South Florida History
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Jan Rosenberg is a free lance folkorist who has done extensive research in the south Florida area. Jan just recently completed the Museum sponsored Jewish traditional arts field work.

On the Cover: Robert James Rudd stands amidst the cypress poles that are essential to the practice of his craft. His story is the premiere article in our occasional South Florida Traditions series, that will explore our region's diverse folklife. *See page 10.*

South Florida History
MAGAZINE

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Editor's Notes

by Tim Schmand

In an earlier professional incarnation, between being a newspaper boy and a doorman on Bourbon Street, I was a janitor. The job was ideal. Four hours of work - that I could finish in two, a wage much higher than minimum, and a routine so established that I could set my working self on auto-pilot and allow my mind to travel where ever it chose. And, I suppose, because I was being tossed around by the hormones of adolescence - the places to which my mind traveled were more mysterious and exotic than any place could possibly be. They were named Mozambique... Katmandu... Madagascar. Names whose syllables spoke of intrigue, adventure or unsurpassed beauty. Knowing now what I have learned by putting this issue together there are more names that could have been added to my list: The Bottom... Windwardside... Saba... Richard Shrout's article about the island nation of Saba combines history, intrigue and fine writing.

In addition to adding new names to my list of exotica Richard's article exploring Saba allowed us to achieve one of the goals that we set for ourselves at *South Florida History Magazine*. We have leapt off the Florida penninsula and begun to explore the people and places in the Caribbean Basin. We will continue to do so in the future.

A History Update

I wish that I could report that history is a process where people of good intention set out across time to create the present. Unfortunately, my research indicates that has not been the case. Throughout history there have been people whose goals were questionable and whose methods we abhor. In this issue of *SFHM,* Through the Lens features infamous people and places from our region's past. I hope you enjoy it.

Getting the Dirt

In downtown Miami, less than three blocks from the Museum, is an innocuous looking pile of dirt - that represents one of the Education Department's best teaching tools. In late Fall of 1988, Metro-Dade Archaeologist Bob Carr advised members of the Museum staff that the dirt from an archaeological site that faced imminent development was available to be moved. While this is not normally done; in cases where the sites will be completely destroyed by construction, moving the dirt is a last resort method of extracting artifacts, and hence information about the site. Its called salvage archaeology.

On February 10, 1989, Bob Carr and Museum staffer Bill Steele went out to the site and supervised the loading and transportation of the materials. Since that date approximately 300 school children and adults have visited the site and participated in a "real" archaeological dig.

In addition to being introduced to the archaeological method by trained Museum staff, participants are taken through the collections storage area of the Museum and shown how the organization cares for and exhibits this material.

The materials retrieved from the site have enabled the staff to make certain assumptions about the people who lived there. The materials found include deer bone, projectile points, decorated pottery shards, shell tools, alligator bone and gar fish bone.

These materials indicate that the site is between two and three thousand years old and it was occupied by the people we call the Tequesta. The camp was situated on an island in the Everglades and the inhabitants were almost totally dependant on the resources of the Glades for their livelihood.

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THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF SABA

by Richard Neil Shrout

Saba, a strangely mysterious island hidden in the Caribbean east of the Virgin Islands in the Netherlands Antilles, is so unusual that the thousand tourists each year who find it more or less by accident think they've discovered a paradise out-of-time, like Shangri-La, Bali-Hi, a Brigadoon.

Imagine a five-square mile Caribbean island with no beaches, no lakes, no rivers, but with spectacular mountains which nestle quaint, immaculate Dutch-type villages with exotic names such as Hell's Gate, Windwardside, and The Bottom. Imagine the shortest airstrip in the world, where merely landing will be one of the greatest thrills of your vacation. Imagine a thousand English-speaking inhabitants who wave as you pass on a hair-pin curve road which practically goes straight up or down so cars never get out of second gear — and you've imagined Saba.

Naturally such a unique place has a fascinating history, with many mysteries.

Columbus sailed past Saba on November 13, 1493, and didn't know what to make of it. It seemed a useless protuberance from the sea, for there was no beach, no shore, no place to land. He sailed on and put men ashore at the islands Nevis, St. Kitts, and St. Eustatius.

Columbus sailed past Saba on November 13, 1493, and didn't know what to make of it. It seemed a useless protuberance from the sea, for there was no beach, no shore, no place to land.

But this island (which travel writers call the Green Gumdrop and its modern inhabitants call the Unspoiled Queen) must have caught the fancy of the great explorer, for he named it "St. Christopher." In 1500, Juan de la Cosa's *Mapamundi* was published, and on that map Saba is indicated as St. Christopher. However, that name was later given to the island we know as St. Kitts, a variation of St. Christopher. It would be sometime before the Windward Islands of the Dutch West Indies got their name straightened out. Seamen had few maps so it was inevitable they changed the names around.

Mystery of Its Name

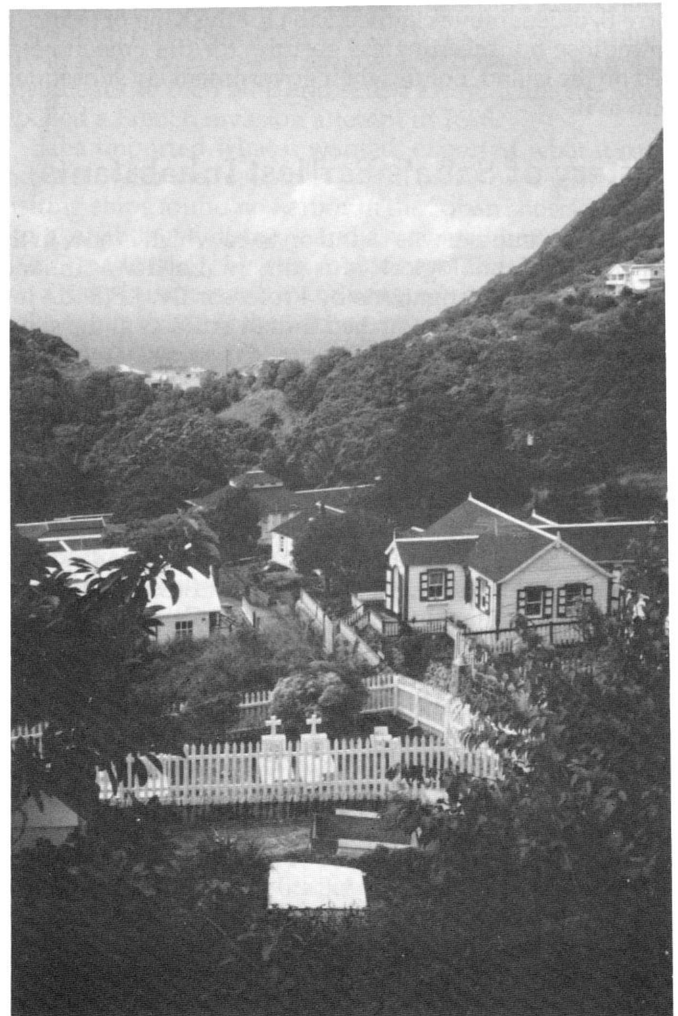
Saba's first mystery is how it got its name. Theories abound, but no one knows for sure. The Spanish thought it was from Sabado, meaning Saturday, when they assumed the island was discovered, However, November 13, 1493, was a Wednesday, so that explanation cannot be true.

The French theorized the name came from the French sabot, meaning wooden shoe, because seen from the northeast they fancied the island resembled a wooden shoe. There is nothing factual to recommend this ingenious explanation.

The most colorful explanation is based on the fact that "Saba" is a form of "Sheba." Author Bjorn Landstrom, in his 1966 book, *Columbus*, suggests this was part of Columbus' shrewd commercial venture. The journals of Columbus' son, Ferdinand, recount that Columbus had promised both his Spanish patrons at home and his crew at sea that they would be repaid when they reached the fabled land of the Queen of Sheba.

According to this unconfirmed story, when Columbus captured some Indians on Guadeloupe and Nevis, he asked them the names of the small islands he saw. When they called one of them "Sobo," he promptly told his crew that the Indians were merely mispronouncing "Saba," or "Sheba."

While it is true many geographical locations were named from phonetic spellings of Indian words, it is unlikely that the Indians had ever heard of Sheba. It is clearly not a Carib Indian name, for according to Father Raymond Breton, a French missionary, the Carib name for the island was Amonhana, and no one knows what that meant. On the other hand the Arawak Indian word *siba* means "rock", which



Houses reflecting Dutch influence in the town of Windwardside. Note the small family graveyard in foreground.

certainly describes Saba as seen from the sea. The mystery of Saba's name is still unsolved.

The earliest mention of "Saba" was in 1596. The ship's log of the voyage of Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins recorded: "The next morning (November 4) we saw the islands of Montserrat, Redonda, Estazia(St. Eustatius, known as Statia), St. Christopher(St. Kitts), and Saba."

An anonymous traveler recommended in a 1604 account that Saba be used a landmark on the way from Guadaloupe to San Juan, Puerto Rico. All these references are from Spanish archives, but the earliest mention of Saba by a Dutch source was on September 28, 1624, when Pieter Schouten, sailing from Jamaica to Nevis, mentioned sailing past Saba. On July 17, 1626, Piet Heyn, conqueror of the Silverfleet, reported he sighted St. Eustatius and Saba.

Visiting ships found no harbor in the Saban shoreline. They had to anchor at a distance and send small boats to shore in waters made tricky by gusty winds and strange currents.

