

# South Florida History

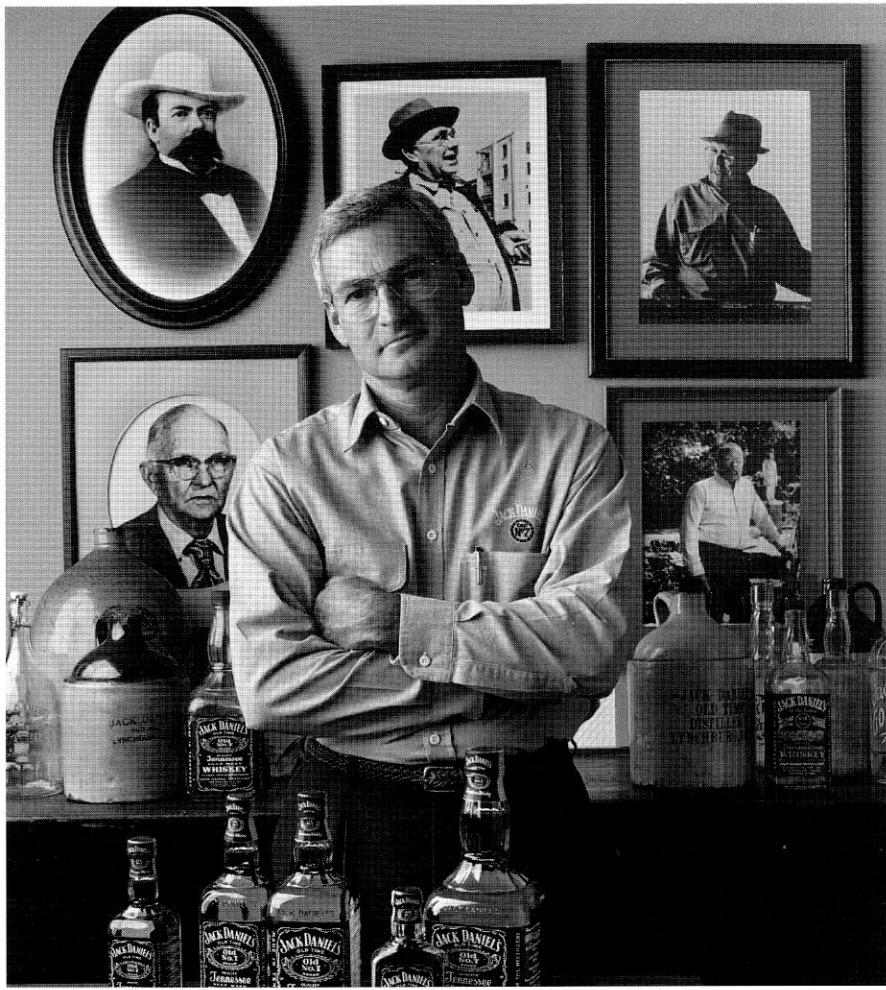
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THE BRIGHT HISTORY OF FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

BOCA RATON HISTORICAL SOCIETY • CLEWISTON MUSEUM • COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM  
FLORIDA HISTORY CENTER & MUSEUM • FORT MYERS HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA



Clockwise from top left, that's Jack Daniel, Jess Motlow, Lem Motlow, Frank Bobo and Jess Gamble. (Jimmy's in the middle.)

**JACK DANIEL'S HEAD DISTILLER**, Jimmy Bedford, has lots of folks looking over his shoulder.

Since 1866, we've had only six head distillers. (Every one a Tennessee boy, starting with Mr. Jack Daniel himself.) Like those before him, Jimmy's mindful of our traditions, such as the oldtime way we smooth our whiskey through 10 feet of hard maple charcoal. He knows Jack Daniel's drinkers will judge him with every sip. So he's not about to change a thing. The five gentlemen on his wall surely must be pleased about that.

**SMOOTH SIPPIN'  
TENNESSEE WHISKEY**

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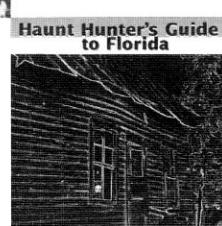
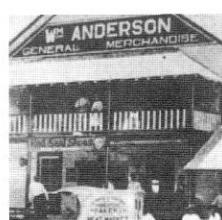
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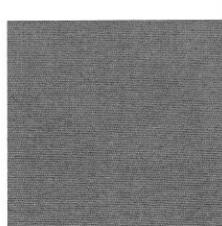
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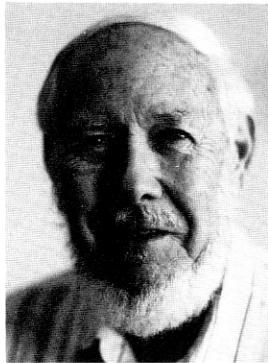


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# editor's notes

By Stuart McIver

Ghosts. Do you believe in them? Have you ever seen one? Have any members of your family or any of your friends ever told you about seeing one? My answer to all these questions is "no."

But do I like to hear them and read about them? This time the answer is "yes."

Why do ghost stories and haunted houses crop up wherever you go? They seem to be part of the culture of small towns and big cities alike. That means ghost stories are interwoven into the history of many places.

How then can historical publications treat these tales which dance along tantalizingly on the thin edge of reality, or possibly of delusion, or maybe madness and just an overactive imagination?

Are there ghosts in the Biltmore Hotel? Helen Muir in her delightful *The Biltmore: Beacon for Miami* wrote: "The rumor was that the ghost of a shabby gangster, one Fats Walsh, was known to prowl the upper regions of the Biltmore following his murder over a gambling debt." Talking it up for its resident ghost certainly helps keep the Biltmore's name in the news just as it does for the ritzy west coast hotel, the Don CeSar, on St. Petersburg Beach.

In the often mysterious Florida Keys a popular new attraction is a ghost tour given nightly by the Key West Tour Association. Spooked out by a ghost tour he took in Edinburgh, Scotland, David Sloan now leads ghost-fanciers on a tour that starts with the Colours Guest House on Fleming Street. The house, the story goes, is haunted by the restless ghost of Enriqueta Marrero, a wronged woman left penniless when her late husband turned out to be a bigamist. At the Artists House he tells the story of a haunted ghost doll named Robert, now residing in the East Martello Historical Museum.

"Before our tours about sixty percent of the people admit they believe in ghosts," says Sloan. "After a tour a show of hands can give you a seventy-to-eighty percent rating."

*The Haunt Hunter's Guide to Florida*, by Joyce Moore, of Inverness, a newly-published book by Pineapple Press, introduces us to ghosts that are rumored to cavort around such locales as Shell Mound on Cedar Key, an unfinished tabby house on Fort George Island and the St. Francis Inn in St. Augustine. (See review pg. 31)

In fact, St. Augustine has been around so long it even has a book of 24 ghost stories all to itself. It is named simply *Ghosts of St. Augustine* by Dave Lapham.

Ghosts have even spun off movies on spook-eradication, such as "Ghostbusters" and "Ghostbusters 2."

A man who has been described as "the world's leading skeptic, iconoclast and debunker" lives in Plantation. James "the Amazing" Randi's work in that intriguing land where science and mythology sometimes meet earned him the Genius Fellowship from the MacArthur Foundation in 1986.

In his *An Encyclopedia of Claims, Frauds, and Hoaxes of the Occult and Supernatural* he classifies a ghost as a "figure, often described as semi transparent, believed to be the remaining trace of a deceased person." Most accounts of ghosts, he says, are second or third-hand. His investigations rarely touch on that area since reports of ghostly behavior usually involve little more than mysterious sounds, a most illusive quarry.

"The stories of ghosts develop from mythologies or from known facts," he says.

"They exist around the world wherever survival after death is a religious belief. People want to believe them. Ghosts are not part of Buddhist cultures since Buddhists believe in reincarnation not in survival after death."

The Amazing Randi, a professional magician, lecturer and author, laments the outpouring of misinformation that has swept through the media in the past decade, particularly the tabloids.

At *South Florida History Magazine* ghosts intruded on us from a surprising sector. We stumbled into a story on Anderson's Corner, a south Miami-Dade County location which was declared a Dade County Historic Site in 1981, and a National Historic Site shortly after. Many interesting events occurred there, not the least of which were the Anderson's Corner ghost stories which kept leaping out at us.

At an editorial meeting involving Jamie Welch, Nicole Shuey and myself we asked ourselves: Is a ghost story a proper subject for a magazine about history? We concentrate on historical facts and we have to strive mightily to make sure that everything we print is accurate.

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IS A RELIGIOUS BELIEF."**

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A scholarly publication is not going to touch a story like this and, we thought, maybe we shouldn't either. We are concerned with facts and sometimes you have to ask, what is a fact? The building was completed in 1912 — fact. But in 1994 Hawk Hawkins, an Iroquois Indian working on the restoration of the structure, recorded his thoughts and observations in a journal. An accurate reporting of what he wrote on any given day is also factual. What he wrote might not be true but it is a fact as long as it is what he wrote.

We expect to receive some criticism for this article. We expect to be criticized for nudging history over into the realm of fancy or possibly be blasted for embracing the sensationalism currently ravishing the land on an epidemic scale, as Randi has noted.

Our answer is we are trying to see if we can write about ghosts in a fair-minded, responsible — and interesting — way. Read Jamie Welch's story and let us know what you think? Do it in a letter. Tapping three times on the wall won't count. **-SFH**

It's Fun!!

It's Easy!!

Test Your Historical Knowledge by Playing the Historical Museum's Super Fun....

**Mystery Photo Contest**

Simply identify the who and where of the above photograph and send your guess into: Mystery Photo Contest, Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 101 W. Flagler St., Miami, FL 33130. If you are correct, you win the following: A custom framed 8x10 print of the entire photograph, a tour of the collections department given by curator Noelle Shuey, a handy 4-color compass pen, a music CD "Cuban Jazz" and a quality cigar to celebrate your victory! Entries must be received before October 30, 1998. If multiple correct entries are received, a drawing will be held November 10, 1998 to determine the winner. The names of all correct guessers will be published in the Winter 1998 issue of *South Florida History*.

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# around the galleries



## **HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**

Miami-Dade Cultural Center, 101 West Flagler Street, Miami,  
Phone: 305-375-1492 Fax: 305-375-1609 E-mail: [www.historical-museum.org](http://www.historical-museum.org)  
General Information: Open Monday Through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.;  
Thursdays until 9 p.m.; Sundays, 12 noon - 5 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving,  
Christmas and New Year's Day. Adults \$5; Children 6-12 \$2. Members Free.

### **SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS**

**FLORIDA FOLKLIFE: TRADITIONAL ARTS IN  
CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITIES** September 25,  
1998 - January 3, 1999. A Statewide traveling exhibition produced by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida featuring handmade objects by over 80 master artists from throughout Florida. Do not miss the accompanying FREE festivals:

#### **SOUTH FLORIDA TRADITIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL** September 26, 1998, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and

the **SOUTH FLORIDA TRADITIONAL MUSIC  
FESTIVAL** October 24, 1998, 11 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

#### **GATEWAY OF THE AMERICAS**

**Permanent Installation Opens Late Fall 1998.** See the newest multimedia addition to the museum's permanent exhibit, Tropical Dreams: A People's History of Southern Florida. Explore the last fifty years of southern Florida's development, a burst of activity which produced more changes in the area than any other time period since its settlement. Visitors can chart the region's growth and examine the myriad influences — from transportation and immigration to education and recreation — which have given southern Florida international importance.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

#### **HISTORIC PURSUIT LIMO RALLY** October 3, 1998.

Historic Pursuit is a Miami history "Trivial Pursuit" - Scavenger Hunt starting at Miami Beach's Groove Jet, 323 23rd Street. After a Champagne Toast players cruise in limos from clue to clue throughout South Beach, enjoying complimentary drinks and hors d'oeuvres on their hunt for historic answers. Call Cuqui at (305) 375-1492 for more details.

