South Florida History

MAGAZINE

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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA, THE FORT MYERS HISTORICAL MUSEUM, THE COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM, AND THE KEY WEST ART & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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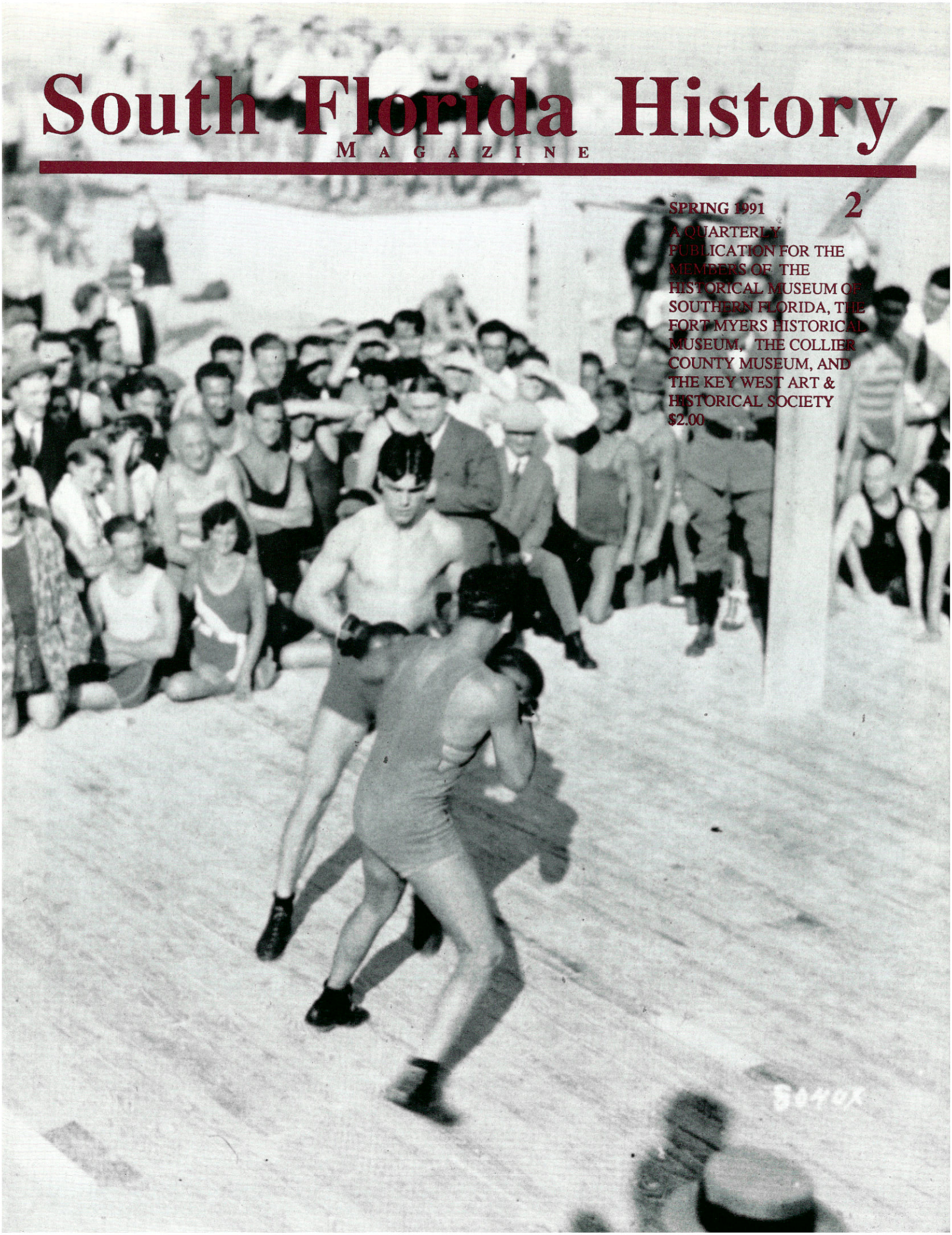

