

A new, and brilliant, event is being added to Miami Beach's summer program this year. It is the Miss Universe Beauty Pageant, scheduled July 2-10 in the city's giant Convention Hall.

Beauties from more than 50 foreign areas and countries, as well as from the 50 states of the United States, are expected to compete in the contest. State representatives will vie for the title of Miss United States, and Miss United States will go into the Miss Universe competition.

Selection of Miss United States will be completed July 7 and the finals in the Miss Universe contest will be July 9.

Plans, of course, are not as yet complete for the Miss Universe Pageant. However, Air France will fly the 25 to 30 girls expected from Europe and the Middle East, to New York. After ceremonies in New York and a reception in Washington, they will travel U. S. Highway 301, renamed the Miss Universe Highway, to Florida, meeting various state delegations en route.

The first Miss Universe Beauty Pageant was produced in Long Beach, Calif., in 1952 and the event has grown in stature and recognition steadily. Now it is recognized as the top beauty contest in the world.

American girls have won the Miss Universe title twice. Miriam Stevenson of South Carolina turned the trick in 1954 and Carol Morris of Iowa in 1956. The first Miss Universe was Armi Kuusala of Finland.

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The growth of aviation and of Miami Beach have been peculiarly linked.

Probably the first flying field in Florida was established at Miami Beach in 1914. It was used by Glenn H. Curtiss in training aviators for the United States government.

J. N. Lummus, who was pioneering Miami Beach as Curtiss was aviation, gave Curtiss permission to use a tract of land as an airfield. Curtiss built hangars where the Fleetwood hotel now stands, and his planes buzzing over Biscayne Bay served, according to Lummus, "to keep the eyes of the Miami populace on Miami Beach."

Just as fledgling fliers who became U. S. pilots in World War I received their first training here, so did thousands of trainees for the Army Air Force in World War II, 25 years later.

Short of housing for the army that had to be built almost overnight, the government took over most Miami Beach hotels in 1942, using them as barracks; the parks and golf courses as parade grounds. The whole city, during the war years, was practically a military encampment.

Strangely, Miami Beach now has no airport although hundreds of thousands of vacationers fly to the city every year and the jet plane has placed summer less than 12 hours from any city in the country.

Planes are noisy, just as were Curtiss' first flimsy craft. The International Airport on the mainland therefore serves the city very well. The airplane no longer is needed to "keep the eyes of the Miami populace on Miami Beach."