#### **SIXTH ANNUAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM GOLF CLASSIC** October 28, 1998. Tee time at 12:00 p.m.

A day of fun and golf at this "shot-gun" tournament at the historic Biltmore Hotel & Golf Course in Coral Gables, followed by a silent auction and dinner reception. All proceeds benefit the education programs of the Historical Museum. For more information, call Pat Helms at (305) 375-1492.

#### **HISTORIC CABBAGE KEY & USEPPA ISLAND ADVENTURE** November 7-8, 1998.

Old Florida Adventure Weekend on the Southwest Barrier Islands... Steeped in ancient Native American history... Island time with good food and friends. Package includes one night accommodations on Cabbage Key, dinner and breakfast at the Cabbage Key Inn, reception at Randall Archaeological Research Center, archaeology tours of Pineland and Useppa Island, tour of Historic Cabbage Key and all boat transportation to and from islands. Call (305) 375-1492 for more information.

#### **HARVEST FESTIVAL** November 21-22, 1998, 10:00 a.m. -

5:00 p.m. Dade County Fair & Exposition Center at Tamiami Park, Coral Way and SW 112th Ave. For over twenty years, the Historical Museum has drawn thousands to this festival with hundreds of crafts booths, historical reenactments, folklife demonstrations, musical entertainment, educational programs, antique automobiles, informative exhibits, and food. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$2 for children (5-12). Call (305) 375-1492 for more information.

#### **TROPEES ANNUAL SCROOGE HOLIDAY PARTY**

**December 3, 1998.** Bring in the holiday with an evening of champagne, hors d'oeuvres, live entertainment, cash bar and a festive array of door prizes that will warm the hardest of hearts. Profits benefit the Historical Museum. For more information please call Cuqui at (305) 375-1492.



### Collier County Museum 3301

#### Tamiami Trail East, Naples (941)

**774-8476.** The Collier County Museum explores the people, places and everyday events that have shaped Collier County's heritage. The museum and four-acre historical park are open Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free.

#### Events

The Old Florida Festival to be held November 14-15, 1998. History literally comes alive as costumed interpreters, historical re-enactors, period vendors, crafts-workers and folk musicians gather on the grounds of the Collier County Museum for two full days to recreate 400 years of everyday life on the Florida frontier. Admission is just \$3 for adults, free for children 12 and under. Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Continuing with a "Cottager's Evening Performance" from 7 - 9 ; Sunday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.



### Fort Myers Historical Museum 2300 Peck Street, Fort

#### Myers (941) 332- 5955.

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed Sundays and Mondays and most holidays. Admission is \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children ages 3-12. Museum members are free.



### Clewiston Museum 112 South Commercio Street, Clewiston (813) 983-

**2870.** The Clewiston Museum, founded in 1984, is a growing museum, collecting and displaying items, large and small, important and trivial, which reflect the past of Clewiston and its surrounding area. The Clewiston Museum is open 1-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, with seasonal adjustments. No admission fee is charged; however, donations are encouraged.



### Boca Raton Historical Society Town Hall, 71 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton (407) 395-6766.

The Boca Raton Historical Society operates a museum and gift shop at the old town hall, 71 North Federal Highway, Boca Raton. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.



### Florida History Center & Museum Burt Reynolds Park, 805 North U.S. Highway 1, Jupiter

**(407) 747-6639.** The Florida History Center & Museum is open all year. Examine artifacts from early Florida inhabitants in the permanent museum collection and view the traveling exhibits.

Open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and weekends 1-5 p.m. Closed on Mondays. \$4 adults; \$3 seniors; \$2 children. The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is open Sunday - Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (must be 48" tall to climb.) For information: (405) 747-8380. \$5. The Dubois Pioneer Home is open Sunday and Wednesday, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. \$2.

# CIGAR SMOKER BENEFIT LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT

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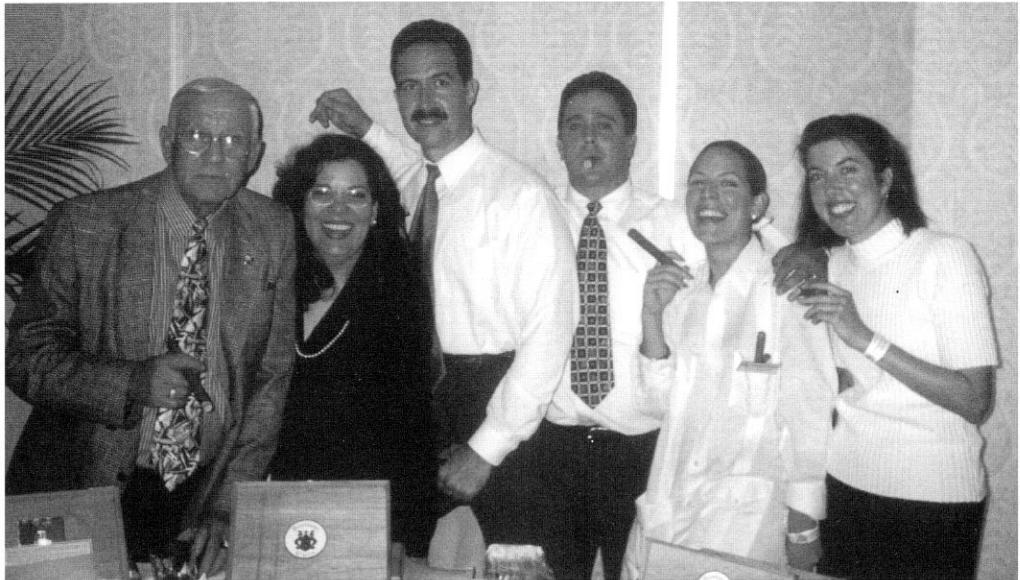
**S**ummer is the sensual season and **Smokin' Summer Nights**

**Cigars & Jazz**, a fund raiser held on Thursday, July 30, 1998 satisfied every appetite.

The event was held from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. at the Sonesta Beach Resort, 350 Ocean Drive on Key Biscayne. Proceeds benefitted the Historical Museum of Southern Florida.

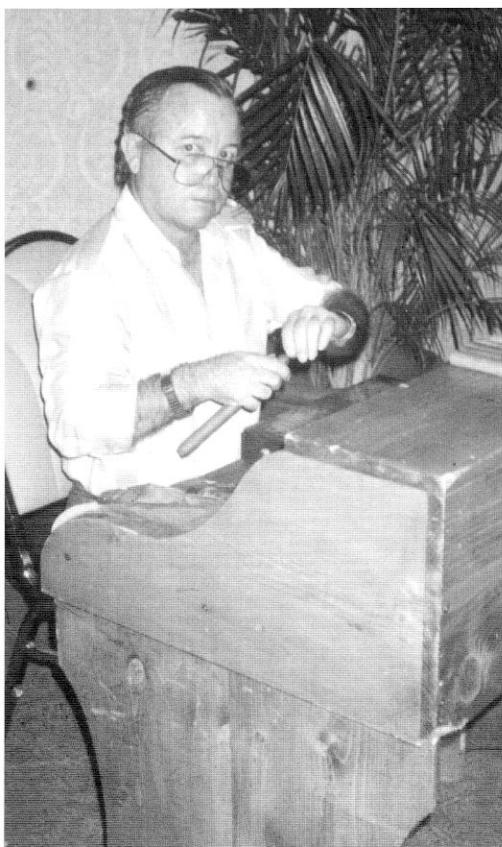
For the cigar aficionado, the evening included complimentary samples of the finest cigars from Canary Islands Cigars, Cigar Connection, Caonabo Cigars Mfg., Inc., La Tradición Cubana and World Cigars Corp. Guests received a personal Cigar Log to record their impressions during the evening's stogie sampling.

Even if cigars were not the preferred indulgence, guests savored the mood of summer in the tropics with the sultry sounds of hot jazz artist Oscar Salas Trio, who performed live, or satisfied their appetite with the tasteful delights of tempting hors d'oeuvres. A refreshing open bar courtesy of National Distributing Company quenched the thirst of everybody. As an added bonus, to commemorate the event *Smokin' Summer Nights* guests each took home a special music CD created by International Music Distributors featuring Cuban jazz. Guests mixed and mingled in a tropical seaside paradise, complete with exquisite arrangements by



**Above:** Manuel Dominguez, President of Caonabo, Yelena Fernandez, SCI, Two employees of Caonabo, Daisy Delgado, NBC 6, Nicole Shuey, Marketing Director at HMSC.

**Below:** Rafael Lorenzo from the Cigar Connection demonstrates how a fine cigar should be rolled.



Curbside Florist, celebrating the seasonal delights of the long, hot summer. Guests also brought their luck with them, as an array of unique door prizes were given away.

The Tropees are a museum support group which annually holds unique fund raising events with a slant on history. All proceeds of the *Smokin' Summer Nights* event benefitted the educational programs and activities of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. The Tropees wish to thank all the event sponsors including: Sonesta Beach Resort; National Distributing Company; Costa Rican Natural; Curbside Florist; International Music Distributors; Canary Islands Cigars; Cigar Connection; Caonabo Cigars Mfg., Inc.; La Tradición Cubana; and World Cigars Corp.; with a very special thank you to Mano for providing original artwork for the event. **-SFH**

# FOLKLIFE EXHIBIT FEATURES INTERESTING HANDMADE OBJECTS

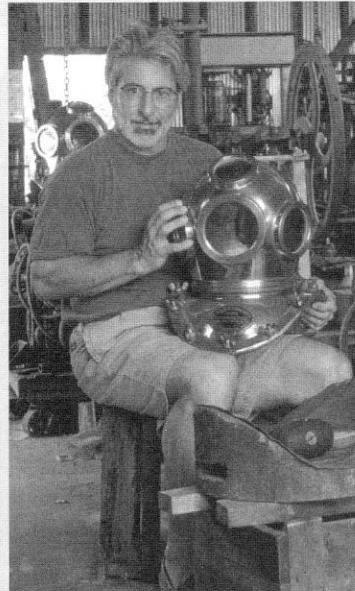
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**O**n September 25, 1998 the Historical Museum of Southern Florida will open the doors for the compelling exhibit *Florida Folklife: Traditional Arts in Contemporary Communities*, which will run through January 3, 1999 at HMSF. Two exciting FREE festivals will accompany this fascinating exhibit. They will be the *South Florida Traditional Arts Festival*, September 26, 1998, and the *South Florida Traditional Music Festival*, October 24, 1998.

The exhibit is based on years of field research carried out by folklorists associated with HMSF and the State of Florida Folklife Program.

"The exhibition features objects made by hand by over 80 master artists," said Dr. Stephen Stuempfle, Curator of the exhibit.

Many interesting handmade objects will fill the gallery. There will be a frog gig, sponge diving helmet, boats, nets and



Artist Nick Toth with sponge diving helmet, on display at the Florida Folklife exhibit.

fishing flies, saddles and cow whips, garments, quilts, baskets, woodcarvings, decorated Easter eggs, piñatas and Carnival costumes, drums and guitars, and many other objects.

"What all of these objects have in

common is that they are made by hand in accordance with traditional, community-based designs," Stuempfle said.

Stuempfle said the exhibit will focus on four broad functional categories: "Maritime, Marsh and Ranching Traditions," including objects associated with a range of marine and fresh water industries, as well as with cattle ranching; "Domestic and Decorative Traditions," featuring primarily objects that are used to adorn the human body or the home; "Ritual and Festive Traditions," with pieces that are employed during special occasions in community life, with some of these objects also having spiritual significance; and "Musical Traditions."

"Though our focus is on objects, these objects do allow visitors to explore more intangible forms of folklife," Stuempfle said. "Music can be examined through musical instruments, for example, and religious beliefs through ritual artifacts."

-SFH

Below: Condal & Peñamil passed out stogies all night. Martha out stogies all night. Martha Quintans, Ricardo Valdes, Esther Alarcon.