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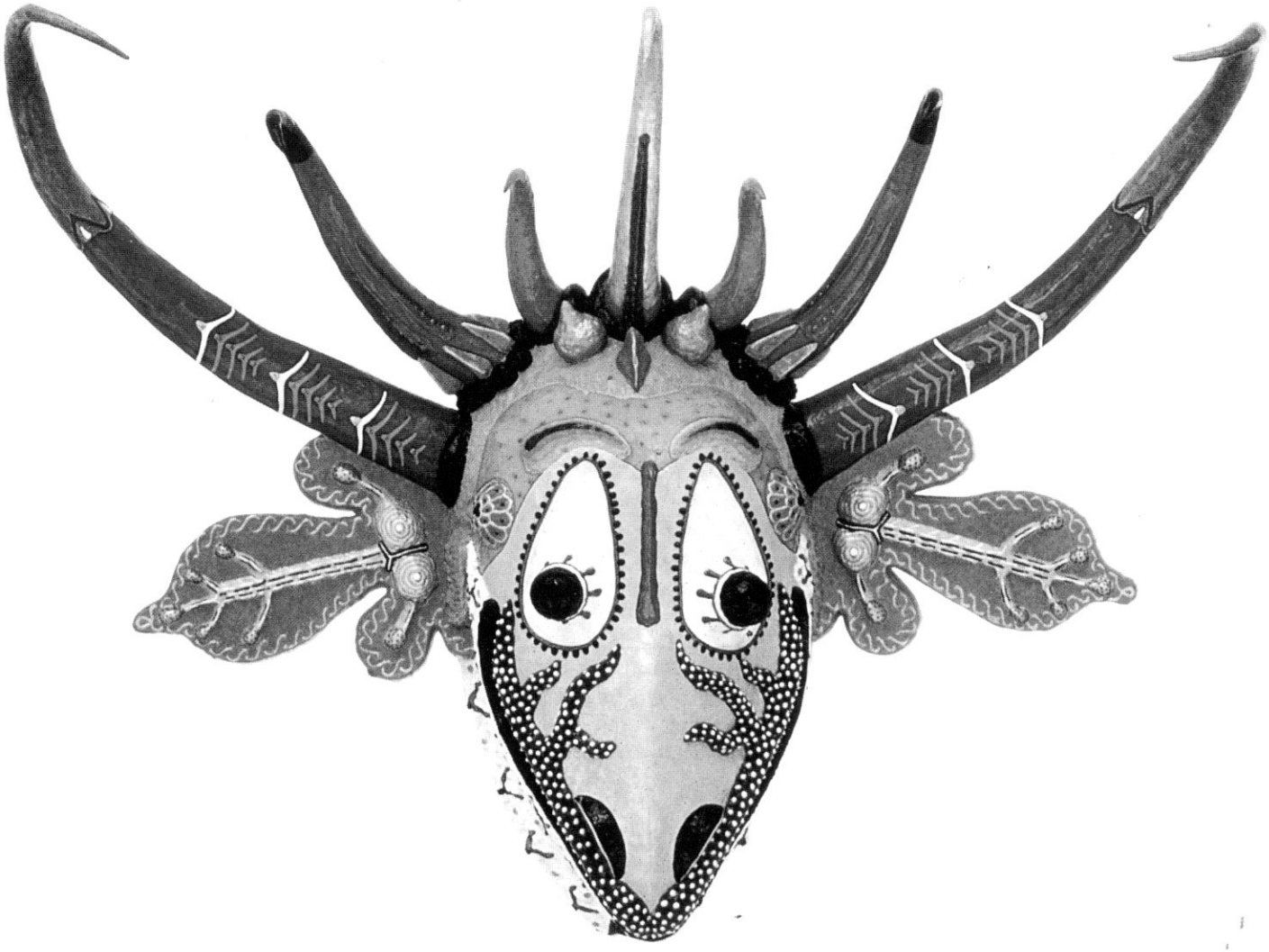

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Southeast Florida Folklife

January 25 - June 30, 1991

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Venezuelan Yare' mask by Manuel Albalate. Photograph by Michele Edelson

Contents

Departments

On the Cover:: Miami Beach was the scene of a 1920s boomtime exhibition boxing match between the champ, Jack Dempsey, rather modestly dressed, and Young Stribling, in trunks.