Neither Schouten or Heyn landed on the island, however. Saba seemed impenetrable, impassable, and impossible to explore or colonize. Some shipwrecked Englishmen managed to reach Saba in a small boat in 1632, where they found plenty of fruit trees but no people. In 1635, French pirate Pierre B. d'Esnambuc claimed Saba for the King of France in a grandiose but meaningless gesture, for the French never lived on the island, nor did their government lay subsequent claim to it.

Mystery of Saba's Earliest Inhabitants

In 1858 a stone axe was found on Saba which is now in the Netherlands Ethnological Museum in Leyden, Holland. Archeological investigations by Professor Dr. J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong in 1923 unearthed Indian artifacts at the site of present-day villages (The Bottom, St. Johns, and Windwardside).

Although pottery shards are too small to be reconstructed, stone pestles and chisels, hatchets and household ornaments made of shells have been found. The earliest inhabitants also used fish bones and crab pincers as tools.

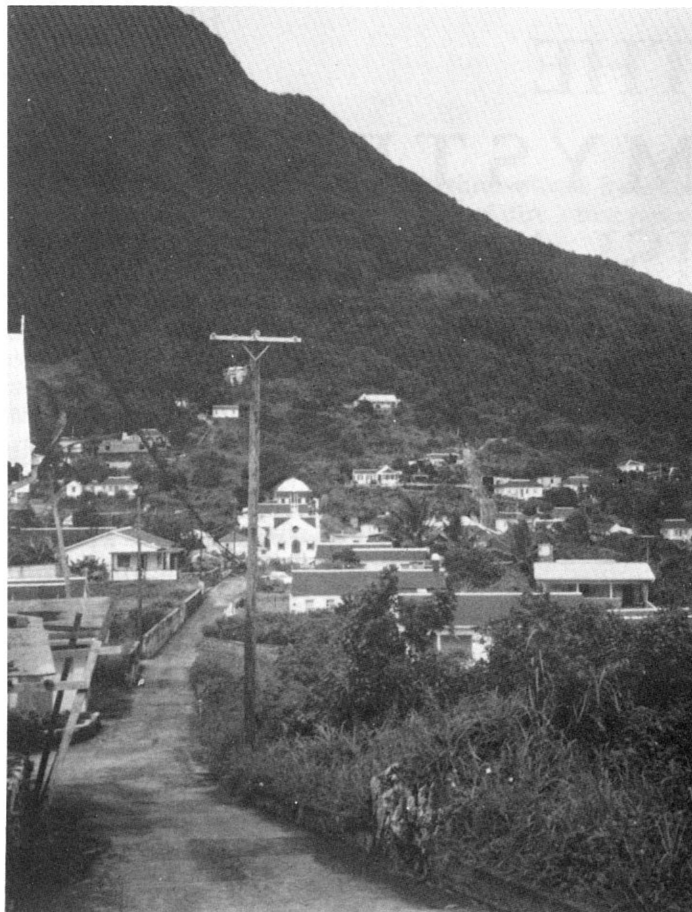
Pottery shards found at The Bottom can be dated 800 to 1,000 A.D. Some Indian artifacts are on display today at the little Historical Museum in Saba. All studies confirm these artifacts to be similar to those made by the Carib Indians, and no other tribe.

One mystery is: Where did the Caribs on Saba come from? It is known that in 1509, when the Spaniards began the colonization of Puerto Rico, one-third of the Indian population there moved to a smaller island in the region. Perhaps some made it to Saba.

Another mystery is: Where did they go? What happened to them? Every account of early explorers declared the island to be uninhabited.

Mystery of Its Exploration

The Dutch had their eyes on little Saba. They occupied the island of St. Maarten in 1631 as a supply station midway between New Netherlands (the New York area), and New Holland, their colony in Brazil. A Spanish naval base was in nearby Puerto Rico, however, and the Spaniards drove them away two years later. The Hollanders settled Curacao in 1634 and St. Eustatius in 1636.



"The Road" leading into Windwardside.

Nearby Saba provided excellent fishing waters which could supply the people of Statia (St. Eustatius) with an abundance of fish, so the Dutch finally attempted to colonize it. After an arduous climb they reached a fertile valley where they could cultivate vegetables, and some Dutch and English families from Statia settled there. A small village was built near Tent Bay, where they lived for 11 years.

When unwelcome visitors came ashore and tried to climb up, the Sabans would knock out the props under the platforms and the boulders would tumble down.

It was not an easy life. There were no mountain streams, no rivers, no lakes; in short, no drinking water. (There are three springs on Saba but all are undrinkable.) Digging wells was out of the question. They built cisterns to collect rain water, just as did settlers in Key West. Remains of their cisterns can still be found in Tent Bay.

In 1851 the village was destroyed by a landslide. After that, people preferred to live higher up on the island and came to live in The Valley which eventually became the government headquarters. Today this town is known as The Bottom. The name is one of the minor mysteries of Saba, which is the only place in the world where you go up to get to The Bottom.

Old Booby Hill's rocky coastline provides an indication of the treacherous shores surrounding Saba.

The town's Dutch name was Botte or "bowl", which became Anglicized to "bottom." Many travel books state it lies in the bowl of the crater of an extinct volcano, but this is untrue. The volcano which formed the island has been extinct for over 5,000 years, and latest geological studies cannot locate the crater.

Hassell, who had no technical training, ignored Dutch experts who said a road could not be built anywhere on the mountainous island. He took a correspondence course in engineering and persuaded his fellow islanders to help him construct the impossible road.

The Mystery of Saba's Language

Ostensibly Dutch, English has always been the common language of Saba. As far back as 1659, Sabans requested an English-speaking pastor. At that time, there were only 57 Dutchmen and 54 Englishmen, Scots and Irishmen living there.

Part of the explanation is the Dutch tendency everywhere to adopt the language of others. Dutch has never become the language of the people in a single Dutch colony. When they took over Spanish colonies, the language remained Spanish. French colonies retained French. The Sabans preferred English.

In addition, the English took the island in 1665 and moved the Dutch Settlers to St. Maarte, where life was easier by far.

It is a mystery why everyone wanted to fight over little Saba. During the war of 1672, Holland fought against both France and England, and the English took possession of the island and stayed until 1679. The Sabans, to whom nationality meant nothing, got tired of being constantly attacked by the French and the English. They wanted to be left alone, and they devised a way to insure it.

Mysterious Defenses

They built wooden platforms supported by props over the cliffs and in strategic places over ravines and gullies and piled large rocks on them. When unwelcome visitors came ashore and tried to climb up, the Sabans would knock out the props under the platforms and the boulders would tumble down. Any intruders who survived such avalanches quickly rowed back to their ship and sailed away. Thus the Sabans repelled a French invasion attempt in 1698.

Saba imported what it wanted, exported what it could, and dealt with the rest of the world on its own terms. Visiting ships found no harbor in the Saban shoreline. They had to anchor at a distance and send small boats to shore in waters made tricky by gusty winds and strange currents. It was a risky business and many boats were dashed against the rocks or capsized. If the Sabans recognized a trading ship, they would come out in small boats to bring goods or a visitor ashore. If they didn't welcome the visitor, they simply didn't come to assist. The visitor had little choice but to sail away.

The 1700s brought a better life to Saba, and it actually became the most prosperous of the three windward islands. Plantations produced enough sugarcane and coffee to export, and cotton was made into stockings, gloves, and hammocks.

All travel writers compare it to landing on the deck of an aircraft carrier, but that is a slight exaggeration. It is a trifle longer—all of 438 yards.

Of course there were slaves on Saba, as elsewhere, but with some differences. Whites on Saba always outnumbered blacks (today the population is about evenly divided) but they treated their slaves differently than anywhere else, for on Saba the whites and blacks worked side by side in the fields. In 1715, 512 people lived on Saba and 176 of those were slaves.

A few details of Saban daily life at this time are known from the writings of a Dominican priest and author, Jean Baptiste Labat, who visited Saba at Ladder Bay on April 27, 1701. He was amazed by the unique Saban step roads.

View of Upper Hells Gate. Level area in the middle of this photograph is the Flat Point Airport.

Mystery of the Step Roads

There scarcely is a level space on the island. Dwellings are on steep mountainsides. Roads for horses or carriages were impossible to find on Saba; indeed, even footpaths had to be different on Saba. They built a mind-boggling transportation system of step roads — steps cut into the mountainside — to connect the villages of the island, which is only seven and a half nautical miles in circumference.

In his book *Noveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amerique*, Labat described the step roads as "a zigzag track hewn in the rocks leading to the summit" and concluded the first men who landed on Saba must have used ladders to reach the top. He also noted the Saban defense system of platforms loaded with rocks and called the island "a natural fortress and absolutely impregnable."

Carving these step roads on mountainsides where virtually only a goat can stand was a Herculean task, the magnitude of which can further be comprehended by considering that The Bottom is 820 feet above sea level, Windwardside 1,804, St. Johns 1,214, and Hell's gate 1,968. These and other places were connected by step roads.

A visitor to Saba in 1829 wrote the step roads from Ladder Bay and Fort Bay each took an hour to the top (The Bottom) because "it is extraordinarily steep and difficult, narrow and between frightening chasms where no two persons can walk beside each other."

The step road from Fort Bay to The Bottom consisted of 200 steps, nearly all different in height and width and each worn to a glassy smoothness. Visiting dignitaries unable to make the climb were actually carried by rugged Sabans in sedan chairs made of upholstered chairs and saplings. Former porters became donkey drivers when the first donkey arrived on the island in 1923.