Above: Some of the event's "spirited" sponsors Howard Barrios, Brown-Forman, Mario Freixas, National Distributing Co., Inc.

# Part I jews in miami South Florida's Promised Land

By Henry Green

**M**iami's metamorphosis into a large Jewish metropolitan center has been described as miraculous. Miami and Miami Beach's fathers, Henry Flagler, the oil, train and hotel magnate, and Carl Fisher, of Prest-O-Lite car headlights, and Indianapolis Motor Speedway fame, had followed the standard real-estate practice of their day. They put restrictive covenants into the deeds to their property. Jews, who until 1949 were forbidden in some areas of Miami Beach to own land, rent a room in a hotel and swim in the ocean, by the last quarter of the twentieth century were having streets named after their rabbis.

The "Jewish Question" surfaced from the very beginning of

Miami. When Flagler's East Coast Railroad steamed into Miami in 1896, Jewish merchants — Jake Schneidman, Sam Singer, Julius Frank, Morris Kanner and Isidor Cohen — could also be counted among those developing the new Southern outpost.

Cohen, in his autobiography *Historical Sketches and Sidelights of Miami, Florida*, described seeking out Mrs. Julia Tuttle, Flagler's frontier partner, for whom is named a causeway between downtown Miami and South Miami Beach. Mrs. Tuttle offered him not a mortgage but a laborer's job. Cohen retorted, "the last labor of this character my race had performed was in the land of Egypt, and that it would be a violation of my religious convictions to resume that condition of servitude."

Nevertheless Cohen's store prospered, competing with Burdines and other early merchants. With other civic-minded Miamians, Jews formed the Miami Chamber of Commerce and served together on municipal committees.

Few Americans, including Jews, were attracted to Biscayne Bay prior to World War I. Malaria, yellow fever, little sanitation, crime, booze and lack of women made it hardly appealing. The handful of Miami immigrants tended to be northerners in search of health, Key West residents in pursuit of employment opportunities and carpet-baggers in anticipation of a catch.

One such pioneer family was Joe and Jennie Weiss. Joe was a New York asthmatic who moved to Miami Beach in 1913 to breathe. Soon Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant was making history near Smith's Casino. Still family-owned and managed, Joe's stands in its original building and its walls portray Miami's transformative story through photos.

*Joe and Jennie Weiss in front of the original Joe's Restaurant, at the same location as today's Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant. Miami Beach, ca. 1917.*

*Ziff Jewish  
Museum of  
Florida Photo.*





May 1, 1927 groundbreaking of Temple Israel with Frank Wharton, city manager as main speaker; also in picture: Herbert Feibelman, D.J. Apte, Herman Wolkowsky, Bernard Wolkowsky, Joe Richter. Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida Photo.

It was during the inter-war years that Miami's Jewish community developed a profile. The promise of land booms, beauty and employment kept spirits afloat for the trickle that migrated to Miami. Some, such as the Brameister family living in Poland, watching the early Nazi signals in Europe, were compelled to stop temporarily in Cuba before being smuggled through Florida immigration officers. Others came to salvage the wreckage left over from the real estate bust of 1926 and the successive hurricanes of 1926 and 1928. Debt-ridden owners were only too anxious to sell.

And still others were galvanized by the idealism and romanticism of being a part of something new. Mitchell Wolfson of Key West not only moved to Miami but was responsible for bringing Wometco (movie theaters), television and tourist attractions (Seaquarium)

to Miami. A sizable Jewish minority, 8,000, evolved on South Beach by the time America entered World War II.

With the exception of a Jewish section in the old Miami City Cemetery established in 1915 all Jewish buildings that are standing today date from post-World War I. These include a number of synagogues. Beth David, (originally B'nai Zion, founded in 1912), Miami's first synagogue, is today a Conservative congregation. Temple Israel, a Reform congregation that split from traditionally minded Beth David in 1922, was erected in 1927 and still serves the community. It is one of the most beautiful architecturally designed Reform Temples in America.

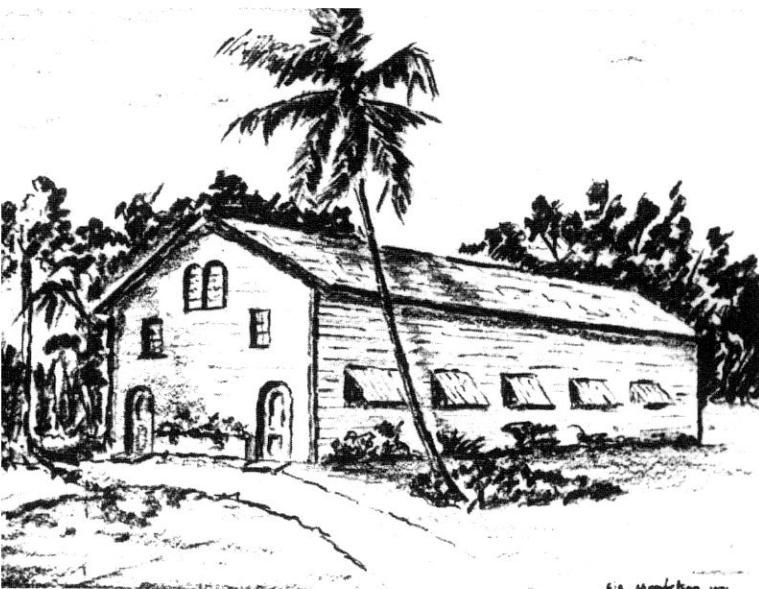
Beth Jacob, an Orthodox congregation and the Beach's first, opened its doors in 1929. Synagogues spawned other commu-

nal, organizational bodies — Zionist, philanthropic, social service — as well as indigenous Jewish publications like *The Jewish Floridian* published continuously from 1928 to 1990.

Just as World War II changed the contours of Europe so too did it change the map of Miami. The 1940s soldiers, billeted in restricted Miami Beach Hotels requisitioned by the Army and Navy, returned to Miami and Miami Beach to vacation and settle in the 1950s.

With the United States Supreme Court outlawing restrictive covenants and promulgating a series of rulings promoting the rights of minorities Miami Beach became a mecca for developers. The building of the Fontainebleau in 1954 by Ben Novack and his architect Morris Lapidus — "my hotels are to tickle" — appeared to many to crown Miami Beach's

*The arrival of the Brameister family  
from Poland to Cuba, 1919.  
Ziff Jewish Museum  
of Florida Photo.*



*Temple Israel. Drawing of original building on 275 N.E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street,  
1924-1926. Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida Photo.*

reputation as the Jewish winter playground of America. Yiddish was the Beach's diet along with kosher butchers and Hebrew classes.

These developments accompanied by massive structural changes created the possibility of democratizing paradise. The assembly line production of air-conditioned homes, the greening of air travel, the legalization of vacations as a right, not a privilege, and the explosion in mass communications placed Miami and Miami Beach in the consciousness of anyone old enough to watch TV.

In the 1950s Jews began to move out from their older areas to North Miami, Westchester and up the Miami coast. More comfortable with themselves and with their integration in Miami a new generation emerged. New communities were formed and leaders weaned. The owners of the South Beach Blackstone Hotel for example, invited black Baptist ministers to be their guests when they could find no accommodation in Miami to attend a convention.

Richard Stone, the son's owner, later became a U.S. Senator from Florida. Shepard Broad, who migrated to Miami from New York just prior to World War II, was another leader of this generation. He built Bay Harbor Village

and at the same time assisted in the purchasing and refitting of ships on the Miami River as his contribution to bringing refugees from Europe to the fledgling state of Israel. Broad also helped to build a synagogue, Beth Sholom, former site of the Nautilus Club's polo grounds from which Jews were restricted by Carl Fisher.

The 1960s brought more of the same. Everything was up for grabs. Meyer Lansky, reputedly the Mafia's Jewish consigliatore, continued to walk his dog north of the Fontainebleau unrecognized, long before the 1980s TV show, *Miami Vice*, popularized the excitement of the city. Jews from the Northeast queued to be airlifted south. Complemented by Cuban Jews boated north, the Jewish population exploded. Today South Florida (Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties) hosts the second largest concentration of Jews in an American metropolitan area. Only the Hispanic population has climbed so dramatically.

The 10,000-strong Jewish Cubans sometimes constitute an enigma. Locked in a sub-culture that exhibits their most recent experience, they remain loyal Cubans even to

the point of voting Cuban over Jewish. For those with Sephardic, Hispanic cultural and historical roots as well as Cuban, the enigma is even more complex. Many do not feel comfortable with European Yiddish or its translation into American currency. Although they have built several congregations, for example, Temple Moses, they remain to some degree separate. Some view their struggle as a barometer for the future of tri-ethnic relations in Miami.

Miami today is a capital for Jewish American as well as Israeli events during the winter season. Comedians and entertainers fly down regularly to visit their "moms." Israeli politicians after their much-ado in Washington relax and gather support in Miami.

Unlike the State of Israel, Miami Beach was never promised to the Jews. It became a promised land through the transformation in America from melting pot to cultural pluralism and the successes of those Jews who came to it as immigrants, refugees, snowbirds and exiles. Their creation of a "New Diaspora" is as much a product of the boom busts and hazardous hurricanes as their dreams to create a Jewish haven. *-SFH*

## Part II jews in miami

### Isidor Cohen The First Miami Jew

By Sara Leviten

**M**iami's early Jewish community was a hard-working group of pioneers. The first known Jewish resident in Miami was Isidor Cohen, a Russian Jew. He was born in 1870 and moved to New York in 1883.

He arrived in Miami on February 6, 1896, from Savannah, Georgia, by way of the Florida East Coast Railway from West Palm Beach to Fort Lauderdale; thence by small steamboat to Lemon City. He had to leave his merchandise in Lemon City in large boxes.

After much negotiating with both Julia Tuttle and the Brickell Family, he located his business on the south side of the Miami River, west of Brickell Point. He later moved to the north bank of the river and secured a new store for \$30 a month rent. The building was owned by banker Brown.

Cohen went on to become a pillar of Miami's community. He and his wife, Ida, were instrumental in just about every civic and charitable organization in Miami. Early on, the only group he couldn't join was "The Tuxedo Society," because he didn't own the proper black suit.

After his merchant days in early Miami, he became a realtor. Cohen died in 1951 and was buried in Miami's Mount Nebo Cemetery.

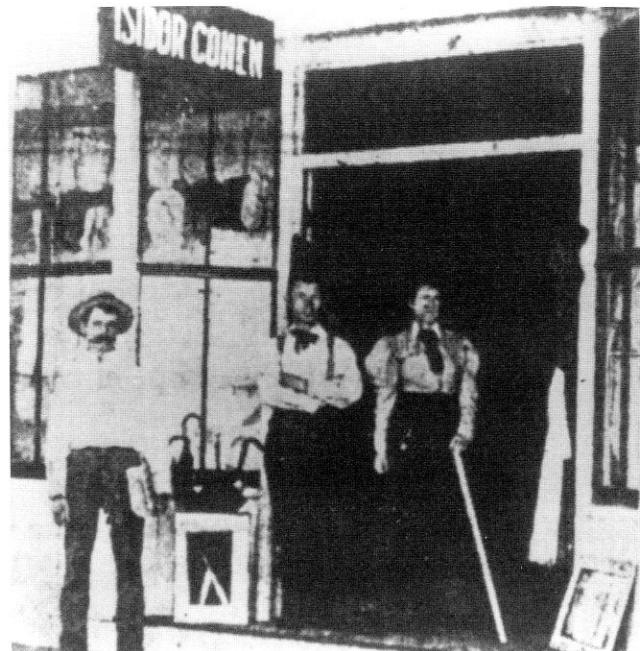
Many of the Jewish pioneer merchants moved to Miami in 1897 from Key West, because the city had imposed a \$1,000 peddler tax. Other early Jewish pioneers were: Samuel Singer, Jake Schneidman (Cohen's partner in 1900), Jacob Schneider, W. Wolfe, M. Bucholtz, Abe Safraneck, M. Seligman, Moe Hanes, Julius Frank, Charles and Morris Kanner, David Singer and N. Goldenberg.