Contributors

Jack B. Moore is Chairman of the American Studies Department at the University of South Florida at Tampa. This is his first article in *South Florida History Magazine.*

Canter Brown, Jr., a native of Polk County, is hard at work on his Ph.D. in History at the University of Florida. He is the author of *Florida's Peace River Frontier,* published this spring by the University of Central Florida Press.

George Klos, who grew up in Cape Coral, in Lee County, holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Florida State University and is currently working on his Ph.D. from the University of Texas, in Austin.

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Editor's Notes

by Stuart McIver

Selling as an art form reached its pinnacle during the Florida Land Boom in the 1920s. Roughly 200,000 bodies were milling around Miami in the winter of 1925. Of these, some 25,000 were actively engaged in selling lots, above or below water; acreage, also above or below water; houses, apartments and office buildings, usually out of the water, and binders, which were options to buy, pieces of paper so flimsy they floated through an airy dreamworld far above the wetlands and swamps.

Advertising blossomed as never before in the warm lands. Color brochures appeared, and color advertising was used in national magazines. Cheesecake photos of bathing beauties were dispatched from Miami Beach to papers all over the country.

The newspapers of Miami bulged with so many ads they boomed into the front ranks of American papers. A woman told a *Miami Herald* circulation man, "I'd like to take the Sunday *Herald,* but I'm afraid it would fall on me."

A small town daily at the start of the decade, by 1925 *The Miami Herald* had become the nation's largest daily in terms of advertising lineage, running roughly 30 percent ahead of its nearest competitor, *The Detroit News*. In fifth place behind *The Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times* was the late, great *Miami Daily News*. For over a half a century *The Miami News* could boast the largest single issue ever printed, 504 pages, celebrating the formal boomtime opening of its new headquarters, later known as Freedom Tower.

The boom was a great game while it lasted. Among those who got into the game were some of the legends from the Golden Age of Sports. The late Red Grange, the "Galloping Ghost," and his Chicago Bears defeated the Coral Gables Collegians, 7-0, on Christmas Day, 1925.

Jack Dempsey, the world's heavyweight boxing champion, came to South Florida to lend his name, the greatest in boxing, to the peddling of real estate. Dempsey, however was selling more than real estate. He was in Florida partly to sell himself and to shine up his somewhat battered image.

Jack B. Moore has written about Dempsey's boomtime days in South Florida in *South Florida History Magazine*. This interesting account has also inspired our choice for this issue's pictorial feature. We are having a look at some of the great sports figures and events that played a role in South Florida's colorful history.

Life, however, confronts us with many realities infinitely more serious than the playing of games. Perhaps the starkest of all these realities is war. In the first half of the 19th century war came to Florida. The Second Seminole War, fought from North Florida to the Keys from 1835 till 1842, was the longest, costliest, and bloodiest of all our country's Indian wars.

In this issue we are balancing the levity of sports with two stories about the Indian wars in Florida. George Klos writes about the role of blacks in the Second Seminole War. Canter Brown, Jr., tells us about clashes between the Indians and the settlers in the Peace River Valley between the Second and Third Seminole Wars. The Peace River, it seems, is far more than a canoe trail.

Congratulations to our Authors

Canter Brown, Jr., appearing in our publication for the first, and we hope not the last, time, is the author of the just-published *Florida's Peace River Frontier,* University of Central Florida Press, $34.95. The river, well known to

(Continued on page 26.)

