Tequesta



The Journal of HistoryMiami Museum

Number LXXIX (79)

2019

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Cover—The Attack on Cape Florida Light. Oil painting by Ken Hughes, commissioned by the Historical Association of Southern Florida for its exhibitions, 1975. HistoryMiami Museum.

T e q u e s t a The Journal of HistoryMiami Museum

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ISSN 0363-3705

Tequesta is published annually by HistoryMiami Museum. Communications should be addressed to the Editor of Tequesta, HistoryMiami Museum Museum, 101C West Flagler Street, Miami, Florida 33130; 305-375-1492 or info@historymiami.org. HistoryMiami Museum does not assume responsibility for statements of facts or opinions made by contributors.

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Editor's Foreword

HistoryMiami Museum will observe, in 2020, eighty years of celebrating, exhibiting, interpreting, and providing for an ever-broadening audience the rich history of our slice of the subtropics. At the same time, *Tequesta*, our scholarly journal, will observe its eightieth year of publication. As for this edition of the journal, we believe it will, like its predecessors, hold the interest of our readers.

One of Florida's premier historians, Gary Mormino, professor emeritus, University of South Florida, and a prolific author, has contributed memorable articles to *Tequesta* focusing on the area in World War II, as well as the expansiveness of Miami and Dade County in the early aftermath of that conflict. With "Immigrants, Dreamers, and Aliens," Professor Mormino sets his sights on a more recent past, a period in which Miami emerged as an international city as it welcomed an enormous influx of refugees and immigrants in quest of political freedom and economic opportunity. Mormino adeptly places into historical perspective the impact these recent arrivals have had on the fabric and culture of Greater Miami.

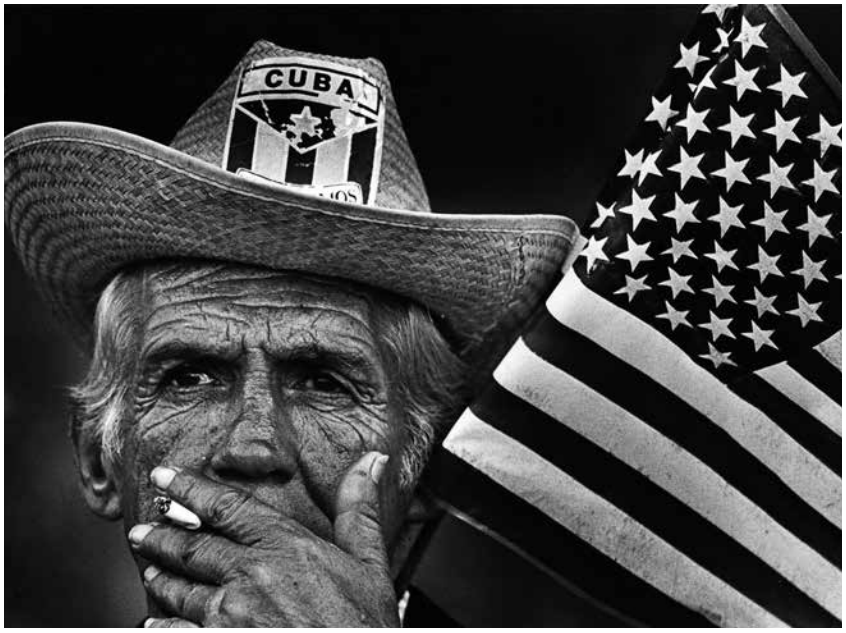
With "An Attack of Influenza: The Impact of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of October, 1918, on Miami and Its Residents," Michele Zakis has provided us with an insightful look, unseen before in article form, into the young city of Miami at a time when it was gripped by a lethal epidemic, which was part of a worldwide phenomenon that killed an estimated 40 million persons. The city had experienced health care crises before, namely those of 1898, with a Spanish American War encampment where illness and disease ran rampant, and, in the following year, a Yellow Fever epidemic, which effectively closed Miami to the outside world for three months. Neither, however, prompted the fear that the influenza plague brought to the area, as World War I was winding down. Michele Zakis is a longtime teacher and administrator in the county's public school system. A diligent researcher and student of Miami history, Michele contributed an article in an earlier *Tequesta* on a pioneer cemetery in deep South Dade.

Neil E. Hurley, United States Coast Guard (retired), has authored several books and articles on the histories of Florida and South Carolina lighthouses. With "John W. B. Thompson's 'Other' Account of the Burning of Cape Florida Lighthouse," Hurley provides a revisionist account of one of the most searing moments in nineteenth century Miami history: the attack by Seminole Indians on the light in July 1836, and the concomitant damage that brought its closure for several years after the event.

Victor Vazquez, a professor of history at Miami Dade College, has written widely on the history of Puerto Ricans in the United States. In this number of *Tequesta*, Professor Vazquez provides us with an insightful history of Miami's Puerto Rican community, which grew dramatically in the era following World War II in neighborhoods like Wynwood. Professor Vazquez traces the presence and impact on Miami and South Florida from the early 1900s into the 1960, an era when Wynwood was also known as "Little San Juan." While Wynwood has garnered international attention for its stunning murals, sculptures, and its art in general, the strong Puerto Rican presence there, especially in the neighborhood north of N.W. 29th Street and in its garment district, is often overlooked. While that area today contains a wide variety of Hispanic groups, many of the artifacts of the old Puerto Rican neighborhood remain.

Please enjoy this issue of *Tequesta* as well as the other offerings of HistoryMiami Museum with its Family Fun Days, Miami International Map Fair, a plethora of history tours and lectures, permanent exhibitions like *Tropical Dreams*. HistoryMiami Museum holds out something for everyone who is interested in the area's rich history. Thank you.

Paul S. George, Ph.D.
Editor, Tequesta, and HistoryMiami Museum Resident Historian



Cuban immigrant holding an American flag, 1980.
Miami Herald Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 2004-363-30.

Immigrants, Dreamers, and Aliens

Miami, Southeast Florida, and the Pursuit of the "American Dream"

Gary R. Mormino

"In America, life is hard, but the bread is soft."
Rosolino Mormino, 1906 letter to his mother in Sicily

Newly settled transplants and snowbirds often embrace a curious dialectic holding that growth be slowed to preserve Florida's quality of life. Sunshine State residents, whose family tree can be traced to Italy, Ireland, or Poland, often argue that today's immigration policies are too lenient. Migration and immigration can be incendiary and frustrating, as witnessed in Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. In the classic 1939 film version, a French gatekeeper halts a bedraggled caravan heading into Paris. The guard snarls at the strangers, "No Gypsies can enter Paris without a permit! It's the new law." Rejected, a Roma shrugs his shoulders, "Foreigners! You came yesterday, we come today."[1]

Ironically, at the very moment Florida movie goers wept at the plight of Esmeralda and Quasimodo, 900 Jewish refugees aboard the SS *St. Louis* were seeking sanctuary in Miami. The White House turned away the doomed vessel. Sanctuary cities were becoming rare in 1939. The voyage of the damned returned to Europe, where many of the passengers died in concentration camps.

An acronym, D. P. (Displaced Person), defined millions of Europeans and Asians displaced by the conflicts changing boundaries and unchanging hatreds. Then as now, words matter. One person's D. P. is another's war bride or reunit-

ed family member. One person's dreamer is another's illegal alien. Etiquette experts plead that holiday diners concentrate more on the turkey and dressing and less discussion of amnesty, chain migration, and family reunification. Consider the Department of Homeland Security—the very name "homeland" conjures up images of patriotism as well as a totalitarian state.[2]

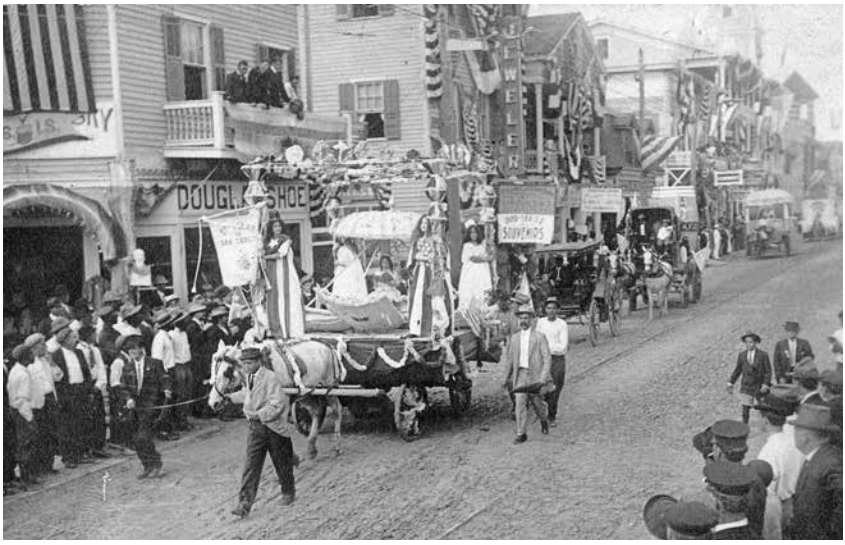
To a desperate immigrant, walls and gates signify old symbols and new frontiers. Semantics matter in the immigration debate. In imagination and deed, the frontier signifies freedom, dreams and individualism. Of course, the word also connotes violence, racism, and nightmares. The Spanish word for frontier is *frontera*, a term conflated with borders and invasion. In 711 A. D. the Moors sailed the narrow Strait of Gibraltar to conquer and transform Spain's arid south into a garden and oasis. *La Reconquista,* the religious wars to wrest Spain from the Moors, lasted almost 800 years.

Floridians, like Americans, bring ambivalent attitudes toward the immigration debate. It has been so for centuries. Upon arriving in Pensacola in 1819 as three centuries of Spanish rule was ending, Rachel Jackson, the feisty wife of Gov. Andrew Jackson, expressed horror. "The inhabitants all speak Spanish and French. Some speak four languages," she deplored. "Jamaican blacks bearing prodigious burdens on their heads, a fish peddler filling the street with incomprehensible cries." She added, "Fewer white people by far than any other." One can only imagine Mrs. Jackson encountering today's Little Havana![3]

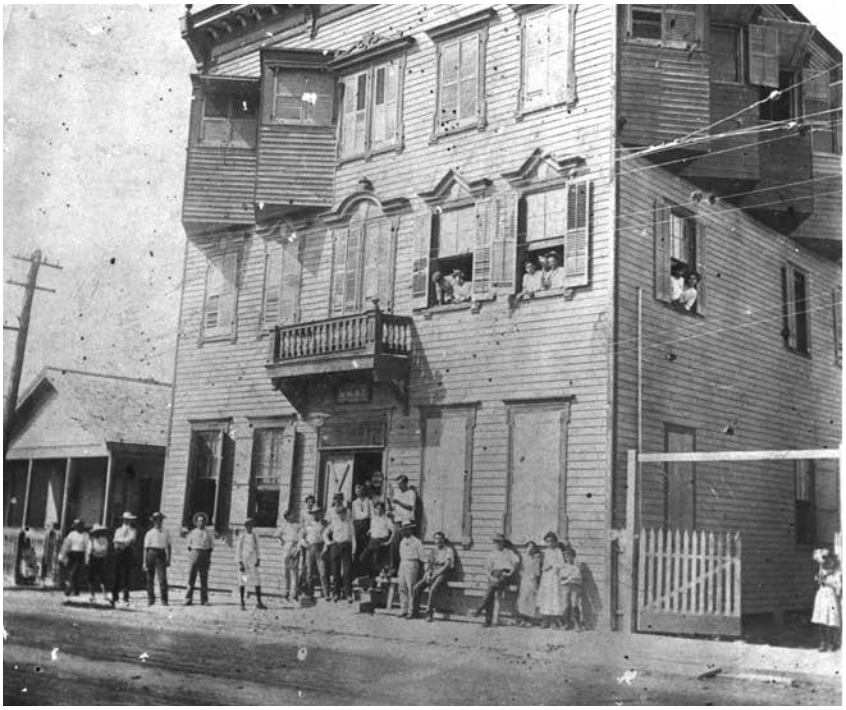
Florida's historical trajectory is complete. How fitting and symmetrical that a place called La Florida in 1513—a colony, territory, and state shaped by Spanish-speaking Floridanos—has become a lodestar for a dazzling diversity of Hispanics.

Perspective

By the yardstick of Maryland or Minnesota, Florida became an immigrant haven relatively earlier and later. The seventeenth-century presidio at St. Augustine was home to *conversos* and *moriscos,* soldiers and priests drawn from several continents. The State of Florida attracted relatively few numbers of Irish, Scandinavians, Germans, Jews, Slavs, or Italians. Compared with North Carolina or Georgia, Florida seemed an ethnic hothouse. When viewed through this prism, the question arises: Just where does Florida belong? Is Florida the southernmost state or the northernmost rim of the Caribbean? Tallahassee, the state capital, is a day's walk from the Georgia border. Miami lies 330 miles from Cuba, but is 676 miles from Pensacola. South Florida shares attitudes and latitudes more *simpatico* with the Bahamas and Jamaica. A porous borderland and marchland, Florida became home to runaway slaves and an extraordinarily diverse population.



School girls clad in patriotic Cuban colors ride The San Carlos School float in a Key West parade, circa 1900. HistoryMiami Museum, 1952-003-1.



Monte Cristo cigar factory, Key West, circa 1900. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-9450.

In 1868, Floridians were reminded—not for the first or last time—that Cuba lurked only ninety miles away. Key West suddenly became an expatriate center as a violent rebellion enveloped "the Pearl of the Antilles." Cuban émigrés and cigar manufacturers infused "Cayo Hueso" with energy, profits, and revolution. "To a person who has never visited this island," wrote Silvia Sunshine in 1879, "it is impossible to imagine that only miles from the mainland of Florida is a city so nearly in appearance to the Spanish dominions of the Old World where hardly a sentence in English is heard."[4]

In 1886, a new Cuban exile community rivaled Key West. Don Vicente Martínez-Ybor, a Spanish *patrón,* founded Ybor City, a company town near Tampa. Thousands of Cubans (white

and black), Spaniards, and Italians created one of America's most extraordinary industrial centers. *Lectores* (readers) read novels of Cervantes, Pérez-Galdós, and Hugo to *tabaqueros* (cigar workers). It represented Florida's largest concentration of skilled labor and industry.[5]

Ybor City mirrored other cities where spectacular waves of emigrants from Europe dwarfed previous generations. The period 1840-1880 drew immigrants largely from the British Isles, Germany, and Scandinavia. Overwhelmingly Protestant, except for Irish and German Catholics, they were uniformly welcomed as vital cogs of the American economy (except for Irish Catholics). But beginning in the 1880s, vast numbers of emigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe descended upon American shores. Slavs, Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, and Jews supplied the brawn needed for America's industrial revolution. Contemporaries distinguished between the two movements as Old and New Immigrants. The new arrivals were overwhelmingly Catholic, Jewish, and downtrodden.

A virulent nativism greeted these new arrivals. Francis Walker, the director of the U. S. Bureau of the Census and a professor at M.I.T., called the new immigrants "beaten men from beaten races." A prominent Protestant clergyman Josiah Strong wrote in 1893, "There is now injected into the veins of the nation a large amount of inferior blood every day of the year." A political battle to restrict immigration ensued, achieving its first success in 1882 with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act. "Beginning in 1881, the United States stopped being a nation of immigrants that welcomed foreigners without restrictions, borders or gates," wrote Erika Lee in her book, *At America's Gates*.[6]

In Florida, newspapers left little doubt as to the state of immigration. The *Tampa Tribune* editorialized in 1888,

"The Indo-European group of humanity has a volcanic tendency that is well-nigh universal. That portion of it inhabiting lower Russia and the outlying countries of the Mediterranean Sea when it runs to extremes, develops the Mafia, nihilist, socialist and anarchist." The *Wauchula Advocate* editorialized in 1911, "We do not want the people of Southern Europe, the Pole, the Huns, and the Italians … they are breeders of socialism and anarchism." The *Gainesville Sun* in 1910 opined, "The Italian is not a trust-worthy, nor faithful kind of laborer … they are given to making trouble wherever they go."[7]

For all the insulting newspaper editorials and verbal slurs, the United States maintained an extraordinarily liberal immigration policy, with its policy toward Asians the great exception. Daily on talk-show radio, Americans debate immigration policy. Many yearn for tough love, such as their forefathers encountered, when they entered America legally. The problem, of course, is that for centuries, simply arriving at Ellis Island or Castle Garden constituted "legal." Italians, Slavs, and Jews may have had their names Americanized, been quarantined for smallpox, or asked whether they were anarchists, but *showing up* was your most challenging test to a new life. Immigrants neither expected nor received a helping hand. Instead they were given a delousing and a bowl of soup. Welcome to America! You were free to seek your fortune. Few complained, and if they were seen as second-class citizens, it was well-worth the price of admission.

Each generation creates its own immigration nightmare. Angry, frustrated citizens screaming, "I want my country back!" can be found in 1820, 1920 and 2020. The tradition of treating strangers with kindness is a virtue in many religions. But xenophobia, a deep-seated fear of strangers, is also ancient.[8]

What caused Americans to close the gates to foreigners? The years between 1820 and 1924 saw an astonishing 40 million immigrants pouring into America. The decades between 1890 and 1920 witnessed waves of newcomers with strange names and stranger accents, activating a volcano resulting from labor unrest, the popularity of Third Parties and radical protest, the rise of eugenics, and a general feeling that the America on the eve of the Great War had profoundly changed for the worse. A loosely-knit coalition of Republicans, Protestants, and Midwesterners fought to restrict the human flow. Internal and external forces—Prohibition, the Suffrage movement, and the Ku Klux Klan, a spike in religious fundamentalism and fear of Roman Catholicism, the Great War and a surge in nationalism, President Woodrow Wilson's stroke and the election of Warren G. Harding—birthed the Johnson-Reed Act, also known as the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924. The draconian legislation closed the open doors of the Golden Gates to Asians, Africans, and Southern and Eastern Europeans. For instance, by the mid-1920s, the new quota laws permitted the emigration of 3,845 Italians, the equivalent of about a single immigrant per day. During the decade of 1900-1910, an average of 1,096 Italians landed in America every single day![9]

The decade of the 1920s reshaped Florida. In the shadows and sunshine amid the giddy land boom and magical new cities, nativism lurked. Florida's Ku Klux Klan harassed Catholic priests, Jewish merchants, and Italian moonshiners. In 1926, Florida voters approved a constitutional alien land law, aimed to prohibit Asians from acquiring property. The 1926 document also banned "aliens from citizenship." The word "aliens" is 1920s speak for Asians. Rarely enforced but reprehensible, the amendment remained in the Florida Constitution until 2018! Many Floridians may have ner-

vously believed that terrorist groups might purchase property in Florida to launch attacks. Other states enacted such legislation, but the Florida amendment remains the last legal vestige. Voters in 2018 removed the shameful constitutional hangover.[10]



South Beach Jews attend a Temple Emanu El "Prayer for Peace" ceremony, September 18, 1978. The temple is located near Lincoln Road at 1701 Washington Avenue, Michelle Bogre, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1995-177-6557.

By 1950, a motorist in Florida encountered strange ethnic accents across the peninsula: Yiddish in Miami Beach, Slovak slang in Slavia, Czech dialect in Masaryktown, Greek sponge divers' chants in Tarpon Springs, Spanish and Italian in Ybor City, Danish in Dania, and indecipherable Finnish in Lake Worth. While the accents may have seemed strange, the number of immigrants in 1950 Florida was quite small. The two largest immigrant groups were Canadians and English. Almost 13,000 Floridians were born in the Soviet Union, most of them living in Dade County. As elderly Russian Jews, Spaniards, and Italians died, many

Floridians and Americans were seeing and hearing fewer immigrants, the result of the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act. Only about one in twenty Americans were immigrants in 1960, the lowest percentage in a century. Only about one in fifty Miami residents were Cuban in 1960.[11]

Revolution, Reverberations, and Unintended Consequences

Since the 1870s, the lodestars for Cuban dissidents and refugees had been Key West and Tampa. But beginning in the late 1920s, left-wing exiles and right-wing dictators had flocked to Miami. In 1933, Cuban strongman Gerardo Machado was overthrown, prompting the *Miami Herald* to editorialize, "Miami's gates will always be open to Cubans." Throughout the 1950s, Cuba's middle classes fell in love with South Florida, enjoying American culture and summer's off-season bargains.[12]

On New Year's Eve 1958, Cuban strongman Fulgencio Batista abdicated power. The event was not a front-page story in many New Year's Day 1959 newspapers. For decades, Cuban military and political leaders had been purchasing property in Florida, hedging their bets. Batista and his art collection landed safely in Daytona Beach. Few Floridians had ever heard of Cuba's newest leader, Fidel Castro. Fortunate not to have been executed for his disastrous raid on the Moncada barracks, the middle-class lawyer in exile spent a few days in Tampa and Miami in 1955 attempting to raise funds for his revolution.[13]

The first wave of Cubans arrived in Miami in 1959. No single human tidal wave slammed Miami; rather, in spasms, almost a million Cubans arrived by planes, boats, and rafts to Florida. Overwhelmingly, they chose or were sent to Miami. The greatest surge came between 1959 and 1980. Each

succeeding year seemed to bring poorer and more desperate refugees. In staccato bursts, the Cuban odyssey in Florida can be reduced to powerful symbols: Pedro Pan; the Bay of Pigs; the Cuban Missile Crisis; Wet Foot/Dry Foot; Freedom Flights; Mariel; Tony Montana and his little friend; Elián; and Guantánamo. Fidel Castro's thumbprint across South Florida tilted the scales with more emotion and force than Henry Flagler. Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba may have been even more transformational and certainly more transactional in South Florida. Who could have imagined that by the 1980s, a Hispanic presence in Miami was so profound and so powerful that many Anglo elites made sure their children learned Spanish?[14]

In the late 1950s, Miami was supremely confident of its status as the state's most glamorous setting. The first decade of television had also created a romantic image. Behind the television sets of the June Taylor dancers and the Arthur Godfrey show, the city struggled. The reality of a civil rights revolution unfolded. The city's service-based and manufacturing economy faced challenges. In 1960, downtown Miami and its elegant department stores and movie palaces seemed invulnerable. But the march to the suburbs had already begun. On Miami Beach, large numbers of poor, elderly Jews found a new home, as the city's once-elegant Art Deco hotels faded. Revolutions in expectations, retirement, technology, tourism, and medicine soon swept South Florida and Florida into their vortex. Not even the boldest soothsayer could have predicted the future. Forty years later, immigrants and Florida were so intertwined and pervasive that every county in the state was affected.