Ascending or descending a step road does not in the slightest resemble climbing an ordinary flight of stairs. It is impossible to establish a rhythm because no two steps were the same height, or one step might be crosswise to the next, or the intervening flat part was slippery from centuries of passing footsteps. (Concrete steps were not used at Ladder Bay until 1934.)

Steps on the step roads tended to be higher than the ordinary stairstep, and the distance between them farther , so it was impossible to climb ordinary stairs sideways.

Until 1947 these flights of stairs were the only way to go between villages. Children on the island left before dawn and walked the hundreds of steps to attend school at The Bottom and walked back again every afternoon.

Mystery of Its Unusual Development

The traveling priest Labat wrote in 1701 that the island was then divided into four districts which together contained 45 to 50 families. He said the homes were clean and well kept. The main business was shoemaking. He himself bought six pairs of well-made shoes at six dollars per pair. He said even the Governor and the Minister were making shoes.

Among the Catholic Irishmen who came from Statia in 1665 were shoemakers who formed St. Crispin's Guild, named after a 13th century French figure who became the patron saint of shoemakers and tanners because he made free shoes for the poor. The center of Saba shoemaking in the 1700s is now a small village name Crispeen.

Saba's period of peace and prosperity ended with a hurricane in 1772 which demolished the coffee and cotton plantations. Demoralized Sabans returned to fishing and catching turtles, and imported the goods they needed from St. Thomas. Today, nearly all food on Saba is imported, as is everything else.

Five American schooners anchored off Fort Bay in 1779 were captured by English pirates, but they could not come ashore. In 1781, the English Admiral Rodney captured nearby Statia and ordered one of his officers, Sir James Cockburn, to capture Saba. The wily Cockburn accomplished this by subterfuge, but the English were driven off by the French a few months later. The French stayed on Saba for two and a half years.

For the next 35 years (1781 to 1816) Saba changed flags no less than eight times. On February 21, 1816, the Dutch flag was raised over Saba and it has remained Dutch (but English-speaking) to the present. In 1816, the population consisted of 1,145 people, of whom, 462 were slaves, 27 were free blacks, and 656 were white native-born Sabans. By 1865 there were 1,807 people living on Saba in 316 homes. A hundred years later in 1975, 958 people lived in 511 homes. Today the population of Saba fluctuates around 1,000. Women slightly outnumber men.

In the 1850s sulphur deposits were found on the north side of the island. Sulphur was in demand at the time as a preventative medication for scabies, which was a problem due to inadequate water supply. Deep shafts were dug but the expense outweighed the results. Operations ceased in 1879. In 1961 a technical advisor to the United Nations concluded "The sulphur deposits of Saba could not compete in present world markets" even if recoverable.

This picture of Windwardside's Police Station and Post Office completes the image of the Storybook isle.

The Mystery of the Paved Road

There was no paved road in Saba until 1938, when a Saban named Errol Hassell undertook to build one from Fort Bay to The Bottom. The difference in elevation between the two sites is 653 feet, which meant a rising road grade of three feet to approximately every sixteen running feet.

Hassell, who had no technical training, ignored Dutch experts who said a road could not be built anywhere on the mountainous island. He took a correspondence course in engineering and persuaded his fellow islanders to help him construct the impossible road. Even men from Windwardside and Hell's Gate devoted several hours a day to assist.

This monumental undertaking was completed on October 16, 1943. On March 17, 1947, the first automobile (a military jeep) arrived, lashed to two rowboats and hauled ashore by fifty men. Seven minutes later it was at The Bottom, terrifying the residents. Saba, at least from Fort Bay to The Bottom, had entered the modern world.

By 1951, the paved road went all the way to Windwardside. Work continued in 1963 under the supervision of Lambert Hassell) to Hell's Gate and beyond to Flat Point, the site of Saba's minuscule airstrip.

The mystery of the nine-mile road (called simply "The Road," because it was the only one, although there are now connecting roads) lies in what inspired its construction despite the scoffing of experts, and how it was accomplished. From sea level at Fort Bay it rises to 1,968 feet and then plunges to 131 feet above sea level at the airport at the other end of the island. It is one of the wonders of the world; the beautiful views are breathtaking. When it isn't going almost straight up or down, it consists of hairpin curves, too narrow to accommodate two cars abreast.

Gasoline had to be brought from St. Maarten, but local boatmen complained because they were not allowed to smoke. An Esso storage tank was built at Fort Bay in 1965. Residents now can buy gasoline there before noon each weekday.

Mystery of Modern Access to the Storybook Isle

Airmail first got to Saba in 1946 when a pilot flying over the island merely threw out a mailbag. A seaplane landed twice that same year, and a helicopter of the Royal Netherlands Navy landed in 1952. Tourists had to wait a while before discovering Saba.

Except for a combined tennis-volleyball court and soccer field in The Bottom, there is only one other flat surface on the tiny island at an area formed by a lava flow thousands of years ago. Cliffs at both ends drop 130 feet to the sea. This site, unimaginatively named Flat Point, is 1,300 feet below Hell's Gate, the nearest village. An air strip was finished there in 1963.

All travel writers compare it to landing on the deck of an aircraft carrier, but that is a slight exaggeration. It is a trifle longer —all of 438 yards. The only flights are by Windward Islands Airway out of St. Maarten in a STOL (short take off and landing) twin-engine DeHaviland Otter plane which carries a maximum of 20 passengers.

With good reason, Sabans sell T-shirts with the popular slogan "I survived the Saba Landing," because each landing is an adventure. The pilot flies directly toward a mountainside until a crash seems inevitable. Then, in an abrupt turn, the plane swoops down toward the minuscule airstrip for a landing which uses only half the available space.

There are no porters to carry baggage into the two-room shed which comprises the airport terminal. Visitors are transported in mini-vans up the famous road which makes 20 sharp turns climbing 1300 feet to Hell's Gate, then numerous dips and rises to Windwardside. It is impossible for the vehicles ever to get out of second gear.

For hundreds of years, boats could only anchor offshore and wait for Saban boatmen to come and transport cargo and visitors to land at Fort Bay. Only the Sabans could come alongside and time a wave right to lift them to land. A mad scramble followed to unload before another wave swamped the boat.

With modern technology, finally a short pier was constructed in 1972. Passengers can now be transported by motor launch from St. Maarten. Often the ride is bumpy and many tourists get seasick. But they do not complain, for the scuba diving at Saba is truly unequalled.

Those who journey to Saba today are amply rewarded, for the island is a treasure in every respect. The English-speaking residents are gentle and friendly, and the scenery is indeed spectacular. This secluded isle with its mysterious history still awaits discovery by the modern traveler.

Land by the Gallon

The Florida Fruitlands Company and the Progresso Land Lottery of 1911

By Dr. Paul S. George

I have bought land by the acre, I have bought land by the foot but, by God, I have never before bought land by the gallon.
—Lament of an Iowan who had purchased reclaimed Everglades land.

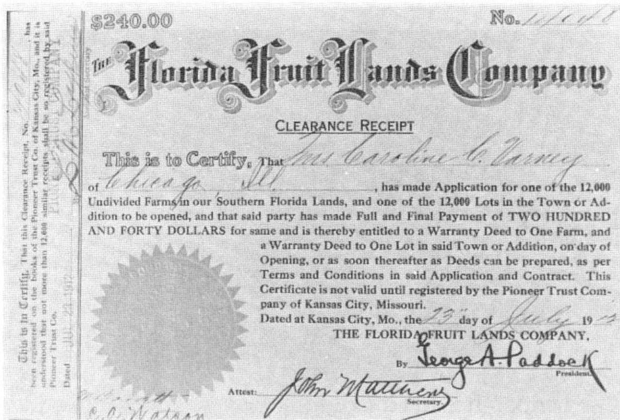
A tent city sprang up literally overnight as prospective land owners flooded into Fort Lauderdale for the Progresso Land Lottery.

Unlike Palm Beach, Miami and other communities in southeast Florida, Fort Lauderdale did not spring instantly to life after Henry M. Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway entered the tiny settlement in February 1896. Instead, the birth of modern Fort Lauderdale was primarily the result of Everglades Reclamation, an event that occurred one decade later under the leadership of Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward. Although Broward woefully underestimated the cost and complexity of converting the Everglades to farmlands and community sites, the construction of drainage canals that reached across its vast expanse eventually opened millions of additional acres to development.

Since much of the reclaimed land stood on the western perimeter of Fort Lauderdale, a promising real estate industry arose there in the early 1900s. Several individuals and firms, in promoting the new land, emphasized its rich black muck or peat considered ideal for farming. Thousands of persons throughout the country, especially in the Midwest, responded to these blandishments by purchasing reclaimed land—usually sight-unseen.

Since the State utilized revenues from these sales to subsidize reclamation, high-ranking officials encouraged large investors or speculators to purchase great tracts of land. Governor Broward and other luminaries, for instance, convinced Richard J. Bolles to buy 500,000 acres of Everglades swampland at $2 per acre in 1908-09. A slim, slick New Yorker who had accumulated a fortune from Colorado gold mines and Oregon farmland, Bolles bought the land with the assurance that it would be drained within two years. He organized the Florida Fruitlands Company to market it and instituted a feverish national promotional campaign utilizing "glib salesmen" who distributed "fancy brochures" while adding "their own verbal embellishments" to this new "Garden of Eden." The Florida Fruitlands Company sold several thousand contracts for ten-acre parcels of Everglades at $24 per acre. Bolles sold the land with the understanding that, following its drainage and survey, his company would conduct a huge lottery, referred to as an auction or drawing, for legal reasons. The drawing would determine the location of contract holders' properties and award a few lucky investors larger parcels of real estate. To encourage sales, the company awarded each client a small lot in Progresso, a tract lying just north of Fort Lauderdale.

