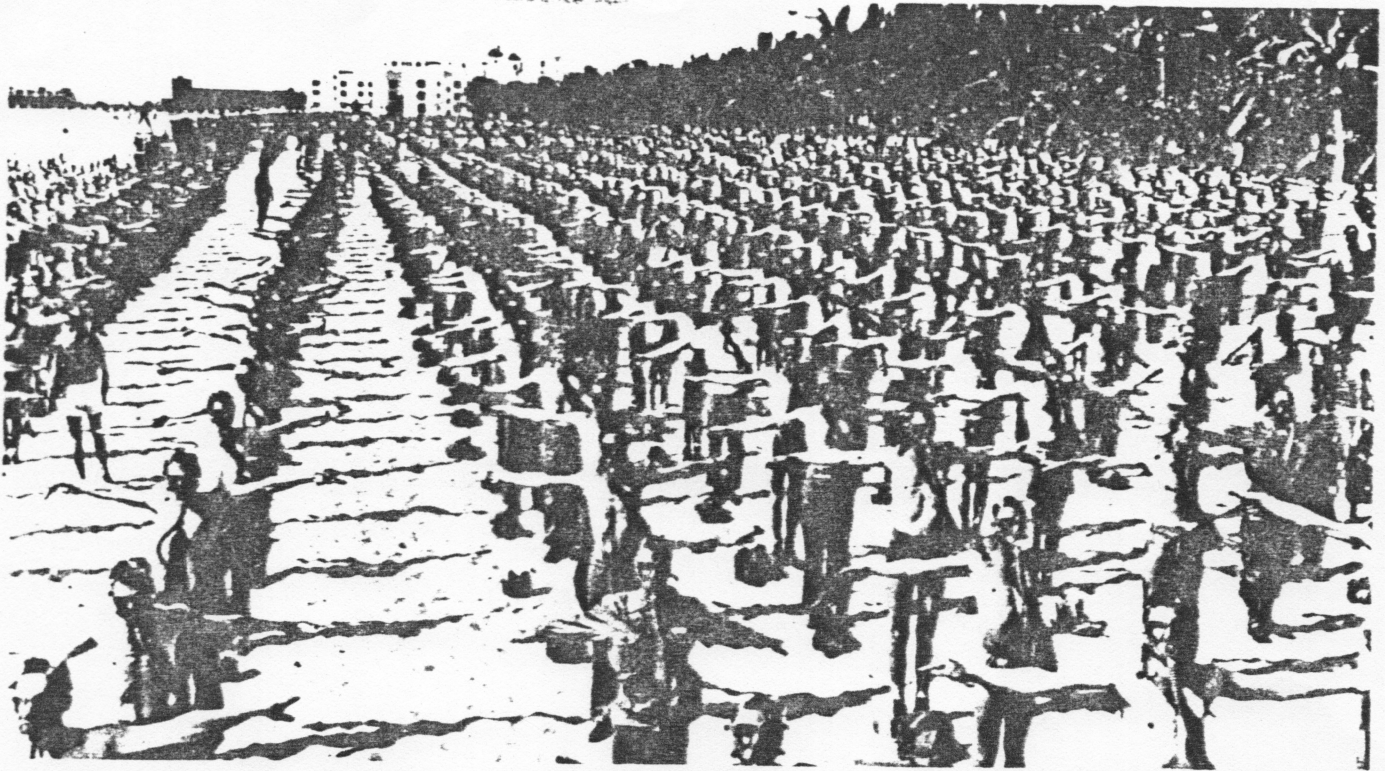
EPILOGUE

The historical events from World War II to the Cuban immigration have been as formative an influence as the arrival of the F.E.C. Railroad was in 1896. However, the perspective that is necessary for the historian to assess the relevance of this recent history is only acquired with time. This is especially true in evaluating how the character of an era relates to architectural expression. Art Deco for example, was not recognized as nearly so comprehensive a style as it was, until the late 1960s, when Bevis Hillier and the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts mounted the first major exhibition on the subject in this country since its initial popularity. Certainly there have been more recent design trends just as pervasive as Art Deco here in the 1930s or Mediterranean in the 1920s. To attempt to evaluate their significance at this point in time would be premature, but the importance of some historical events is obvious, regardless

of how their effects may be interpreted in the future.

With the decline of the real estate boom, and the Depression, Miami and its environs regained something of the small-town character it lost during the 1920s. That atmosphere was not destined to last for very long. A revival in the number of tourists and new residents coming south to Florida was occurring before World War II engulfed the nation.

War was a circumstance difficult to reconcile with the sun, sea, and parties. After an initial spate of enlistment and anticipation, Miami settled back into business as usual and the regular winter season picked up, prompting local newspapers to question the propriety of tuxedos, cocktail parties and suntans when young men were dying to preserve the noble cause of liberty. The realization of war came soon enough when the tanker *Pan Mas-*



SOLDIERS DRILLING ON MIAMI BEACH DURING WORLD WAR II. (HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA)

sachusetts was sunk off the Florida coast by a German submarine.² Several dozen tankers were attacked in the Florida waters in the early years of the war and rumors of German spies and secret refueling bases in Miami often circulated.