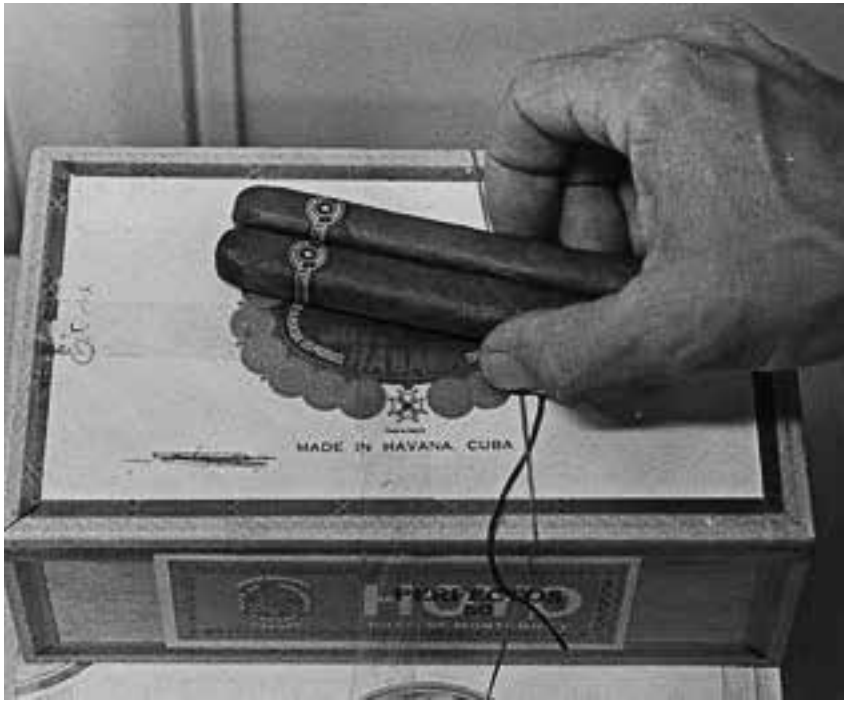
A series of events profoundly changed the face of Florida and especially South Florida. No one could have envisioned the consequences. The first involved the designation of Cu-

bans as a most-favored immigrant group. The motivation, an amalgam of Cold War hardball and American compassion, was a determination to humiliate Red Cuba, as well as assist the flood of refugees. Cuban-American success stories juxtaposed starkly with newsreel images of firing squads and food rationing. As if in a chess match, Cuban, Soviet, and U. S. leaders moved adroitly and clumsily across a big board. In July 1960, President Eisenhower cut imports of Cuban sugar by 700,000 tons. In October, Cuba nationalized U. S. properties. Displaced and suddenly landless Cuban sugar barons, such as the Fanjul family, received generous subsidies and incentives to plant massive new acreage in reclaimed Everglades land. Sugar patriarch Alfonso Fanjul, Sr., a fabulously successful plantation owner on the island, hedged his bets wisely and began transferring wealth to American banks before the revolution. Born in 1959, Big Sugar quickly mastered the art of political lobbying, corporate agriculture, and public relations.[15]

Confident that no American government would tolerate a Communist threat off the coast of Florida, the first waves of Cuban immigrants did not become politically involved. Why sink deep roots when Fidel would soon be removed by military force or mobs? Just to be sure, Cuban exiles with the help of U. S. agents, organized Alpha 66, a paramilitary group trained in the Everglades for counter-insurgency operations. In April 1961, 1,400 U. S.-sponsored, counter-revolutionary forces invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. The invasion failed miserably. President Kennedy's decision not to support the faltering invasion with U. S. air power left a bitter taste. Cuban leaders in Miami quickly shifted their allegiances to the Republican Party. A politics of resentment came to characterize Cuban-American politics, but also an awareness that Castro had solidified power. The reality was

clear: Miami was home. Miami became the incubator for an extraordinary range of groups fostering political and cultural advancement.[16]

On the morning of 2 February 1962, President Kennedy summoned his press secretary, Pierre Salinger. "Pierre, I need some help," the president explained. When asked for details, Kennedy matter-of-factly stated, "I need a lot of cigars … About 1,000 Petit Upmanns." The youthful president had acquired expensive tastes. A Petit Upmann was considered a deluxe, hand-made Cuban cigar. Mr. Salinger asked innocently, "When do you need them, Mr. President?" The president replied curtly, "Tomorrow morning."[17]



Confiscated Cuban cigars, 1964. Charles Trainor, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-4533.

Salinger possessed a cultivated palate and a Rolodex containing discreet contacts. The next morning, Salinger's West Wing telephone rang. "How did you do, Pierre?" asked the president. "Very well," the press secretary answered. He quickly escorted carts containing boxes and boxes of prized smokes. Salinger then remembered what happened next. "Kennedy smiled and opened up his desk. He took out a long paper which he immediately signed. It was the decree banning all Cuban products from the United States. Cuban cigars were now illegal in our country." The Cuban Embargo had begun. Tampa's faltering cigar industry was one of the first victims, suddenly deprived of Cuban tobacco. Future legislators and presidents toughened sanctions, tightened screws, and isolated Cuba.[18]

Cubans benefitted immensely from powerful friends in Washington and Florida. No single action, rather a series of bills and amendments identified Cubans as eligible for special status. The fact that the first wave of émigrés were government officials, propertied and well-educated groups, and military officials aided the cause. Founded in 1960, the Cuban Refugee Program and Refugee Emergency Center generously assisted new arrivals with educational programs, medical assistance, and job training. Congress, with one eye pivoted toward a Communist island in the crosshairs of the Cold War, and the other eye focused on humanitarian relief, authorized billions of dollars to help the Cuban refugees. The Catholic Diocese of Miami and other private agencies also helped the newcomers. The Cuban-American Foundation, among other groups, brandished political power. While the first generation of Cubans richly rewarded the Republican Party its vote, Democrats, too, supported the new residents. U. S. Senator Lawton Chiles lobbied for an amendment to ensure Cuban immigrants' immediate eligibility for gener-

ous welfare and food stamps. Florida, insiders smile, is the only state with three U. S. senators. The third is U. S. Senator Bob Menéndez of New Jersey. Born in the U. S. only a few months after his parents left Cuba in 1953, Menéndez has shared his concerns and exercised his political clout on behalf of Florida's Cuban community. One study indicated that aid to Cuban immigrants ballooned from $1 million in 1960 to $680 million by 2015.[19]



Bob Menéndez, United States Senator for New Jersey, exercised his political clout on behalf of Florida's Cuban community. https://www.menendez.senate.gov/about/biography (accessed October 1, 2019).

Claude Pepper learned from his political mistakes. Defeated in the 1950 reelection race for the U. S. Senate, largely because he underestimated or ignored the potency of

anti-communism, Pepper resurrected his political career in 1962 when he was elected to Congress. His two previous residences in Florida had been in Perry and Tallahassee. Representing a liberal district in Miami and Miami Beach, by 1978 his constituency had changed. Almost half of his electorate was Latin. The born-again Cold Warrior learned one valuable phrase. Shaking a clinched fist, he exclaimed, "*Democracia, sí! Castro, no!*"[20]

From the beginning of the Cuban exodus, the U. S. government rarely forced Cubans caught at sea to return to their homeland. Between 1990 and 1991, the U. S. Coast Guard intercepted thousands of desperate Haitians bound for Florida, repatriating them. Ten years earlier, over 125,000 Marielitos arrived in Miami by rafts and boats. The migration included large numbers of Afro-Cubans. One critic noted, "The Cubans are treated like heroes, while the Haitians are treated like criminals." President Bill Clinton had promised to reform the inequities of refugees seeking asylum in America. Cubans had almost derailed Governor Bill Clinton's future. In May 1981, almost twenty thousand Marielitos had been transferred from Florida to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. When Marielitos rioted and set fire to the fort, Arkansans were furious and blamed the young governor for the mess. Clinton lost his re-election bid in 1982. In 1995, President Clinton amended the Cuban Adjustment Act. Clinton's "wet foot, dry foot" policy insisted that Cubans reach American soil. Cubans had to reach the beach to *ensure sanctuary*.[21]

The second event was the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, also known as the Hart-Cellar Act. Congress had been intent on revising the antiquated 1924 Immigration Restriction Act that imposed unfair quotas on potential immigrants. The debate coincided with an embattled era of

race riots, a civil rights movement, Vietnam, and the Great Society. The issue of race hovered over the immigration debates—after all, Congress in 1790 had restricted naturalized citizenship to "free white persons." Of course, many Americans questioned the "whiteness" of Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants. But World War II had forged a new American identity, one proud of its polyglot platoons and multi-religious fighting forces. Passed in the wake of the Great Society, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act contained one critical clause, an exemption allowing immigrants to bring immediate family members to the U. S. with President Lyndon Johnson declaring that "America is not merely a nation but a nation of nations."[22]

When the Hart-Cellar Act went into effect in 1968, politicians and pundits assumed the same old, same old, that Europeans would comprise the ranks of the newest immigrants. President Johnson assured anxious Southerners that the new legislation "is not a revolutionary bill." Americans may have been anxious over the protest movements and counter culture of the Sixties, but World War II and time had persuaded most Americans that previously undesirable Italian-Polish-Jewish-Greek-Americans were assimilated and safe. But the president and many Americans were shocked when most new immigrants came not from Ireland, Sicily or the Russian Pale but from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[23]

An Immigrant State

Buoyed by new boatloads and planeloads of not only Cubans, but individuals and families from every Caribbean island, Latin American and South American country, Miami became an extraordinary collection of immigrants and their offspring. A sense of perspective is needed: In 1950, Dade

County numbered almost a half-million inhabitants. In 1950, the U. S. Census Bureau had no category for Hispanics. Fifty years later, Miami-Dade County's population had zoomed to 2.25 million, of whom half were foreign born and their children. While one-quarter of the county was Cuban, the most eye-catching story was the ethnic and racial kaleidoscope of Latinos, Hispanics, and Islanders, from Argentinians and Haitians to Jamaicans and Venezuelans. As scholars debate the political and demographic consequences, adventurous gourmands navigate the culinary parameters, stopping for *churrasco* drowning in *chimichurri* sauce; *griot yon pikliz*, served with rice and beans; jerk goat and chicken with a side of yucca and a background of jamrock; and *arepas* with *huevos pericos*. Black beans and rice seemed so Cuban, so 1960s.[24]

A single revelation of the 2000 census was the news release that Florida's Hispanics outnumbered African Americans. One million new Hispanics arrived during the 1990s. Consider that in 1870, Florida's white residents outnumbered blacks by only five thousand. As late as 1910, the state's white residents outnumbered blacks by only 135,000.[25]

To understand the remarkable transformation of Florida, consider that in 1910, New York was the nation's largest state with a population of 4.77 million, of whom almost 2 million were foreign born. In 1910, Florida's population totaled just 752,619 inhabitants, of whom 33,482 were foreign born. Astonishingly, Florida succeeded New York as the nation's third largest state in 2014, a milestone unimaginable without the unabated march of immigrants to Southern cities and fields.[26]

Miami, Los Angeles, and New York are not only great cities; they are also great immigrant cities. Miami even more

than New York or Los Angeles has the highest proportion of Hispanic and Latin city's residents (around 60 percent between 2000 and 2018). More than half of the population of Miami-Dade County speaks a language other than English at home. In 2002, a *Miami Herald* reporter advised demographers and scholars eager to understand the shifting ethnic currents of the region one simple clue: Listen to the accents of the waitresses in reply to "*Un cafecito, por favor*." Ethnic accents can be comforting as well as threatening, but in no other American city does one hear Spanish spoken so often and so passionately. In the case of South Florida bankers, mayors, and engineers speaking Spanish or Haitian in front of Anglos, the foreign words can be threatening. When Cubans worked as dishwashers and janitors, few Anglos cared. Today, South Florida politicians, engineers, and bankers often say, "*Tenemos un trato!* We have a deal!" Such words can appear threatening, eye-opening, or pleasing.[27]



Cook Roberto Leyes holds a bowl of his black beans at La Carreta restaurant, 1987. The mural behind him shows a Cuban cart, for which the restaurant is named. J. Albert Diaz, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1995-277-3027.



Terry Robbins advocates the use of the English language at a Miami-Dade County commission meeting, July 1987. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1995-277-5103.

In South Florida, language has meaning and power. For many Americanos, their first jolt of linguistic reality came when they visited a fast-food franchise in Miami and read the sign on the entrance window: "English Spoken Here." Put another way, Professor Guillermo Grenier explained, "For Americans coming here is like going to another country without a passport." The 2000 census verified the obvious: six in ten Miami-Dade County residents spoke Spanish at home. Most, however, spoke English, when necessary. In 1980, Miami-Dade approved a referendum requiring that county business be conducted exclusively in English. The measure passed, marking the final stand of an Anglo majority that would quickly vanish. Cuban and Hispanic voters proceeded to light their own bonfires of cultural resistance, seizing power at the ballot box. Political power also counts. In 1970, a mere 800 Cubans were registered to vote in Miami.[28]

Sacred Spaces

In Florida, geography may not be destiny, but it matters. What is the most valuable piece of property in South Florida? Realtors and property appraisers would almost certainly circle Fisher Island, Zip Code 33109. Mar-a-Lago's tony neighborhood in Palm Beach and downtown Fort Lauderdale are synonymous with luxury and wealth. But what is the most sacred property in the region? Three places vie for the honor: Freedom Tower, Little Havana, and Miami-Dade College.

To investors and Dot.com billionaires, South Florida's sandy beaches are not brown but green. To Cubans, Florida beaches were red, white, and blue, symbolizing freedom and sanctuary. The Cuban Adjustment Act, 1966-1995, provided Cubans who arrived without a visa a special status and protection. Newly-arrived Cubans immediately qualified for humanitarian relief. If apprehended, refugees would not and could not be returned to Cuba. In 1996, President Clinton, alarmed by the escalation of Cubans fleeing the island by boats, introduced the 'wet-foot, dry-foot" policy. The Cuban government agreed that refugees intercepted in American waters (wet-foot) would not be returned to the island, but sent to a third party, such as Haiti or the Dominican Republic. However, Cubans who managed to step ashore --dry foot—won the lottery and could remain in the U. S. and become eligible for citizenship.[29]

Along Miami's ballyhooed Biscayne Boulevard stands a temple, a symbol first of capitalist excess and later to immigrant success. F. Scott Fitzgerald insisted there are no second acts in American life, but Freedom Tower belies that notion. Built in 1925 in the likeness of Seville's Giralda Cathedral Bell Tower, the nineteen-story structure was home

to the *Miami Daily News*, a newspaper owned by the Cox family. In 1962, with, the decline of the afternoon newspaper business underway, the elegant building became a processing center for a quarter million newly arrived immigrants over the next twelve years. The structure is now owned and operated by Miami Dade College, an institution that has educated staggering numbers of first-generation university students.[30]



Four recent arrivals pause outside the Freedom Tower entrance, June 10, 1974, after having come ashore at Marathon. From left, Sergio Hernandez Plaza, Julio Suarez Orta, Orlando Fernandez Rojas, and Orlando Gomez Guaderramas. Bob Mack, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-4556.

Reflecting upon his long tenure as publisher of the *Miami Herald*, David Lawrence Jr., wrote that his choice for "the greatest leader" of his generation was Eduardo Padrón. "No leader has better lived and demonstrated a commitment to the diversity of community and country," Lawrence observed. Born in 1944 in Santiago, Cuba, Eduardo came to

Miami as a teenager, one of fourteen thousand children sent to America as part of Operation Pedro Pan. He struggled in the public schools. Upon graduating from Miami Senior High, the only higher education institution that accepted him was Dade County Junior College, today's Miami Dade College. Earning a doctorate in economics at the University of Florida, he returned to teach at Miami Dade College. He never left. In 1995 he was asked to become president of an institution that meant so much to him and so many South Florida immigrants and their children. Miami Dade College became the nation's largest institution of higher education, burgeoning to more than 160,000 students. Florida International University has also been a critical ally in the educational and assimilation process. In 2016, Barack Obama conferred upon Padrón the Presidential Medal of Freedom.[31]



Eduardo J. Padrón. Vice President, Miami-Dade Community College, and CEO of the Wolfson Campus, November 1987. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1995-277-15307.

Freedom Tower soared into the heavens, serving as "*El Refugio,"* the Ellis Island of Florida. Little Havana, meanwhile, was earthly and gritty, providing new arrivals modest jobs and cheap rent. The ten-square mile bloc of land intersecting Southwest Eighth Street, W. Flagler Street, the Miami River, Federal Highway 1, and I-95, has become hallowed ground. In the 1920s, the neighborhoods of Shenandoah and Riverside welcomed Eastern European Jews, white and black Bahamians, and transplanted Americans drawn to the Land Boom. One such family was the Tibbets, whose son Paul was raised in those neighborhoods. Many years later, Paul Tibbets, Jr., piloted the *Enola Gay*, an airplane named for his mother, which carried "Little Boy," an atomic bomb detonated over Hiroshima. A social-economic- and political tsunami hit Miami in 1959. Fidel Castro's revolution propelled the first wave of refugees to these neighborhoods. Revolutions have consequences: Shenandoah became Little Havana, Eighth Street is now better known as Calle Ocho, synagogues were converted into Christian churches and Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Halls, and Miami morphed into Havana USA. Americanization also has consequences as Cuban exiles became immigrants.[32]

Amid the hurly burly of 1980s Miami, the author David Rieff made a fascinating point "Cubans," he boldly speculated, "are probably the only people who really feel comfortable in Dade County these days." The reality, however, is that Miami, in the lives of so many immigrants, became home but also a springboard to a better place.[33]

To tourists, Little Havana seems timeless: Máximo Gómez/ Domino Park and men arguing over *cafe con leche*. Every seventeenth of April the surviving veterans of Assault Brigade 2506 gather in Little Havana to commemorate their lost Bay of Pigs comrades. Little Havana may have changed in character and composition, but not purpose.



Diners at Versailles restaurant, Little Havana, January 1987. George Detrio, photographer. City of Miami Photograph Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, CM-1-14815-2.

Tony Villamil recalled his impressions of Little Havana in 1960: "I remember going down Calle Ocho and crying, 'What am I doing here?' It was almost like a country road." Between 1970 and 2000, Little Havana added thirty thousand inhabitants, bringing the densely populated neighborhood's population to 150,000 residents. What is lost in the statistics is the displacement of thousands of whites—Jews, Italians, and other ethnics now called "Anglos" in the Miami vernacular. One storeowner declared in 1963, "It's a Cuban invasion." As invasions go, the Cuban takeover of Little Havana was swift but painful. One study estimated that for every two newcomers moving into the Miami Metropolitan area, one left. The most popular destination for those who wanted their country back was Broward County.[34]



Bay of Pigs veterans gathered at the monument commemorating the invasion, Little Havana, April 16, 1985, Jeff Widener, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1995-277-3020.

Little Havana was never static. The neighborhood has also been one of the most mobile census tracts in Florida. Mobility should not be confused with prosperity. As upwardly mobile Cubans left, more impoverished immigrants moved in. Renters greatly outnumbered home-owners. In the 1960s and '70s, most of the residents were Cuban. By the mid-1980s, Little Havana was morphing into "Little Nica" or "Little Managua," the result of large numbers of Nicaraguans. The Yambo Restaurant typified the change. Newer and more discriminating diners preferred *gallo pinto* (spotted rooster) to *moros y cristianos* (Moors and Christians). The Central American favorite consists of red kidney beans and rice cooked with onions, peppers, garlic, and in some

versions, coconut milk, while the Cuban classic is composed of black beans and white rice. By 2005, Nicaraguans comprised 85 percent of the Hispanics in Little Havana. As Cubans moved up and out, newly arriving and poorer Nicaraguans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans, moved into the vacuum. Patricio Cepeda, a Dominican immigrant who owns a supermarket in the neighborhood, offered a culinary metaphor to understand the changes: "Cubans don't eat tortillas, and a lot of people [here] like tortillas!"[35]

Miami-Dade County is home to clusters of hyper-Hispanic and ethnic neighborhoods and cities. Hialeah's origins combine the exotic Muskogee name meaning high prairie, the romantic film making capped by the filming of D. W. Griffith's *The White Rose*, the high-tech contributions of Glenn Curtiss, a 1920s boom city and the fabled Hialeah Race Track. The Cuban revolution, migrations from the Americas, and zoning decisions transformed the city, nearly quadrupling its population from 1960 to 2005, catapulting Hialeah to fifth place among largest cities in the state with a population cresting at 225,000. The fourth largest city in Florida, Hialeah has the distinction of being the least diverse city in America and the most Hispanic (95 percent in 2010 and 96 percent in 2017). Only 6 percent of its residents do *not* speak Spanish at home! Hialeah's alter-twin was The Villages, in central Florida, where 97 percent of the residents were non-Hispanic whites![36]

Central Americans

Central Americans began showing up on the demographic radar in the 1970s. The whirlwinds of revolution, poverty, violence, and repression were felt across Florida. In the early 1980s, the Sandinista Revolution roiled Nicaragua, sending thousands into exile. The number of Nicaraguans living

in 1980 South Florida was estimated at 20,000. A decade later, the revolutionary fires extinguished but the economy in ruins, an estimated 125,000 Nicaraguans had settled in the region. Streams of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans followed. By 2015, almost a quarter million Central Americans lived in Metro Miami, making it the fourth largest concentration in the nation. Central Americans are particularly vulnerable to U. S. deportation policies.[37]

Guatemalans, desperate to avoid entrenched poverty and civil strife, began migrating to South Florida in the early 1980s. Many of the early arrivals were Mayans, indicated by a refugee who insisted, "I am Maya, not Guatemalan nor Hispanic." Mayans settled in the small farming community of Indiantown in Palm Beach County. Others migrated to Jupiter and Lake Worth. The 2000 census documented 28,650 Guatemalans in Florida. Many more were believed to be living here illegally.[38]

Puerto Ricans

When Maurice Ferré arrived in Miami in 1953, he was one of only 4,500 Puerto Ricans residing in Florida. By 2000, their numbers had risen to 80,337, ranking the group second only to Cubans. A decade later, a stunning 847,550 Puerto Ricans had flocked to the state, as islanders were fleeing their beleaguered homeland. Florida replaced New Jersey as home of America's second highest concentration of Puerto Ricans, trailing only New York. Shockingly, by 2016, more Puerto Ricans live in the United States than in Puerto Rico. Resettlement has hollowed the fabled island. By 2020, there may be more Puerto Ricans in Florida than Cubans.[39]

First, one needs a sense of perspective. Defeated on the battlefield and humiliated at the diplomatic table, Spain lost its imperial jewels, Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1898. Puerto

Ricans did not immediately become U. S. citizens. In 1917, Congress passed legislation endowing Puerto Ricans with U. S. citizenship. The legislation also allowed islanders to travel to and from the mainland without a passport. Significantly, Puerto Ricans moved to New York City in large numbers in the 1940s and '50s as migrants, *not* immigrants. So many Puerto Ricans migrated to Manhattan's Italian Harlem—then the largest Italian colony in America—that the famous enclave became known as Spanish Harlem. Few Puerto Ricans chose to migrate to Florida during this era. Modern air travel simplified the act of migration to New York or Florida.[40]

Scholars and politicians dispute the causes of Puerto Rico's slow collapse. One side contends that Puerto Rico represents a case study in racism, colonialism, and avaricious American corporations dodging taxes; others argue that the island epitomizes a cratered welfare state that blames the United States for imposing a second-class citizenship. Everyone acknowledges that the island's economic malaise, fiscal crisis, political dysfunction, environmental woes, and depopulation have created a death spiral resulting in a diaspora to Metropolitan New York and Florida. Between 2007 and 2016, the island's population shrank an alarming 11 percent, while the island's economy declined 15 percent. The island has essentially lost much of its professional classes. Optimism and optimists are rare.[41]

Wordsmiths coined appropriate terms to describe the extraordinary relationship with Puerto Ricans and America. Considering that so many Puerto Ricans moved to New York and later to Florida, "Nuyorican" and "Floriricans" seemed pitch perfect. And finally, because Central Florida became the favorite destination of the newcomers, clever writers suggested "Orlando Ricans" and "Mickey Ricans." Historian Jorge Duany raised a debate question distinguishing native

Puerto Ricans and those born on the mainland: "Who are the true Puerto Ricans? Puerto Ricans have massed in three areas of Florida: Metro-Miami, Central Florida, and Tampa Bay. The 2010 Census revealed that three of America's greatest concentrations of Puerto Ricans were in the Sunshine State.[42]

An Ethnic, Immigrant Economic Powerhouse

Despite all the obstacles—language barriers, nativist hostilities, and the challenges of a new land—Florida's immigrants have succeeded widely and wildly, acquiring political power, surviving economic sanctions, knocking down barriers, and creating and sustaining an economic powerhouse. In the process, Miami and South Florida have emerged as the banking and political capital of Latin America.