By 1911, however, the state had made little progress toward draining the vast acreage of the Florida Fruitlands Company. Undaunted, Bolles decided to proceed with the land drawing in early March. This announcement brought a stampede of contract holders to Fort Lauderdale from many areas of the country, overwhelming the settlement and prompting *The Miami Metropolis* to observe that "The village of yesterday (is) today a seething mass (of) bustling humanity." Sardonic Tom Watson, the Georgia populist politician who operated a fishing camp in the area, described the frenzy in his *Jeffersonian Magazine*: "I was there when these bargain seekers (or I might say suckers) began coming to Fort Lauderdale. One day...I saw these long,



$240.00 No.

The Florida Fruit Lands Company

CLEARANCE RECEIPT

This is to Certify, That Mrs Caroline C. Varney of Chicago Ill, has made Application for one of the 12,000 Undivided Farms in our Southern Florida Lands, and one of the 12,000 Lots in the Town or Addition to be opened, and that said party has made Full and Final Payment of TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY DOLLARS for same and is thereby entitled to a Warranty Deed to One Farm, and a Warranty Deed to One Lot in said Town or Addition, on day of Opening, or as soon thereafter as Deeds can be prepared, as per Terms and Conditions in said Application and Contract. This Certificate is not valid until registered by the Pioneer Trust Company of Kansas City, Missouri.

Dated at Kansas City, Mo., the 23 day of July 19

THE FLORIDA FRUIT LANDS COMPANY,

By George A. Paddock, President.

Attest: John Matthews, Secretary.

This is to Certify, That this Clearance Receipt, No. has been registered on the books of the Pioneer Trust Co. of Kansas City, Mo., and it is understood that not more than 12,000 similar receipts shall be so registered by said Pioneer Trust Co.

Dated

Mrs. Caroline C. Varney 's receipt from the Florida Fruitlands Company. Mrs. Varney had purchased a ten acre tract in the Everglades.

heavily loaded trains come to the place; at one time they simply filled the woods, as there was not house room for one-fourth of the crowd in the town. More than a thousand tents were put through the piney woods between March 15 and 20. Fort Lauderdale two years ago had nearly 150 inhabitants counting men, women, children and dogs. The town had 5,000 inhabitants on March 20."

Not surprisingly, Fort Lauderdale's four hotels filled quickly. The Osceola Inn even lined its halls with cots. Many slept in tents or on the ground. In the meantime, a virtual tent city arose in Progresso amid its palmettos and pine trees. To alleviate some of the problems rising from inadequate accommodations, one advertiser offered "Good comfortable cots in private homes. 50 cents per night. Inquire Sanitary Lunch next to Keystone Hotel."

The "land auction" began on March 11, under a huge canvas tent constructed by the Florida Fruit Lands Company in Progresso. Already, however, the contract holders had become disillusioned, after learning that their land was still underwater and unsurveyed, thus rendering the drawing meaningless at that time. (Later, after its reclamation, this land proved disappointing in terms of its fertility.) *The Miami Metropolis* took note of the situation on March 15: "The atmosphere of carnival has disappeared. The jubilant spirit of expectation has given way to the more subdued tins [sic] of 'show us' and 'demand.'" Nearly one week after it had begun, the land lottery had ended, and "Almost as magically as they had appeared, the visitors vanished. Tents were taken down, temporary offices disappeared, and the woods returned to their stillness once again."

Many indignant contract holders subsequently filed lawsuits against the Florida Fruitlands Company for the return of their money. The trial that followed revealed that the company had committed 12,000 contract holders to payments totaling $2.88 million, or $2.5 million more than Bolles had paid for his land. The court ruled that Bolles could keep the $1.4 million already received but that he should collect no more payments until reclamation was completed. The land baron was later indicted on 22 counts of mail fraud in what the *Washington Times* called "one of the biggest land swindles in history."

At his trial in 1913, Bolles argued that Florida officials had assured him that drainage would proceed with alacrity. Testimony by Florida Governor Park Trammell and other state officials at the trial corroborated his claim. A federal commission eventually dismissed the case, concluding "that the action of Mr. Bolles throughout the entire transaction is that of an honest man." The federal government also indicted Bolles for employing the mails to conduct a lottery, but before the land broker could come to trial, he died aboard an FEC Railway train outside of Palm Beach.

The Progresso land lottery marked south Florida's first great real estate boom and underlined the quickening development of Fort Lauderdale, which incorporated as a town two weeks after the event. While the activities of Bolles and other real estate operators produced an image of the area as the province of "land by the gallon" sharpies, there was no shortage of prospects in subsequent speculative schemes. In the process, Fort Lauderdale and other parts of southeast Florida have experienced land booms and busts that have accompanied their development into one of the nation's most dynamic regions.

Ricahrd J. Bolles, third from left, pictured with some of the contract holders at the Progresso land drawing.

South Florida Traditions

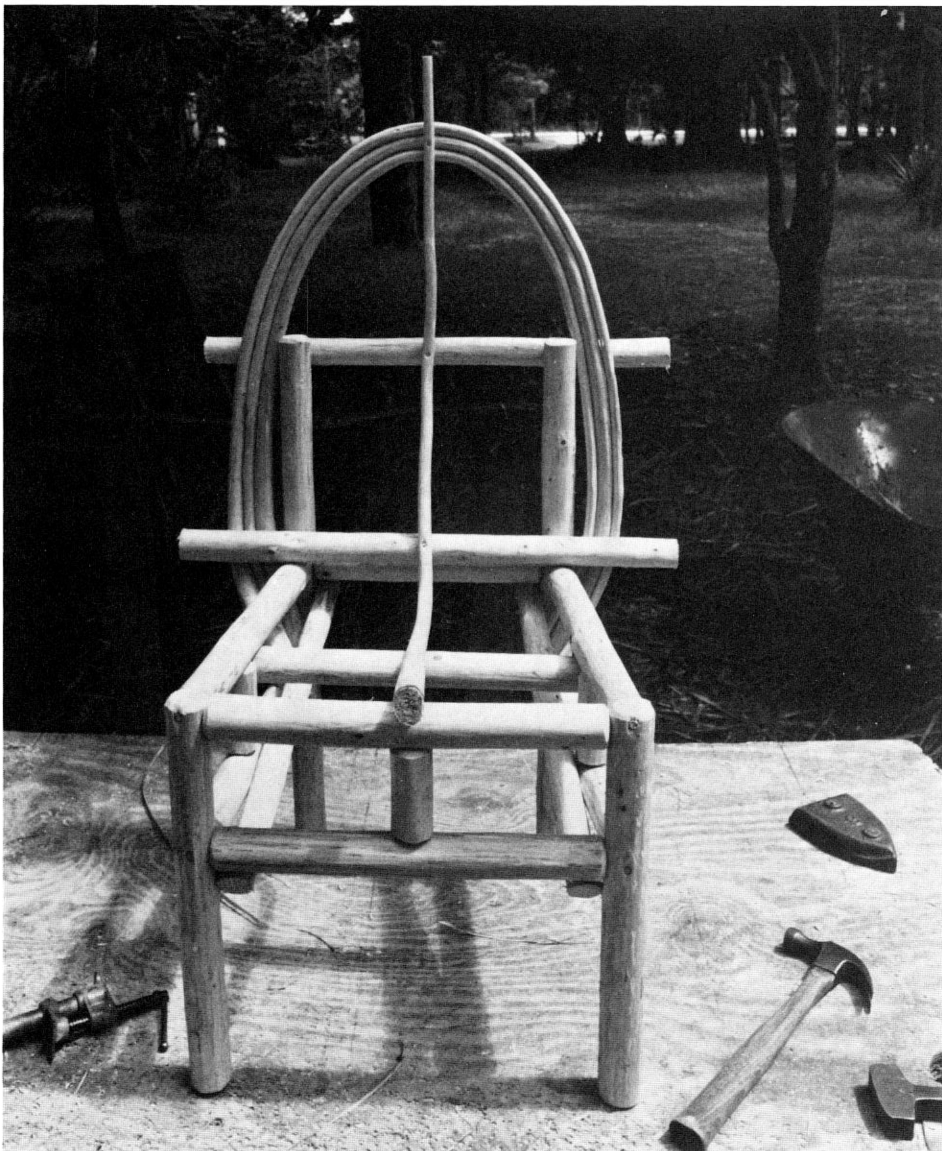
Robert James Rudd: Cypress Furniture Maker

by Jan Rosenberg

If you travel west on Lake Worth Road from I-95, you will pass sprawling housing developments and shopping centers. Modernity is the watchword along this road, but that was not always the case. In the not too distant past this was grassland—pasture for cattle.

As you pass the entrance to Florida's Turnpike, you will see a little of this old grassland, but that too is being reworked into housing developments. It makes one wonder: what was the land like twenty, thirty years ago? Was it lush? Were there swamps? It is hard to tell, unless you can find someone who remembers the older times and places of this western edge of Lake Worth.

After you pass Gulfstream Polo Grounds on the left, slow down. A short way down the road you will see a sign on the right: "Rudd's Cypress." Drive slowly down the pine-needle and cypress shaving covered drive. You come to a barn. Leaving your car you may well hear the sounds of a hammer and a country-western radio station. Around the outside of the barn may be pieces of furniture waiting to be completed. Inside is a man who remembers another Palm Beach County, and carries part of it with him —Robert James Rudd, cypress furniture maker.