By the end of 1896, out of a total of 500 Miamians, 25 were Jewish. Twelve of the 16 businesses were owned by Jews. Most of downtown was destroyed by a fire in December, 1896.

After fire struck in 1896 and 1899, followed by a yellow fever epidemic, most of the Jews who survived those catastrophes moved away. In 1900, there were three Jews left: Isidor Cohen, Ida Cohen and Phillip Ullendorf. The Jewish population increased to 75 people in 1913.

In 1912 B'nai Zion (later to become Beth David Congregation) was formed. Jews were required to have 10 men (now 10 people) in order to hold a religious service. B'nai Zion was named after Morris Zion.

Murray Dubbin, the grandson of Zion, told me that Zion also founded



Isidor Cohen at The Ideal Store, Miami, 1904.  
Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida Photo.

the Jewish Welfare Board in 1922. Today, Dubbin is City Attorney for Miami Beach and the Jewish Welfare Board is now the Jewish Family and Children's Serviceman. Of course, Isidor and Ida Cohen were also founders of B'nai Zion, as were Louis Fine, Henry and Louis Seitzlin, Philip Segall, and Rubin, among others.

I spoke with Louis Seitzlin and Judge Adele Segall Faske (daughter of Philip Segall). The Seitzlins originally came to Dade County to join a "kibbutz" (communal agricultural settlement) in South Dade, but it had already gone out of existence when they arrived. They settled in Miami in 1912. They were among Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe that were settled in South Florida by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. The Seitzlins' house was a meeting place for B'nai Zion and later Beth David Congregation. They lived on N.W. 5th Street, which was the Jewish neighborhood at that time.

Judge Faske's family came here in 1910 from Tampa. Later on, both Judge Faske and her brother Judge Sidney Segall along with Judge Robert Floyd wrote the "Reciprocal Support Law" that penalized delinquent parents who did not pay child support to their dependent children. This law was one of the first "Deadbeat Dad (and Mom)" laws adopted in the United States.

In 1912, a Jewish cemetery was created, as a special section of the City Cemetery. A young man by the name of Sacks died. He had no family, so he couldn't be buried in anyone's backyard, which was the custom then. Beth David didn't own a building, yet — so they had to establish a Jewish cemetery for the young man's burial.

David Afremow established the New York Bargain Store in Miami in 1909. Later it became Cromer and Cassel and eventually Richard's Department Store. B'nai Zion became Beth David Congregation in 1917, to honor Afremow, when he gave the synagogue a substantial contribution.



Abe Aronovitz, mayor of Miami, 1953. Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida Photo.

In 1917, a rabbi was brought in for seasonal and special religious events, and the Jewish Aid Association was formed. It later became The Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

During this decade, Miami's Jewish population increased to 2,000; the general population was 69,700. Among organizations formed in the Jewish community were Hadassah, a Zionist district, a B'nai B'rith Lodge and National Council of Jewish Women.

Temple Israel, the first Reform temple and Beth Jacob, an Orthodox "shul" (synagogue) were formed. Beth Jacob, located on South Beach, was recently converted into the Sanford Ziff Jewish Museum. During this period the synagogues first hired full-time rabbis.

In 1925, Miami was booming. Real estate was sold by the gallon, the acre, the square foot, whatever. The same piece of property could be sold many times in one day. The speculators made lots of money and the Jewish people were not left out of this financial bonanza.

By this time, many Jewish families had arrived from Key West and Jacksonville. "The Magic City" was the land of opportunity. People with vision, both Jews and Gentiles, came here to seek their fortune.

The Wolkowsky Family arrived from Key West in 1924 when Ruth, later married to Arnold Greenfield, was a six-month-old, colicky baby. Her grandfather had started Wolkowsky's Department Store down in Key West back in 1870. Things were starting to die down in the Keys, because the cigar industry had moved to Tampa.

Ruth and her relatives were major contributors to Miami. For example, she started the Conservatory School in 1951. It was the first integrated school of the arts in Dade County. Remember, Florida was part of the Jim Crow South and the school started three years before the Supreme Court decision on integration of public schools. Years later, Ruth would teach in the Humanities Department at Miami-Dade Community College. She ran the Lunch-Time Lively Arts Concerts for everyone to enjoy at Maurice Gusman Center for the Performing Arts.

Harold Pont and his family arrived in 1924 from a little town in Alabama. His cousins, Sam Silver, later a judge, and Bea Stepkin, one of the best teachers at Coral Way Elementary, had preceded them.

Rosedale Delicatessen opened in the 1920's. Dave Alper and Dave Boras owned it. Many decades later the South Dade Jewish Community Center was named after Dave and Mary Alper. Probably the first Jewish delicatessen in Miami, it was on N.W. 5th Street. Everybody went there to eat and socialize.

Harold Pont was well-known in the old time Jewish community as the owner of Rosedale. He and Irving Gordon did not buy it until the 1940's. What most people don't know, is that Harold did not even know what "lox" (smoked salmon) was until his Bar Mitzvah. Lox and bagels weren't too common in rural Alabama in the early 20th century. Harold had to make three trips to New York to learn the business. It was like deli school. He learned all about corned beef, smoked fish and herring. Rosedale closed in the late 1970's, but people still talk about its lamb shank today.

Max Silver, now a semi-retired attorney, arrived in 1925. He remembers going to the Palatial Kosher Restaurant for dinner on Friday nights. Fred Shochet, publisher of *The Jewish Floridian* ate there often, also. So did Father Kelly from Gesu Catholic Church. Sunshine (Sunny) Fagan Hershbein's family owned the Palatial. It was located behind the Everglades Hotel.

One time the Palatial was hired for a really big wedding, that of Lena Weinkle and Leo Chaikin. The wedding reception was to be kosher, but it was held in a non-kosher hotel, thus necessitating hard work by the Fagans to ritually clean the wedding reception hall for the party. They had to bring all their pots and pans, dishes, linen, silverware and glasses to the hall. Otherwise the reception would have been "unclean." Then they had to serve the meal and clean up afterward.

Mildred Berkowitz Braverman and her family came to Miami in 1925. Her father went into the scrap iron business called "A. and B. Pipe," after owners Adelman and Berkowitz. They also lived on N.W. 5th Street. Everyone wanted to be near the train station, but I think they also enjoyed living near Rosedale and the Palatial.

The Rubin family, who owned "The Hub," a clothing and sewing supply chain store, lived where Miami-Dade Community College's Wolfson Campus is now. They came from Key West in 1914.

Bernie Blanch helped start Tau Epsilon Phi at the University of Florida. His family came to Miami in 1913. They were in the clothing business. They even received the first contract to provide Catholic schools in Miami with uniforms. Recently, one of his daughters was elected to the City Council of Pinecrest.

The devastating hurricane of 1926 hit Miami with all of its force in September of that year, on the very important Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, so services were canceled.

Louis Spector's family had just arrived two days prior to the hurricane. The *Miami Metropolis* reported them as dead. Their building was demolished, but they all survived. The Spector family now holds a prominent position in the Miami Community as builders and developers. They erected many buildings, such as present-day Beth David. Their slogan is "We Built Miami!" Pop Spector, Louis's father, donated the reinforced steel to the fledgling University of Miami. It laid there for five or six years until the "cardboard college" was financially able to put down roots.

Jerry Weinkle remembers having only salt water from celery containers to drink after the hurricane in 1926. All the water and electricity were shut down. Ruth Greenfield remembers being told that they had fish swimming around their house. Millie Braverman's family needed a row boat to get across the street. Joan Feibelman Lehman, well-known sculptress and wife of automobile dealer and later Congressman William Lehman, arrived in 1926. Her family moved to the Gables and then to the northeast section near Temple Israel. She became a dental hygienist, but later developed her talent as an artist. She married Bill Lehman after graduating from Northwestern University.

Attorney Marwin Cassel relates that



*Ruth Wokowsky Greenfield at age 5. Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida Photo.*

Cromer-Cassel lost their business because of hurricane damage. The department store never recovered from the storm. It was a traumatic experience because that store was so modern and huge. When it had opened in 1925, Herbert Hoover, Secretary of the Treasury, was sent by President Calvin Coolidge to press the button to inaugurate the store.

The opening had been a grand event in Miami history and now the store was destroyed. It was rebuilt as Richards. Irwin M. Cassel later opened a store on Lincoln Road. His wife, Marwin's mother, was called Mana-Zucca. Not only was she a famous and talented composer, pianist and Broadway singer, she was also community minded. She used to hold open house, free concerts for 150 people in her home every week during the 1920's and 30's. Their house was located on the site of today's Omni Mall. It was called "Mazica Hall." Along with Dr. Arturo di Filippi, founder of the Greater Miami Opera Guild, Mana-Zucca put Miami on the cultural map of the United States.

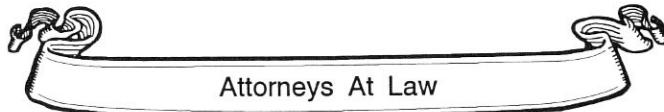
Babette Simons Ackerman came to Miami in the 1920's. She and her husband, Leo, operated the first major local insurance agency in Miami. They were active in every civic, cultural and Jewish organization in town.

The Great Depression hit Miami three years earlier than the rest of the country. The real estate boom went bust. The Jewish community coalesced to help each other. The Jewish population was 3,500 (general population 110,000). Many old timers were ruined. As related by Isidor Cohen, two or three committed suicide. Some of the survivors and newcomers continued to invest in city and beach property and eventually made a fortune.

Beth David built a community center, adjoining the synagogue. It gave great impetus to the cultural and social life of the community, and provided a meeting place for Jewish tourists, brought the “insouciant” youth into the synagogue and increased attendance at religious services.

In 1933 the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) and the Young Women's Hebrew Association (YWHA) were founded. The nucleus of youth activities were sporting events, dances, weddings, bar mitzvahs. They even sponsored Cub and Boy Scout troops. The YMHA and YWHA were the forerunner of today's Jewish Community Centers.

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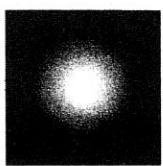
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The specter of anti-Semitism also reared its ugly head at YMHA sporting events. The YMHA teams played baseball against some gentile teams. This was done to foster a better understanding between the different groups, but some of the gentiles would get overly excited and call the Jewish boys "kikes" and "dirty Jews." Millie Braverman said, when asked about anti-Semitism, "You could cut it with a knife." At public school, Jewish children had to hide their Hebrew school books under their regular books. Herschel Rosenthal corroborated that story.

The B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League (ADL) started in Miami in the early 1930's to fight anti-Semitism. The ADL is still going strong. Art Teitelbaum, the Southeast Regional Director, is stationed in Miami.

Herschel Rosenthal, who eventually became a C.P.A. and the president of the former Flagler Federal Savings and Loan Association, came to Miami with his family in 1932 from Key West. He was Bar Mitzvahed at Beth El Congregation, because it was in their neighborhood. He used to ride his bike from Citrus Grove Junior High on N.W. 13th Avenue and N.W. 6th Street to Beth El on S.W. 2nd Street and S.W. 1 5th Avenue.

He remembers later going to the YMHA to attend the club events of the high school fraternity Sigma Rho. He used to play pool and also basketball with Cliff Suchman, who later became a developer. He met his future wife Marge there. They fell in love, got married and had three kids. They later joined Beth David and he eventually became president of the synagogue.

Robert Traurig, the well-known land-use attorney, came to Miami in 1933 for two years. He and his family came back to live permanently in Miami in 1937. His roots were the YMHA where he played basketball, went to Sunday school and was a member of the B'nai B'rith high school organization AZA.