Obamidad and Cuba

The election and re-election of Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 aroused a sense of anxiety and hope in Florida's immigrant neighborhoods, none more so than South Florida's Cuban neighborhoods. Nationally, Obama swept the Hispanic vote by a two to one margin in the contest against John McCain. In Florida, Obama won 57 percent of the Hispanic vote in a state where Cubans, Puerto Ricans and others historically leaned Republican. "Obama is picking the Republican lock in Florida," reflected a polling analyst.[43]

In 2012, Obama's popularity among Florida's Hispanics only intensified. Obama upset any guava carts left standing, nearly winning the Cuban-American vote. No Democratic candidate had ever performed so well in Cuban and Hispanic areas. Analysts wondered whether the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, had blundered by not sharing a *cafe con leche* among Cuban leaders and television cameras. Instead,

the devout Mormon had chosen a juice bar for his photo op! Not even television commercials featuring Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chavez and the niece of Fidel Castro both voicing their fondness for Barack Obama helped the Republican cause. The Hispanic turnout set a record. Florida's Puerto Ricans were among Obama's biggest supporters.[44]

Cuban-Americans' attraction to Democrats was part of a process that many immigrant groups and their children experience. Young Cuban Americans were evolving even if their grandparents seemed locked in the 1960s. The early years of the twenty-first century witnessed profound change, especially among South Florida's Cubans. For a half century, journalists and policy makers maintained that Florida Cubans were united around the immutable doctrine of *Cuba Libre*. But Cuban-American lives, dreams, and politics were evolving, as the first-generation pioneers were dying and third-and fourth-generations were Americanizing and facing the same challenges as other Floridians: financing college and finding good jobs, buying a home and raising families in safe neighborhoods. If their *abuelos y abuelas* were obsessed with toppling Fidel and keeping Elián safe in Miami, the grandchildren had become *Yanquis* in Havana USA. Waiting for snow in Havana was as frustrating as waiting for Fidel to die. By 2015, almost half of young Cuban Americans supported ending the Cuban embargo and normalizing U. S. and Cuban relations.[45]

It is dangerous to paint a portrait of immigrants with too broad a brush. Cubans who arrived in Florida after 1995, a huge cohort rivaling in numbers the exodus following the revolution—came for economic reasons rather than political persecution.[46]

The great thaw between Cuba and the U. S. can be measured by new technologies and ancient words. Poets help ex-

plain who we are. In January 1961, a youthful John F. Kennedy chose eighty-seven-year-old Robert Frost to read a poem at his inauguration. Frost summoned visions of his Anglo America: stone walls, white-steepled churches, and village lanes. Curiously, Frost lived briefly as a snow bird in Miami, but his muse was New England, not the Sunshine State. In January 2013, a youthful President Obama, who was just two years old when Fidel and *los barbudos* (the bearded rebels) seized power, invited forty-four-year-old Richard Blanco to become his inaugural poet. Blanco, conceived in Cuba, was born in Madrid in 1968, and soon moved to Florida with his family. He reduced his life to "made in Cuba, assembled in Spain and imported to the United States." The first immigrant, he was also the first Latino, the first gay, and the youngest inaugural poet. In his poem "América," he tells the story from the perspective of a seven-year-old girl pondering Thanksgiving:

> A week before Thanksgiving
> I explained to my abuelita
> about the Indians and the Mayflower …
> liberty and justice for all, until
> this Thanksgiving we would have turkey,
> as well as pork.[47]

To many, it must have seemed the world had turned upside down. The new president understood the pain and rapture of emigration and freedom. "Like immigrants before," he remarked in 2014, "Cubans helped remake America, even as they felt a painful yearning for the land and families they left behind. All of this bound America and Cuba in a unique relationship, at once family and foe." A confident president vowed that he would not stand pat on the Cuba question as the previous nine chief executives had done. The thaw was

visible in Washington and Havana, Miami and Hialeah. Loosened travel restrictions had reawakened old connections in Miami, resulting in unaccompanied Cuban-American minors beginning to visit the island and reuniting with their families. Elderly exiles denounced President Obama as an "appeaser," but a moveable object had met an irresistible force. "The monolithic stridency that once defined the exile community," wrote Abby Goodnough in 2005, "has faded." The fade intensified.[48]

Young Cubans on both sides of the Straits were connecting with relatives via e-mail. "The truth is that the driver in policy is not the relationship between the United States and Cuba," explained Joe García, once chair of the Miami Democratic Party, "but the relationship between Cubans." He explained with a simplicity that diplomats and politicians lacked: "When you remove some of the barriers, people do what people do--help their families." Philip Peters, an expert in the field, explained the new diplomacy: "Cuban-Americans are normalizing relations one by one." Anyone who spent time in Miami or the Miami International Airport during this era witnessed the dynamics of this relationship: endless stores selling tennis shoes, jeans, and appliances, goods to be protected by "Secure Wrap," a capitalist device. One of the most popular stores is Ñooo! Que Barato! (Translation: Noo! So Cheap!) A reporter in 2016 explained that, increasingly, Cuban relatives want iPhones, Nikes, but most of all, minutes on their cellphones, not jeans and bras. The economic relationship between Cuban-Americans and the island is substantial. In 2016, remittances to Cuba reached $3.5 billion. The Cuban government welcomes flat screen TVs, washing machines, and breakfast cereals, but bans air conditioners, power lawn mowers, and clothes dryers.[49]

The rapprochement between Cuba and America benefitted certain sectors. Frenzied tourists and crowded airplanes trafficked between Miami and Havana. In 2016, Cuba attracted almost four million visitors. Tourists ate well, marveling at the bounty of the countryside. Capitalism rewards winners and punishes losers. In this case, the Cuban government and markets diverted so much food to the *paradores*, *paladares*, and newly opened hotels/restaurants that shortages of basic staples have become commonplace. "It is a startling evolution in Cuba," writes Azam Ahmed, "where the future has been a pillar of the revolution's promise." He concludes that "most Cubans still work within the state-run economy and struggle to make ends meet."[50]

Ironically or prophetically, Cuba's flirtation with capitalism neither improved the lives nor stilled the dreams of poor Cubans. Indeed, the reforms may have only quickened the pulses of Cubans desperate for better lives. A perfect storm surrounds Cuba—a failed economy, the collapse of its once stalwart patron clients, the Soviet Union and Venezuela, and agricultural woes. The U. S. Coast Guard noticed an increase in *balseros* (rafters) eager to arrive in America before the repeal of the Cuban Adjustment Act. The ninety-mile journey to reach the U. S. remains as treacherous today as in the 1960s.

Resourceful Cubans quickly learned that open waters were not the only passageway to America. Cubans, Haitians, and others explored the option of exploiting the southern border between Mexico and the U. S. In May 2016, large numbers of Cuban refugees were spotted in El Paso, Texas. "The standoff," explained a reporter, "is the latest episode involving a growing number of Cubans trying to make it to the United States before immigration rules that favor them may be changed." More than fifty thousand undocumented

Cubans entered the U. S. in 2015.[51]

President Obama methodically upended decades' long sanctions, introducing sweeping changes that allowed new travel and business links. In January 2017, Obama ended the previously sacrosanct "wet-foot, dry-foot" policy.

In late November 2016, Fidel Castro died. Monitoring Fidel's health was a fixture on Miami news stations, reminding veteran diplomats of the annual May Day parade in Moscow, when Western journalists analyzed the platform of Soviet dignitaries, waiting to see who was standing next to the Boss. When one considers the arc of his life, which of the following would have been the most improbable prophecy on New Year's Eve 1958: That Fidel Castro would die a peaceful death at his bedside at age ninety? Or that Fidel would outlive John F. Kennedy or Robert Kennedy? Or that Fidel's fifty-seven-year-old revolution would somehow survive counter-revolutionaries, military invasions, and a Cold War?

In January 2017, days after Fidel Castro's death and shortly before the transfer of power to Donald Trump, President Obama terminated the decades-old policy that favored Cubans without visas, helping them gain legal residency. President Obama's bold move to normalize diplomatic relations with Cuba elicited alternating reactions: "¡*Triunfamos*!" (We triumphed!) and "¡*Nunca*!" (Never!). One Cuban placed the events in perspective: "You know when the Cuban dictatorship will end? When the first McDonald's opens in El Vedado," (an affluent Havana neighborhood). Only one in three Cuban-American residents of Miami-Dade County still supported the embargo. Older residents expressed outrage that Obama reestablished diplomatic relations without significant concessions from Cuban leaders.[52]

Venezuelans

Few soothsayers predicted that Venezuela would emerge as the sick man of the Americas. Once, Venezuela boasted one of South America's earliest and healthiest democracies. The nation's standard of living was the envy of its neighbors and served as a magnet for aspiring migrants and immigrants. In the 1970s, observed scholars, "It has the best infrastructure in South America." In 1970, Venezuela's per capita GDP was higher than Spain and barely below that of the United Kingdom.[53]

Fast forward to 2018. Venezuela, argue scholars in *Foreign Affairs*, has committed "suicide," a legacy of a "failed state." Today, Venezuela "is one of Latin America's most impoverished nations and its newest dictatorship. Its schools lie half deserted. … Only a tiny elite can afford enough to eat. An epidemic of violence has made it one of the most murderous countries in the world."[54]

Doral and Weston vie for culinary honors, each city renowned for its *arepas* (a cornmeal cake-crusted sandwich with meats and cheese) and *cachitos* (cheese turnovers). One of the most famous is El Arepazo, a cafeteria-style restaurant serving the locals in Doral. The café adjoins a gas station and flies the flag of Venezuela. A statue of the nineteenth-century freedom fighter, Simón Bolívar, sits in the parking lot. By 2008, five Venezuelan-American newspapers and magazines kept the expatriates informed about news their old and new homes.[55]

The demographic and political consequences are enormous. Two newspaper headlines suggest the ramifications of the international crisis for Florida. On 15 August 2017, the *Miami Herald* announced, "Maduro Regime Wants to Arrest Venezuelans in Miami." A 25 February 2019 *Wash-*

ington Post headline explained everything: "GOP Sees Turmoil as a Means to Strengthen its Hold in Florida." Almost one in five Florida voters are Hispanic. President Trump has traveled to Florida on several occasions to denounce corrupt dictators and socialism. The president has even threatened to deport families of Venezuelan military officials living in Miami. Conspicuously, when Vice President Mike Pence visited Miami, he did not select Café Versailles for his photo op; rather, he chose a church in Doral. Inside the church, the crowd waved tricolor Venezuelan yellow, blue and red flags, responding with shots of "*Libertad! Libertad!*" The topic of military intervention of American and Russian troops harken back to the Cold War and threats of brinkmanship. "This could be Bay of Pigs 2.0," noted a prominent Hispanic Democrat. U. S. Senator Marco Rubio, a Cuban-American Republican, has been especially vocal in alerting Americans and prominent officials as to the importance of the Venezuelan crisis. Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz explained, "Foreign policy is domestic policy in South Florida."[56]

The Future

Sharp declines in birthrates can also be found in Hispanic Americans. The Mexican birth rate has been plummeting for decades. In 2016, Mexico averaged 2.18 births/woman, down from 6.77 in 1964. In comparison, Puerto Rico averaged 4.66 children/family in 1964, but the figure has fallen to 1.30 in 2016. In interviews, young Hispanic Americans explain the inter-generational advice: "Don't be like us. Don't get married early. Don't have children early. We made these sacrifices so that you can get educated and start a career." Government demographers note that U.S. fertility rates in 2017 were the lowest since the government began

compiling such information. The rate for Hispanic women, fell 31 percent between 2007 and 2017. In other words, Hispanics are acting just like Italians and Poles, Irish and Germans. Evidence also confirms that the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Latinos are likely to define themselves as "mixed," and "non-Hispanic."[57]

For whatever reasons and purposes, immigrants *are* transforming Florida and America. "Today, in raw numbers," described the *New York Times* in 2015, "45 million immigrants live in the country, up from just under 10 million in 1965, by far the largest foreign-born population in United States history." The 2018 *Times*' headline, "Whites a Minority in the U. S.? The Transition Is Accelerating." Florida is a posterchild for the transition, as deaths now outnumber births among whites. The U. S. Census Bureau has predicted that whites will become a minority in the U. S. around 2045.[58]

Schools serve as the frontlines of the intersection of race, ethnicity, and immigration. By 2019, every large school system in Florida had turned majority-minority. The phenomenon first occurred in Miami-Dade County in the early 1960s. In 2006, Lee County's minority students became the majority.[59]

For all the invectives and filibustering, immigrants have changed America's and Florida's culture and identity. The British statesman Disraeli may have railed against "lies, damned lies, and statistics," but numbers don't lie. In 1960, Florida's immigrant population was negligible, but the demographic Rubicon and Straits of Florida had been crossed with the first wave of Cuban exiles. Today, over one in five Floridians are foreign born. Immigrants have touched every corner and cafeteria of Florida. Is it progress, the far reach

of capitalism, or assimilation when MacDonald's introduced dulce de leche McFlurries on its menu? Immigration has shaped Florida's urban corridors, expanding to once remote corners of the state.

Race and ethnicity enrich and complicate lives for citizens and the U. S. Census Bureau. In 2015, one third of Metro Miami's black population came from abroad, a greater proportion than New York City. Haiti and Jamaica, not Cuba, constitute the greatest numbers of Metro Miami's black immigrants. The number of black immigrants in Florida has expanded dramatically since 2000. As late as the early 1970s, only 5,000 Afro Cubans resided in Miami. Mark Lopez of the Pew Research Center explained the state's special character, "It's a place that is diverse in its immigrant stock in a way that other parts of the country aren't necessarily diverse." Miami may be a global city surrounded by immense wealth," the study concluded, "The concentration of wealth that characterizes modern global cities does not necessarily trickle down to all its residents." More precisely, for black households in the Miami area, Black-Caribbean (predominantly Jamaican and Haitian) family net worth was more than three times African American cohorts but dramatically less than white households.[60]

Jamaicans and Haitians

Haitians and Jamaicans represent a rapidly changing segment of non-Spanish speaking Caribbean immigrants. For centuries, white and black Bahamians have contributed to the economies and culture of South Florida and the Florida Keys. Over a quarter million Jamaicans live in Florida, and soon the Sunshine State will replace the Empire State as the home of America's largest Jamaican population. Jamaicans now represent the largest West Indian population

in Miami. Several South Florida communities radiate the influence of large proportions of their populations, most notably in Miramar and Lauderhill Lakes, Melrose Park and Pembroke Park, El Portal and Pembroke Park. In 2018, almost 330,000 Haitians (two-thirds of them American born) and 138,000 Jamaicans resided in Metro Miami. Jamaicans constitute the largest immigrant group in Broward County.[61]



Haitian refugees aboard a small sailboat, circa 1977. To see a similar boat, visit HistoryMiami Museum Museum's exhibition, *Tropical Dreams*. HistoryMiami Museum, x-1098-1.

The significance of having the largest black foreign population in Florida goes to the Haitians. The dubious distinction of being the most vulnerable immigrant group is also held by Haitians. Denied entrance into the U. S., Haitians typically choose to brave the ocean, often in dangerously small boats. Historically, the nautical or historical tides rarely favored Haitians. Headlines—"65 Fleeing Haiti Wash Ashore at Pompano" and "'Good U. S. Life' Lures Another 103 Haitians," typified the experience. The details were chilling: "For most of the 103 Haitian refugees crowded into a rotting, 50-foot sailing junk they had pooled their money to buy, a jump into the sandy surf was their first step onto American soil." A hand-painted sign proclaimed, "God is Good." Courage and faith notwithstanding, the Haitians were paroled as illegal aliens. U. S. Representative E. Clay Shaw of Fort Lauderdale railed against Haitians in 1991, "If these people are allowed to stay, we're going to see a mass migration from Haiti to the U. S. as we've never seen before. … [the ocean will become] a blood bath for sharks."[62]

For Haitians, the journey to Florida has been littered with legal landmines, political and geological earthquakes a vigilant U. S. Coast Guard, and a lush but punishing native land. Between 1977 and 1982, at least 50,000 Haitians arrived in South Florida, many of them stigmatized or lionized as "boat people." Whereas the very presence of Cubans requesting political asylum was *prima facie* evidence of their legal status, Haitians faced the worst odds of any asylum seekers. Haitian immigrants often settle into Miami's African-American neighborhoods, such as Opa-locka and Miami Gardens. Chariclaire Simon typified the struggle. A Haitian, she labored two years picking tomatoes in Hillsborough County, saving enough to bring her seven children to Pompano Beach. She found work in Broward Coun-

ty at a laundry. Throughout the presidencies of Obama and Trump, critics and supporters have urged the chief executive and directors of Homeland Security to affirm their status as legal immigrants or deport them as diseased, illegal, and undesirable immigrants. South Florida may seem like a fragile asylum, but the Haitian communities are vital to the economy and security of Haiti—fully one-quarter of the country's gross domestic economy comes from remittances of Haitian immigrants.[63]

One of Miami's most famous neighborhoods is *Petite Haïti,* Little Haiti, located in a place once known as Lemon City, north of the Miami River. In 2016, following tense, racially charged debates, the Miami City Commission voted to officially designate Lemon City as Little Haiti. Critics argued that the decision denigrated the Bahamians who helped build Lemon City before Miami emerged as a city. Unofficially, the southern boundary is NW 54th Street, west to Interstate 95 and north to and along NW 82nd Street. In 2016, the neighborhood was younger and poorer than the rest of Miami. The average household size for Miami is 2.6 persons; for Little Haiti, it is 8.1. The colorful murals and loud Konpa music soften the hard lives lived. Author Jan Nijman insisted that if one were to pinpoint the center of Little Haiti, it would be "the Marché au Fer, a visually striking tin-roofed shopping bazaar, a replica of the building with the same name in Port-au-Prince. … Another ingredient of Little Haiti's iconic landscape … is the thirteen-foot bronze statue of Toussaint L'Ouverture." Once known only to locals, establishments such as Piman Bouk Bakery and Chez Le Bebe have become trendy to newcomers and those few who still call Miami "My-AMAH." But today Little Haiti is in the crosshairs of extensive redevelopment and gentrification as developers prepare to rollout mega projects.[64]



Miami-Haiti Market, Little Haiti, circa 1988. Tina Bucavalas, photographer. Folklife Archives, HistoryMiami Museum, 1988-007-13.



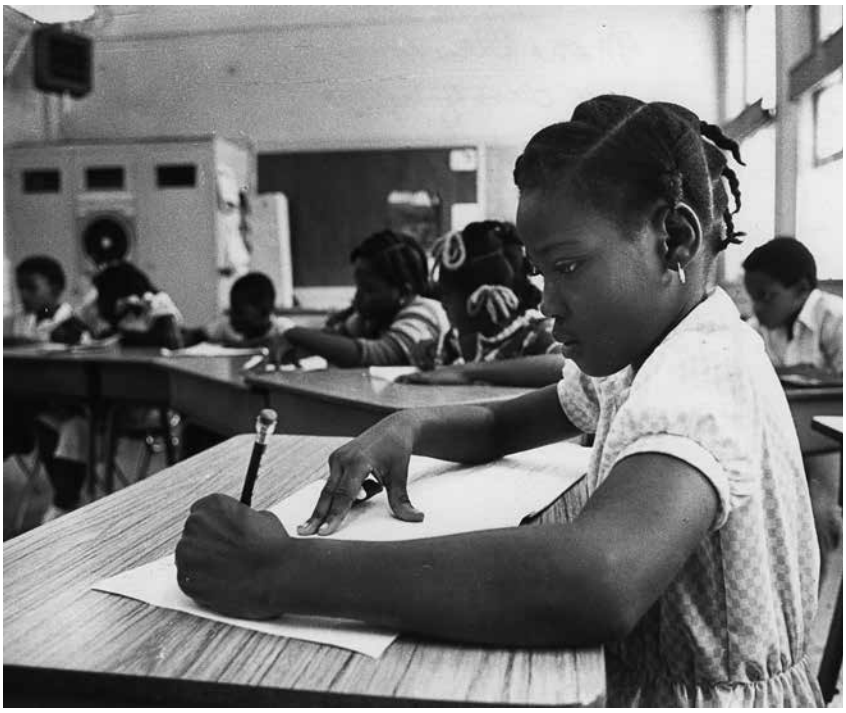
Haitian Regis Larose and other immigrants sit in the waiting room at the Haitian Refugee Center, May 4, 1987. J. Albert Diaz, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1995-277-455.

The Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach metropolitan area boasts the largest number of Haitians in the U. S., with over 300,000 in 2010. Over a quarter of the populations of Golden Glades, Pinewoods, and North Miami are Haitian. The impact of Haitians in Palm Beach County is striking. By 2015, over 56,000 foreign-born Haitians resided in Palm Beach County, making them the largest immigrant group. They are the second-largest immigrant group (81,000) in Broward County. The range of employment is varied, from agricultural to the food industry to small businesses. Cubans and Jamaicans rank second and third in immigrant populations.[65]

In the old country, most Haitians were Roman Catholics, but in Florida, they have embraced their new freedoms and joined a wide variety of religious faiths. Divine Mercy Haitian Catholic Church in Fort Lauderdale opened its doors in 1989, the first all Haitian Catholic church in Broward County. The First Haitian Baptist Church of Pompano Beach dates from 1976. A converted auto repair shop on Hammondville Road offered Haitian immigrants a place to pray, take English classes, and find a home to rent. The most important Haitian church of all is that of Notre Dame d'Haiti in Little Haiti. It is there that a young parish priest, Thomas Wenski, made a deep connection with his flock of worshippers. Today he is Archbishop of the burgeoning Archdiocese of Miami, one of the nation's largest ecclesiastical districts, which serves a Catholic population of 1.3 million spread over three counties in southeast Florida.

Class and heritage do not stop at the nave. Some churches in South Florida celebrate Mass and services in French, others in Creole; some bilingual. "French means status," explained Rev. Roland Lamy from the Divine Mercy Church in Fort Lauderdale. "It shows that you have a good education."

French may signify status, but French Creole is the third most spoken language in Florida![66]



Fifth grade student Marie Dieudone in her class at Little River Elementary School, circa 1985. Miami News Collection, 1994-370-330.

In 1991, a *Miami Herald* reporter began her story in the aisles of the Haiti Supermarket on Sunrise Boulevard in Broward County, where Haitian men talked politics. "The problem, they say," wrote the journalist, "is that Haitian participation in Broward politics barely exists." Slowly but promisingly, Haitians have translated their numbers into political clout. Priorities matter, in this case Haitians' struggle to avoid deportation, care for ones' families, and learn a third language, after Creole and French. But Haitians are becoming citizens, registering to vote, and recruiting candidates.