The bare frame of one of Robert James Rudd's cypress chairs.

Robert Rudd remembers when there were plenty of cypress trees in south Florida before houses became the region's major crop. His father, Roosevelt Rudd, took advantage of the timber and mangrove to make chairs and small tables. Robert James (also called James or "Buddy") helped his father pull the trees and vines from the local swamps. They would drag it back to the workshop where Robert would watch his dad peel the timber, cut the thick poles, make frames and arms, bend thinner limbs to make u-shaped backs, and bend even thinner limbs to fill in the back.

Robert watched and helped his father, but Roosevelt did not give away the secrets of how to build furniture. No matter, Robert had other things to do. Born in Boynton in 1926, he grew up in south Florida, worked his father's cattle, hunted frogs, and fished. He joined the Navy and fought in World War II, then re-enlisted after the War. He married Betty Brooks, a painter he had known since childhood, and together they had five children. When he left the Navy, he went into construction work and lathing. Making furniture came later.

After years of working in noisy environments, Robert began to lose his hearing. He needed to do something else. He remembered the cypress furniture and how his father made it. He applied his memory and began to make cypress furniture. As he became more

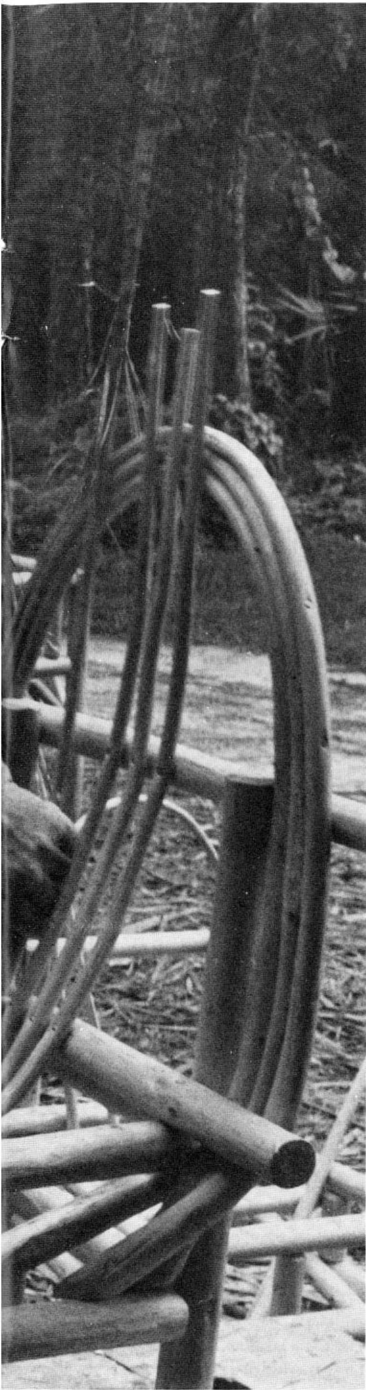
Robert designs furniture in his dreams and then shapes it in his backyard.

Betty Rudd looks on as Robert nails pre-shaped " benders" to the chair frame.

confident, he began to elaborate on his father's basic chair. Today, Robert James Rudd makes chairs, armchairs, lounges, love seats and small tables. His work comes out of his experience of how a piece of furniture should look and feel, and he relies on dreams to shape, create, or improve a design. His work is "traditional," for he learned to make the furniture, not from a book but from observing and remembering what his father did.

Cypress furniture making is a folk art that utilizes Florida's woodlands and swamps. Instead of retrieving timber from home, however, Robert and Betty must go to north central Florida's swamps to harvest cypress. About every six weeks, the Rudds load their panel truck with food, clothing and the tools needed to cut and haul timber: a chainsaw, machete, hip-length wading boots, a rope to tie timber together, an all-terrain vehicle to haul the timber from the swamp to the truck and trailer, and a pistol to ward off snakes.

The trip lasts a week. When the Rudds come home to Lake Worth, they will have poles to frame up the chairs, benders (pliable limbs that can be bent to make the back of the chairs and its arms), and switches, the thin branches that fill in the back of the chairs. The Rudds lay the poles and benders into piles by the barn. These poles will be kept wet. The switches are stored in huge trash barrels filled with water. Water keeps the timber supple and usable. Dry



Two generations of knowledge, Robert's dreams and the Florida environment combined to make this chair.

timber breaks and rots.

When it is time to make a chair, Robert will use a machete to peel the bark off of each piece of timber he needs. He uses a radial arm saw to cut the poles into lengths appropriate for chair frames. He will round off the ends of these pieces with a jackknife. He nails the frame together with galvanized nails, and then moves on to the arms and back. The benders will be pre-bent in a clamp so they will curve for the back and the chair arms. These are nailed in with galvanized nails, also. Then the switches are bent into the chair to create a seat and fill the back of the chair. These are nailed in with brads.

When this is done, he brands the chair frame with his name. He will burn off the loose cypress strands with an acetylene torch. This completes the chair.

Robert sells his chairs to anyone, but, each piece is made to order. A buyer who is impressed by the work will soon be touched by the individual care and years of tradition put into the furniture, especially if they spend some time with Robert. That is when you will learn about the chair maker as well as the chair - and develop a better understanding of south Florida's traditional arts.

What Would It Cost Today?

By Donald C. Gaby

Almost everyone has had the experience of some older person, perhaps a grandparent, telling how inexpensive something was when they were young. In most cases the older person has forgotten or prefers not to recall how little he or she earned at the time. My father's favorite comparisons were of the 25-cent lunch or the nickle beer that he remembered so well.

In writing historical articles or simply looking back at events of an earlier time, it is often valuable to know what something cost in terms of today's money. Presented here is a simple technique to make such comparisons easy. The technique is summarized in the graph and table of Figure 1. The graph compares dates with overall average annual earnings. It yields a multiplier for comparison. Multipliers are shown every ten years, but one may enter the graph for a particular year and determine the desired multiplier by dividing the overall average annual earnings for 1990 by those of the year of interest. For example, following the 1946 line (ordinate) up until it strikes the graph, one moves to the right along the line (abcissa) to find the overall average annual earnings of $2,200 for 1946. Dividing $19,226 for 1990 by $2,200 gives a multiplier of 9.6 for 1946. Obviously, the graph can be used to compare earnings (cost) in any two years. The insert table in the upper left of Figure 1 provides an easy guide that can be copied and carried on one's person.

To construct Figure 1, data were extracted from *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1790-1970* which provide average annual earnings by decades in a variety of occupations. Those data for Wholesale & Retail Trade, Domestic Service, Public Education, and Federal Civilian Service were used as broadly representative of all categories. From those original data an Overall Average Annual Earnings was calculated for each decade. See Table 1. Unfortunately, those original data existed in a coherent form only from 1900. The Overall Average Annual Earnings were plotted against time for each decade from 1900 through 1970. There is some scatter in the data points, but three distinct economic periods were evident that could be represented reasonably well by only two straight line segments. From 1900 to 1930 there was a period of steady growth with a gradual decline in the value of the dollar, followed by the Great Depression which was revealed as the only decade when the value of the dollar increased slightly. The decades 1940 to 1970 represent a period of high inflation that began with World War II. The period 1900 to 1940 is represented by a straight line in Figure 1, and that line is extrapolated backward in time to 1870 as shown by the dashed line portion. Use of the technique is less reliable the farther one retreats into the 19th century. A second straight line segment represents the period 1940 to about 1968 during which the rate of decline in the value of the dollar was markedly greater. To extend the graph forward to 1990 a different method was used.

Data extracted from Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), U.S. City Average provide the annual percentage increase in the CPI for each year from 1970 to 1987. The CPI for 1988 was taken from media reports. For 1989 a CPI of 5.0 percent was assumed as being near those values projected in the media by various economists. Table 2 shows the values for each year plus the Cumulative Percent Change by Decade for each of the two decades represented. To calculate the Overall Average Annual Earnings for 1980, the Overall Average Annual Earnings for 1970 was multiplied by the cumulative percent change in the CPI for the next decade to determine the increase in earnings (cost), and that was added to the value for 1970 [thus $7,290(0.742) + $7,290 = $12,699]. The Overall Average Annual Earnings for 1990 was calculated in a similar manner [thus $12,699(0.514) +

Table 1. Average Annual Earnings (4 categories) with Overall Average Annual Earnings calculated.
Overall Average

Year	Whsl/Retail Trade	Domestic Service	Public Education	Federal Civilian	Annual Earnings
1900	$ 508	$ 240	$ 345	$ 940	$ 508
1910	630	337	518	1,096	645
1920	1,270	665	970	1,707	1,153
1930	1,569	676	1,455	1,768	1,367
1940	1,382	554	1,435	1,894	1,316
1950	3,045	1,502	2,794	3,494	2,709
1960	4,597	2,356	4,752	5,895	4,400
1970	6,886	3,535	8,141	10,597	7,290

Table 2. Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), U. S. City Average.