By the end of 1942, well over one hundred Miami Beach hotels were being used as barracks to house enlisted men and officers in training.³ The Miami Beach Golf Course was leased by the Officer Candidate School as a drill ground and the beaches were soon filled with soldiers practicing maneuvers. Many foreign soldiers trained here as well. The University of Miami was training British soldiers in navigation. The Submarine Chaser Training Center was attended by Russian soldiers who stayed in hotels along Biscayne Boulevard. Military personnel from Norway, France, Cuba, Chile, and Uruguay were being schooled in one field or another in the Miami area.⁴

As the war proceeded, wounded soldiers were flown directly to Miami hospitals. The Coral Gables Biltmore Hotel was converted to a veteran's hospital as were others on Miami Beach. Many of Miami's buildings were converted to war time uses. The Roo-

sevelt Hotel downtown became the Lindsey Hopkins Vocational School to teach mechanical trainees war time skills. Part of the Dupont Building in Miami was taken over by the U.S. naval command. The Air Force made use of several of the local air fields and two POW camps were opened in south Dade County.⁵ On Miami Beach, the South Beach Pier became a serviceman's club staffed by local volunteers. Other recreational facilities were opened and operated by concerned citizens, including one in Overtown for black soldiers who were not allowed in the white clubs.

When the war finally ended, the growth of Miami did not exactly take up where it had left off. Many veterans and their relatives who came to the area in connection with wartime activities came back to settle and Miami was back on its boom and bust cycle. Although the rapid change brought about by sporadic development was a familiar phenomenon to Dade Countians in the twentieth century, that pattern did not hold true for the residents of Colored Town who struggled disproportionately for every slight mark of progress. Segregation laws in Miami had eased little.

Finally Overtown, formerly Colored Town and later known as Culmer after Father

John Culmer, experienced his own economic boom during the post-war resurgence. Black performers such as Billie Holliday, Lena Horne, Louis Armstrong, Nat "King" Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, and the Ink Spots, who were suddenly popular attractions in Miami Beach clubs and hotels, were still not welcome as guests in those places. As a result, they stayed in Overtown with friends or in hotels.⁵ The Mary Elizabeth Hotel, which had opened on Second Avenue in 1918, was later followed by the Sir John and the Lord Calvert. Second Avenue soon became known as "Little Broadway" because of the nightclubs where world famous entertainers performed in their off hours. In the words of popular composer Fats Waller, "The joint was jumpin'." The commercial district was anyway. Much of the surrounding population still lived in substandard conditions. As segregation laws eased in the next decades, a wider spectrum of employment and educational opportunities became available, but integration also encouraged white-owned businesses to compete for black dollars and struck a serious blow to the Overtown business district.

Changes came rapidly to Dade County in the post war years. As the wilderness disappeared under encroaching development, interest grew in preserving and maintaining some of its features. In 1944, Congress autho-

rized the transfer of 847,175 acres of Everglades to the National Park Service.⁷ In 1947, the Rickenbacker Causeway was dedicated, providing access to the new Crandon Park on Key Biscayne.⁸

In Miami and Miami Beach significant development resumed after the war's end, but the reputation of the area was tarnished by the bad publicity the expansion of the illegal gambling industry attracted. In 1949, the Congressional Crime Committee, headed by Estes Kefauver, came to town to investigate the allegations of criminal activity. The committee's report was filled with statements of condemnation for local officials. Among many unflattering things it stated,

...criminals from all over the nation were able to act freely in the Miami area because the concentration of economic power they brought in from outside enabled them to control local government and corrupt substantial portions of the community.⁹

In the aftermath of the hearings, many gambling establishments closed their doors for good, particularly on Miami Beach where they were concentrated.

In spite of the seedy nature of that episode, many of the respectable citizens of the Beach still believed in the fantasy created by Carl Fisher. Hotels with names like the Mar-seilles, the Sorrento, the Monte Carlo, the Casablanca, Algiers, and Bombay continued to spring up on the waterfront, each eliciting some exotic daydream from their guests. The mobsters ousted from Miami by the Kefauver Commission moved on to Havana where they reinstated the same system of corruption. Another episode in the evolution of Dade County had passed, leaving South Florida in the midst of the 1950s with the same concerns as the rest of the nation: Communism or McCarthyism, Korea, the advent of rock and roll, and an uneasy loss of individual identity as many families moved into planned suburbs with row upon row of identical housing and no way to tell if they were living in Iowa or California.

Technological advancements, the pro-



BILLIE HOLIDAY (LEFT) AT GEORGETTE'S TEAROOM IN LIBERTY CITY. GEORGETTE CAMPBELL OWNED AND MANAGED TEAROOM AND GUESTHOUSE WHICH CATERED TO VISITING BLACK CELEBRITIES.

liferation of, and improvements in communications and transportation also served to erase local identities. The more time that passed, the less Miami and all of Dade County thought and acted as an appendage isolated from the rest of the nation. International homogenization affected everything and was a trend led in many respects by the early twentieth century Modernist architects who believed the worldwide standardization of design principles would produce buildings for the modern age that were more aesthetically pleasing, symbolically appropriate and behaviorally effective.

While architects built, and their critics debated the gap between intellectual theory and real world application, larger numbers of people became interested in the preservation of vernacular forms of architecture. This was an important change in attitude for Dade County, particularly because it is a region that is largely dependent on the appeal of its local

identity. When we try to visualize what elements combine to make up the character of the Miami area, both as it is and as we would like it to be, what comes to most people's minds are palm trees, the blue Atlantic, an international urban center of sophisticated highrises, the low-scale Art Deco hotels facing the beach, the two-story porch of a tropical Bahamian home, an eccentric building in oolitic limestone, and the breeze-filled courtyard of a Mediterranean house. Humanity's additions to the natural terrain of South Florida did not begin with Henry Flagler's railroad, nor does it end with the 1920s real estate boom, or the Cuban immigration. The wood and concrete manifestations of the continuing human effort in Dade County combine to contribute to a developing character that is vital to any city, and that cannot exist when people do not have a visible reference to their origins.

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