Haiti also boasts a heritage that includes a slave insurrection of French planters in 1804. In 2010 and 2012, Haitian-born doctor and lawyer Rudy Moises ran unsuccessfully for Congress. In 2014, a political breakthrough occurred: a Haitian boat survivor was elected chair of the Miami-Dade County Commission and a Haitian-born physician was elected mayor of North Miami while a fellow Haitian was elected to the city council. Haitian-Americans commanded a majority of the El Portal city council. Phillip J. Brutus, a Haitian immigrant, was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2000. Gilded Age Irish power brokers would admire the political skills a *Miami Herald* reporter described in 2012: "At Little Haiti's St. Mary's Towers, ballot brokers jockey every election season to see who can get in the doors and collect the most absentee ballots. Brokers tout their skills on Creole-language radio, pitch their services to candidates running for office in cities that boast a sizeable Haitian electorate and even brag about their vote-getting prowess on business cards emblazoned with slogans like 'Queen of the absentee ballots."[67]

In 2010, a devastating earthquake rocked Port-au-Prince, Haiti. A cholera epidemic, a drought, and a monster Hurricane Matthew deepened the island's misery. The Obama administration offered a rarely-used lifeline of temporary protected status (T.P.S.) to the 58,000 Haitian immigrants, most of them residing in South Florida. Olita Inera, a Haitian living in Lauderhill but fearful of deportation, rejoiced after Obama's announcement: "I feel like I have an identity now!" The government program permits thousands of Haitians living here illegally to remain in the U.S. until conditions improve. Years after the earthquake and hurricane, Haiti struggles to recover, but the blame game continues. Ten billion dollars raised to assist one of the most impover-

ished and corrupt nations has vanished.[68]

While Miami-Dade remains one of the most celebrated immigrant places in America, Broward County has become an immigrant-ethnic refuge and redoubt. Latin flight succeeded white flight. For decades, Broward served as a springboard to aspiring Miami-Dade's immigrants who moved upward and northward. Buttressed by surging numbers of Jamaicans and Haitians, and buffered by declining numbers of non-Hispanic whites, Broward's black immigrant population exploded. *Sun-Sentinel* journalists placed these events into context in 2012: "Nearly one in three Broward County residents comes from a foreign country, as the county continues its transition from a tourist and retirement haven to a magnet for immigrants." Colombians, Cubans, and Peruvians followed Haitians and Jamaicans as the next largest foreign-born groups in Broward County. The immigrant percentage of Broward's population continues to rise.[69]

A 2000 *Miami Herald* headline neatly summarized the impact of intermarriage upon immigrants and their children: "Intermarriage Fuzzes Latin Identity." What happened when Cubans marry Nicaraguans and Brazilians fall in love with Venezuelans? Besides clashes over national foods and regional customs, the short answer is an evolving ethnic identity. The *Herald* concluded, "Even the seeming truism that Latins all speak the same language isn't really correct." Second-and third-generation Latins have the highest intermarriage rate of any ethnic group. The Pew Research Center reported that two-thirds of Hispanics reported having a parent or grandparent who is NOT Hispanic or Latino.[70]

Will intermarriage dilute Hispanic-Latino solidarity in South Florida? Jorge Duany, a respected scholar of Puerto Rican immigration, writes that "the degree of social interac-

tion among different Latino groups will largely determine whether a new hybrid identity emerges beyond their national origins." He notes that Puerto Ricans living in the U. S. intermarry frequently, especially with Dominicans. He also observes, "Puerto Ricans in Miami are more likely to marry Cubans than are their compatriots in Orlando." Conservative critic Linda Chávez questioned the very idea of Hispanic-Latino identity/solidarity. "Do Cuban blacks really have much in common with Anglo-Argentines or Mayan Indians from Guatemala[?] What sort of common bond is there between Honduras and El Salvador who once went to war over a soccer match?"[71]

Nativism Unfurled

Few contemporary issues stoke the political fires more than immigration. Honest Americans disagree over borders, paths to citizenship, sanctuary cities, the impact of immigrants upon the economy, allowing caravans to cross borders, and the impact of multiculturalism. In 2005, commentator Robert J. Samuelson observed, "Immigration is crawling its way back onto the national agenda—and not just as a footnote to keeping terrorists out." Immigration has remained a central tenet and lightning rod to the American dream. Dreams differ. Baiting the Irish Potato Famine, Sicilian brigands, or Polish peasants is as American as a Thomas Nast cartoon that lampooned apelike Irish Papists but defended Chinese laborers. The custom of repelling foreigners is an ancient tradition. The Old Testament's Book of Leviticus reminds us, "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."[72]

In the 1993 film, *Jurassic Park*, Ian Malcom philosophizes, "If there's one thing the history of evolution has

taught us, it's that life will not be contained. Life breaks free, it expands to new territories." In contemporary America, immigrants cannot be contained and continue to cross the Southern border in numbers so threatening that a government official exclaimed, "The breaking point has arrived."[73]

As a presidential candidate in 2016, Donald Trump drew a firm line in the sand regarding immigration. Curiously, Trump's grandfather, Friedrich Trumpf was, in the parlance of his future grandson, "an unaccompanied minor" when he emigrated from Germany to America in 1885. A resourceful immigrant, he made his first fortune running brothels in Seattle and the Yukon. His grandson, the president, became agitated during a discussion about the visa lottery program that benefits certain African nations and the temporary protected status afforded to immigrants from El Salvador and Haiti. Trump referenced Haiti and El Salvador as "shithole countries." Several senators heard the president rage, "Why do we need more Haitians, take them out!" The president then deflected the conversation, wondering why more Norwegians do not come to America.[74]

Florida's Haitian Americans angrily responded to President Trump's fiery rhetoric. "Trump's racism is a rallying cry for us Haitians," proclaimed Jacques Despinosse, a celebrated figure in Miami politics. He added bluntly, "He's sorely mistaken if he thinks he's toying with some uneducated refugees." Journalist Simon Romero observed that for South Florida's Haitians, Trump's remarks "were yet another reminder of the stigma they have faced." Romero placed the events in perspective: "They have had to refute claims they that they are carriers of disease, struggle to find footing in a society where Latins have been ascendant, and face ostracism from some of their African-American neighbors." Florida's Haitians will not be shamed; rather, the Haitian community

is too busy working and taking pride in the multitude of professionals and success stories among their ranks.[75]

What happens when awkward comments are made by liberals? In 2019, the iconic NBC broadcaster Tom Brokaw admitted on *Meet the Press* that "Hispanics should work harder at assimilation." A vigorous debate erupted, prompting painful questions and memories. One person wrote, "My late great uncle changed his Italian name to an English version to find work in Chicago. I'd wish that on no family in America." On the subject of whether the government has the right to exclude certain nationalities from emigration, the *New York Times* editorialized its support of the Chinese Exclusion Act: "And as for the assertion that we have no moral right to say who shall and who shall not come into the country, no true American will for one minute admit a doctrine so dangerous, or to make a confession so weak."[76]

What happens when scholarship collides with disputed truths? Few discussions generate more debate than whether immigrants drag down the wages of native workers. Twelve-year-old Jorge Jesus Borjas and his mother managed to escape Cuba in 1962, settling in a Cuban neighborhood. The family moved to New Jersey. Borjas succeeded in higher education, earning a position as an economist at Harvard. A specialist in labor economics, the conservative Borjas wrote a scholarly essay, "The Wage Impact of the *Marielitos:* A Reappraisal." He argued that one of the consequences of 125,000 Cubans flooding the market was a dramatic decrease in wages of native-born Miamians. Academics attacked Borjas for his "spurious" scholarship.[77]

Americans are divided into rival camps over the immigration question. The very words "sanctuary cities," and "illegal aliens," "catch and release" and "border walls" arouse

passions and incite debates. Recent headlines screamed, "Sanctuary City Debate Reaching Fever Pitch in Florida," and "Immigrants Really Do Change America's Culture." The 2019 Florida Legislature is advancing a bill that would prohibit local governments from adopting "sanctuary cities," allowing illegal immigrants shelter from ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents). The fact that Florida has *no* sanctuary cities is irrelevant to the politics of frustration and fury. In 2008, Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite was speaking in Brooksville about the immigration problem. Ranting about a U. S. stimulus bill, she said, "The bill sends millions of dollars to people who do not pay federal income taxes, including residents of Puerto Rico ... I do not believe American taxpayer funds should not be sent to foreign citizens who do not pay taxes." Journalists pointed out that Puerto Ricans were American citizens. In 2017, Iowa Congressman Steve King, alarmed at America's foreign-born birthrate, tweeted, "We can't restore America with somebody else's babies." Similar debates occurred a century earlier, when the Italian, Polish, and Irish grandparents and great-grandparents of many of today's protestors also wished to close the gates and make America great again. "There's no small irony that the ancestors of some of the most prominent voices in the immigration debate," commented historian Chris Klein, "spoke with an Irish brogue, because few groups proved to be as challenging to assimilate into the fabric of American life as the Irish." If anything, the earlier "conversations" were more impassioned. Many "old stock" Americans truly believed that America's genetic destiny and democratic character were imperiled by unwashed and unassimilable hordes. Theodore Roosevelt, among others, worried that the birthrates of the new immigrants would crowd out old stock Americans. Demographics is destiny.

The *Washington Post*, commenting on Rep. King's remarks, wrote, "But in one small way, King was on to something: Immigration *does* change a nation's culture. It has altered America's identity, and the transformation has been stressful."[78]

Many Americans compare the incessant debates over immigration to *Groundhog* Day, the popular 1990s fantasy comedy. The conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer wrote in 2011 that he believed "that most Americans would be quite willing to regularize and legalize the current millions of illegal immigrants if they were convinced that this was the last such cohort." A 2019 poll reveals how evenly divided Americans remain over the future of a majority nonwhite nation. Almost half of white Americans feared a majority-minority future, as well as a quarter of Hispanics and forty percent of blacks.[79]

Immigration has always been a polarizing issue. Studies of previous generations of immigrants may have relevance for today's foreign born. Powerful external forces—upward and geographic mobility, new freedoms, economic prosperity, assimilation and acculturation, the American public-school system, work, and World War II—profoundly shaped new men and women who left the Old Country for a New Land after 1890. Scholars disagree over levels of assimilation and even acculturation. In the 1950s, historian Oscar Handlin argued that immigrants not merely left the Old World but were "uprooted" by the searing ordeal. The very act of immigration created new men and women. Later scholars insisted that the melting pot was pure myth and propaganda, that deep-seated, vibrant, ethnic values survived for generations.[80] Observing future immigrant waves in Florida, in its southeastern environs and elsewhere in the Sunshine State, will pose great challenges and opportunities for new generations of scholars and Floridians.

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In 1918, Miamians were both encouraged and expected to do their part to win World War I. Here, Red Cross nurses, businessmen, Boy Scouts, and officials pose in front of a Red Cross billboard on the grounds of the Halcyon Hotel. Influenza would all too soon test the mettle of the Red Cross and these nurses. Gift of Kay Pancoast. HistoryMiami Museum, 1974-008-24.



"For God's Sake, Hurry" the original painting for the billboard shown above. Gift of Dorothea Roach. HistoryMiami Museum, x-1707-1.

An Attack of Influenza

Miami and the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of October 1918

Michele L. Zakis

"(T)he city is yet in its youth with all the future before it," opined the *Miami City Directory* in 1918.[1] Though their city was less than a quarter-century old, the residents of Miami were much like those of any American city at the outset of October 1918. Optimism was in the air. As the month began, business interests, including the Bank of Bay Biscayne, Burdine and Quarterman, the Miami Coca-Cola Bottling Company, the Sewell Brothers, and John Seybold, sponsored a full-page advertisement entitled "Opportunity," which proclaimed, in part, "The Golden Gate of Opportunity has been flung wide open to all who will deserve Success."[2] But this opportunity came at a cost. As the United States and its allies closed in on victory against Europe's Central Powers, *The Miami Herald*'s headlines detailed war efforts and encouraged patriotism. In space contributed "to winning the war" by the Fidelity Bank and Trust Company and accompanied by a list of casualties, William D. Nesbit's essay "Yanks" advised that "every time you buy a Liberty Bond you put a newer and higher courage in the hearts of all our boys."[3]

Miamians were both encouraged and expected to do their part. The Dade County Liberty Loan Committee proclaimed that Friday, October 4, 1918, "will be known as the War Relic Day of the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive," and announced the arrival of a "special government train" at Sixth Street and the Boulevard during what would be observed as a citywide holiday.[4]

While efforts were focused on winning the war, there was still time for leisure and comfortable living in Miami. "With practically the same cast you saw in *The Birth of a Nation*," D. W. Griffith's *The Great Love* was showing at The Paramount Theater. Billed as a "snappy musical show" that was sure to please, *Too Many Sweethearts* was airing at the Airdrome. Homestyle cooking was on the menu at James McLaughlin's New Haven Restaurant.[5] To provide appropriate attire for a night on the town, the Sewell Brothers' store on Twelfth Street advertised "$50,000 Worth of Merchandise," including shoes, hats, shirts, clothing, and furnishings that could be purchased for "cut prices."[6] For those choosing to dine at home, Palm Grocery on Avenue D offered apples for six cents a pound and fresh eggs for seventy-five cents per dozen. On Avenue J, Pure Food Grocery, Inc., offered a ten-ounce bottle of catsup for eighteen cents and a medium jar of Van Camp's Peanut Butter for less than a quarter.[7]

City leaders, however, made a point of enumerating the ways in which Miami differed from all other locales. While describing the city's location in its 1918 *Miami City Directory*, publishers R. L. Polk and Company exclaimed that, "(a) more fortunate location as to natural beauty could scarcely be imagined." With its "soft air, gorgeous foliage, and rich vegetation," Miami possessed all the benefits of the tropics while "escaping the severe heat and enervating lassitude in the realms to the south." Legislation had been passed to drain the Florida Everglades and cultivate the area for agricultural purposes, an act that would enhance Miami's reputation as "the center and market for an agricultural empire."[8]

Along with "an elaborate sanitary and storm sewer system," the area's climate and natural resources supported its reputation as a healthy environment in which to live or vacation.[9] Just twenty-two years earlier, Henry Flagler brought

his Florida East Coast Railway Company south and created a vacation Mecca for wealthy Northern tourists. By 1918, the railroad maintained stops from Jacksonville to Key West, transporting tourists, military personnel, and residents throughout the state. A thriving tourism industry supported the young city's economic survival, but it also came with drawbacks. In their city directory, R. L. Polk and Company acknowledged the difficulty of securing information from seasonal residents and cited a "scarcity of competent help" to support the needs of the growing city. This assertion is supported by listings from their own publication. At press time, the directory listed but one hospital, two sanitariums, twenty-eight physicians, six osteopaths, and fifteen nurses to serve Miami's estimated population of 29,353 permanent residents. More than four pages of the directory, however, were needed to document the city's one-hundred and eight real estate companies and fourteen property rental agents.[10]

World War I brought military encampments at Curtiss Field near the Miami River, the Dinner Key Naval Air Station, and Chapman Field in South Dade. Hailing from cities and towns across the nation, the young men housed within these camps prepared for deployment to the fighting fields of Europe. Miamians showed their appreciation by hosting dances and picnics for military personnel, who responded by attending these events in droves.

Large and small, the minutiae of everyday life served as a backdrop for what, upon later examination, would prove the much greater drama of 1918. Abetted by the wartime migration of troops and civilians, from March to July, an influenza epidemic swept the globe, claiming tens of thousands of lives.[11] Contact between individuals who would not, under ordinary circumstances, interact, led to a rapid spread of the disease.[12] To protect morale and disguise potential vulner-

abilities, nations on both sides of the Great War censored news about the epidemic.[13] Because initial reports of the outbreak came from Spain, a nation not actively engaged in the war and, therefore, more forthcoming with its news reports, the disease was dubbed *Spanish Influenza*, a misnomer since, in all likelihood, it originated in China.[14]

By late August, the influenza virus had mutated.[15] Spanish Influenza's second wave was first detected among naval personnel at Boston's Commonwealth Pier.[16] October would prove especially deadly. That month, the deadliest in United States history, the pandemic claimed an estimated 195,000 American lives.[17] During the week of October 23, alone, influenza killed 21,000 Americans in seven days, the highest weekly number of deaths from any cause ever recorded in the nation.[18]

Sometimes referred to as the *Spanish Lady,* and, owing to the color its oxygen-deprived victims' skin took on, *purple death*, the pandemic struck members of the armed services earlier and more severely than it did the civilian population.[19] It is estimated that as many as forty percent of all United States naval personnel had the flu at some point in 1918.[20] Most influenza outbreaks are particularly deadly among the very young and the very old. While the 1918 epidemic claimed a number of victims from these categories, it also killed an inordinate number of otherwise robust young adults between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-nine.[21] This third category of victims overlapped perfectly with the age range of America's fighting forces. Coupled with their confinement to crowded military encampments and troop transport ships, the intercontinental mixing of soldiers and influenza strains proved extremely dangerous.[22]

Sweeping from coast to coast, continent to continent,

the 1918 influenza outbreak was a pandemic of epic proportions. In eighteen months, approximately 500 million people, worldwide, would be afflicted with the disease. Between 50 to 100 million people would die.[23] No other war, famine, or disease has claimed as many lives in as short a period of time.[24] Though its impact was devastating, records of the outbreak are lacking, most narratives being gleaned from public health records and daily newspapers.[25] These sources reveal several common reactions to the epidemic. Many community leaders denied the presence of a threat until it was irrefutable; large, war-related gatherings continued, uninterrupted; authorities failed to report early incidences of the disease; and, at the peak of the outbreak, many municipalities were unable to maintain even the most basic of public services.[26] Though different from other cities in many aspects, Miami would prove much the same in its reaction to the Spanish influenza epidemic.

Like other Americans, Miamians did not grasp the gravity of the pandemic until they experienced it firsthand. On October 9, just a week before the epidemic's deadliest day, *The Miami Herald* assured readers that "(a)bove all, there is not the slightest reason for getting excited over the situation, which is not even grave. The disease will speedily disappear, if the people will use the most ordinary precautions and will take care of themselves, as they ought to do at all times."[27] City Health Officer Dr. John W. Shisler assured residents that there was a "low percentage of pneumonia cases among the influenza cases among civilians."[28] Just thirty-one at the time of the outbreak, Shisler, a native of Richwood, Ohio, and a graduate of the University of Chicago, would become a major force in disseminating information and maintaining order throughout the epidemic.

By the following day, however, *The Herald's* tone had

changed. When reporting the need for trained nurses, the paper referred to the outbreak as "the epidemic."[29] Thus began what must have felt like a roller coaster ride of news coverage. An October 11 *Herald* account referred to the situation as "a near epidemic"; just twenty-four hours later, the journal reported that influenza was "sweeping through this city."[30] It was not until October 16, the epidemic's deadliest day in Florida, that *The Herald* acknowledged the presence of a pandemic.[31] That same day, the paper published a circular from the nation's Division of Sanitation. This document provided a comprehensive overview of the Spanish influenza outbreak, listed purported causes, and discussed the means for transmitting, avoiding, and treating the disease.[32]

Even reports on the outbreak's decline were confusing and contradictory. On October 16, *Herald* readers were advised that the epidemic was "most surely on the wane."[33] In the paper's next edition, that reassurance was amended when *The Herald* conceded that "perhaps it is too soon to say positively that Miami's influenza wave has broken."[34]

Word from Miami's medical authorities was equally confusing. At an October 18 meeting, members of the Dade County Medical Society stated that the influenza epidemic was still critical.[35] By October 20, Dr. Shisler announced that the epidemic had reached its crest. Dr. H. G. Babcock, President of the City Board of Health, agreed, as did Drs. James M. Jackson and John L. North. The number of potentially lethal pneumonia cases, however, was said to be increasing.[36] It would not be until October 29, with fourteen out of eighteen of the city's physicians reporting a decline in their caseloads, that the influenza epidemic truly appeared to be on the wane in Miami. The four physicians who did not make reports, it was learned, were, themselves, ill with influenza.[37]

Closely related to a community's inability to recognize the threat of influenza was its failure to report early cases. Many boards of health did not make influenza a reportable disease until the fall wave was well underway. In 1918, the U. S. Census Bureau did not receive transcriptions of death certificates from Florida. For this reason, the number of Floridians who died during the pandemic can only be estimated.[38] To its credit, Miami's City Board of Health did ask physicians to report new cases of influenza on a daily basis.[39] And, to their credit, Miami's physicians tried to comply but, faced with mounting caseloads, they were often unable to keep up with the task of filing reports. On October 11, ten of the city's eighteen physicians provided updates.[40] The following day, only five physicians filed reports.[41] By October 14, Dr. Shisler stated that physicians were too busy to compile reports and that the epidemic showed no signs of abating.[42]

It was not until the epidemic's second wave was ebbing that *The Herald* reported statistics from Dade County's outlying areas. In Lemon City, Dr. John G. DuPuis stated that he had treated several hundred influenza cases during the epidemic. Dr. Mary Freeman shared that she cared for 300 cases throughout South Dade. In Homestead, a community that did not see its first influenza-related death until October 18, when Japhus Rolle, a 36-year-old black man, succumbed to the disease, Dr. J. B. Tower said he had treated 250 cases and had assisted in establishing a hospital for his city's black patients.[43] Dr. Tower, himself, was stricken with the disease but recovered and was able to resume providing care in his community.[44]

Despite muddled whispers of an epidemic, early October found many Miamians fully engaged in supporting America's war efforts. With "ample space … arranged for the accommodation of the entire community" and the following

Friday afternoon being "reserved as a holiday in this city," the October 2 *Herald* informed Miamians of their patriotic duty to participate in the War Relic Day of the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive. It was informing them of their patriotic duty. The arrival of a "special Government train" would be accompanied by speeches, musical performances, and airplanes that would "bombard the city with Liberty Loan literature." Miamians were asked to "help swell the crowd."[45]

In 1918, the United States lacked a uniform policy for limiting contact in public gathering places. With no central authority to create and enforce rules, each community acted on its own. On October 4, the same day as Miami's War Relic Train assembly, U. S. Surgeon General Rupert Blue recommended closing all public gathering places.[46] This recommendation did not discourage Dade County's Liberty Loan Committee from conducting their October 5 meeting in the Central School auditorium. "Our boys are still dying in France, giving up the last drop of their life's blood for all of us who stay at home," the committee's Bulletin Number 9 admonished. "How far are you willing to go for them?"[47]

Some individuals and agencies were, however, taking heed of the Surgeon General's advice. On October 2, City Physician John W. North advised Miamians to avoid public gatherings. Children who might be suffering from influenza, he warned, should be kept home from school.[48] Two days later, *The Herald* announced that Coconut Grove's community dance and other weekly entertainment for servicemen had been postponed. A Baptist social was postponed "on account of the prevalence of Spanish influenza in the camps" and, because she was suffering from influenza, Mrs. Emmett McDonald was forced to cancel her Sunday school class picnic.[49]

By October 7, local authorities appeared to be heeding the Surgeon General's advice. After consulting with the State Board of Health, Dr. H. G. Babcock, Chairman of the City Board of Health, ordered schools, theaters, dance halls, and other places of amusement closed. No request was made to close church or lodge gatherings, though many were expected to close voluntarily.[50] The following day, members of the city's ministerial association voted to close local churches the following Sunday and to close all church services for the remainder of the week. As of October 14, the only church that remained open was St. Agnes Episcopal Church with Archdeacon Phillip S. Irwin, the church's pastor, stating that there was a need for church services during the epidemic.[51] Despite an urgent push to secure funds for the war effort, Dade County's Liberty Loan Committee postponed a meeting scheduled for the upcoming weekend.[52] Miamians, it appeared, were hearing the message and taking it seriously.

Soon, they would have no choice. On October 9, Dr. Shisler issued the order to close "all churches, theaters, schools, the Y. M. C. A., lodges, dance halls, while forbidding any mass meetings." This order included a ban on weddings and funerals.[53] Dr. Shisler's order did not prevent all gatherings from taking place. On October 11, Alice Frederick and E. McIvor Law were married in what was described as "a simple ceremony" at Trinity Episcopal Church. Because of the ban on public gatherings, only the wedding party was permitted inside the church.[54] When Edith Brickell, a Miami pioneer and a scion of the fabled land-rich family, succumbed to influenza, her funeral was private. John W. Watson, John B. Reilly, John Sewell, J. Gilman, Dr. James M. Jackson, and J. H. Cheatham were, however, on hand to serve as pallbearers.[55]

Miami's epidemic did not preclude its residents' need for

food and other essential supplies. Nonetheless, on October 12, the City Board of Health ordered the closing of all stores and restaurants. Only drug stores were exempted from this mandate. Because many people had been unable to purchase food, grocery stores and meat markets were allowed to open for several hours on October 13, and restaurants could continue operations, though people were urged to eat at home. Dr. Shisler stated that "soft drink places and soda fountains" could reopen on October 14, after glasses and dishes had been sanitized.[56] Effective sanitation practices were believed to be tantamount to success in combatting influenza, for, as Dr. Shisler advised, "an unsanitary glass is one of the greatest mediums for the spread of disease."[57]

As the epidemic wore on, Dr. Shisler would do his best to maintain order, but his decisions would not go unopposed. An October 11 *Herald* editorial questioned the benefit of cancelling school and closing churches and movie theaters when children were permitted to play together and young people continued to gather with their friends.[58] This argument was not unfounded, as schools in New York City and Chicago remained open throughout the epidemic.[59] On October 26, Clifton A. Sawyer, in a letter to the editor, suggested that a quarantine be imposed on homes in which someone was suffering from influenza and questioned why Dr. Shisler had not mentioned the idea.[60]

Nor were the orders always easy to understand. Much like reports of the epidemic's severity, the rules governing business hours wavered from day to day. After one night of curtailed services, regular hours resumed at Ye Wayside Inn on October 13 and many Miamians ventured to the restaurant for Sunday dinner.[61] On October 19, all mercantile establishments, with the exception of drug stores, were ordered to close at 6:00 p.m. While grocery stores and meat

markets could remain open until 7:00 p.m., soda fountains and soft drink stands had to cease operations at 6:00 p.m. and remain closed on October 20. Restaurants were not required to close early but were asked to avoid the crowding of patrons at tables and lunch counters. Schools and theaters had yet to reopen.[62]

"With the influenza keeping people off the streets (and) with a lightless night and a heavy rain," the October 17 *Herald* reported, "Miami fully lived up to the statement of a disgusted sailor, on Tuesday night, that this was some dull town."[63] Its social events cancelled and its amusement venues shuttered, even the normally bustling tourist town of Miami could not deny this assessment.

With club meetings cancelled and dining out discouraged, Miamians found other ways to socialize. Despite admonitions to stay at home, the October 13 edition of the *Herald* reported that "Misses Violet Eberhart, Alberta Eberhart and Alice Carrier were guests of Mrs. Frank Wheeler on Wednesday afternoon."[64] On October 28, *The Herald* reported that Miss Carrier was ill with influenza.[65] Bending the board of health's rules was so common that the Red Cross and Miami health officials urged women to refrain from making social calls, as the women were at risk of carrying influenza from affected individuals to healthy ones.[66]

Travel outside the city was affected, as well. An October 23 advertisement in the *Herald* reported that "The citizens of Rock Harbor, Fla., ask the people of Miami and the intermediate stations not to get off trains at said station on account of Spanish influenza."[67] Fearing the spread of contagions, Rock Harbor had, in effect, voluntarily cut itself off from the world.