Gerald Soltz, his brother and mother

came to Miami in the mid 1930's. His mother owned the Triangle Hotel where the family first lived at 211 N.E. 1st Street. He remembers hanging out at the Palatial Kosher Restaurant. He later had an auto parts store and his wife ran a travel agency.

Norman Reinhard moved from New York to Miami Beach in 1939. During World War II, his family lived across the street from Beth Jacob Synagogue. Thousands of soldiers were stationed for training on Miami Beach. His mother operated an open house for Jewish soldiers observing kashrut (only serving free kosher food). She served thousands of Jewish soldiers during the war.

Meanwhile, Norman and two of his brothers were stationed in the Pacific Theater during the war. They met each other in Manila and had a mini-reunion. The fourth brother was stationed in North Africa and Italy. Their names are included on a commemorative plaque in the basement of the present day Ziff Museum.

Norman went on to marry Maxine; they had four children. They moved to Miami where they own and operate Tippy Togs Childrenswear, and are important members of Beth David.

Judge Louie Bandel became the first Jewish judge in Miami in 1941. He had been the first Jewish Miami City Commissioner prior to that. His widow, Priscilla Bandel, stated, "He started the first traffic court and school." He later became a municipal judge, county court and circuit

court judge. He was also a long-time president of the local tuberculosis society.

Judge Joe Morris was the first Jewish Circuit Court judge in Miami as related by Kathryn (Kitty) Morris Gersten, his daughter. Governor Fuller Warren appointed him as a judge in 1950. Albert Dubbin, Murray Dubbin's father, was also an early municipal judge in Miami.

Jerome Stem came to Miami in 1945. He was a young pharmacist and veteran of World War II who had started a love affair with The Magic City while vacationing here from 1938 to 1941. One day he came to look at Robert's Drugs. The next day he bought the store. It was the only 24-hour pharmacy in Florida from 1947 to the early 1980's. It was also known for offering table service.

Famous people such as George Jessel and Mae West were customers at Roberts' Drugs. Mae West used to come there with her whole entourage in the wee hours of the morning and have breakfast after doing a long-running show at the Coconut Grove Playhouse in the 1950's. He also became friends with Lou Walters, Barbara Walters' father from "The Latin Quarter" and convinced him to put on shows at Florida Pharmaceutical Conventions.

Abe Aronovitz was a city commissioner in the early 1950's and then the only Jewish mayor in Miami's city history. He was known as "Honest Abe" because he cleaned up a lot of the corruption prevalent at the time.

From 1896 until the present day, the Jewish people of this area have reaped much from and given much to this area. *-SFH*



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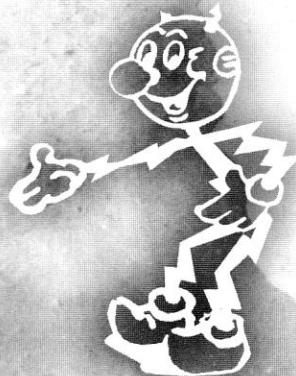


THE HISTORY  
FLORIDA POWER  
By Will



*A proud show of equipment and staff at the Miami plant in 1930's, which had recently withstood a major hurricane. The plant was so strongly built that it was designated as a shelter during World War II for Miami documents and a bomb shelter during the Cuban Missile Crisis of the 1960's. FPL Museum Photo.*

**TORY OF  
LIGHT COMPANY  
am Ho**





*During World War II, women like "Jimmy" Bird took over many FPL jobs held previously by men such as mechanic's helper and truck driver. FPL Museum Photo.*

**E**lectricity's journey into South Florida began in January 1897, when the twinkling lights of Henry Flagler's magnificent Royal Palm Hotel on the north bank of the Miami River sparked demand for power in the tropical swamps of South Florida. Built just one year after Miami incorporated, the fashionable five-story hotel lit up the night as the dazzle of electric light generated by the facility's own power plant streamed from the hotel's many windows.

Miami's 500 residents immediately took notice and began asking for an extension of the hotel's electric service to nearby businesses. Flagler granted their request. In 1904, he built a new, larger power plant and formed the Miami Electric Light & Power Company (EL&P). By 1913, the wood-fired plant, located downtown at the present-day site of Florida Power & Light's (FPL's) Central Service Center, was serving 10,000 residents.

Tourists and new residents flocked to the "Magic City" by the thousands and Miami EL&P was hard-pressed to keep up with ever-growing demand. Carl Graham Fisher, a millionaire who was building Miami Beach on a swampy island, took matters into his own hands when he built a generating plant on Miami Beach in 1919. Fisher's

Miami Beach operations and Miami EL&P were among the 58 diverse companies that became part of the new FPL in 1925. The incorporation also brought together a small generating plant and distribution system in Hialeah, distribution facilities in Coral Gables and Miami's gas works and street car systems.

Miami, home base for the new FPL, was in a champagne daze, experiencing the most fantastic real estate boom in history. Homes were built so fast that no accurate addresses could be assigned. The two bicycle-riding meter readers of the struggling Miami Electric Light & Power Company often used notes, such as "house with red shutters" or "third house from railroad tracks" to identify homes. Some customers escaped bills for two years.

In mid-September 1926, South Florida's real estate boom came to a dramatic halt when a savage hurricane struck Miami. The 1926 storm left the new FPL with thousands of poles snapped like match sticks, a gigantic tangle of 1,500 miles of wire, flooded plants and 55,000 stunned South Florida customers in the dark.

FPL's restoration work began immediately after the 1926 hurricane subsided, using primitive methods and equipment and safety standards that were a far cry from work practices used today.

Work crews made their way to Miami over flooded, pitted roads, and many employees got their start with FPL in those hectic days. "Just jump on the truck" was the word to any able-bodied person who asked for work.



Miami had barely recovered from the hurricanes of 1926 and 1928 before the Great Depression of the 1930's gripped the nation. In addition to their regular jobs, FPL employees were expected to sell toasters, percolators, vacuum cleaners and even electric ranges and refrigerators. During these years, FPL's home service department would call on South Florida customers and show them how to cook electrically and economically.

After a heated six-year electric rates dispute with the City of Miami beginning in 1933, FPL sold its water works and closed its streetcar system. A dramatic streetcar "funeral" was held in front of Miami's city hall, with the last street car decked out in mourning and accompanied by 12 pallbearers.

There was still a glimmer of optimism in Miami, despite the hard times. The first Orange Bowl Parade was held in the 1930's. Commercial aviation was taking flight by 1935, with the founding of Pan-American Airlines and Eastern Airlines. Even then, FPL played an important role in making Miami an international destination. Hundreds of Art Deco hotels sprouted up on Miami Beach between 1935 and 1941, and FPL's Miami Beach substations were built to resemble the distinctive architectural style.

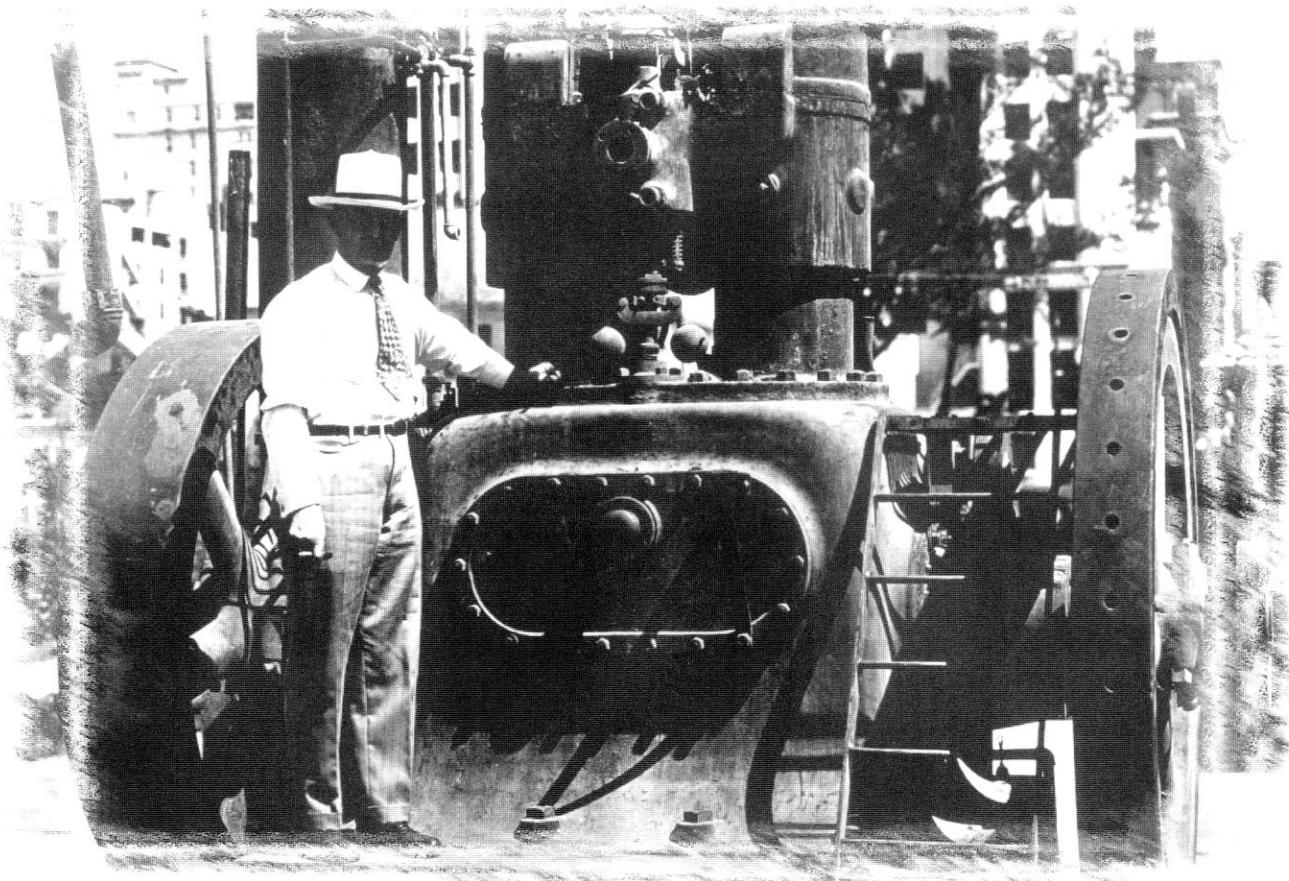
Then came 1941, and World War II. Lights dimmed along the Gold Coast, and the glittering hotels and balmy beaches of Miami became barracks and training grounds for thousands of war-bound soldiers.

Postwar prosperity and air-conditioning boosted year-round tourism and phenomenal growth in Miami after World War II, and South Florida's demand for electricity skyrocketed. New residents poured into Florida at the rate of 3,000 a week, seeking homes and jobs. In those days, a three bedroom home in North Miami sold for around \$16,000, often with no money down.

Cruise ships began to depart from the Port of Miami and beautiful parks took shape near the Magic City including Crandon Park, the Cape Florida State Recreation Area, Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park. New FPL plants were built too, including the acclaimed Cutler plant which was considered the marvel of its day because of its lush landscaping and unusual architectural style.

FPL's Turkey Point plant, built in 1965 on a mangrove wilderness of 21,000 acres, played an important role in helping meet Miami's growing demand for power. But the complex was more than just the site for a generating plant, which later included the state's first nuclear units. FPL developed part of the complex as Dade County's largest natural park and conservation area.

By 1960, Cubans fleeing from Fidel Castro's Communist regime were entering the United States by the thousands. Some arrived in tiny, battered boats, some clinging to rafts and tires, many by airlift. A number of these Cubans, along with other Latin American and Caribbean immigrants, would become FPL employees—and all would play an increasingly prominent role in establishing Miami as a multicultural city of the future.