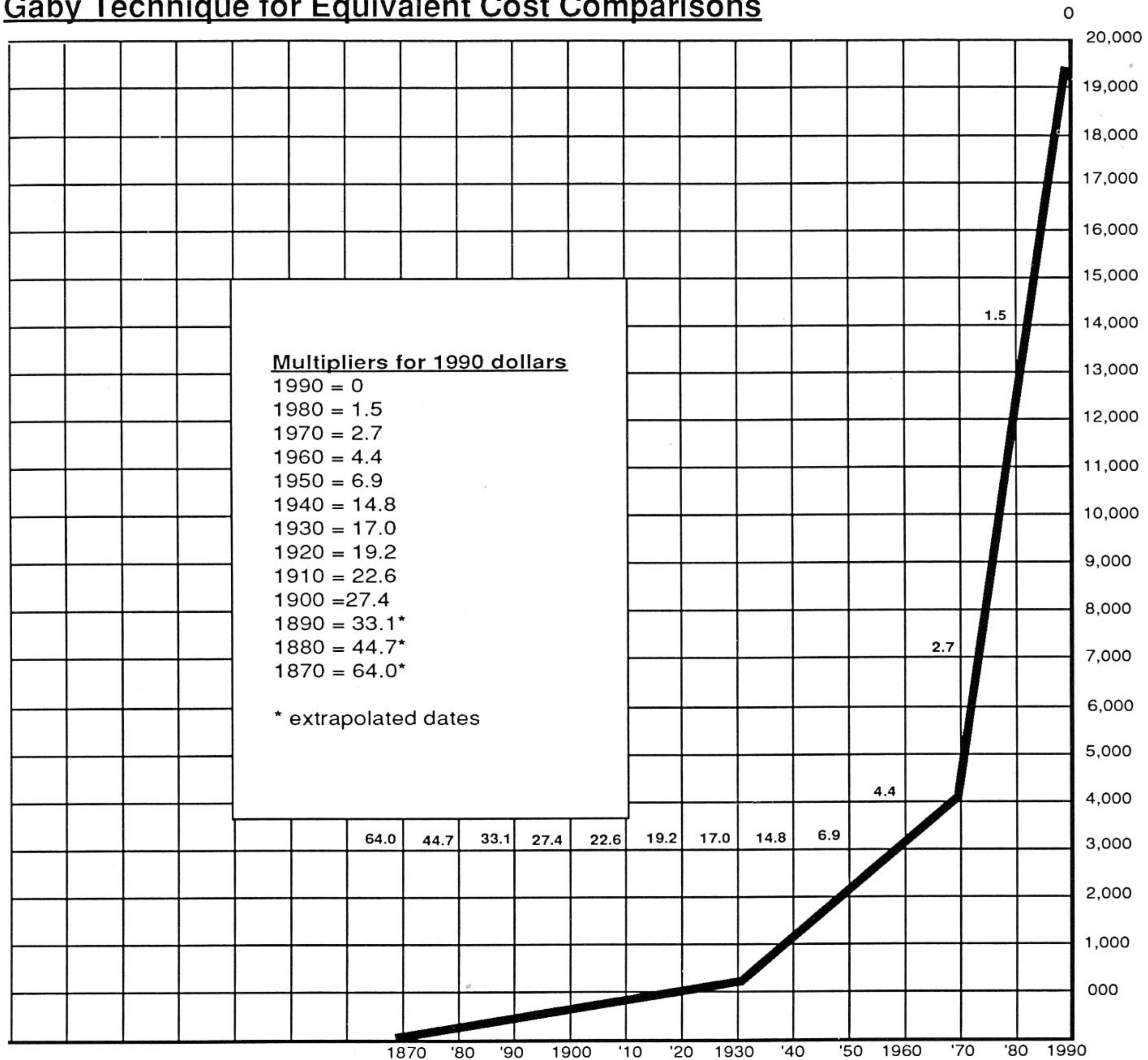
Year	Percent Change Dec.-Dec.	Cumulative % Change by Decade	Year	Percent Change Dec.-Dec.	Cumulative % Change by Decade
1970	5.5		1980	12.4	
1971	3.4		1991	8.9	
1972	3.4		1982	3.9	
1973	8.8		1983	3.8	
1974	12.2		1984	4.0	
1975	7.0		1985	3.8	
1976	4.8		1986	1.1	
1977	6.8		1987	4.4	
1978	9.0		1988	4.1	
1979	13.3	74.2%= 0.742	1989	5.0	51.4=0.514

Table 3. Overall Average Annual Earnings.

Year	Overall Average Annual Earnings
1980	$12,699
1990	19,226

Figure 1

Gaby Technique for Equivalent Cost Comparisons



$12,699 = $19,266]. Those values for 1980 and 1990 are shown in Table 3. These were used to complete the graph of Figure 1. They reveal another distinct period of economic activity which began with the decade of the fuel crises. The period from about 1968 to 1990 is easily represented by a third straight line segment of the graph in Figure 1.

One might argue whether earnings represent costs. My experience is that they go hand-in-hand and that one may be taken to represent the other in a general way. Here we are concerned only with trends. To illustrate use of the technique, consider the cost of a tour boat ride up the Miami River. In 1906, such a trip on the Sallie cost 50 cents which, according to Figure 1, is equivalent to about $12 in 1990 dollars. As this is written in early 1989, a similar trip up the Miami River on the Island Queen would cost only $5.50—far less expensive than in "the good old days!"

There are other considerations. Prior to World War I there was a much greater difference in earnings between the ordinary working man and business or professional people, not counting the wealthy. A so-called "servant class," willing to work long hours for low wages, was taken for granted. The work week for most was much greater than 50 hours in the 1900s, so ordinary people had neither the time nor the money to enjoy pursuits that are taken for granted today. When the Flagler Street bridge—built with private capital—opened in 1905, there was a toll of 25 cents to cross by two-horse carriage or automobile and five cents to walk across. Those charges would be equivalent to about $6.10 to drive across and about $1.20 to walk across the bridge in today's money. Such tolls to cross the bridge would seem exorbitant today, but in those days few people could afford a carriage or automobile and those who could and lived across the river in Riverside may have wished not to encourage pedestrians. By 1909 the City of Miami had bought the bridge and everyone was able to cross for free!

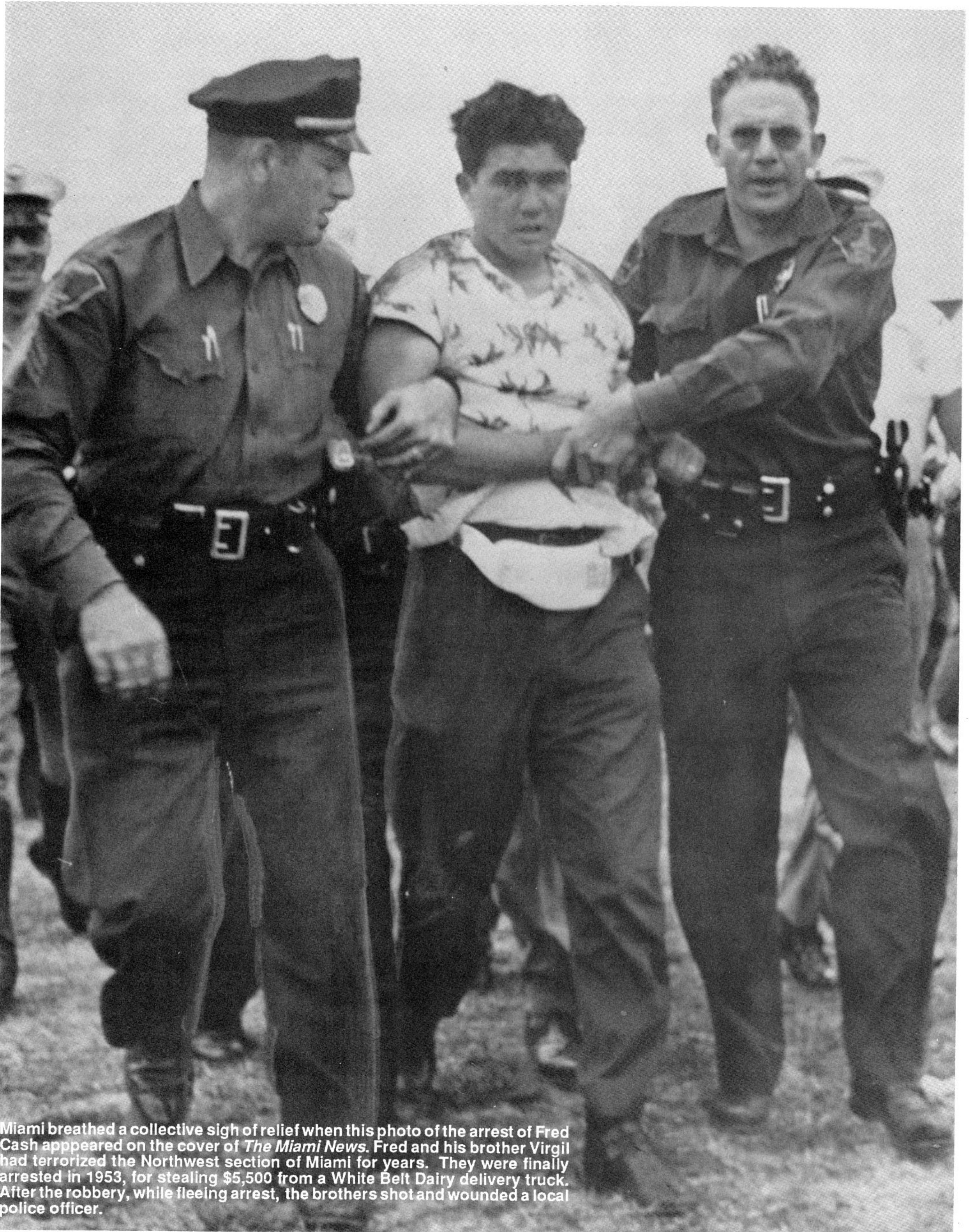
Through the Lens

Decades before Tubbs and Crockett were household words vice was being popularized in Miami. The following pages contain photos charting the history of vice in our region - from the arrival of the railroad through contemporary society. Many of the pictures used in this spread are from *The Miami News* photo archives, which came to the Museum through the fine work of Howard Kleinberg and David Kraslow.