By the end of the month, regular hours were resuming, but authorities warned merchants to prevent crowds

from gathering in their stores and cautioned against "loafing about." Police officers and Boy Scouts were detailed to enforce these rules.[68] On October 29, *The Herald* reported that, should conditions continue to improve, the city hoped to reopen churches, theaters, and soda fountains by the following week.[69] This prediction held true and, by the beginning of November, the lights went on in local theaters and churches resumed services. On Monday, November 4, school children returned to class for the first time in almost a month.

Enmeshed in a world war, Miami's military operations were impacted by postponements and cancellations. Following the advice of Dr. James M. Jackson, Battalion Surgeon, the Dade County Guard cancelled an assembly, parade, and drills planned for the weekend of October 12-13. Drills had to take place in "open air," meetings, had to be held outdoors and "(n)o man feeling indisposed should be allowed to attend and must be excused accordingly."[70] On October 22, a contingent of ten men left Miami for basic training in Key West. Because of the influenza epidemic, this was the first draft contingent to leave Miami in several weeks, a phenomenon almost unheard of during wartime.[71]

The greatest impact of a community's failure to respond to the influenza crisis was its inability to maintain even the most basic of public services. No stranger to natural disaster and disease, Miami was, nevertheless, unprepared for the challenges it would endure in October 1918.

Across the nation, hospitals faced a shortage of nurses and supplies.[72] On October 2, *The Herald* published a call for trained nurses willing to assist in the fight against influenza at military encampments in other parts the United States.[73] Locally, Mrs. Mary E. M. Carter was appointed

chairman of the Red Cross' Committee on Nursing. Responsible for organizing the United States' hospital system in the Philippine Islands, Mrs. Carter was a graduate of New York City's Bellevue Hospital and, according to *The Herald*, was employed by the Rockefeller Foundation to study infantile paralysis in that city.[74] On October 5, all Miami women with nursing training were instructed to contact Mrs. Carter, as, according to *The Herald*, "(t)he present epidemic of Spanish influenza and pneumonia in cantonments and in civil life is straining the number of women nurses available." Black women with nursing experience were asked to report to the community health center located at Fourth Street and Avenue G.[75]

Their schools closed, furloughed teachers answered the call for volunteers until Director A. Leight Monroe, Superintendent of Schools, asked them to refrain from serving as nurses unless directly called upon to do so by local health authorities. Dr. Monroe feared that, after being exposed to influenza, teachers would not be able to return to work when schools reopened.[76] By October 19, the superintendent rescinded his directive, stating, "I see no reason why the teachers should not offer their services in this emergency. It will probably be some time before the schools can be reopened." Teachers were urged to volunteer their services "at once." On the same day, Mrs. Carter at the Red Cross declared the shortage of nurses "a question of life or death."[77] To meet the demand, the Red Cross began accepting male volunteers and established a training school for them.[78] With their shows at the Airdrome cancelled because of the epidemic, members of Mack's Musical Review answered the call to volunteer, as well.[79]



Miami City Hospital, the Alamo, circa 1918. Claude C. Matlack, photographer. Matlack Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, C45.

With its only hospital filled to capacity, city leaders sought ways to care for an ever-increasing number of critically ill patients. Located approximately two miles from Miami's center, City Hospital was less than a year old at the onset of the influenza epidemic.[80] City Physician North declared that no new patients would be admitted to City Hospital until the nursing shortage had been resolved and Dr. Shisler advised that, if necessary, he would close all Miami businesses in order to secure the manpower needed for fighting the epidemic.[81] An emergency hospital with space for 100 patients was established at First Street and Avenue D.[82] Back at City Hospital, tents were erected to accommodate the overflow. Their quarters converted into sick bays, hospital workers were forced to sleep outdoors.[83]

The strain on hospital workers took its toll. After receiving reports that patients from local military encampments were not receiving adequate care at City Hospital, City Auditor Hoffpauir inspected the hospital and found that its matron, Lilla B. Harley, and all but one of the nurses were stricken with influenza. Volunteer nurses, local women with little or no nursing experience, and orderlies were overseeing patient care. Hoffpauir promised public assistance to the greatest degree possible.[84] On October 14, *The Herald* reported that Miss Harley was in "very critical condition."[85] She would recover, but at least two trained nurses, City Hospital's Beatrice Horne and Bay View Sanitarium's Alice Keeler, succumbed to the disease.

Adding to the chaos and much to the surprise of local authorities, on October 11, health officials from the Dinner Key Naval Air Station commandeered City Hospital. Naval personnel stated that civilian patients could remain in the hospital and receive care from private physicians, but it did not comment on whether new civilian cases would be accepted. Dr. Shisler stated that, as Miami had financed the hospital to ensure medical assistance for its residents, it was wrong for naval authorities to take charge and refuse civilian patients. He suggested that the navy could have commandeered a hotel for use as a hospital.[86] By October 13, civilian authorities regained control of City Hospital, but naval personnel retained command over a portion of the facility.[87]

To compound matters, on October 26, the same day it issued a call for new volunteers, due to the fact that "women who volunteered early in the epidemic (were) worn out and must be relieved," the Red Cross was addressing a new problem. On October 13, it was reported that volunteer nurses were needed to care for the civilian population. In many households, every family member was ill and there was no

one to care for them.[88] Within two weeks, Red Cross offices were receiving requests for nursing services from individuals who were healthy but did not want to care for sick family members for fear of contracting influenza. In a statement printed by *The Herald*, the Red Cross urged all families to care for their own patients.[89]



Christian Hospital opened soon after the epidemic to serve African Americans. This view probably depicts the dedication ceremony. Hicks Studio, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-2822.

Without a hospital of its own, the situation was even more dire in Miami's black community. To fill this gap, a resident of nearby Highland Park offered to provide a house in that neighborhood for use as a hospital for black influenza patients. A number of residents complained to Dr. Shisler, who informed them that, if they did not want the Highland Park residence to be used by the black community, they would have to find an alternate location for the proposed hospital. Within twenty minutes, the complainants had lo-

cated an alternate location and turned it over to the health department.[90] A 25-room temporary hospital was donated by D. A. Dorsey, while 11th Circuit Judge H. Pierre Branning donated funds to pay a week's salary for two black nurses.[91] Following the influenza epidemic, members of the black community sought to establish a permanent hospital.[92] In 1920, the Christian Hospital opened at 1218 N. W. First Place. The hospital was destroyed by fire, but rebuilt, in the same location.[93]

Like their counterparts across the nation, Miami's socialites responded to the community's cries for help. Assisted by Maude Wallace and Cornelia Leffler, Lucy Cushman took control of the diet kitchen at Coconut Grove's Hopkins School, which was serving as an emergency hospital for personnel from the Dinner Key Naval Air Station.[94] In an October 16 interview, the hospital's commanding officer joked that, with the epidemic supposedly on the decline, he feared losing his job and having to, once again, eat "regular chow."[95]

After City Auditor Hoffpauir found the City Hospital in disarray, Mrs. John Sewell, wife of Miami's third mayor, promised to volunteer at the hospital as long as needed. Sarah Ament Dodson took charge of the hospital kitchen. Mrs. W. N. Hull, Mrs. Bain, and other Miami women volunteered under the guidance of the few trained nurses still available.[96] Mrs. Sewell also proved instrumental in securing supplies for the temporary hospital on First Street and Avenue D and for establishing a nursery for children whose parents were too ill to care for them.[97]



Dinner Key Naval Air Station quarantine hospital, 1918. Gift of William Bordeaux. HistoryMiami Museum, 1983-074-12.

Along with a shortage of manpower, Miamians faced a scarcity of supplies and funds for supporting the fight against influenza. Drug stores were unable to meet the demand placed upon them. There was a dearth of medication and atomizers.[98] Despite this shortfall, Dr. Shisler asked drug store operators to create an agreement to ensure that at least one store was open throughout each night.[99] As the epidemic worsened, some manufacturers were unable to keep up with the demand for their products. In an advertisement, the makers of Vicks' VapoRub warned of potential shortages but offered druggists booklets containing information about Spanish influenza.[100]

Hospitals lacked even the most basic supplies needed to ensure adequate patient care. During his visit to City Hospital, City Auditor Hoffpauir found a need for blankets and sleeping garments. Upon learning of Hoffpauir's findings, Mrs. Sewell set about collecting the needed items.[101] The epidemic may have been coming to a close, but, at the end of October, Patriotic League No. 7 was still making sleeping garments for children at the emergency hospital.[102]

When an emergency hospital for black patients opened at the Crescent Hotel, a call went out for donations of hand towels, disinfectants, alcohol, turpentine, surgical gauze, bed pans, urinals, malted milk, grape juice, wash basins, water pitchers, tin trays, fly paper, fresh eggs, tea towels, ice, Ivory Soap Powder, lye, blankets, and pillow cases.[103] There may have been a building to house patients, but there were no supplies for meeting their needs.

For those convalescing at home, obtaining and preparing food proved a challenge. On October 13, a soup kitchen opened at Trinity M. E. Church. Those in need of food could secure chicken soup and broth by sending a covered

pitcher or glass jar to the kitchen. Anyone who could not send a container was advised to telephone the pastor, Rev. J. M. Gross, for assistance.[104] To supplement patients' meals, the Red Cross provided the soup kitchen with a supply of ice cream.[105] Supported by donations, by month's end, the church was serving up chicken soup, beef broth, vegetable soup, broiled chicken on toast, cup custards, baked apples, and gelatin to anyone in need.[106] While, at mid-month, it appeared that the church was meeting the dietary needs of Miami's influenza victims, the Woman's Club was prepared to open a soup kitchen at their club building on Twelfth Street should the demand for food increase.[107]

The influenza outbreak placed a tremendous strain on Miami's economic resources. On October 22, at a special meeting, the Miami City Council, appropriated $10,000 to be used in combatting the epidemic. The relief fund would be administered by a committee of five citizens: Mayor J. W. Watson, Acting Finance Commissioner J. W. Claussen, President of Council J. W. Blackmon, Judge H. Pierre Branning, and Attorney F. B. Shutts. Funds to support the appropriation would be secured from the forthcoming collection of taxes. County commissioners promised to appropriate funds for fighting the epidemic, as well. Relief monies would support efforts at City Hospital and the two auxiliary hospitals.[108] Despite promises of increased funding, on October 26, the Women's Relief Association stated that, without additional financial support, their auxiliary hospital and children's home were in danger of closing.[109]

As they had in fighting America's enemies in Europe, through acts large and small, Miamians did their part in the war against influenza. Each day, female employees from the E. B. Douglas Company Store donated forty newspapers to servicemen suffering from influenza.[110] When a truck donated by

the Railey-Milam Company broke down while transporting patients and supplies, the Miami Grocery Company stepped in to provide another vehicle.[111] Overwhelmed by calls from frantic influenza patients and their families, the South Atlantic Telephone and Telegraph Company gently reminded customers to "(k)eep the wires clear for those who must use them" and to avoid speaking harshly in telephone conversations.[112] And, though not all hardships were avoidable, Miamians did their best to greet the adversity with humor. After the Southern Express Company suspended shipment of liquor from Tampa to Miami, *The Herald* quipped, "Whiskey may, possibly, be good to use in influenza cases—but not the Tampa brand."[113]

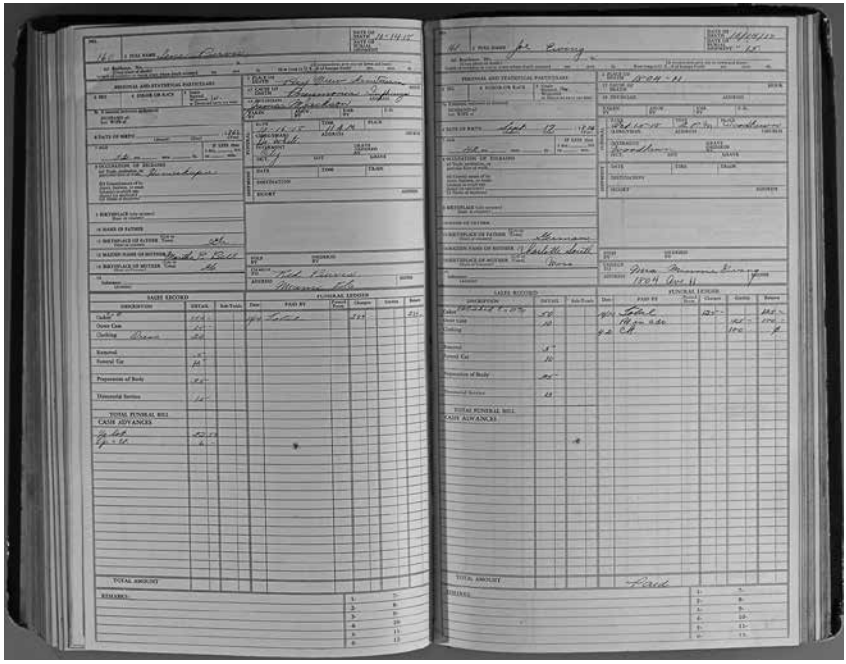
As residents strove to conquer the epidemic and keep their wits intact, they found themselves confronted with rumors and fallacies that, if allowed to run rampant, could prove dangerous to the community's health and well-being. Throughout the influenza epidemic, researchers and physicians grappled with identifying safe and effective treatments for the disease. Nurses were advised to wear gauze masks or helmets and told to separate patients with gauze curtains, precautions now known to be largely ineffective, as they do not prevent the transmission of small, airborne contaminants.[114] While it was true that anyone experiencing fever and muscle pain should rest and contact a physician, the suggestion that there "need be no dangerous after results if the patient will use a little common sense" was unfounded.[115] It took more than common sense to fight influenza and the oftentimes accompanying pneumonia. University of Pennsylvania bacteriologist Henry F. Smith advised readers to treat influenza with a twice daily salt water gargle, fresh air, a hot foot bath, hot lemonade, quinine, and bed rest.[116] The Dade County Medical Society expanded upon this advice by

instructing anyone with cold symptoms to take a light laxative.[117] Without an adequate understanding of the disease, even the most highly regarded advice could bring adverse results.

"People should refrain from dwelling too much on the matter, and above all should not spread rumors as to the number of cases of influenza and the number of resultant deaths. A ridiculous rumor has been going around the city that there have been fifty deaths in this city from influenza, and that the doctors and newspapers are suppressing the news so that there will be no panic."[118] *The Herald's* admonition to avoid gossip did little to quell widespread panic. The paper reinforced its call for accuracy by printing daily reports detailing conditions at the city's hospitals, updates from the Red Cross, and the steadily rising death toll. Even this strict attention to detail did not prevent some slip-ups. Under a headline that read "Combs Is Not Dead," *The Herald* shared, "A report was in circulation yesterday that W. H. Combs, of the undertaking firm by that name, had died of influenza. When seen last night Mr. Combs said he was almost dead from overwork and loss of sleep, but he did not have the influenza, and had not thought of dying. One of his friends on hearing the rumor went so far as to order a wreath of flowers for his funeral."[119] Combs, a North Carolina native who grew up in Central Florida and arrived in Miami at the turn of the century, directed the funerals of many of Miami's influenza victims, and his name appeared frequently in *The Herald's* October obituary columns.

Perhaps the most poignant reminder of the influenza epidemic's impact on Miami and its residents, these obituaries illustrate the diversity among Miami's victims. Wealthy and poor. Young and old. Black and white. No group was spared, but the cause of death remained the same: pneumonia, follow-

ing an attack of influenza. Ivan S. Jaudon, manager of the Consolidated Fish Company left an estate valued at $35,000 but no will. Just thirty-two years of age, Jaudon wasn't prepared to die.[120] Far from his Salt Lake City home, Nicholas V. Shishman died at the county tubercular hospital. His belongings indicated he was an actor or employed by a theatrical company.[121] Quartermaster Leonidas M. Estill was well known in Miami, having commanded the guard that accompanied funerals. Twenty-one years old and stationed at the Dinner Key Naval Air Station, Estill was returned to his home state of Oklahoma for burial.[122]



One of Miami's influenza casualties, housekeeper Lena Purves, died of pneumonia on October 14, 1918, and was buried in the Miami City Cemetery. This entry, on the left page, in a Combs Funeral Home journal typifies the October 1918 entries. Funeral Home Record [for] 1916-[1917]-[1918]. Kolski-Combs Funeral Home Records, HistoryMiami Museum, 2000-510. Gift of Patricia Kolski.

And then there were the children. Gardener Butler, age one. James Roberson, age two. Harold Saunders, age thirteen. All are interred in Miami's City Cemetery. Just three days old, a child identified only as Sealey Infant, died along with three other family members. The Sealeys were not the only local family decimated by influenza. Edward Kalb, 16, came to West Palm Beach to live with his sister and attend high school. Stricken with influenza, he was brought to Miami's City Hospital, where he died. Within ten days, two of Edward's sisters, twenty-two-year-old Rose Greenberg and twenty-eight year-old Sarah Ginsberg, would die as well. With "but one additional death" occurring the previous day, by October 29, at least eighty-seven Miamians had succumbed to influenza. While more were certain to follow, America's deadliest month had come to a close.[123]



Ivan S. Jaudon died of influenza, as did many other Miami residents. This studio portrait, 1913. James F. Jaudon papers, HistoryMiami Museum, x-055-112.

The dark month of October behind it, Miami rebounded quickly. On November 1, theaters reopened. With the cast of Mack's Musical Review returning to their role as entertainers, the Airdrome proclaimed, "Good-bye 'Flu'—Hello Friends." For thirty cents, adults could watch moving pictures and a musical comedy at the Hippodrome, and the Fotosho announced it would "reopen with its usual run of high class pictures.[124] Elbre's Pharmacy was back in business, completely renovated with "sanitary features of perfect sterilization" and Stewart's Orchestra performed for dancers at Elser's Pier.[125] At the Halcyon Hotel, preparations were being made for the upcoming tourist season. The hotel's southern and eastern verandas were being enclosed and the basement was being remodeled. Based on existing reservations, it was believed that the hotel would be filled within weeks of reopening in mid-November.[126]

For those wishing to purchase food, Avenue D's White House Grocery offered Lowney's Cocoa at twenty-five cents a can, grape juice for fifty cents a quart and two packages of Kellogg's Corn Flakes for a quarter. Hoping to lure influenza-weary customers, the New Haven Restaurant claimed to have received a "medal for cleanliness."[127]

Even Halloween celebrations went on, undeterred, with the November 1 *Herald* reporting many "parties and dances, and there were the time-honored pranks of changed gates and signs."[128] No mention was made of Miami's influenza epidemic or the ensuing bans on public gatherings and events.



World War I ended, as did Miami's flu epidemic, in November 1918. Naval officers and sailors from the Dinner Key Naval Air Station paraded on 12th Street (Flagler Street), as part of Miami's celebration of the signing of the Armistice. Claude Matlack, photographer. Matlack Collection, HistoryMiami, 231-36.

Like the rest of the nation, Miami and its residents were greatly impacted by 1918's fall influenza epidemic. Overwhelmed by the number of sick and dying, the City of Miami's infrastructure was shaken but did not falter. Doctors, nurses, community leaders, and everyday citizens put their own health at risk to care for their neighbors. As they had done in the past and would do in the future, Miamians faced an extreme crisis with wit and determination. October faded into November and, after an attack of influenza, Miamians were back on their feet.

Endnotes

1 *Miami City Directory*, R. L. Polk & Co., 1918, 33.

2 *The Miami Herald*, October 1, 1918, 7.

3 *The Miami Herald*, October 1, 1918, 6.

4 "Merchants to Close Stores Friday P. M.," *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 1918, 1.

5 *The Miami Herald*, October 5, 1918, 2.

6 *The Miami Herald*, October 1, 1918, 8.

7 The city's streets were renumbered and renamed in the fall of 1920 by action of the Miami City Council. The most important thoroughfares in early Miami were Avenue D and Twelfth Street, which ran perpendicular to each other. Since 1920, they are known, respectively, as Miami Avenue and Flagler Street. *The Miami Herald*, October 5, 1918, 7.

8 *Miami City Directory*, R. L. Polk & Co., 1918, 33.

9 *Miami City Directory*, R. L. Polk & Co., 1918, 41.

10 *Miami City Directory*, R. L. Polk & Co., 1918.

11 Alfred W. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28.

12 Virginia Aronson, *Great Disasters, Reforms and Ramifications: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2000), 29.

13 Aronson, *Great Disasters, Reforms and Ramifications*, 46.

14 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 26.

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16 Ibid, 57.

17 Robert Kenner (Producer), *American Experience: Influenza 1918*, (United States: PBS Home Video, 1998).

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20 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 204.

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22 Ibid, 30.

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28 "Influenza is Waning Here," *The Miami Herald*, October 9, 1918, 1.

29 "Urgent Demand for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1918, 1.

30 "Sustain the Board," *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1918, 4; & "Disease Carriers," *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1918, 4.

31 "Epidemic Seems to be Abating," *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1918, 1.

32 "Influenza," *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1918, 3.

33 "Situation Well in Hand at the Miami Naval Air Station," *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1918, 3.

34 "Just Comment," *The Miami Herald*, October 17, 1918, 4.

35 "County Doctors Probe Epidemic," *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 1918, 2.

36 "Epidemic Reaches Crest, Doctors Say," *The Miami Herald*, October 21, 1918, 1.

37 "Epidemic Rapidly is Abating in Miami the Physicians Say," *The Miami Herald*, October 30, 1918, 1.

38 Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic*, 204.

39 "Influenza is Waning Here," *The Miami Herald*, October 9, 1918, 1.

40 "Naval Authorities Take Over Hospital for Men in Service," *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1918, 1.

41 "Red Cross Calls for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 1918, 1.

42 "Influenza Epidemic Continues in Miami; More Nurses Needed," *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 1918, 2.

43 "Influenza is Decreasing in Dade County," *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 1918, 1.

44 "Homestead," *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1918, 8.

45 "Bulletin No. 6," *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 1918, 1.

46 Marrin, *Very, Very, Very Dreadful*, 89-90.

47 "Bulletin No. 9," *The Miami Herald*, October 5, 1918, 1.

48 "Miami Asked for Aid to Fight Influenza," *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 1918, 3.

49 "People and Events," *The Miami Herald*, October 4, 1918, 3.

50 "City Health Board Orders Schools and Theaters Closed," *The Miami Herald*, October 8, 1918, 2.

51 "Urgent Need for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1918, 2. Paul S. George, "Policing Miami's Black Community, 1896-1930," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LVII (April 1979), 447. Archdeacon Irwin was the white pastor of St. Agnes Episcopal, a black church. In 1921, he was abducted by the Ku Klux Klan allegedly for preaching equality between the races. The Reverend Irwin was tarred and feathered and dumped on a sidewalk only after agreeing to leave Miami immediately. No one was prosecuted for the crime.

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53 "Mandatory Order Issued by City Board of Health," *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1918, 1.

54 "Miss Frederick and Mr. Law Married With a Simple Ceremony," *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1918, 3.

55 *The Miami Herald*, October 29, 1918, 3.

56 "Health Board Closes Business Houses to Aid Epidemic Fight," *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 1918, 8.

57 *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 1918, 3.

58 "Sustain the Board," *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1918, 4.

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60 "Quarantine Homes," *The Miami Herald*, October 26, 1918, 4.

61 "People and Events," *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1918, 3.

62 "Stores Close Early Tonight Because of Influenza," *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 1918, 2.

63 "Just Comment," *The Miami Herald*, October 17, 1918, 4.

64 "Larkins," *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 1918, 3.

65 "Lake Worth," *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 1918, 8.

66 "All Stores to Remain Open Later Today," *The Miami Herald*, October 26, 1918, 1.

67 *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 1918, 8.

68 "Influenza is Decreasing in Dade County," *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 1918, 2.

69 "Influenza Epidemic Gradually Subsiding," *The Miami Herald*, October 29, 1918, 1.

70 "Battalion Orders," *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1918, 8.

71 "Ten Men Leave for Key West Barracks," The *Miami Herald*, October 22, 1918, 2.

72 Marrin, *Very, Very, Very Dreadful*, 110.

73 "Miami Asked for Aid to Fight Influenza," *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 1918, 3.

74 "Red Cross Doing Great Work Here," *The Miami Herald*, October 22, 1918, 1-2.