*Early generating equipment was simple and basic. Henry Flagler had this generator installed in his Royal Palm Hotel in Miami in 1897. **FPL Museum Photo.***





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In 1972, FPL and Florida entered the nuclear age when Turkey Point Unit 3 came on line, followed by Unit 4 in 1973. Turkey Point's 21,000-acre site, with its unique 150-mile cooling canal system, became Dade County's largest and most primitive wildlife sanctuary.

As one of the nation's largest consumers of fuel oil, FPL was vitally affected by the Arab oil embargo and spiraling petroleum prices. Adding to the problems of exorbitant oil prices was a recession. Long gas lines were a common sight in Miami in the 1970's. FPL's days of promoting the use of electricity were replaced by energy conservation programs.

But through it all, FPL tackled the problems, flourished and grew. Today FPL services roughly half the population of Florida, stretching up the east coast to the Georgia border and up the west coast to Bradenton. Its service area includes all or part of 35 counties.

The company earned the Edison Electric Institute's prestigious Edison Award and numerous accolades for its environmental programs. FPL was also acclaimed for its innovative Quality Improvement Program, winning the Deming Prize in 1989—the first non-Japanese company ever to capture the award.

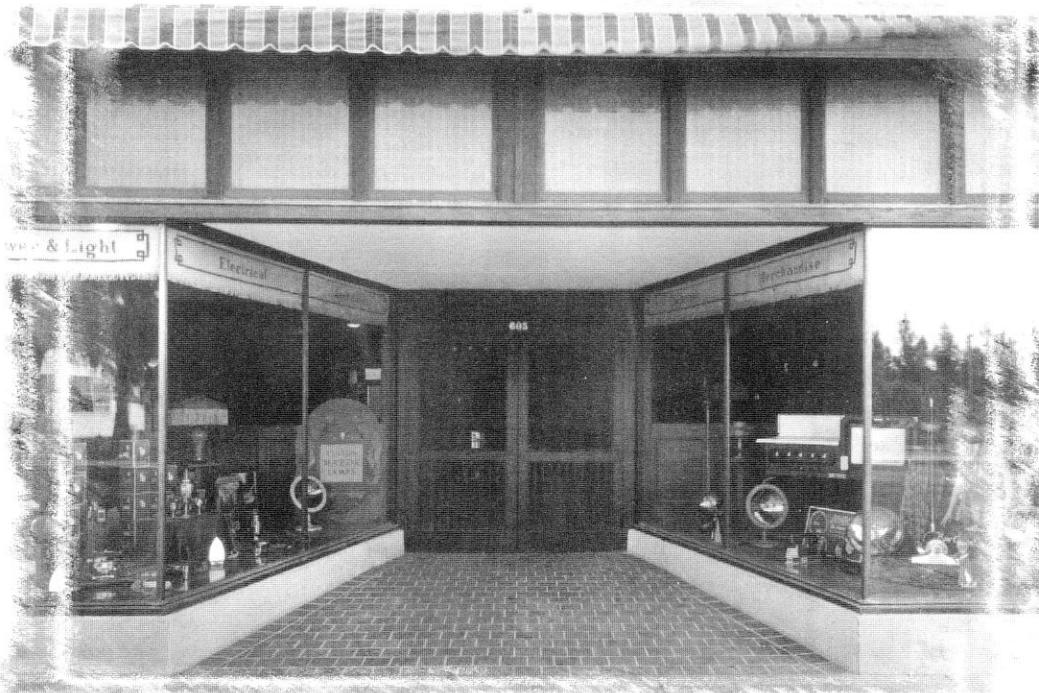
Throughout South Florida's history, hurricanes have been destructive enemies, and the 1990's are no exception. Hurricane Andrew, the most expensive natural disaster in history, wreaked unforgettable havoc on Dade County. Many

FPL employees were victims of the storm, yet worked tirelessly to restore electricity to 1.4 million homes and businesses.

FPL, like South Florida, is poised for the challenges of the new millennium. The company is powering Miami's Metrorail train system, participating in an experimental electric vehicle program and upgrading electric service facilities for a major expansion at Miami International Airport.

As FPL prepares for the challenges that lie ahead, it continues to make history: today residential rates in South Florida remain about the same as when FPL was founded in 1925. **-SFH**

*The Miami Plant, shown in the 1920's, was built on the north bank of the Miami River. FPL Museum Photo.*



*The Miami Beach office, along with other FPL offices in the 1920's and 1930's; was a showroom for the latest in electric appliances. FPL Museum Photo.*

*William Ho writes about FPL from a strong vantage point. He is a corporate manager at FPL and is second vice-chair of the Historical Association of Southern Florida's Board of Trustees. He also serves on the Executive Committee.*





# WHO'S HAUNTING ANDERSON'S CORNER?

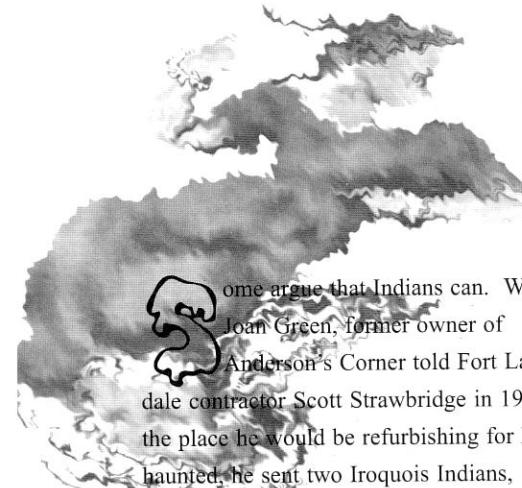
*By Jamie Welch*



If only the phantoms could sit in front of a microphone and tell the stories. The stories about how it was a place where you could buy everything from dynamite to lace. How it was the center of rural gossip with otter and rattlesnake skins hanging from behind the counter. How it was the veritable beating heart of the south Dade pioneer culture in the early part of this century.

Anderson's Corner, built out of sturdy Dade County pine by a shipbuilder, has served the homesteading community as a grocery store, weathered hurricanes, harbored FBI agents, fought back against bureaucracies trying to condemn it, hosted a flop house, movie set, restaurant, and millions of interested glances from artists to lost motorists alike. If you drive by the corner of Newton Road and Silver Palm Drive today you will see the rectangular two story structure with white washed lettering in stunningly good condition, much like it was near the turn of the century — a relic sitting quietly, mysteriously vacant... or so it seems. With all the history of several novels, "the corner" belched up a piece of unbelievable history several years ago, echoing the lollapalooza of her fantastic past.

But what do ghosts know about history? And who can properly communicate with them?



Some argue that Indians can. When Joan Green, former owner of Anderson's Corner told Fort Lauderdale contractor Scott Strawbridge in 1992 that the place he would be refurbishing for her was haunted, he sent two Iroquois Indians, brothers, to repair her site. After Hurricane Andrew gutted the structure and put an end to her nine-month-old restaurant, Strawbridge put the construction and ghost busting jobs into the hands of those he considered spiritual people.

"I have respect for Native Americans because they deal with the spirit world so much," Strawbridge affirmed. "They believe that people stuck in the spirit world are there due to a conflict in their lives, and are unable to move on."

In January, 1994, brothers David and "Hawk" Hawkins, and a few other workers began working in what Hawk described in a journal as the Harvest House, the restaurant that resided in Anderson's Corner building before Hurricane Andrew. They were installing shoring to brace the building against further movement. Hawk wrote in his journal that he felt the presence of a female, white, in her early mid twenties in the building. "She is of a gentle nature and meant us no harm," Hawk wrote. "I did not get messages or visions from her during that time except looks. She's about 5-feet-tall, 120-130 pounds, long, light hair, thin facial features, good disposition. We left after a couple of months."

The workers returned at the end of the summer of '94, and Hawk wrote that he felt more ghosts and that something felt bad. Then in September of that year he went back with his brother Dave, and while working on steel columns in the structure, made journal entries describing how there would be times when he would feel someone standing beside them, but no bad feelings or malicious acts.

Hawk wrote that on the morning of the Winter Solstice (about December 22<sup>nd</sup>), Dave and Hawk were working on the house when

strange events continued. "Dave and I were near the walk-through by the kitchen and Dave heard some banging from upstairs," he wrote. "He asked me if I had heard anything and I said, 'no.' Then I heard it. It was as if someone took a metal pipe and threw it on the floor above our heads. We ran upstairs. There was an iron pipe on the second level subflooring. There was no one up there, nor could anyone get there before us or pass us. Both upstairs doors were nailed shut and all windows were inaccessible." Hawk also described how they heard tapping from inside a wall behind a mirror. After removing the mirror with a crowbar, they found nothing but four inches of air space.

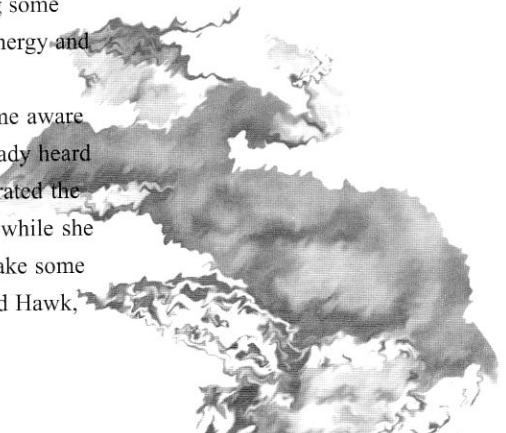
Then he wrote how he began to see the woman again. "I was seeing pictures of a woman that was badly beaten sitting in a corner," Hawk continued on. Then Dave added some of his encounters to the journal. "...violent thoughts passed through my mind. There was a strong urge to kick a ten-ton hydraulic jack into my brother's head, smashing it," Dave wrote. "When I was upstairs I could feel a strong sexual presence. Then a picture of a young woman taking a bath hit me. Then there was a man, older, molesting her. Then it stopped, with a feeling of shame and endless pain."

Hawk then continued in the journal, "I got the same pictures of sexual abuse. I also got the idea that the young woman married this older guy... I don't know who he was, but he ran the house at that time," he wrote. "That night my brother was run out of his apartment by spirits and I decided I would bring some things to clean out some of the bad energy and find out what was going on."

That was when Joan Green became aware of the new occurrences. She had already heard stories that happened before she operated the restaurant, and things that happened while she operated it. She went to the site to take some pictures for another project and found Hawk,



Above: Map and photos of Anderson's Corner. Don Vinton Photos.



alone in the building with a noose tied to the stair railing and the place filled with smoke, as Hawk was "smudging" the structure of spirits.

"I went over there and there was Hawk burning incense and he had a noose hanging from the stairwell... people had been telling stories about how Bill Anderson married a widow with three children, and how he left his wife for a stepdaughter," Green told *South Florida History*. "I had a picture of the Anderson family and I showed it to Hawk and David, and Hawk identified Bill Anderson and his step daughter, Annie, although they said the man was much older than in the picture."

"Joan showed David and I a picture of the Anderson family," Hawk wrote. "We recognized Will and Annie as the spirits here. I smudged the place well, starting at the south entrance and working north." Smudging the place eventually seemed to calm the spirits, as no new occurrences have been reported at the site.

Ironically, a smudge pot was the same method used by those sturdy pioneers a century ago to defend themselves against mosquitoes, probably what seemed to be a much more dangerous adversary than ghosts.

According to the late historian Jean Taylor, in her book *The Villages of South Dade*, William Anderson was born September 24, 1877, and came to West Palm Beach in 1898 from Indian Springs, Indiana. He worked in Jupiter butchering cattle and came to Miami in 1900. Anderson, along with the Charlie Gossman family, were two of the earliest pioneering families in the Silver Palm area located between Cutler Ridge and Homestead.