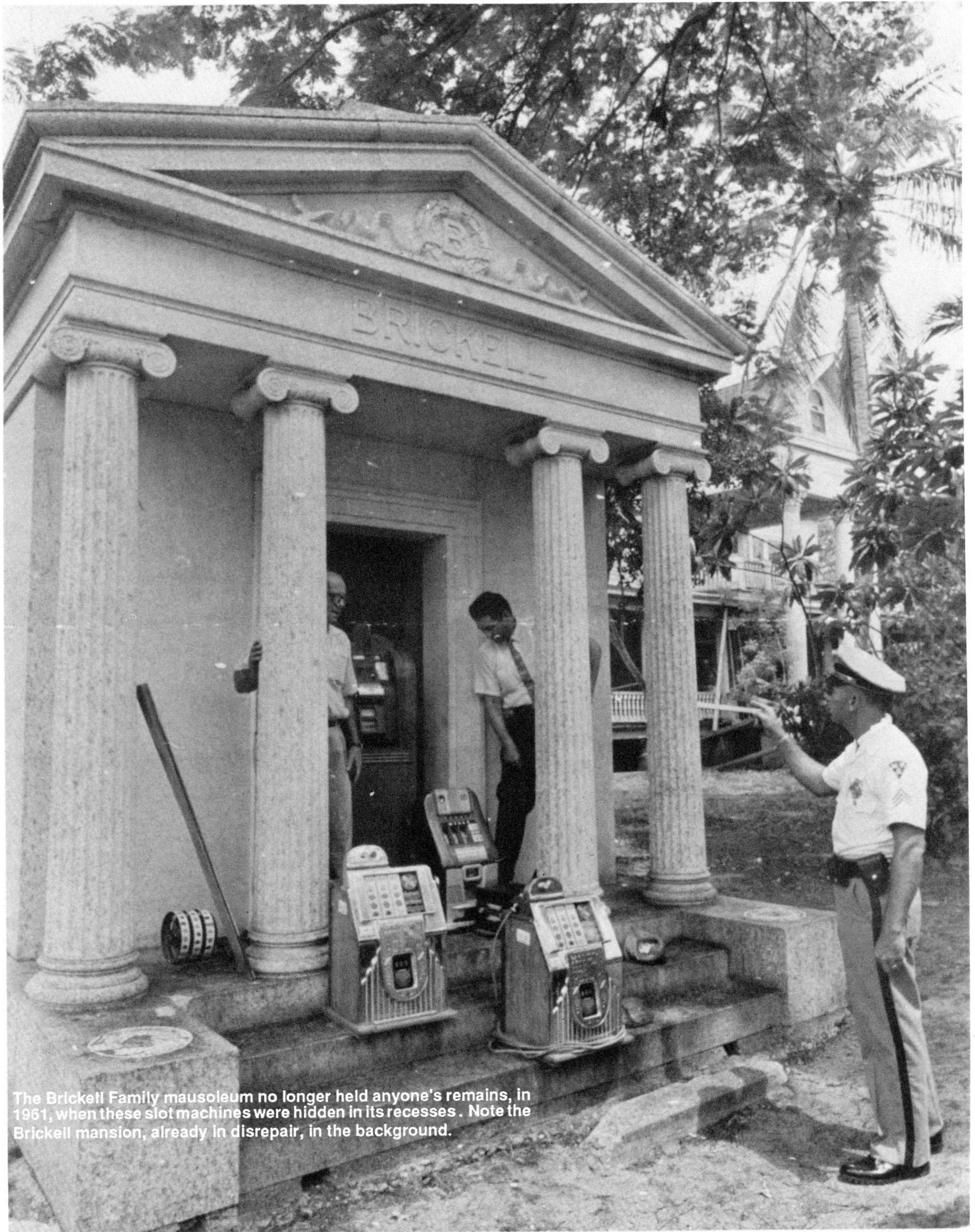
The Seminole Club, begun by Henry Flagler, provided guests at the Royal Palm Hotel access to the gaming tables.

Gun battles, murders, and smuggling were as popular a past-time during prohibition as they are today. Of course some people then, as now, chose to manufacture their own. In May of 1939 Federal agents raided a bootlegging operation. That's a 30 gallon copper still for the unintiated. 1939... hmm just 50 years ago this month.

The ever popular Alphonse "Scar Face" Capone (right) with personal trainer, at Star Island home in 1939.

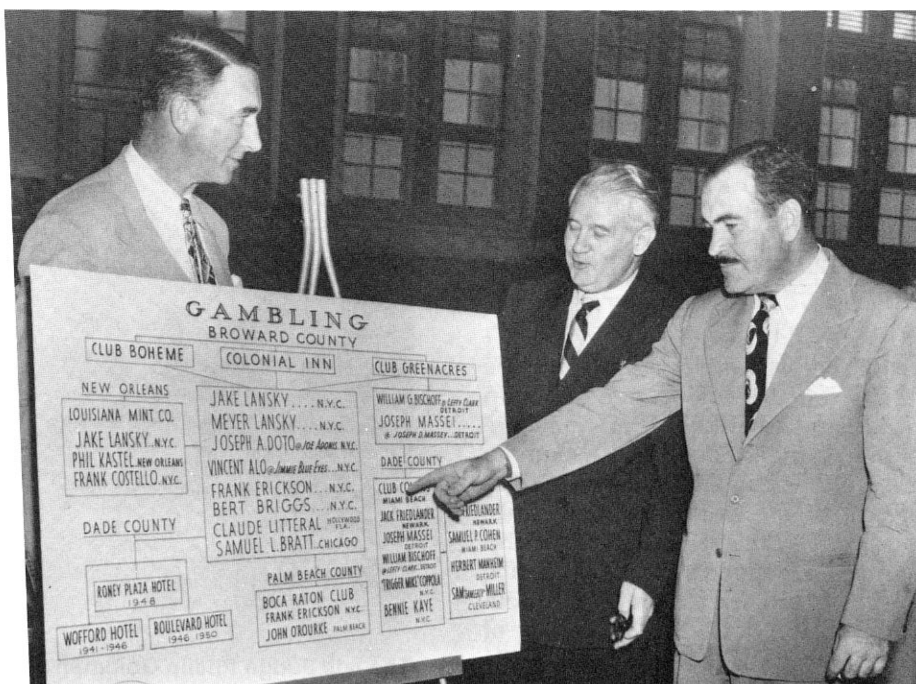


Miami breathed a collective sigh of relief when this photo of the arrest of Fred Cash apppeared on the cover of *The Miami News*. Fred and his brother Virgil had terrorized the Northwest section of Miami for years. They were finally arrested in 1953, for stealing $5,500 from a White Belt Dairy delivery truck. After the robbery, while fleeing arrest, the brothers shot and wounded a local police officer.



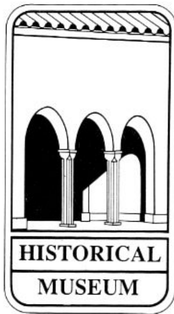
The Brickell Family mausoleum no longer held anyone's remains, in 1961, when these slot machines were hidden in its recesses. Note the Brickell mansion, already in disrepair, in the background.

In March of 1951, when this roulette table was removed from the Riviera Club, the general consensus held that Miami and the Beach had to have gambling to attract tourists. Unfortunately, no one had bothered to make it legal, and those people that became involved were suddenly deemed criminals. Funny how that works.



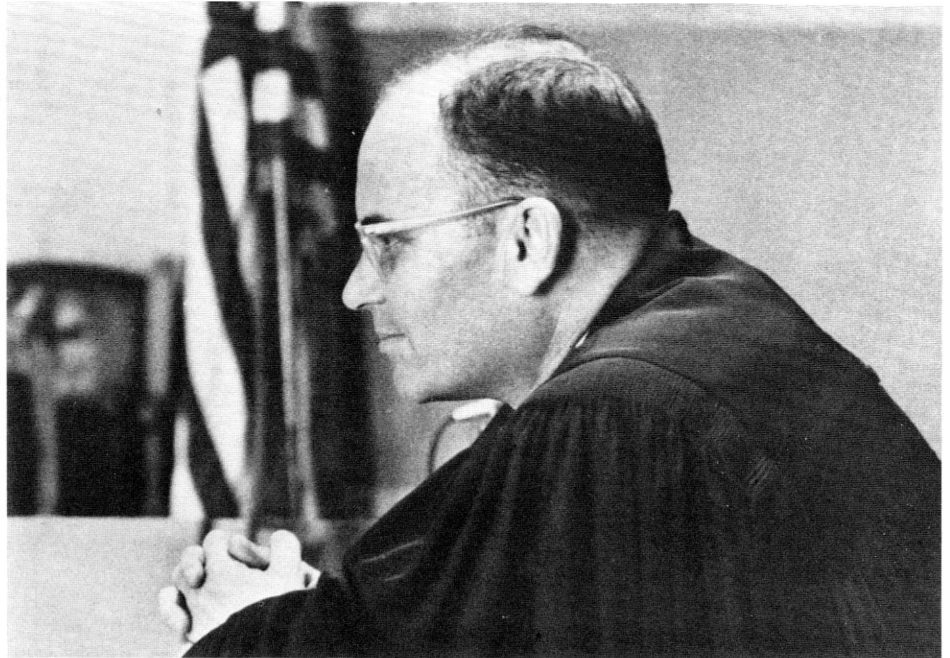
In 1950 Senator Estes Kefauver arrived in Miami to conduct senate hearings into illegal activities in South Florida. The Kefauver Committee made life uncomfortable for the person pictured in the next photograph. Not unbearable, just uncomfortable. Left to right: Senator Estes Kefauver, Senator Lester Hunt and investigator for the Miami Crime Commission Dan Sullivan.