75 "Calling for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 5, 1918, 1.

76 "Teachers Should Not Volunteer to Help," *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1918, 4.

77 "Unless More Women Aid Many Pneumonia Patients Will Die," *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 1918, 2.

78 "Money and Nurses Needed to Carry on Influenza Fight," *The Miami Herald*, October 21, 1918, 3.

79 "Need for Nurses is Still Great," *The Miami Herald*, October 18, 1918, 1.

80 Dr. John G. DuPuis, *History of Early Medicine History of Early Public Schools, and History of Early Agricultural Relations in Dade County*, (Miami: Self-Published, 1954), 66.

81 "City Physician Issues an Urgent Plea for Nurses to Aid in Fighting Influenza Epidemic," *The Miami Herald*, October 20, 1918, 1.

82 "Money and Nurses Needed to Carry on Influenza Fight," *The Miami Herald*, October 21, 1918, 3.

83 "Ten Thousand to Fight 'Flu,'" *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 1918, 8.

84 "Urgent Demand for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1918, 1.

85 "Personal Mention," *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1918, 3.

86 "Naval Authorities Take Over Hospital for Men in Service," *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1918, 1.

87 "Red Cross Calls for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 1918, 1.

88 Ibid, 8.

89 "All Stores to Remain Open Later Today," The *Miami Herald*, October 26, 1918, 1.

90 "Red Cross Calls for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 1918, 1.

91 "Urgent Need for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1918, 2.

92 "Negroes Working for a Hospital," *The Miami Herald*, October 30, 1918, 2.

93 DuPuis, *History of Early Medicine History of Early Public Schools, and History of Early Agricultural Relations in Dade County*, 71.

94 "People and Events," *The Miami Herald*, October 9, 1918, 3.

95 "Situation Well in Hand at the Miami Naval Air Station," *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1918, 3.

96 "Urgent Demand for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1918, 1.

97 "Money and Nurses Needed to Carry on Influenza Fight," *The Miami Herald*, October 21, 1918, 3.

98 Urgent Demand for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1918, 1.

99 "Epidemic Seems to be Abating," *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1918, 2.

100 *Miami Herald*, October 27, 1918, 4.

101 "Urgent Need for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1918, 1.

102 "People and Events," *The Miami Herald*, October 27, 1918, 3.

103 "Epidemic Seems to be Abating," *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1918, 2.

104 "Urgent Need for More Nurses," *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1918, 2.

105 "Epidemic Seems to be Abating," *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1918, 2.

106 "People and Events," *The Miami Herald*, October 27, 1918, 3.

107 "People and Events," *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 1918, 3.

108 "Ten Thousand to Fight 'Flu,'" *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 1918, 8.

109 "All Stores to Remain Open Later Today," *The Miami Herald*, October 26, 1918, 1.

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116 "A Remedy Suggested," *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 1918, 8.

117 "County Doctors Probe Epidemic," *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 1918, 2.

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119 "Combs is Not Dead," *The Miami Herald*, October 22, 1918, 8.

120 "P. B. Jaudon Administrator of His Brother's Estate," *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 2018, 3.

121 *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1918, 3.

122 Ibid, October 8, 1918, 2; October 10, 1918, 2.

123 "Influenza Decreasing in Dade County," *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 1918, 2; & "Influenza Epidemic Slowly Subsiding," *The Miami Herald*, October 29, 1918, 1.

124 Ibid, November 1, 1918, 2.

125 Ibid, November 1, 1918, 3.

126 "Making Ready for the Tourist Season," *The Miami Herald*, October 29, 1918, 3.

127 *The Miami Herald*, November 1, 1918, 11.

128 "Witches, Ghosts, and Hobgoblins Held Sway in Miami Last Night Because of Halloween," *The Miami Herald*, November 1, 1918, 3.

Burning Down the (Light) House

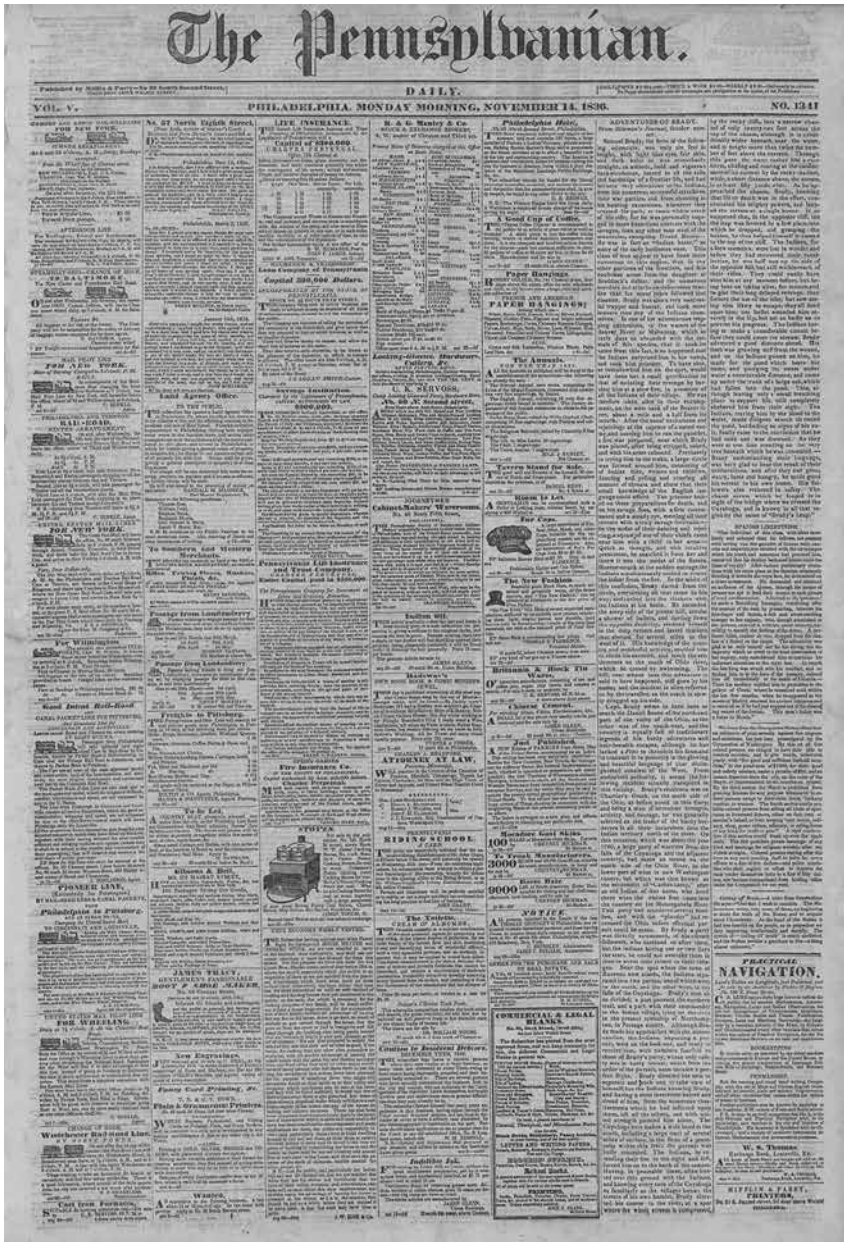
John W. B. Thompson's "Other" Account of the Burning of Cape Florida Lighthouse

By Neil E. Hurley

It was the most dramatic event in Florida lighthouse history. On July 23, 1836, Cape Florida Lighthouse was burned and severely damaged in an attack by Seminole Indians.[1] The lighthouse, located on the south tip of Miami's Key Biscayne Island, was rebuilt in 1846 and still stands today as a cornerstone of Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park.

Much of what we know about the attack comes from a letter written by the sole white survivor, acting lighthouse keeper John W. B. Thompson.[2] While recovering from gunshot and burn wounds suffered in the attack, Thompson wrote a 1,600-word letter to the editor of the *Charleston Courier* in November 1836.[3] Thompson's account ends with "... I am now in Charleston, S. C. where every attention is paid me. Although a cripple, I can eat my allowance and walk without the use of a cane."

Thompson's letter was republished in newspapers nationwide. Copies also appeared later in books about Indian attacks. As the story was repeated, artistic license was sometimes used and, today, many accounts contain inaccuracies. Most notably, Thompson's "elderly negro assistant" is sometimes identified as "Henry," and in some later accounts as "Henry Aaron." Fortunately, an article in the 1949 edition of *Tequesta: The Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida*, entitled "Cape Florida Light" by Charles M. Brookfield, contains an exact copy of the earliest known form of Thompson's letter.



The Pennsylvanian.

DAILY.

PHILADELPHIA, MONDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 14, 1836.

Vol. v. NO. 1341

The original account appeared in several newspapers, including page two, *The Pennsylvanian* (November 14, 1836). Page one is shown here. Gift of Martha Pancoast Grafton. HistoryMiami Museum, x-1787-1.

Perhaps because Thompson's letter was so compelling and detailed, there has been little scholarly work directed at finding other accounts of the attack. Other than a brief thank you letter penned by Thompson to his rescuers on July 29, 1836, no other correspondence by Thompson is known.

Thus, it was with great surprise that I came across a later statement by Thompson published in 1841. Appearing in *The Yazoo City Whig and Political Reporter* of Yazoo City, Mississippi, this "other account" by Thompson contains many more details about the attack, the people involved, and Thompson's subsequent attempts to obtain a government pension. It is introduced by a nameless person who met Thompson in Key West, was taken by his account of his life, but especially of the Seminole Indian attack on the Cape Florida Lighthouse, and transcribed the old lighthouse keeper's account. Thereafter, this person submitted the account to *The Yazoo City Whig and Political Reporter*.

Although some elements of the article may sound fanciful to the modern reader (particularly Thompson's White House bedroom meeting with President Andrew Jackson), most parts of Thompson's story are verified by other sources. An additional cross-check of Thompson's birth year resulted in a possible link to a record of his death in 1870.

The following is the account that appeared in *The Yazoo Whig and Political Reporter*, Sept 17, 1841, Pages 1 and 2:

"Editorial Correspondence.

East Pascagoula, Aug. 1, 1841.

Attack by seventy Seminoles on the Light House at Key Biscayne off Cape Florida.

-Brave defense by an old veteran seaman of the late

War – Unheard of suffering – Captain Armstrong, U. States Navy – Key West – Charleston – Gen. Jackson – Mr. Pringle – Mr. Pickens, of South Carolina – Reward of a Patriot of the last War – The poor Fisherman.

To the Editor of the Yazoo City Whig:

I hand to you enclosed the statement of John W. B. Thompson for publication. It is written in his own words as I could put it down, and with a view (by his consent) of publication. Thompson was born in Perth Amboy, New Jersey and is now 58 years old. He fought on board our navy during the last war, and was badly wounded in the shoulder at the glorious battle of Plattsburgh on Lake Champlain, 6th September 1814.[4] He is an intelligent man, and is now living the life of a recluse on the banks of this Bay. I came upon him during my mornings ramble, seated on an old log under a live oak tree, with a book in his hand, dressed in a check shirt and duck trowsers (sic), both patched so often that you could not well make out the original color of the stuff he wore.

It was so strange a sight to see a man in his garb reading, that I went up to him and after some conversation drew from him his history. You may remember to have seen some account of the burning of the Light House on Key Biscayne off Cape Florida by the Seminoles in July 1836, published first in one of the Charleston papers.

Since Daniel Boon(e), I do not believe there has lived a more extraordinary man than this.[5]

He has been upwards of twenty years in Florida, and a history of the cruises of his small vessel the "William" or, "Little Billy" with a boy named Mack, (to whom he refers in the statement below,) would form a romance of the wildest nature. He now lives by fishing and is reduced to the utmost

verge of poverty, yet he is cheerful in conversation, when once he forms an acquaintance and is treated with due respect.

I made him a small donation which he expended in buying a pair of shoes and some fishing tackle. I went to see him every day for a week but never could get him to accompany me to the Hotel. He is a man about 6 feet high with a spare and sinewey (sic) form, very deep chest, fine open countenance, light blue eyes, and light hair, sprinkled with gray.

Perhaps if you will publish the enclose[d], it may be of service to him in procuring relief from government.

Certainly if the government has any favors to bestow, his claims are entitled to notice, not as a favor but as being due to a veteran who has lost his little all, and spent his life in the service of his country.

But let him tell his own tale, beginning with the

Attack on the Light House.

"There stood an old man—his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might;
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him on that day
In a semi-circle lay'
Still he combatted unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded." *Siege of Corinth.*
"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun at noon,
Right up above the Light House stood,
No bigger than the moon." *The Ancient Mariner.*

It was about four months after I had gone under a contract to keep the Light House at the Key off Cape Florida. The former keeper had abandoned it in alarm, for the

Seminoles had been committing various depredations all along shore. [6]

I was to receive one thousand dollars a year[7] and furnish the additional aid of my black man Carter[8] who was my only companion, and generally did the work of cook, and was a good one all except the coffee, and that he never could get right, sometimes it was toasted too much, sometimes too little, but Carter knew all about fish and oysters, and made capital bread. I had the promise of some men to assist as guards to the Light House but they never came.

Well, as I was saying, it was about four months after I entered on the duties of Light House keeper that I smelt the coffee parching in the house, that is in the brick dwelling attached to the Light House which we used now as a kitchen, preferring to lodge in the Light House,[9] because it was more secure, and I did not like to trust much to my "neighbors" the Seminoles; for you see I knew that the old Chief Alabama (one of the leaders at the Fort Mims massacre.) [10] had been shot by a man named Lumlin, for insulting his wife. Now Lumlin was a poor man but when Alabama offered the insult to his wife, he came home and what did he do but take down his Rifle, walk straight to where the old head devil was, and sent a ball through his head, and setting fire to his lodge burnt it up and roasted him to a crisp. Alabama had three dogs, two very large ones and a small, and they staid by the body until they eat it entirely up, then the two large dogs eat up the small dog; and then set up a howl; and used to swim off to the "Little Billy," but I always beat them back. So notwithstanding none of the Indians liked the old Tyrant Alabama, and although Lumlin had been sent to prison in Key west for shooting him and his family reduced almost to starvation, notwithstanding they knew all this, still they pretended to be very much enraged about it, whereas if the

truth must be told they were glad of it, as they were rid of Alabama and had a good excuse to shoot and plunder as much as they pleased.[11]

It must have been about four in the afternoon when I started from the Light House to see about parching the coffee. The dwelling house was about twenty paces from the Light House; on the south side was the Ocean, and all around else was a low oozy march (marsh), covered thickly on one side with Mangrove bushes and other small growth; but on the other, the under growth had been cleared away to keep off the musquetos (sic). The beach was naked about four or five miles on either side. The thicket covered the marsh so thickly, and the ooze was so soft and mirey (mire) that a hog could not have gone through it. If you stooped very low you might see a short distance under the Mangrove bushes, but standing up you cannot see five feet in the *ever glade*, as the young officers in the army call such places.

Passing to the house I thought I heard a splash in the mud, and concluded it was one of those cursed Alligators that crawl about the yard and eat my pigs; another splash and I stooped to see what it was and God bless your soul, there were ever so many of them devils the Seminoles, up to there [sic] armpits in mire, holding their Rifles over head, and tugging and struggling to get through the mud!

As soon as they saw that they were discovered, "click—bang—bang,—whiz-z-z!" went a dozen rifles. Carter left his coffee and came hobbling out of the house, crying "O Goda-massa; de Ingens – de Ingens, O Goda – O massa!"

I bawled at him to run for the Light House, but there he stood, turning round and round making lamentations, and not knowing which way to move, I turned back, seized him by the wool of the head, and with cuffing kicking and pull-

ing, got him inside the door just as the foremost devils were about to lay hold of it.

Fortunately I was not wounded, the balls whistled through my shirt and trowsers [sic] and my hat had several holes through it.

Well, I felt now pretty safe. The door however was made of pine boards and not at all intended to resist a siege of seventy or eighty savages thirsting for blood.

Several balls had passed in the door when it was open, and sticking in some of Uncle Sam's oil casks, had set them to running so that the floor was now ancle [sic] deep in oil. Anticipating a difficulty of this kind, I had previously provided a number of old water tanks and casks which I picked up on the shore and placing them in such a manner as to leave just space enough for a man to crawl through after he had passed the door, (leaving room for the door to shut,) I filled them with sand, stones &c. forming a barricade that was almost impregnable. After having closed and bolted the door, I made Carter crawl through the opening and then followed myself.

I now held a council of war with myself (for poor Carter seemed panic struck and nothing I could say would bring him too) and determined to hold out to the last.

"We're safe now, Carter, "said I, trying to stimulate him to exertion," if you will only act the man; here take this axe, and stand fast; if they break down the door hew off the first head that pokes itself through the hole here, and sing out and I'll come to your relief. I'll go to the windows and see if I can't amuse them there while you stand guard here."

He seized the axe, and raised it in a striking posture as if just then he was about to strike off an Indian's head.

"Now, be a man," said I, "and we're safe."

"O God – a, a massa." was all the reply I could get from him as he stood with the axe drawn, his teeth chattering, and his knees knocking against each other.

A single resolute man could have defended the entrance against a host, but my lieutenant (who was a brawny black fellow,) was completely paralyzed by fear.

I had with me two muskets and a rifle and ammunition in the greatest abundance; so loading up the two muskets with about forty buckshot each, and the rifle with two balls I retreated up the winding stairs till I came to the first window.[12]

The Indians, when they found the door bolted against them, had made for the dwelling, whooping, laughing, and yelling like so many fiends, as they are. In they all crowded and began the search for food, for they seemed half starved. They rolled a barrel of flour out, stove in the head, and commenced eating the raw flour, cramming it down their throats, which made them choke and cough, blowing the flour over their black faces and hedious [sic] naked bodies besmeared with mire.

From the time we first bolted the door until I was at the window with my guns loaded, not more than ten minutes could have passed. When I gained the window, keeping my body hid, I could see them gathered around the barrel of flour as before stated, some forty or fifty in number, while the rest were going through and around the house in search of food. It is evident they did not expect resistance from so feeble a force as we were, for many of them had set down their guns, and not one seemed to be apprehensive of danger.

I now prepared to give them a broad-side, and being at a lower window could rake them fore and aft. I had no hope

in capitulation.

They were not more than a hundred feet from me, so placing my guns in a position that I could handle them readily, I laid out my cartridges, intending after the first round to fire the muskets alternately.

I took dead aim at the bunch who were diving their hands into the flour, some laughing at the whitened faces of the others, some grinning and making mouths, and all in high glee; loud roared the old musket! But I did not wait to see the effects of my fire before I blazed away with the other, and seizing the rifle presented that, but was blinded by the smoke of the two first fires. The screams and yells which followed, told plainly of the effects of the handful of shot I had sent among them. I went to a window higher up and peeped cautiously out, at about the same instant that they sent a perfect shower of balls in at the window I had just left. I saw a fellow dragging off a wounded Indian near the edge of the thicket,—for you must know, with the Seminoles there's more honor in carrying off the dead or wounded than in taking a scalp—I saw him making off with the wounded Indian and took my rifle and drew a bead on a white flour spot on his breast; he keeled over with a bounce, and then the wounded Indian tried to get him off but it was no go, so he laid down by his side. The fools rattled away at the window again where I last was—as if I would stay there to be shot—but I was at another calmly looking out for another shot.

After I had fired about twenty times, they were very cautious about showing themselves; whenever I could catch the glimpse of one I let him have it, using rifle or musket according to the distance.

By this time I had taken about twenty prisoners.—You laugh at that but it is a fact.—I had them penned up near the

door of the Light House right under me, so that if they came out some one was sure to be shot, while standing where they did, I could not bring my guns to bear upon the cowardly dogs; and there they stood 'till night.

Occasionally I would call out to Carter to know how he came on.

"O God a—O massa!" was always the reply.

There was now a perfect stillness, and I employed some time in cleaning up my guns. I began at last to fear that some deviltry was going on, so I put my hat on the end of a ramrod and poked it just above the window sill—rattle and smash but they wasted their ammunition and riddled my poor old hat! Now was my time to be still. They thought I had been killed and began one by one to peep out. I saw one fellow with a torch of lightwood and another with a bundle of sticks making a circuit with a view of reaching the door to fire it. I thought if that was done all would be up with me. I fired at the foremost one and they both made off.

A party had gone down to take possession of my sloop ("the Little Billy" as I called her,) that I was telling you about yesterday.

She had most of my stores a-board, and was anchored off shore just off shore just out of gun shot. She had some lead on board, a quantity of bacon hams, and a few bottles of rum. They took some of the sails and cut them up to make sacks for carrying off the flour.

I kept the Little Billy always ready that I might, if hard run, take to her and make off for the beach was naked some miles and I had no thought the Indians could approach where an alligator would hardly crawl. I learnt afterwards that they were three days in coming four miles.

It was now growing dark. I went down to see what Carter was about and there he stood with the axe still, and now commenced our trouble. The door was on fire! We fought hard to extinguish the flames, but the pine boards and the oil was too much for us, so retreating up the winding stairs, taking along the guns and ammunition with a keg of powder, we were driven by the fire to the very top of the Light House into what is called the Lantern, built of frame work with sash and glass. The platform on which the lantern stands is a brick floor some two feet thick, covered with flag stone, in the centre of which is a small trap door lined with copper. We shut down the door and made it fast. The only wood work about the building is the stairs and a large shaft of timber run up through the centre around which the stairs wind. You know how a Light House is built? Well this one was eighty feet high with very thick walls. We had to lie flat down, for they kept up a constant fire, shivering the glass and rattling the balls around us as they rebounded. By lying in this manner, they could not see us. If they walked out far enough to bring our bodies in view as we lay, it was too far to reach us with their rifles, besides, the marshy soil and Mangrove bushes were obstacles to their doing so.[13]

There we lay, Carter and I, the flames roaring beneath and pouring out at the windows. The oil tanks would burst and some three hundred gallons were burning, and you may guess it was no pleasant summer evening we spent, the Indians cracking away whenever they saw any part of us exposed, and the stones beginning to feel quite warm under us. I forgot to say that they had set fire to the dwelling which was now rapidly consuming. We lay tolerably comfortable until the copper on the trap door heated redhot and the door fell in. Now the fire roared up through the narrow door-way, and the heat was intolerable! The Indians ceased firing and

I suppose were looking on enjoying the scene. Our clothes, that is shirt and pantaloons, were continually getting on fire and we would tear off the piece and throw them away; I was now nearly naked, all the hair was singed off my head, and my eyes were nearly burnt out. I now, in the agony of the moment, threw my feet over the sides of the wall and let my legs hang down to avoid the heat, preferring the balls of the Indians to the fire. A stinging and numbing sensation told me each time that I was hit, still I let them hang for some moments.—Carter was writhing and throwing himself about, exposing his body to the Indians.[14]

"Master," said he, "I'm wounded."

"So am I Carter," said I "and have long ago prayed to God to save my soul, and you had better do likewise, for we will never see daylight again."

I called to Carter soon after, but the poor fellow was dead, and strange as it may seem, in that situation, I felt lonely when I found he was dead. O, if I had had the boy Mack with me. But I'm glad he wasn't,—still a man cares less about dying and fights better when he has some one to talk to, and to cheer him when he stands up bravely to it. I thought of home and my boyish days as I lay scorching, and as I thought, dying with a death-thirst, for I did not know how I was wounded, being literally raw with the burning. Yes, it is strange that I should then think of friends long, long ago forgotten,—and now, since I have been talking to you these three days, somewhat of the same feeling comes over me, for it is a long time since I have seen any one who would notice "Old Thompson" in his patched, fisherman's garb; but let that pass.

When I found poor Carter was dead, I shoved and rolled him nearer the flames and crawled along side of the body

which served to keep off a little of the heat; still it was intolerable. Once I thought of throwing myself over the iron railing, for I fancied myself dying, so great was the agony I was in; then I thought of the triumph of the Indians in taking my scalp hairless as it was.

I took the keg of powder and crying aloud "God have mercy on my soul"! threw it down the door-way and waited calmly to be blown up. It was, perhaps, about five seconds before it exploded, sending a current of fire and burning fragments up the door-way, and carrying off the top of the lantern! O, it was horrible! Yet, there I lay, *alive* still.

I had a powder flask attached to a cord around my neck I pulled this off (for the string was burnt in two) and hurled it away; it struck an Indian on the head and knocked him down; he rose up and must have looked very foolish for they all set up a loud laugh at him.