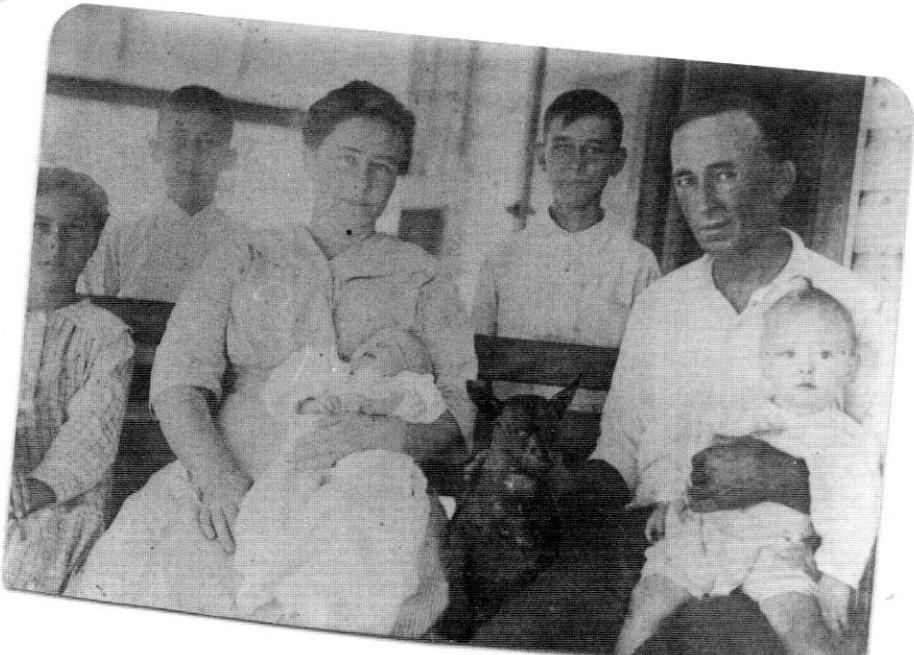
Originally, William Anderson lived with his sister, Flora on Farmlife Road, one-fourth mile above Coconut Palm, in a house which consisted of one long room with a kitchen and porch tacked on the east side of the building. "The first few

nights they survived with the help of a smudge pot," Taylor wrote. "This was a large pot or bucket into which were put a few splinters of lighter knots or fat pine to get the fire going. Then palmetto roots were added and the hole topped with a damp fertilizer bag to make it smoke. This didn't really kill the mosquitoes, but just drugged them for a few hours."

Taylor found that Anderson took a job running the commissary car for the Drake Lumber Company. While working for Drake, Will became acquainted with the widow Atka Harper, who had three children of her own, and ran the hotel for the lumber company in Princeton. "While Will was courting Harper, he drove a horse and buggy to call on her," Taylor wrote. "The horse had formerly been a race horse and was highly nervous. The widow's three children, knowing this, would hide inside a large box they placed along the road, and as Will approached, would move it and spook the horse and away he'd bolt with Will hanging on for dear life. Sometimes he'd get tossed out and arrive torn and dirty. It isn't recorded what happened to them after he became their stepfather."



**Above:** David, left, and Hawk Hawkins working on the second floor of Anderson's Corner. **Joan Green Photo.**  
**Left:** This picture was shown to Hawk Hawkins while he was having visions. He identified two people. Pictured are William and Atka Anderson holding Elizabeth and Mabel Anderson. Next to and behind them are the stepchildren Annie, John and Francis. HASF 1986-283-2661.



Taylor, who in the 1970s spent countless hours researching the pioneering culture of South Dade county, concluded that in 1911 Will Anderson and Atka Harper were married, decided to go into business for themselves, and purchased the land where Anderson's Corner lies. He purchased five acres for \$500. The structure was completed by a shipbuilder by the name of Rawls in 1912. It was built with the sturdy Dade County pine from the Drake Lumber Company.

The interior of the upper story was built like an inverted ship's hull, explaining how the structure has survived major hurricanes. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson had five children of their own in addition to Atka's three children. Taylor wrote that of the Harper children, the oldest, Francis, was killed in a motorcycle accident, a daughter, Annie, is deceased, while the younger son, John, died several years ago.

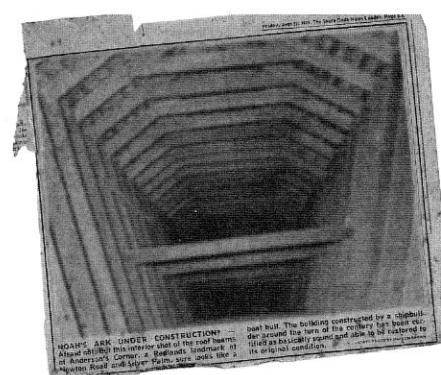
Taylor found that the family opened a small grocery store on the first level, and lived upstairs. The east side of the store was a grocery, and mainly sold such staples as sugar, beans, flour, lard and bacon. The west side had sundries, men's work clothes, yard goods, etc. "The store was a gas-lighted cracker barrel area for loafers, jokers, workers, and gossip mongers," Walter Thompson, former employee of the store, told Taylor in 1976.

"The air was always filled with the competing aroma of ripe cheese, sauerkraut, molasses, and onions struggling against the more sophisticated odors of peppermint, coffee and spices. Candy jars were filled with gumdrops, licorice, rock candy, and horehound lozenges. A kerosene-powered peanut roaster stood beside a big red coffee grinder."

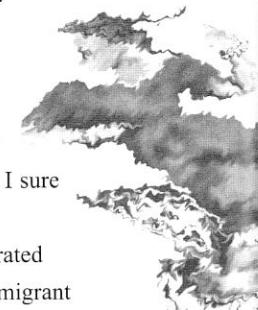
According to the research by Taylor, Atka Anderson was a hard-working woman. "In addition to caring for her eight children and her husband she had her elderly mother with her most of the time," Taylor wrote. "As she was often so busy in the store that she didn't have time to go upstairs to prepare meals, a little kitchen was set up at the back of the lean-to where she could cook and also keep an eye on the store."

Taylor found that William Anderson, with the same horse and buggy he used to court Atka, would bring pioneer families who lived within a radius of 10 miles to the schoolhouse across from his store. The schoolhouse was also used as a community meeting hall, and there would be fried chicken dinners and square dances which lasted until early morning. According to Taylor's research, "Uncle Will" would drive everyone home after those events. She went on to find that Anderson was a member of the school board.

Orval Irwin, who used to work at the Pioneer Museum and has been a valuable living resource to historians in the area, told *South Florida History* that Anderson was a friend of his father, that he was a kind man, and that he remembers waving



Interior photo of the roof beams of Anderson's Corner. The structure was built by a shipbuilder, and resembles an inverted ship's hull in design. Published in The South Dade News Leader Friday, June 22, 1975.



to Anderson in 1959, in front of the store. "I don't know anything about ghosts," Irwin said with a chuckle. "But I sure don't want to meet any."

Taylor went on in her book to say that the store operated until the early thirties, and then became apartments for migrant farm workers in 1936. Joan Green contends that in 1935 J. Edgar Hoover conducted a search for Cash Kid using Anderson's Corner as its headquarters, just after the Lindbergh kidnapping.

County records show that Atka V. Anderson filed a decree of divorce against William Anderson, recorded April 28, 1936, and moved to a different building on the Anderson property, where she lived until her death. Files in the proceeding were sealed, and destroyed by the county some years after. An anonymous source related to the family said that Annie, Anderson's step daughter, died of a self inflicted overdose in the 1940s, after moving back into the building after the divorce of William and Atka. William Anderson lived on the property until his death on February 17, 1961. He was 83 years old.

Taylor wrote that in 1970 the building was sold by the family to Mr. and Mrs. James Cothron, who used the building for various events. The building made headlines when a Baptist Church filmed a western movie at the site, and when it was condemned by the county. Community outrage lead by the Cothrons, media attention, and the sheer strength of the framework led to a stay of the demolition, and the building became a Dade County Historic Site in 1981.

"We used to live there in the 1970s, when it was apartments," Bulah Glenn, a former resident of the property, said in an interview from her home near Gainsville. "We only stayed a month or two. We lived downstairs, but at night the lights upstairs would go on and we heard people screaming and chains were dragging. Nobody else lived upstairs. All of that was empty and we could never figure out the screams and chains. The door was padlocked, and it was used for storage. My husband would look upstairs, and nobody was there. We thought it might be neighbor kids playing tricks, but we would go outside and nobody was there. I heard this girl's voice screaming 'help, help,' just like that, so I did what I had to do. I packed up my family and kids and got out of there, ha ha ha hee hee. I said, 'I ain't livin' here no more.' It must have been a ghost, I reckon."

Glenn was working for Joan Green in the 1980s when Green bought Anderson's Corner from the Cothron's, and was shocked when Green told her that she bought the property. "Bulah had this kind of stunned look on her face," recalled Green. "But she didn't say anything at first. Then later she said the place was haunted."

Green opened a restaurant called the Harbor House in 1991, and it lasted nine months until it was gutted by Hurricane Andrew. She said that a bus boy stood on the stairs alone and saw someone standing next to him in the mirror. There were also various stories about people feeling chills in doorways and hearing noises. Green is a farmer by trade, but has worked as the Educational Director at Fairchild Tropical Gardens, served on the County Agricultural Advisory Committee and the State Tropical

Fruit Advisory Committee.

"Joan Green has no reason to want to be called a crackpot," Scott Strawbridge contended. "My philosophy is that if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it is a duck," Strawbridge said in reference to the paranormal activity. "Hawk has been moving around, and I believe he is somewhere in Arkansas, but I don't know for sure. His brother David had told him that he, David, was going to get hit by a truck. He foresaw his own death. Last October he got hit by one, and survived. Then six months later, on his motorcycle David got hit from behind by a garbage truck going 50 m.p.h. He died in this unfortunate tragedy, and want to hear something interesting? His family said that God sent a bigger truck."

"This Corner has a hell of a lot of importance," Strawbridge continued. "I was on the Damage Assessment Committee for The National Trust for Historic Preservation. I talked to a lot of people who were to have their sites set aside, and every one of them asked, 'What's going to happen with Will Anderson's place?'"

Speaking of wondering, where is Hawk, and what was he doing with the smoke? Dr. Kenneth McAll, a psychiatrist born in China, has written two books on the subject, titled *Healing the Family Tree*

and *Healing the Haunted*. McAll writes about the traumatic effects of past tragedies and evil on the lives of people living today. "I have witnessed many cases in which the upset seemed to stem from apparent haunting of a place or house in which the affected person had to live," McAll wrote. "Taking these ghosts seriously has meant my trying to identify the individual who is doing the haunting and then trying to treat them as souls in need of help and release. This has been done by holding a ceremony on the affected site."

McAll described an Indian ceremony he witnessed that was held to free the souls of former members of the Chumash Tribe, an ancient tribe in California that had a very violent history. McAll writes that the service was called after residents on the land described severe health and stress problems. "We decided to call on the chief of the Chumash tribe.... speaking on behalf of his tribe, he apologized to God for having wiped out the Stone Age men, then the Spaniards," McAll writes. "The Indian prayer ritual was beautiful. Everyone sat on the floor, as one person prayed, and the chief extended his left hand to everyone to receive his prayer. At one point, he laid two eagle's feathers in front of him on the floor. Then he held them extended to all points of the compass and tapped them together in each direction. Later he burned some herbs making a blue smoke trail curling up to the ceiling."

After exorcising Anderson's Corner Hawk disappeared along with any sign of the identified phantoms, and left lots of questions in his path. Joan Green sold the property after a court ordered the sale due to her having problems meeting the historical criteria and the enormous expenses, and the loss of county grants. So the mystery continues.... if only ghosts could hold press conferences. -SFH



**Above:** Early photograph of Anderson's Corner. In front of the store is Fuchs Bakery delivery wagon. The people on the second floor are unidentified. HASF 1986-283-2660.