Meyer Lansky in 1979. In his later years the reputed organized crime genius enjoyed taking his dog for walks down Collins Avenue in Miami Beach.



On the Plaza

by Lee Aberman



The late Judge Phillip Goldman's family decided there was no better way to honor his memory than to sponsor one of the Historical Museum's prints from Audubon's *Birds of America*.

Just before Christmas last year, the family of the late Judge Phillip Goldman gathered in a private ceremony at the Historical Museum to celebrate their sponsorship in his honor of one of the prints in John James Audubon's *Birds of America*. On hand to mark the sponsorship and receive the gift were Randy Nimnicht, Executive Director, Becky Smith, Curator of Research Materials, and Marcia Kanner, Past President of the Museum.

The ceremony was warm and familial, but I have it from more than one of the participants that it was marked by a sober joy and sense of occasion. In attendance were several generations of the Goldman family—the judge's children James Cates, Janice Goldman-Carter, Richard Goldman, Robert Goldman and Douglas Goldman, his grandchildren, Phillip and Nathaniel Goldman-Carter, his widow, Sue Goldman, and his godmother, Clara Schwartz Fine, a sprightly octogenarian with kinship ties that go deep into Southern Florida history.

At the informal ceremony Randy gave a brief review of the history of the Museum. Becky Smith discussed the Audubon prints and their care and conservation. Marcia Kanner described her pleasure not only in the significant contribution the sponsorship made to the Columbus Discovery Commemorative Fund, but also in the affectionate family feeling that had given rise to this way of leaving a memorial to a kind and gentle man who had served the public interest with exceptional fairness and grace.

Judge Goldman was born in Miami in November 1921 to one of Key West's pioneer Jewish families. At the time of his premature death in December 1969, he was a member of the law firm of Steel, Hector and Davis. His heart, however, had always been in public service. After the University of Florida, Harvard Law School, and a stint with the firm of E. F. P. Brigham, he joined the Attorney General's office in Tallahassee under Richard Irving. In 1960 Governor Leroy Collins appointed him to the Circuit Court and he and his growing family returned to Dade County.

In the last five years of his life, Judge Goldman had developed an interest in the Florida Keys because of the pioneering role played by his grandparents in that region. Among the families with whom the Goldman family were close was the Fine family.

But if Judge Goldman was interested in Florida history, he was not a "bird" man particularly. Birders, I can say with authority, being married to one, are identified by the binoculars around their necks, the Peterson Field Guide in their pocket, and a certain expression in the eyes, both absent and alert. Phil Goldman wasn't one of these. He did, however, have a fondness for the Ospreys that build spacious but somewhat sloppy nests on the powerline poles along the Overseas Highway and elsewhere. He loved to point out these magnificent birds of prey to his children on trips to the Keys. He made a game of spotting the first and the most unusual nesting site. The choice of the osprey for sponsorship by his family stems from these trips.

The Osprey painting is one of the finest of the Audubon prints. The great bird is seen in flight, his fierce predator's face in profile. In one clawed foot he holds a large hapless fish.

At the informal sponsorship ceremony, Bob Goldman, one of Sue and Phil Goldman's sons, explained the choice of the osprey. Each of the children took part in the ceremony. Richard Goldman and Janice Goldman-Carter exhibited the print, after Becky Smith's careful tutelage in handling the valuable volume. Douglas Goldman unveiled the nameplate that describes the family's sponsorship in memory of Judge Goldman. With the completion of the family's part in the ceremony, Randy Nimnicht presented the judge's widow, Sue with a framed replica of the osprey painting, and offered a toast at the small party that followed.

I had an opportunity to chat with Sue Goldman in the compact, cheerful apartment she has just moved into after many years in a large house. A Virginian by birth, she has the captivating drawl and charm of natives of the Old Dominion. She is also a woman of outstanding achievements and a remarkable range of interests. After majoring in zoology at FSU, she did graduate work at Yale. Like many of us at the time, she spent the years following her marriage rearing her children and doing volunteer work, much of it on environmental issues under the leadership of Macgregor Smith. She was also active in the PTA.

Since her husband's death, she has been associate professor of Environ-

John James Audubon's Osprey from the *Birds of America*. Ospreys are responsible for the sloppy nests dripping from the powerline poles lining the overseas highway down through the Keys.

mental Science and Florida History in the Division of Learning Alternatives at Miami-Dade Community College. Her interests also extend to archaeology and physical anthropology. She was the second president of the Archaeological Society of Southern Florida, and works closely with Metro-Dade Archaeologist Bob Carr on contract archaeology and physical anthropology projects mandated by the State of Florida. Inevitably, she has long been interested in the Museum. She was a member of the board of directors when the new building was being planned and when the purchase of the Audubon prints was being considered. So, the sponsorship of a bird as a lasting memorial to her husband is a natural outcome of the confluence of her interests.

Sponsorship of a bird may be of interest to others looking for a method of honoring someone close and dear. The cost for sponsorship of an Audubon print begins at $2,250. The price for one of the 39 "Florida Birds" is $10,000. The Graham family, which is closely linked to the Museum, has sponsored one of the Florida birds.

When you consider that the Museum's participation in the Columbus Discovery Commemorative Fund will bring matching funds to each donation in support of the *Birds of America*, the incentive to participate can become even greater. Audubon print sponsorship is clearly a substantial and important way to honor those we feel merit this distinction.

In the next issue we'll catch up on what's been going on in the *MOSAIC* exhibit. We'll talk to Pat Wickman, Andy Brian, and Dr. Henry Green, to learn what they've been doing both for the overall exhibit and the local Miami enrichment contribution.

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Letters

Editors:

Congratulations on your new publication! We were just saying the other day that South Florida deserved a good history magazine which would really have a market if it could spark the interest of newcomers to the area. I would imagine that, with the interest of so many individuals have or at least profess (in conversation) to have in history, South Florida History Magazine should venture to selected newsstands in the future.

I noted a repeated error in the Glassman article on the Tamiami Trail Blazers. W. Stanley Hanson of Ft. Myers was never a federal Seminole agent - though he was extremely qualified for that position (see sidebar).

As far as I know, Abraham Lincoln Clay, one of the two Seminole guides for the Trail Blazers (Little Billie was tragically killed in the 1930s) is the sole survivor of the motorcade. I have a photo of him taken in November 1987 and hope to interview him in the next several months.

Patsy West
Ft. Lauderdale

Editors:

Commendations to the editorial staff and advisers of South Florida History Magazine for their most interesting issue #1.

We look forward to many more issues of this excellent publication.

Herbert S. Saffir
Coral Gables

W. Stanley Hanson

W. Stanley Hanson knew the Seminoles intimately; he spoke the Mikasuki language; on more than one occasion he was asked to sit on the Seminole council of elders for important deliberations; and he was welcome at the annual Green Corn Dances. He was a founder of the Seminole Indian Association in 1913, an organization whose purpose was to protect the Seminoles' welfare. Hanson served on the executive committee until his death in 1945.

Hanson ardently wanted the appointment as Seminole Agent. At the death of Agent Lucien A. Spencer in 1930, Hanson and his supporters campaigned for the position, receiving an unprecedented amount of support from Indians, as well as prominent Floridians and officials across the State and in Washington, D.C. Unbelievably, he was passed over.

In the following years, having been the spokesman for the sizeable Seminole population in Southwestern Florida for years, plus his position as Secretary of the Seminole Indian Association, he was often in the news. For Hanson it was doubtless a hollow victory knowing that the media frequently referred to him as the "Seminole Agent" - he surely should have been.

Patsy West

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Corrections

At *South Florida History Magazine* we can eat crow with the best of them. The following photograph is a case in point. In the last issue we featured a 1948 photograph of Fulgencio Batista identifying him as President of Cuba. Batista was not President in 1948, Carlos Prió was.

Cuban President Carlos Prió (1948-1952) with his wife Mary Prió at the Festival of the Flowers, Cardenas.

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Services

- A 35,000 square foot museum located in the heart of downtown Miami.
- Special exhibitions, changing every six to eight weeks, that help increase south Floridian's understanding of their community and the world.
- Publication of two quarterlies, *Currents* and *South Florida History Magazine*, as well as the annnual scholarly journal *Tequesta*.
- Education programs, ranging from historic site visits to dramatic presentations, that reach over 30,000 school children each year.
- Sponsors of the **Harvest**, south Florida's premiere celebration of its past and present. Over 16,000 people visited the 1988 Harvest and discovered the excitement and diversity of our past.
- The Museum's folklife program enriches the entire community by discovering and preserving the traditional folkways practiced throughout our region.
- The Museum supports and encourages research into south Florida's past through publications, exhibitions and public forums, providing our community with a complete understanding of itself.
- The Museum's collection of 9,000 artifacts, ranging from the shell tools of the first inhabitants to the street signs from the 1987 visit of Pope John Paul II , help to explain and illuminate all of man's experience in the region.

THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

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