Instead of putting an end to my suffering by blowing myself up with the powder, it only tended to prolong my life, for the stairway fell with the explosion and the flame ceased.

A thick smoke continued to ascent through the door-way from the smoulderings below. I rolled the body of Carter down through the floor, and it fell in the fire. One side of the body was roasted brown, and while I lay beside it I could smell the flesh as it was cooking. It was soon, no doubt, devoured by the flames below, but I could not see down for the smoke and heat.[15]

Day-light at last came. I was now out of danger from the Indians, for I was 80 feet from the ground. Still they tried to get up to me to take my scalp. Two of the Indians I knew very well, Joe and Bob, as they were called; they had been at sea and were pretty good sailors. They undertook to ascend by the lightning rod, of which they made a ladder by tying

short bits of wood on which they would mount, then; binding another stick, mount again, and so on, until about half way up. I was prepared to give them the *high fall*. I had an old knife with which I quietly commenced sawing the copper wire in two which kept the rod fast at top, and which I could reach as I lay; but they desisted after getting half way up. These two scoundrels spoke to me in English several times during the previous day, saying if I would open the door and surrender they would not harm me, but the devil trust them, I knew them too well for that. It was now about ten o'clock in the forenoon and they all prepared to leave, a number going on board my little vessel and the rest along the beach, carrying away every thing that was at all valuable. And here was I, on the 28th of July, on my back, at the top of the Light House with six rifle balls in my feet and legs, the skin off my body in many places, lying on a stone floor with the sun shining in my face, off the coast of Florida where I had been for months without seeing a white man! Three days I lay in this situation, with a burning fever; my very brains it seemed to me were dried up; *water, water, water*, was all I craved.[16]

A lamp reflector lay near me, I caught my ----- and drunk it, but with the fever on me, even that failed me after the second day. On the third day, as nearly as I could note the time, about 2 o'clock, I raised my head once more and looked towards the sea, and O, Joy! I could plainly make out from the glistening of the muskets that they were not Indians, but friends coming to my relief![17]

The Rescue.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood;
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,

And cried, A sail! a sail!" *The Ancient Mariner*.

It proved to be the United States schooner "Motto," Captain Armstrong.[18] They had landed in the boats and were marching in regular order, with files of men flanking to the right and left.

"Are you there Thompson!" demanded the Captain.

"O yes," said I faintly, for my voice was nearly gone, and my tongue and lips baked black, "send me up some water for God's sake."

"He's alive!" said the Captain and they raised a hurra and swore that I should soon be down.

I felt greatly revived; but how were they to get me down? It was easier said than done.

They consulted about the mode, and concluded that I might be reached by a sailor's climbing the lightning rod.

Captain Armstrong himself drew off his coat and ran up to the rod as high as the Indian's had gone; I told him it would not do as I had cut the wire nearly apart, so he returned. They devised every means to reach me within their power. I told them to throw a stone to me with a twine attached, but there was not a mother's son that could throw to the top of the Light House—when I was a boy I could have thrown double the height.

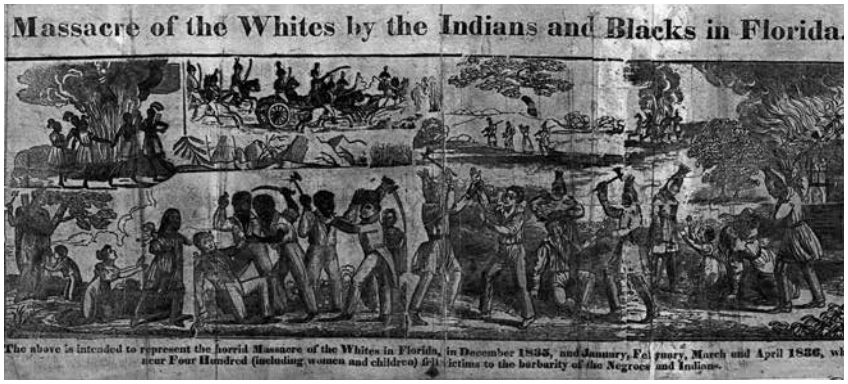
The sun was now down, and I felt my heart sink within me as the Captain bade me keep my spirit up, saying he would have me down the next morning; so they marched down and went on board.

The next morning they returned. The midshipmen had made paper Kites which they tried to fly, but there was no air stirring. The Sun shone in my face, and the stones on which I lay were heated.

They then attached twine to strings to ramrods and fired them. About noon it must have been, one of the ramrods struck the Iron railing and glancing off left the twine around the rail, I reached up and seized it; a rope was made fast to the other end and I hauled it, passed it over the rail & sent one end down, to this they attached a block with a pulley and I drew that up. I made the block fast by doubling the twine several times and tying it to the rail. So they drew one of the sailor up. "Hallo"; said he, dancing around in his bare feet on the hot stone (for they were heated by the sun,) what do you think the Devil will do with you when he gets you? He pulled off his hat and stuck it under my head, and returned for his shoes saying that if they tied a rope around me I'd break in two for there was no skin on me.

The officers pulled off their coats, and sent up two men with them. They wrapped these around me and let me down by the ropes.[19] I fainted away and when I came too I was on board, and the vessel under way. The Captain with his own hands would take water in a spoon and moisten my lips, allowing me to swallow it only in small quantities. There was a man on board whose name was Cooly [sic],[20] a good hearted bluster, drinking sort of man, (you may remember seeing an account of the massacre of his wife and children by the Indians, in the papers—I helped to bury them,) Cooley came down and told the Captain he would take care of me.[21] So soon as the Captain left the Cabin, Cooley came to me and I begged him to give me water.

"Come old fellow," said he, "we've taken a cocktail together before, and let's have one now," and with that he mixed & sweetened a stiff glass of gin and water and I drank it off—I believe it saved my life.



The Cooley Massacre was one of a number of coordinated attacks around Florida, beginning in December 1835. "The Horrid Massacre of the Whites in Florida." Gatefold illustration from *An Authentic Narrative of the Seminole War*. Providence: printed for D. F. Blanchard, 1836. Florida Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library. 1976-165-1.

Captain Armstrong did all he could for me and I hope he will be rewarded for his kindness to so poor a wretch as I was. My legs and feet were terribly swollen, and the fever still continued until he landed me at Key West and placed me under a surgeon, with strict orders that I should want for nothing.

Here I remained about two months, and recovered slowly. I became very impatient of confinement but they would not hear of my going until I prevailed on the surgeon (a very good fellow he was) to give me a certificate that a sea voyage would be of service to my health.

Here the document is in this old pocket book and you may read it, as your eyes are better than mine. [22]

(It reads as follows.)

KEY WEST SEPT. 26th 1836

I hereby certify that John W. B. Thompson was shot in

the feet and legs, that he has been a patient of mine – that he has recovered from his wounds, but remains in somewhat a debilitated state, -- that in my opinion a sea voyage would be of much benefit to his health.

D. PLATTS Ar. Surg. [23]

I sent this down to the mail packet, schr. Hope for Charleston, Captain Walker, and got myself, by his consent, carried on board.[24] He took me to Charleston, where I remained under Dr. Ramsey about three months.[25]

When the people heard that the "Light House man" was on board, they crowded down to the schooner to see me, like some wild animal. I hid myself in the hold, but Captain Walker hauled me on deck. Among the rest, who do you think was there? Mack, God bless the boy! There he was, just in port from New York, come to see the show but he did not know it was his old Captain. The poor boy cried when he saw me, and went and bought apples and oranges and brought me.

Conclusion.

After some three months, by the aid of Mr. Pringle, Collector of the Port, I had myself conveyed to Washington, as they told me the government would do something for me, for I had lost everything in the fire, including $700 in bank notes. They told me to go to General Jackson; so when I arrived at Washington, I went to see the President.[26] It was now January, 1837, and I still went on crutches. I went about 11 o'clock for three successive days, but could not get within six deep of the old gentleman. Once I saw the top of a white head which a man told me was he.

It was some days before I made another effort. In the mean time I tried to see some one else who might have something to do with the government, but they all seemed very busy, and had no time to talk to me. Mr. Pickens, of South Carolina, treated me very friendly and offered me money, but I took only a small amount from him, and am now afraid I can never repay him.[27]

I went again to the President's House, and this time went before breakfast, in order to be there before the crowd.

I saw a decent looking man about the door, who stared at me when he learnt my object.

"The President," said he, "never sees company 'till 10 o'clock."

"I'm glad of it," said I, "go and tell him, if you will, that there is a poor man from Florida wishes to see him as soon as he can be admitted."

The man looked at me, and as I thought, felt compassion for my poor appearance.

"Wait," said he, handing me a chair and going up stairs.

In about five minutes he returned and motioned me to follow him. He popped me plump into the old cock's bedroom. The General was sitting on a low stool very near the fire, with a woolen wrapper on. I had never seen him before, but from his lean and haggard appearance it struck me that all would soon be up with the old man.[28]

I began in my awkward manner to apologize for intruding, but he soon made me feet easy,—all except a large quid of tobacco which I unconsciously took in my mouth when waiting at the door.

The President reached me his long bony fingers to shake

hands, and then motioned me to a sofa near him. He looked very hard at me, then at my crutch, "so," said he, "you are from Florida."

"I am sir," I replied, "I had the misfortune to take charge of the Light House off Cape Florida, which was destroyed by the Indians in July last," (here the old gentleman stopped me).

"I know all about it," said he, "the government must do something for you"—he relapsed into a moments silence, looking into the coal fire, then raising his eyes quickly he took up a newspaper and pointing to an extract of a letter from Florida.

"Look here," said the President, "read that; these young officers instead of going to capture Indians are writing long letters home about Florida, and making themselves out heroes."

The article alluded to was in a northern paper.

"You see, he says he has been on the banks of the Ocklawaha where foot of white-man has never before trod. You have been there, have you not?"[29]

"Often sir," I replied.

"Well, I've been there, so there are two white men at least that have been there."

The old gentleman became very much excited while talking to me about Florida, and I began to regret having called on him.

I rose at length, took my hat and crutch and was about to leave.

"Recollect," said he "go to Mr. _____ , chairman of the committee on pensions, and tell him I sent you – use my name."[30]

I thanked the President and left.

After a great deal of going about, I found the gentleman old Hickory had sent me to, but it was no go. He talked to me about seven hundred dollars, and "bringing in a bill," and I don't know what else.

"I told him to fork me over the $700, as a bird in the hand,—you know the old saying—but he caughed [sic], and told me it would be several years before he could have the thing done in a legal manner.

It was all up with me now. My little cash was nearly out. I got another small loan from Mr. Pickens and came off to Key-West, leaving all my papers in Washington however, and among them my certificate of good conduct from Capt. McDonough.[31]

I wrote since to Mr. Downing (Delegate from Florida) to get my papers, but here is the only word I ever had from him. You see he put no date to his letter, except the month.

[The following is an exact Copy.]

17 Feb

Dr. Sir – Y'r letter is recd. – I will look up yr papers & press them on the favorable notice of Congress. – I will be yr friend to the extent of my power & you may rely on it. – It is no trouble to me. It is and will be a great pleasure to me to serve you. Yrs. C DOWNING.[32]

(Free, C. Downing)

To John W. B. Thompson

Key West, Florida

The little dug-out there, this old tent cloth, that box, and this little frying pan, is all that I now own on earth. If the

government will remunerate me by giving me a Light House on this coast, it is all that I would ask,—(let the rest go) for I must live on the salt water.[33] – So now as the tide is up, and you have heard my story about the Light House affair, I must be off. I have already told you about how I lost the "Little Billy." – Come again to-morrow, or whenever you have leisure. It is very seldom I talk to any one like I have to you.

Thompson's petition had its day in the sun before Congress on January 31, 1837: "... On motion of Mr. Whittlesey, the Committee of Claims was discharged from the further consideration of the petition of John W. B. Thompson, the individual who defended the Cape Florida light-house, and became perfectly disabled in that defense, and the same was referred to the Committee on Invalid Pensions."[34]

There is no record that the Committee on Invalid Pensions ever received or considered Thompson's petition. Even if they did, it is unclear if Thompson would qualify: He was not on the list of those wounded at the Battle of Plattsburg, and his December 1836 account mentioned that "although a cripple I can ... walk without the assistance of a cane."

In October 1870, an 85-year-old, former navy sailor named John Thompson died of old age in Monroe County Florida.[35] The age and occupation match, and while we cannot be certain, if this was indeed the John W. B. Thompson of lighthouse fame, it was his last opportunity to tell his lighthouse tale.

Thompson's 1841 account adds much to the story of the only American Lighthouse destroyed in an Indian attack. His details on the approach of the Indians, the suspected reason for the attack, the description of the construction of the lighthouse tower, moments of humor and his encounter with President Jackson in Washington, D.C., provide new insights to the story of the Cape Florida Indian attack.

Endnotes

1 Many of the Indian attacks in south Florida were blamed on a subgroup of Seminole Indians known as "Spanish Indians" due to their language skills and close interaction with Cuban (Spanish) fisherman. John Viele, *The Florida Keys: True Stories of the Perilous Straits, V. II* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 2011).

2 John Dubose, the officially appointed lighthouse keeper, left on a trip to Key West on July 18, 1836, leaving Thompson in charge of maintaining the light. Dubose was paid $600 annually as lighthouse keeper. *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Baltimore), August 16, 1836; Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury transmitting a report on the lighthouse establishment, *House Doc.* 66, *Serial Set,* Vol. No. 288, January 15, 1836; Neil E. Hurley, *An Illustrated History of Cape Florida Lighthouse* (Camino, California: Historic Lighthouse Publishers, 1989).

3 One of the earliest reprints of Thompson's letter appears in the *Alexandria* (Virginia) *Gazette*, November 12, 1836, 2. Brookfield, Charles M., "Cape Florida Light," *Tequesta*, no. IX, 1949; http://digitalcollections.fiu.edu/tequesta/files/1949/49_1_01.pdf (accessed October 20, 2019).

4 The Battle of Plattsburgh, also known as the Battle of Lake Champlain, was a naval and land battle fought between the United States and England in the War of 1812. The battle was fought between September 6 and 11, 1814, and resulted in an American victory. John W. B. Thompson is listed as a participant and as a Naval Master's Mate. He was awarded $1,163.62 in prize money for the capture of British ships. *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative ... Vol. 1, Class VI, Naval Affairs, 1834.*

5 Daniel Boone (1734-1820) was an American pioneer, explorer and frontiersman.

6 The reference here is to John Dubose.

7 In March 1836, William A. Whitehead, Superintendent of Lights at Key West, was authorized to pay an additional $100 monthly to protect the Cape Florida light from marauding Indians. At one time, five guards were proposed for protection of that lighthouse. The average national pay for lighthouse keepers at the time was $390.00 annu-

ally, so keeper Dubose's salary was at the top of the pay pyramid. There is, however, no evidence of a contract to hire Keeper Thompson at $1,000 annually. Report to the Committee of Claims," January 4, 1839, *House Report 100, Serial Set 351; "*Report of the Fifth Auditor of the Treasury," December 12, 1838, *House Document N. 24, Serial Set* 345.

8 Aaron Carter was probably Thompson's slave. In Thompson's 1836 letter, and in early reports from Key West, Carter was unnamed and described only as an elderly black man.

9 Thompson's original account of the attack on the lighthouse mentioned that bedding and food stores were located in the lighthouse tower without explaining that he was also sleeping there.

10 The Fort Mims Massacre, which took place on August 20, 1813, resulted when Creek Indians, who were members of the Red Sticks faction, overwhelmed a U.S. garrison thirty-five miles north of Mobile, Alabama. More than 250 militia and another 250 civilians were killed in what is considered one of the greatest military victories by Native Americans over U.S. forces.

11 *Macon* (Georgia) *Weekly Telegraph*, March 3, 1836. The story of the attacks that were revenge for Chief Alabama's murder was first reported by a slave of William Cooley, who was an influential member of the tiny New River community in today's Fort Lauderdale. Most of Cooley's family lost their lives to marauding Seminoles in January 1836, in one of the early actions of the Second Seminole War.

12 Thompson's original account claimed that he had three muskets and did not mention a rifle.

13 Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, Light-House establishment, January 15, 1836, *House Document 66, Serial Set Vol. No. 288*. Cape Florida's lighthouse tower stood 65 feet above the land and contained fifteen lamps.

14 Thompson's original account noted that the oil tanks held 225 gallons of whale oil.

15 Lieutenant Armstrong reported that the body of the black assistant was found in the base of the tower, having been pushed off just before they arrived. The officer's account notes that the body was difficult to carry to the grave since the flesh was roasted and decomposed.

16 The author believes that forty-two hours passed between the beginning of the attack and Thompson's rescue from the top of the lighthouse tower.

17 No records have been found indicating the size of the lighthouse's reflectors, but other Florida lighthouses of the time employed reflectors thirteen to sixteen inches in diameter. As noted, the lighthouse contained fifteen lamps and each lamp possessed a reflector.

18 Letter from U. S. vessel, the *Concord,* Pensacola, Florida, August 11, 1836, found in *Army and Navy Chronicle and Scientific Repository,* September 1, 1836. The U. S. Transport Schooner *Motto* was commanded by Lieutenant Thomas J. Leib with eleven seamen, eight marines and Midshipman Stanley aboard. A Midshipman Postell boarded the ship at Indian Key. The *Motto* was on a mission to burn the wreck of the *Gil Blas* near the Hillsborough Inlet in today's Broward County, and destroy William Cooley's starch mill on the New River to prevent the starch from falling into the hands of the Indians.

19 This account does not mention the arrival of the wrecking schooner *Pee Dee* of Indian Key, captained by a Captain Cole. One of the vessels affiliated with the *Pee Dee* accompanied the *Motto* on the day of Thompson's rescue.

20 After William Cooley lost his family in the Indian attack on the New River in 1836, he served briefly as the keeper of the Cape Florida Light and, later, as a pilot to the *Motto*. *House Documents, Vol. 142, Reports of the Court of Claims*, 1861.

21 Other accounts of Cooley burying his family provide names of the persons with him. Thompson is not mentioned in these accounts.

22 Dr. D. Platts is mentioned in Jefferson B. Brown's, *Key West, the Old and the New*, (St. Augustine: The Record Company Printer and Publishers, 1912) as the victor in an election for the Key West City Council in 1836.

23 Captain Walker arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, from Key West aboard the U. S. mail schooner *Hope* on October 9, 1836. *New York Evening Post*, October 17, 1836.

24 Thompson had authored his "first hand" account while under the care of Dr. Ramsey. Other journals had republished the account by

November 17, 1836. See *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Baltimore), November 17, 1836.

25 James R. Pringle was the Charleston Collector of Customs from 1832 until his death in 1840. Earlier, he served one term as mayor of Charleston, and several terms in the state assembly and senate. See the entry in *Wikipedia* for James R. Pringle.

26 In January 1837, President Andrew Jackson was preparing to turn over the presidency to president-elect, Martin Van Buren, who began his term of office, March 4, 1837. Jackson was a Van Buren supporter.

27 Francis Wilkinson Pickens was a U.S. Congressman representing South Carolina from 1834-1843. Later, he became a strong supporter of secession and was serving as governor of South Carolina, the most rabid secessionist state, when the Civil War began in April 1861.

28 President Andrew Jackson died on June 8, 1845.

29 No link has been found to a newspaper story about the "first white man" on the Ocklawaha River in January-February 1837. There were, however, newspaper reports on the capture of a group of sixty armed blacks along that waterway in mid-January 1837, by Jim Boy, a Creek Indian who enjoyed a good relationship with whites. See *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Baltimore), January 27, 1837.

30 James Madison Hite Beale chaired U. S. House of Representative's Committee on Invalid Pensions in January 1837. Beale was a Jacksonian who served four terms in Congress. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, *1774-Present* (Washington, D.C.: United States Congress, 1998).

In 1837, there were two standing committees in the U. S. Congress, which exercised authority over military pensions: the Committee on Revolutionary War Pensions and the Committee on Invalid Pensions. As a veteran of the War of 1812, Thompson fell under the jurisdiction of the latter. *United States House of Representatives, Committee on Invalid Pensions, January 10, 1831-1946, Organization Authority Record,* National Archives, Washington, D. C.

31 Thomas Macdonough, Jr., was "the hero of Lake Champlain," and

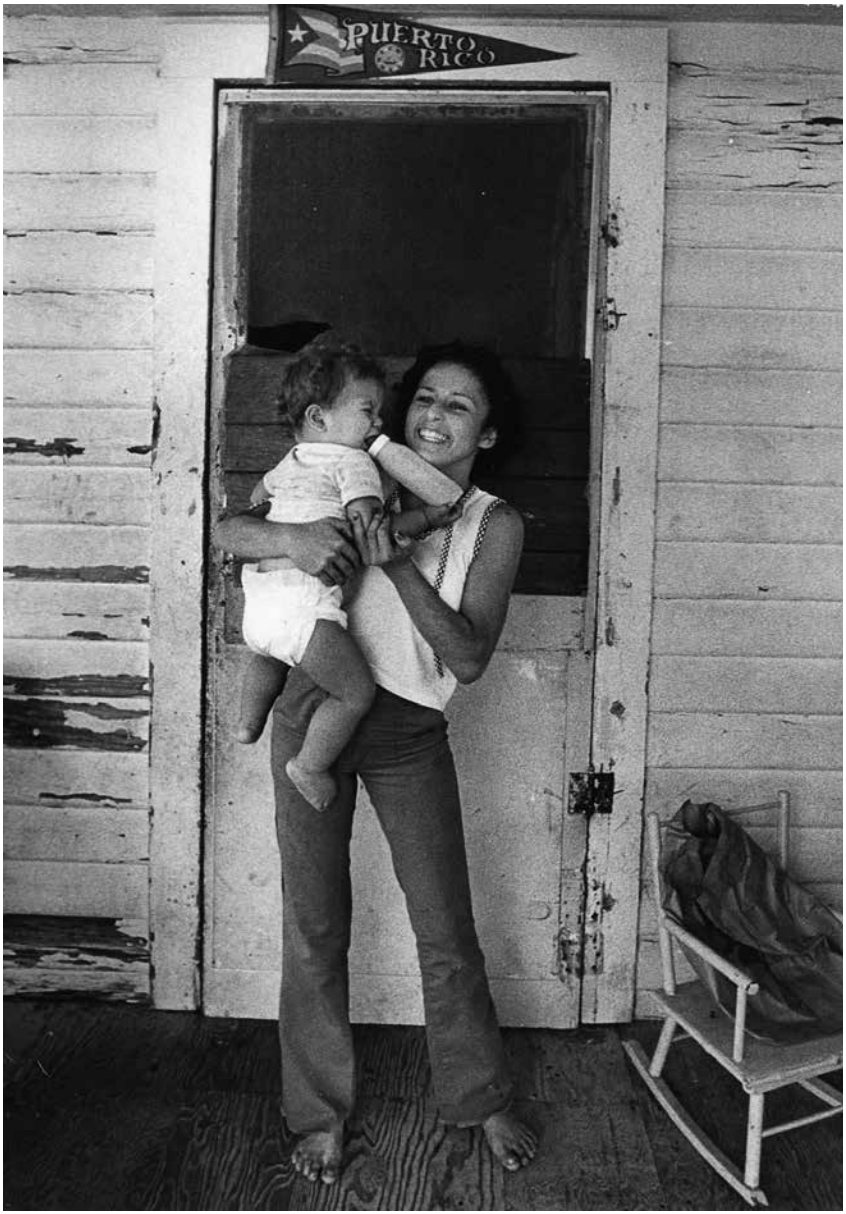
as Master Commandant, he led U. S. Naval forces in the battle. Macdonough later served as commander of several U. S. warships, including the USS *Constitution*. He died in 1825.

32 Charles Downing of St. Augustine was a delegate to the U. S. House of Representatives from Florida, serving in that body from March 1837 until March 1841. *Floridian and Advocate* (Tallahassee), February 18, 1837. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*.

33 Thompson was considered for the post of Assistant Keeper of the Dry Tortugas Lighthouse on the island of Garden Key off of the lower Florida Keys, but he was not selected owing to his poor physical condition. *Registers of Lighthouse Keepers, 1845-1912*. National Archives, Record Group 26, Microfilm, 1373.

34 *The Congressional Globe* 37 *of the Twenty-fourth Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 4, 18*, page 144.