**Right:** Scott Strawbridge and Joan Green working on the site in the early 1990's. Joan Green Photo.



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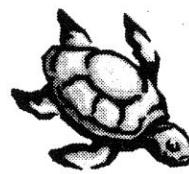
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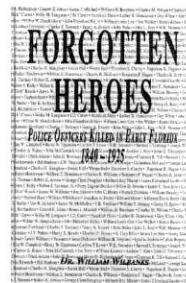
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**FORGOTTEN HEROES: POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN EARLY FLORIDA, 1845-1925.**

By William Wilbanks. Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company. 1998. 224 pages. \$34.95.

**Review By Stuart McIver**

From 1840 through 1925 well over a hundred law enforcement officers were killed in line of duty in Florida. In his third *Forgotten Heroes* volume, Dr. William Wilbanks, professor of criminal justice at Florida International University, tells the stories of these public servants from Key West to Fernandina and across to Pensacola.

His contention is that the recent deaths of lawmen are well documented while those who died in earlier, more primitive times, have all too often slipped from sight. A major purpose of his research has been "to see that the 'lost' officers are remembered by the communities they died protecting. It seems to me to be a double tragedy to lose one's life in the line of duty and then have that sacrifice be forgotten by the community."

Most of the 117 killed are relatively forgotten, with the exception of Guy Bradley, the Audubon warden who was killed off Oyster Keys in 1905. Visitors to Everglades National Park can see the memorial to him at Flamingo.

The memories of many survive, however, as players in events that became part of Florida's history. Take, for example, the case of David Mizell, sheriff of Orange County, who was killed in an ambush near Orlando in 1870. His death led to the Barber-Mizell range war which raged across central Florida's cattle lands in the 1870s.

Wilbanks writes, too, about the murder of Clarence K. Till, a Key West police officer, in March, 1904. Till, on his way to arrest a man who had beaten him severely earlier that night was ambushed and shot to death by the man, Dutchy Melbourne. Dutchy, who had good connections in Key West, was first sentenced to hang, then managed to get his sentence downsized to manslaughter and a sentence of one year in the county jail.

Hired out as convict labor, he formed a gang which organized burglary and arson ventures, among them the burning of the Cortez Cigar Factory. These brought him an additional sentence of 13 years but he escaped and fled to Chatham Bend, the domain of Ed "Bloody" Watson in the Ten Thousand Islands. There Dutchy himself was murdered, apparently on orders from Watson. At least that is what Watson's neighbors on Chokoloskee Island thought since they shot him to death a few days after Melvin's murder. (Review continued on page 33)

**HAUNT HUNTERS GUIDE TO FLORIDA**

By Joyce Elson Moore  
Sarasota, Fla.: Pineapple Press, 1998. 168 pages.  
\$12.95.

**Review By Nicole Shuey**

For most historians, the lure of visiting historical sites lies in the rich, tangible links to the past these special environments provide. They offer us a physical stage set where dramas played out long ago can come to life in our imaginations. At some unique locations, however, no imagination is necessary to recreate the past. Unbidden, it mysteriously springs to life—make that life after death. Native Floridian Joyce Elson Moore has found many such places throughout the state. Theaters, hotels, lighthouses, beaches, forts, and other locales where it seems simultaneous dimensions collide and the past and the present come together in a disconcertingly physical way. Deceased people appear, furniture inexplicably moves and phantom voices call out to startled witnesses.

Whether or not one is a believer in supernatural or paranormal phenomena, it is difficult to ignore the prevalence of stories about unusual occurrences at historical sites. People often circulate these tales in hushed voices or with forced jocularity, as if unseen forces might overhear or the sanity of the teller may be questioned. Indeed, Moore states that many of those who experienced the strange events related in her book admitted to being skeptics, until undeniable evidence overcame their disbelief. That is not to say that visitors to these various sites will be guaranteed to experience strange emotions, see ghostly apparitions or hear otherworldly sounds, but Moore has done her best to make finding these opportunities as easy as possible.

*The Haunt Hunter's Guide to Florida* offers a complete and handy guidebook to thirty-seven of the state's most eerie places. Moore divides the state and the book's contents into seven regions, with a corresponding map. For each site, she provides historical background followed by the "haunt history," which details the unexplained phenomenon occurring at each location. Should the reader choose to go a step further and personally investigate the story, Moore gives such practical advice as directions, hours, telephone numbers, admission prices, if applicable, even suggestions on where to eat and stay in the vicinity. The author documented most of the sites on her paranormal tour with her own photographs, including an intriguing image of an unidentified woman on the porch of the Kingsley Plantation house on Fort George Island. (Review continued on page 33)

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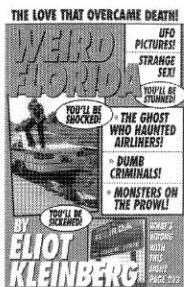
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## WEIRD FLORIDA

By Eliot Kelenberg. Longstreet, 229 pages. \$12.95



### Review By Jamie Welch

Weird, wacky, wild, and the stories get worse from there, in the wonderfully funny and sometimes frightening new book *Weird Florida*, by Eliot Kleinberg. The book features over two-hundred pages filled with over 1,000 amazing accounts from Florida newspaper clippings and documents from around the state, revealing the offbeat side of Florida culture like no other comprehensive work before it. A quick glance could land you on the page of "The Cinder Woman," who spontaneously combusted, or Sarasota Florida's "Teacher of the Year," who was charged with having five of his 17-year-old female students dance topless for him during a class. This tremendously entertaining book is perfect for people who enjoy hanging out by the copy machine and entertaining their co-workers, someone who enjoys the bizarre side of history, or someone who is just downright demented.

The first story of the *Part I: The Weird Hall of Fame*, is that of Count Carl von Cosel of Key West, who at the age of 63 had sex with his girlfriend's corpse for seven years after her death in 1932. Then Kleinberg races over to the Bermuda Triangle where he details accounts of the "lost squadron," along with ten other mysterious disappearances over what has been called "Devil's Triangle." After dealing with stories about UFO's and the ghosts of Eastern Airlines and Coral Castle, we have *Part II: History Ain't Pretty*, where you can find a picture taken of a Florida road sign on the Georgia border that reads "WELCOME TO FLOIRDIA," or a former Florida state seal with *mountains* on it. Then in *Part III: The Daily Weird*, we find strange sex, religion, dumb criminals, and prison life. You can also learn details about Henry Flagler, politicians, and many other historical figures that could even educate the most avid Florida historian.

The cover of *Weird Florida* is bright green and orange and resembles a weekly tabloid in design, with pictures and speech bubbles that read "You'll Be Stunned!" and "You'll be Shocked!" Ironically, Kleinberg's primary sources were the *Palm Beach Post*, the *Sun-Sentinel*, *Miami Herald*, the Associated Press and standard dailies from throughout the state. This is an opportunity for those of us who wouldn't dare to buy one of those scandalous tabloids at the checkout counter (we're too *intellectual* for that, right?) to enjoy the sensational side of the news as well.

Kleinberg, a Florida native, has authored or contributed to six books about Florida. He has spent more than 20 years reporting for the *Palm Beach Post*, where he is now a feature writer. **-SFH**

(*Forgotten Heroes*, continued from page 31)

The Ashley Gang figures in these violent events. In June, 1915, Bob Ashley launched a plan to free his brother John, in jail under a death penalty. The jailbreak failed and in the attempt Bob Ashley killed Wilbur Hendrickson, a Dade County deputy sheriff, and John Rhinehart Riblet, a Miami police officer. Bob, too, was killed in the unsuccessful attempt to free his brother.

The deadliest day for law enforcement came on September 16, 1916. Earlier the previous day four members of the Rice Gang robbed the Bank of Homestead of \$6,500. Over a hundred volunteers from Homestead plus a posse recruited by Dade Sheriff Dan Hardie tracked the robbers south into the Everglades.

The sheriff sought to head them off at the Everglades water station, six miles north of Jewfish Creek. Just before midnight the bandits appeared and opened fire on Hardie and five posse members. Three lawmen were shot to death: two brothers, Allen B. and Willliam Z. Henderson, and Charles R. Williams.

Dr. Wilbanks, author of 14 previous books on law enforcement, goes into considerable detail in each of these cases, presenting information on the victims, the killers and the society in which these crimes occurred. The last of his 117 accounts relates the story of a Miami policeman, Laurie Lafayette Wever, shot and killed by robbers on March 15, 1925, at the height of Florida's incredible land boom. Wever was chasing them on his motorcycle along N.W. Second Street in downtown Miami when the fatal shooting occurred.

The author paints a disturbing picture of boomtime Miami when population increased 600 percent in just two years. The murder rate in 1925-26 was 106 per 100,000 residents, triple the rate for 1924 — and still triple the rate at a later lawless period, 1980.

The author takes into account, too, the racial overtones in the meting out of punishment for these crimes. "The vast majority of those hung (approximately 25), lynched (19), and killed at the scene (approximately 17) were blacks," he writes.

Dr. Wilbanks' book offers an engrossing view of crime in pioneer Florida and illuminates the efforts to build a civilized society in what was for many years a wilderness. **-SFH**

(*Haunt Hunters*, continued from page 31)

Searching for the truth behind inexplicable phenomena can be difficult at best. For the avid haunt hunter, Moore has done the initial legwork by locating sites, researching incidents and interviewing witnesses, while including her own insights based on the information gathered. She has doggedly searched the state from Pensacola to Key West and documented tales from the ancient Indian Shell Mound at Cedar Key, where the sight of a murdered woman and her dog are seen, to the town of Cassadaga near Daytona, where the author experienced firsthand the power of a century of spiritualist activity. As a new addition to the long list of published Florida guidebooks, *The Haunt Hunter's Guide to Florida* stands out for its bizarre subject matter. Moore's book will assuredly be successful in its intent "to serve as a guide for those who want to experience a different side of Florida than what most visitors see." **-SFH**

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**September 25, 1998 -  
January 3, 1999**

A statewide traveling exhibition produced by the Historical Museum of Southern Florida featuring handmade objects by over 80 master artists from throughout Florida.

- Maritime and Ranching Equipment
- Domestic and Decorative Objects
- Ritual and Festive Items
- Musical Instruments

*At right is Nick Toth of Tarpon Springs with sponge diving helmet.*

sponsored by:

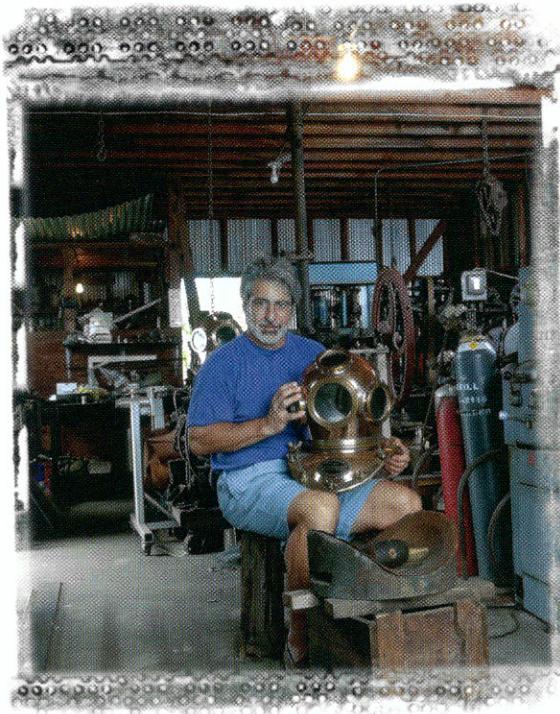


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**HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**

101 W. Flagler St., Miami, 305-375-1492 [www.historical-museum.org](http://www.historical-museum.org)



**DON'T MISS THE ACCOMPANYING FREE FESTIVALS!!**

## SOUTH FLORIDA TRADITIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

**September 26, 1998  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Demonstrations by South Florida artists featured in the exhibition. Plus special musical performances and folklife video screenings.

## SOUTH FLORIDA TRADITIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

**October 24, 1998  
11 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

Performances by a selection of South Florida's finest traditional musicians. Plus folklife video screenings.

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