35 *United State Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880*.



Noelia Gonzalez and her niece, Sylvia Gonzalez, pose in front of their Wynwood home, beneath a Puerto Rico pennant, December 23, 1979. Rill Reinke, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1994-370-3552.

Puerto Ricans in Greater Miami
1920-1960s

Victor Vazquez-Hernandez

On September 20, 2017, the Category Four Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, and its impact was catastrophic. Three thousand persons perished, while building damage measured in the millions of dollars, and power outages roiled the island for months afterwards. Puerto Rico was already reeling from Hurricane Irma a few weeks earlier and from declining economic conditions that brought the island to the precipice of bankruptcy.

Before and after these problems, many, but especially professionals and other college-trained Puerto Ricans, faced with diminishing opportunities, had chosen the well-worn path of migrating to the U. S. There are over five million Puerto Ricans living in the United States, with a concentration of 1.2 million in the State of Florida. Presently, there are 350,000 Puerto Ricans living in South Florida, with close to 100,000 of this number in Miami-Dade County.[1]

Using primary data gleaned from the United States Manuscripts Census for Miami, the Florida State mid-decennial Census, and other sources, this essay examines the earliest arrivals, settlement patterns, and labor participation of Puerto Ricans in Miami, the Magic City, and its environs into the decade of the 1960s.

The Puerto Rican diaspora to the continental United States and beyond reaches back to the nineteenth century. By the time of the Spanish-American War (1898), which was fought over the issue of Cuban independence, Puerto Ricans had already been living, along with other Spanish speak-

ers, in cities like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Key West, Tampa and cities elsewhere. Once the U. S. took control of the island of Puerto Rico in 1898, resulting from the Treaty of Paris, which concluded the Spanish-American War, Puerto Ricans began to emigrate in increasingly larger numbers. Cigar makers as well as farm laborers were prominent among the earliest migrants. The connections drawn within the U. S. centers of cigar manufacturing, due to the artisanal nature of their craft, helped to create solidarity and migrant routes among them. As soon as the U. S. military occupation of Puerto Rico ended with the passage of the Foraker Act of 1900, the newly instituted civilian government, under the direction of the U. S. appointed Governor Charles Allen, began to view out-migration as an answer to the displacement of workers seen as excess population. Thus began a governmental policy of emigration that would continue for most of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1902, more than 5,000 Puerto Rican men, women, and children were sent to Hawaii as farmworkers. Over the next two decades, thousands of additional Puerto Rican workers were recruited and sent to Arizona, New York, and other locations. In addition, port cities became an attraction for Puerto Ricans as commercial interests, particularly in sugar and tobacco, expanded maritime routes, most significantly to New York City, but also to Key West and Tampa. It was these trade routes that Puerto Ricans followed to Florida.[2]

How did Miami become a hub for the Puerto Rican diaspora? What was the particular attraction of the Magic City for these migrants? The study of this migration provides a glimpse of the migratory patterns that include circular and transnational migration.

Early Migration, 1920s

Miami was one of America's fastest growing cites in the 1910s. A few of those residents who settled in the Magic City hailed from Puerto Rico. Margarita Peacock, the wife of Beverly Peacock, was then a 27 year-old mother of four. It is not clear when she and her husband arrived in Dade County, but they lived there as early as the 1920s. Beverly Peacock was president of Peacock Rice Company, and he and his family resided in the nascent Shenandoah neighborhood southwest of downtown. This family stands in sharp contrast to that of another Puerto Rican family then living in the Redlands in Deep South Dade County. Pancha (Francisca) Langdon and her son Angel Lopez. Langdon was a 45 year-old widow who worked as a servant with a private family. Her son Angel worked as a laborer on a fruit farm. These two families lived different lives in a racially segregated town. The Peacocks were listed as "white" while Langdon and her son were listed as "black" in the Federal Census.[3]

Boricuas (Puerto Ricans) are drawn to the Magic City

The 1920s and 1930s proved to be an important decade for the arrival of Puerto Ricans in Miami. The advent of commercial aviation, led by the rise of Pan American Airways, created travel opportunities for Islanders and, as it turned out, employment possibilities as well for arriving Puerto Ricans. As early as 1929, Pan Am Airways, which included a seaplane operation out of Coconut Grove's Dinner Key, was carrying Puerto Ricans to Miami. The flight was challenging since it flew first from San Juan to Belize, and then on to Managua, Nicaragua before arriving in Miami.



Pan Am publicity photo of La Fortaleza, San Juan, Puerto Rico, circa 1965. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-13937.

Not all Puerto Ricans came directly from the Island to Miami. Many, in fact, first touched down in cities like New York before moving to Miami. Among those in this category was Frank Alonso, a former cigar maker who became a shoe repairer in Miami. Alonso was born in San Juan, Puerto

Rico, in 1888. He migrated to New York in the early twentieth century, where he plied his trade as a cigar maker until the early 1930s. Like many cigar makers of his time, Alonso became expendable with the advent of the cigar making machine in the 1920s, which instituted a shift in the production of cigars from a craft driven by predominantly skilled males to one later dominated by unskilled female laborers. Many, like Alonso, eventually found themselves removed from the business of cigar making. By 1932, Frank Alonso, his wife, and children were living in Miami and operating a shoe repair shop. Alonso resided at 54 N. E. 14th Street, while his shop stood across the street at 63 N. E. 14th Street. For twenty years, until his death in 1952, Alonso plied his trade as a shoe repairer, and was likely one of the first Puerto Ricans to settle in that neighborhood one mile north of downtown Miami.[4]

J. Lawrence Gutierrez, who arrived in Miami in 1923, was another example of those Puerto Ricans who came directly to Miami in that era. By 1930, the 21-year old was married and working as a clerk with Pan American Airways. He and his bride resided at 1274 N. W. 39th Street on the edge of the Allapattah neighborhood. Throughout the 1930s, Gutierrez continued to work with the airline as a traffic representative. By 1934, Gutierrez' brother Benito had joined him in Miami and was employed as a commercial artist; at that time, all three family members lived at 121 N. W. 7th Avenue.[5]

White collar workers also joined the movement of Puerto Ricans to Miami. One migrant who fit that profile was Ramon Lamberty, who worked at the Corporate Building in downtown Miami and lived nearby at 440 N. W. 5th Street. The census listed Lamberty as having arrived in 1923.[6]

To illustrate further the diversity of Puerto Ricans in Mi-

ami in the 1930s, there is the example of Emma Vallares, a 52-year old woman listed as "negro" in the census. She worked (and presumably lived) as a servant in a private home at 319 S. W. 22nd Street. Inocencio Rivera, a 50 year old widower who worked for a Cuban Engineer and his family at 1043 N. W. 13th Avenue, served in a similar capacity. The census also found three Puerto Ricans incarcerated in the Dade County Jail. They included Jose Alfonso, listed as "white," and a 28-year old, who had arrived in the U. S. in 1927; Thomas Perez, 30 years old, who was listed as "negro." Perez arrived in the U. S. in 1919. J. Rodriguez (no first name was given) was the third, who was also listed as a "white" 25 year-old, who had arrived in Miami in 1918. No additional information appeared in the census report on the three.[7]

By the middle of the 1930s, as the economic situation deteriorated on the island, amid the Great Depression, the exodus of Puerto Ricans to the U. S., which had slowed in the late 1920s-early 1930s, resumed. Florida appeared primed to welcome and encourage Puerto Ricans to move there. An important reason for this development stemmed from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's appointment in 1933 of Robert H. Gore, a part time Floridian, as Governor of the island of Puerto Rico. Gore was a wealthy newspaper man from the Midwest who spent his winters in Fort Lauderdale. From the beginning of his tenure in Puerto Rico, Governor Gore touted Florida as an excellent place to send unemployed Puerto Rican laborers. Indeed, there was a need at the time for workers in the Sunshine State, especially in agriculture. Letters written to Governor Gore during his tenure made it evident that islanders were aware of his promotion of Florida, and many indicated their willingness to relocate.[8]

In a letter to President Roosevelt, Gore expressed his excitement with his appointment as governor of the island: "I

want to go to Porto Rico (sic) as governor general because it gives me the opportunity to do some real constructive work for this country and for the people of those Islands." Gore was following in the steps of previous American governors who called for mass migration as a way to address the high unemployment and poverty rates of Puerto Ricans:

> "It seems to me advisable that we should work with Florida to secure land for the settlement of the people of Puerto Rico. By putting them together on the land in large communities they will be homogenous and they will be helpful to each other. I would suggest that we take units with ten families--that these ten families work in common interest as a community until each has a substantial home on an acreage sufficient to maintain that family, and to give a feeling of independence for the rising generations"[9]

Unemployed Puerto Ricans were not the only islanders who became interested in the prospects of Florida during this period. Island industrialists and owners of major sugar plantations who began looking to invest overseas found in Florida a primary venue for their capital. Indeed, in the 1930s, Puerto Rican investors began purchasing land South of Lake Okeechobee in Palm Beach County for agricultural development.[10] The group included sugar barons like Pedro Juan Serralles, owner of the Don Q rums, Jacobo Cabasa, Adalberto Roig, Asuncion Lluveras, and the Miguel Angel Garcia Mendez and Ramirez de Arrellano families, who were among the largest sugar landowners of western Puerto Rico and who were increasingly sold on the idea of investing in Florida, where land was considered inexpensive.[11]

In the 1940s, Miami and South Florida became ever more attractive for Puerto Ricans. Reasons for this devel-

opment included the return of military servicemen from the island who had been stationed in the city and surrounding region in World War II and who found the environment attractive, as did additional wealthy Puerto Rican investors, farm laborers, garment workers, and those attracted to employment in the burgeoning hotel industry. Between 1940 and 1960, the Puerto Rican population in Miami increased from less than 200 to more than 30,000. The numbers of Puerto Ricans elsewhere in Florida grew dramatically, too, rising to almost 47, 000 by 1970.

That aforementioned Puerto Rican sugar barons wielded an increasingly more significant impact on the development of South Florida in the early postwar era is evidenced by an article in the October 14, 1945 edition of *El Mundo*, one of the Puerto Rico's major newspapers. The journal highlighted the purchase of 80,000 acres of land in the western part of West Palm Beach for more than five million dollars of Puerto Rican private capital. As noted, Puerto Rican investors had already established a sugar mill in the mid-1930s in that region called Central Fellesmore, located south of Lake Okeechobee and in the deep western sector of Palm Beach County. The list of investors in the mill read like a who's who of the island's richest landowners and industrialists, and included the Roig family of Humacao, as well as the Ferre and Serralles families of Ponce. Other Puerto Rican investors included the Garcia Mendez brothers; the Ramirez family of Mayaguez; Esteban Mason; M. Tennant, Jacobo Cabasa, Guillermo Cabrera, Luis A. Serrano, Rafael Martinez Dominguez, Rafael H. Lopez, Aurea Garcia, Guillermo Schuck, "La Succesion Serralles," the doctors Antonio and Rafael Muniz, and other Puerto Ricans and Anglos. The land was purchased not only for the cultivation of sugar, but also for cattle grazing and other agricultural products, as in-

dicated by Juan B. Garcia Mendez, a member of the political clan of the island. Mendez had been living in Miami for some time and had helped to create the Okeechobee Growers Association, with headquarters in the Congress Building in downtown Miami. Garcia Mendez was a strong proponent of Puerto Rican investment in Florida. Ultimately the Fellesmore property produced sugar for at least twelve years before its sale.[13]

In addition to capital investments in the Everglades and other parts of southeast Florida, Puerto Rican investors purchased prime real estate in Miami. Another article in an edition of *El Mundo*, published later in 1945, explained that at least $1.3 million dollars had been spent by these investors for office and apartment buildings as well as hotels. One of the principles here was the Serralles family, whose partirarch, Pedro Juan Serralles, Jr., himself a sugar planter, founded, in 1945, the Pan American Bank of Miami in the city's thriving downtown sector after he found it difficult to cash a check because no one spoke Spanish, prompting a friend to suggest that only way to get a check cashed was to start his own bank. The Pan American Bank of Miami billed itself as "the first Spanish-speaking bank in Miami." A few years after the institution's founding, Serralles moved his bank from the towering Security Building to a handsome new four-story building he constructed on Southeast Third Avenue just south of E. Flagler Street in another sector of downtown Miami. The bank building was also the venue for many professional offices.[14]

In the mid-1940s, according to *El Mundo*, Puerto Ricans who traveled between Miami and the island usually stayed in the Magic City for brief periods. Some owned homes in Miami. It was estimated that at that time Puerto Ricans owned more than 100 homes in Miami valued at between

$10,000.00 and $20,000.00 dollars each. Many of these families, including the Ferres, whose son Maurice would become the first Hispanic mayor of Miami, settled south of downtown Miami in the late 1940s. Along with some of the other Puerto Rican investors and bankers, they created a neighborhood they called "Little San Juan" on leafy Brickell Avenue. Meanwhile, the working-class Puerto Rican population of the city was estimated at approximately 500 persons.[15]

Another category of Puerto Rican migrant in Miami and other parts of Florida was the farm worker. As early as the 1930s, Puerto Ricans had been coming to Florida to work in agriculture, but after World War II they began arriving in larger numbers. By 1953, Puerto Rican farm workers in Florida represented a steady stream of the state's agricultural labor force. They came through the Migration Division of Puerto Rico's Department of Labor, which created a contract farm worker program that sent thousands of Puerto Ricans to farms in the United States, especially Florida. In 1953, *El Mundo* reported that there were 3,000 Puerto Rican farmworkers in the state. This number represented 25 percent of the farm workers hired for work in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties. Many worked on farms throughout south Dade County. In 1953, for instance, one tomato farm in the South Dade community of Princeton hired 407 Puerto Rican laborers. Many of these farm workers returned to the Island after their contracts expired or traveled to other parts of the U. S. where their respective growing seasons began after the Florida season ended.[16]

Increasingly greater numbers of migrants moved to the City of Miami, especially to Wynwood, a Twenties-era community with a strong blue collar base, by the early post World War II era. Wynwood lies three miles north of downtown

Miami. They were drawn there primarily by the prospect of employment in that sector's growing garment industry. Others worked in the burgeoning hotel industry in Miami and Miami Beach. By the early 1950s, newspaper articles were referring to the growing Puerto Rican "ghetto" in Miami. On February 18, 1952, a *Miami Herald* article, translated and re-published in *El Mundo*, referenced former Puerto Rican farm workers then living in squalid conditions in that neighborhood.[17]



Garment District factories around N.W 5th Avenue and 24th and 25th Streets, June 20, 1965. Bill Tyler, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-6310.



Garment workers, circa 1965. Pat Canova, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-6311.

As City of Miami Police Chief Walter Headley observed in 1954, "weekly planeloads of Puerto Rican laborers were being brought here for farm work. When these workers learned that their life and earnings in the field was (sic) not what they expected or when they lost their jobs, they came to downtown Miami. Often they found that their new employment led to higher salaries and better working conditions."[18] Additionally, moving to Miami allowed these migrants to bring their families. This process accounts for the beginnings of Miami's Puerto Rican enclave of Wynwood.[19]

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, garment manufacturers from the North began relocating to the South, particularly to Wynwood as well as to Hialeah in northwest Dade. While garment factories in cities like New York often employed hundreds of workers, those in Miami tended to hire 60 or fewer workers each.[20]

Puerto Ricans made up 40 percent of all garment workers in New York City and New Jersey. In the 1950s, that percentage was almost the same for Miami. Around this time, two Puerto Rican women, Dorothy "Dottie" Quintana and Dr. Alicia S. Baro, who would become leaders of the community in subsequent decades moved to Miami from New York City. Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, in 1909, Dorothy Quintana moved to New York with her mother and brothers in 1927. She lived in the city until 1950, when she moved to Miami with her husband Efrain and their daughter. She moved to Wynwood in 1957, where she lived until her death in 2010 at age 101. Dottie, as she was known to all, was a firebrand organizer and defender of that community. She also worked in the garment factories of Wynwood. Any officeholder or candidate for an office that included Wynwood was expected to "cultivate" Dottie.[21]

Born in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico in 1919, Dr. Baro moved with her family to New York City in the 1930s. She eventually received a bachelor's degree from the City University of New York's Hunter College and in 1951, moved to Miami with her husband Jose Antonio where they lived until her death in 2012. Both Quintana and Dr. Baro were involved in the struggles and evolution of Puerto Ricans in Miami for more than 50 years. Many of the Puerto Rican organizations in the city like ASPIRA Inc. of Florida, which is part of a national Latino leadership organization, and the Miami Chapter of National Conference of Puerto Rican Women (NACOPRW), were incubated in Wynwood, with Dr. Baro instrumental in their creation. The oldest of these groups, the Organizacion de Democratas Puertorriqueños/ Organization Puerto Rican Democrats (ODP), was founded in 1955 to address the civil rights of Puerto Rican farm workers in Homestead. The ODP's challenges were great since working and living conditions for these laborers were often horrific.[22]



Alicia Baro, 1989. Debra Lex, photographer. Impact (Community Coalition for Women's History) Photographic Portraits, HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-337-1.

In the meantime, as the number of Puerto Rican residents of Wynwood grew, the neighborhood took on the trappings of a typical Puerto Rican community, and, in fact, was referred to as "Little San Juan" by the 1960s and after. The main street, N. W. 2nd Avenue, was the locale for San Juan Bautista, a Catholic Church (and a mission church of the nearby Corpus Christi congregation), bearing the Spanish name for the island of Puerto Rico, and several small "mom and pop" owned and operated businesses, including a laundromat and eatery, and a bodega, which carried a wide array of foods and other goods. Additionally, the Buena Vista Elementary School, which opened on the same thoroughfare in the mid-1920s, became by the 1960s, one of the first bilingual schools in the county, reflective of the pervasiveness of Spanish in the neighborhood. The community's large city park, initially known as Wyndwood Park, was renamed in the 1970s Roberto Clemente Park for the great Puerto Rican baseball player who lost his life on a mercy mission to earthquake-racked Nicaragua in 1972. Clemente's widow and children attended the dedication.[23]

Vocal demands by residents of Little San Juan for a social services center, particularly one catering to the elderly, in the neighborhood resulted in the construction, by the end of the 1960s, of the Eugenio Maria De Hostos center on a large corner lot at N.W. 2nd Avenue and 29th Street. The center's namesake was a prominent 19th century advocate of Puerto Rican independence. Standing across the street from the complex was the Borinquen health clinic, its name derived from the Native American label for the island of Puerto Rico.



Linda Guzman, Soraida Rivera (age 3), and Yolanda Rivera walking in a Wynwood neighborhood, December 23, 1979. Bill Reinke, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1994-370-3549.



Fidel Alvarez and Anita Medina stroll down a Wynwood street, by the Discoteca Borinquen, December 23, 1979. Bill Reinke, photographer. Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami Museum, 1994-370-3550.

Another aspect of the growing Puerto Rican presence in mid-twentieth century Miami was found in the spiritual realm. In 1954, downtown Miami's Gesu Catholic Church created a "Spanish Mission" for its Spanish-speaking parishioners, many of whom were Puerto Ricans. Gesu's priestly staff received warm receptions from the Hispanics who were beneficiaries of their assistance. Parish records indicated that four to five Puerto Ricans visited the rectory daily for advice and spiritual assistance. The Gesu parish school provided a tuition-free education, as well as a complimentary hot lunch, to many Puerto Rican students. A parish bus delivered these children to school each morning. Two school buses delivered Puerto Rican children to Mass every Sunday. Afterwards, they received instruction in catechism by dedicated lay workers. The Gesu House Diary indicated that this outreach with the children "cemented to the church 150 Puerto Rican families who but a few years before were frustrated in their poverty and were induced to let their children attend Protestant Sunday schools." By the end of 1954, sixty delayed Baptisms had been performed, and thirty-five marriages validated among Gesu's Puerto Rican parishioners. As historian Paul S. George has observed in *The Gesu in Miami, A Story of God's People in a Subtropical Metropolis, 1896-2006*, "the foundation had been laid for Gesu's pre-eminent role in rendering assistance to a huge wave of Cubans who would begin fleeing that island nation five years later."[24]

Another impact of the growth of the Puerto Rican diaspora in Miami was felt politically. In the 1950s and 1960s, Puerto Ricans were considered an important voting bloc because they were U. S. citizens.[25] In 1967, Maurice Ferre, the son of one of the investment families in Miami, was elected a Florida State Representative. In a special election

in 1972, he was elected the first Hispanic Mayor of the City of Miami. Ferre's election opened the door for other Latino politicians, especially for Cubans, who followed him as mayor. Also, the ODP continued to play a key role in the electoral arena assisting other Puerto Rican and Cuban politicians, like Raul Martinez, the future mayor of Hialeah, who was a member of the organization, in their successful political campaigns.[26]



Maurice Ferre and his wife, Mercedes Ferre, at the Dade County Courthouse. November 3, 1970. Miami News Collection, Joe Rimkus, photographer. HistoryMiami Museum, 1989-011-20676.

In the final decades of the twentieth century, Wynwood's old Puerto Rican neighborhood became more ethnically and racially diverse. Yet, the Puerto Rican influence remained strong, as evidenced by the opening of two public schools named for Puerto Ricans, one a longtime educator in the neighborhood, the other a Puerto Rican statesman and writer. Other developments pointing to the lingering imprint of Puerto Ricans in Wynwood are seen in the name of the clubhouse in Roberto Clemente Park, as well as a portion of N. W. 2nd Avenue, with both named for Dorothy Quintana.[27]

While Puerto Ricans continued to migrate to Miami and South Florida, a decline, by the 1970s, in opportunities here for farm work and in the garment industry limited the job opportunities for both these groups. This fact coupled with the opening of inexpensive real estate and job opportunities in Central Florida, with the expansion of the National Aeronautics Space Agency (NASA) in the 1960s and thereafter, and the construction of Walt Disney theme parks, as well as other attractions, provided a strong incentive for Puerto Rican migrants to settle in communities around Central Florida bypassing the Miami area.

Conclusion

The Puerto Rican presence in Florida continues to grow even with the slowdown in the rate of migration by these islanders to Greater Miami. What is clear is that Puerto Ricans born on the island and those born in the Diaspora have brought with them a diversity of histories and cultural traits and blended them with the diverse Anglo, African-American and other Caribbean and Latino cultures "forged out of divergent experiences of race, gender, class and migration."[28] There is still much work to be undertaken in the realm of the history of this diaspora. As this essay demonstrates, by employing census

data and other primary and secondary sources (including oral histories), a better connection can be made among the different waves of migration and community building experiences of this diaspora in Miami and in Florida. This is particularly true for understanding the early migration of Puerto Ricans. This article has identified some of the key trends in this migration; hopefully more light will be shined on the different groups of Puerto Rican pioneers who have come to Florida.

Endnotes

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Boricua is a term of endearment that Puerto Ricans use to self-identify. It is derived from the word Boriken, which is the term used by the Tainos, the native population that inhabited the island when the Spaniards began their colonization there in 1508. Tampeños is the term used by Spanish speakers from Tampa to identify themselves.

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5 United States 14th Federal Census, Manuscript, Enumerator District No. 1346, Sheet 2; *Polk's Miami (Dade County, Fla.) City Directory*, 1935 (Jacksonville: R. L. Polk & Co., 1935), 37.

6 United States 14th Federal Census, Manuscript, Enumerator District No. 1346, Sheet 12.

7 United States 14th Federal Census, Manuscript, Enumerator District No. 1347, Sheet No. 48; Enumerator District No. 1356, Sheet 10B; United States 15th Federal Census, Manuscript, Enumerator

District No. 1346, Sheet 12. United States 15th Federal Census, Manuscript, Enumerator District No. 1363, Sheet No. 5A

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9 Paul A. Gore, *Past the Edge of Poverty: A Biography of Robert Hayes Gore, Sr.* (Chicago: R. H. Gore, Publisher, 1990), 148-49.

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14 Obituary, *Orlando Sentinel*, August 23, 1985; *Miami Herald*, August 23, 1985; *Miami News*, August 23, 1985.

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16 No Author, "There is a Puerto Rican Ghetto in Miami—50 farm workers live in two houses," *El Mundo*, February 16, 1952.

17 Ibid.

18 Paul S. George, *The Gesu in Miami, A Story of God's People in a Subtropical Metropolis, 1896-2006*, (Miami: Fort Dallas Press, 2006), 105.

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