The Champ Fights Back

by Jack B. Moore

Heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey, at left chats with Young Stribling, center, and unidentified fight fan.

In 1926 Jack Dempsey was almost unparalleled as a national hero; Babe Ruth was his only possible competitor. Overseas, in countries such as France and England, Dempsey alone as a sports idol "was received as a symbol of America," according to Randy Roberts, Dempsey's most authoritative biographer. In 1926 as a charismatic figure in the public consciousness, Dempsey experienced heights of public adulation and personal triumph and lows of personal defeat that contributed to the authentic and not merely transitory American legend he would become.

The defeat--in Philadelphia at the fists of Gene Tunney--is well known and has been written about thousands of times. The personal triumph occurred in Florida, first in Miami and later in Tampa, and has gone unnoticed in histories of the region and narratives of Dempsey's exploits.

In this brief essay, I would like to tell of his triumph. I also suggest why he undertook his travels through the southern part of the state and what his experiences in Miami specifically reveal about the fascinating connections among sport, commerce, and community growth during this time of intense and accelerating interest in the region's development.

Even when not covering his famous fights, southern Florida and, particularly, Miami newspapers greatly publicized Dempsey. Seemingly, any scrap of information about Dempsey, whether trivial or critical, as though writers enjoyed twisting the lion's tail, seemed worthy of space in the early and middle twenties.

The Miami Herald, for February 12, 1925, graciously reported in a headline that "Jack Dempsey Rushes To Bedside of Father," who was sick in Salt Lake City. But two years later, the same paper meanly printed a photograph of the champion commenting that "His face is approaching flabbiness. Wonder how he compares with the Dempsey of 1923 or 1919 in weight?"

Dempsey had not in fact fought an officially sanctioned title or non-title match since battering the "Wild Bull of the Pampas," Luis Firpo, to the canvas in two frantic rounds on September 14, 1923. He knocked the powerful Argentinian down nine times and was himself pushed from the ring by Firpo in a wild fight.

Prior to that he had defeated Tommy Gibbons by decision in fifteen boring rounds at the unlikely venue of Shelby, Montana, on July 4, 1923. Local backers of the match were damaged (financially) far more than either fighter.

On February 10, 1925, the *Herald* carried a release suggesting that "Willard May Fight Dempsey In Chicago". Fortunately for Jess Willard, this pipe dream never materialized. Since Dempsey destroyed him in 1919, Willard had fought only two official bouts in the last of which Firpo had knocked him out on July 13, 1925.

The *Herald* further reported, in a separate item, a projected bout, which never would take place, between Dempsey and Joe Beckett, an English heavyweight. English heavyweights were dreaded like bad prohibition hooch during the

1920s, though not for their blinding wallop. Perhaps the best known Brit, Phil Scott, was called "Phaintin' Phil." Predictably, in his first American fight, he was knocked out by journeyman Knute Hansen in one round.

Toward the end of 1925 Dempsey seems to have decided to appear in a Florida ring. Once before, in 1924, he had fought an exhibition in Pensacola, and he may have included some training exercises in a vaudeville tour stop, also in 1924, in Jacksonville.

From the middle of 1925 he attempted to gain positive publicity and earn money by appearing in exhibition fights. While he was a dominating sports hero of his day, his failure for over two years to defend his title hurt his reputation. But even when he was brutally victorious in famous fights against Georges Carpentier and Firpo, his luster was dimmed by charges he had shirked his patriotic duty by not joining the armed forces during World War I and by his unwillingness to fight possibly his strongest contender during the early 1920s, the "Black Panther," Harry Wills.

Dempsey convinced a court in 1920 that he was not guilty of conspiracy to avoid the draft, but many Americans still harbored lingering doubts about his Americanism. He was constantly plagued by reporters badgering him about when and where he would meet "Black" Wills for the title.

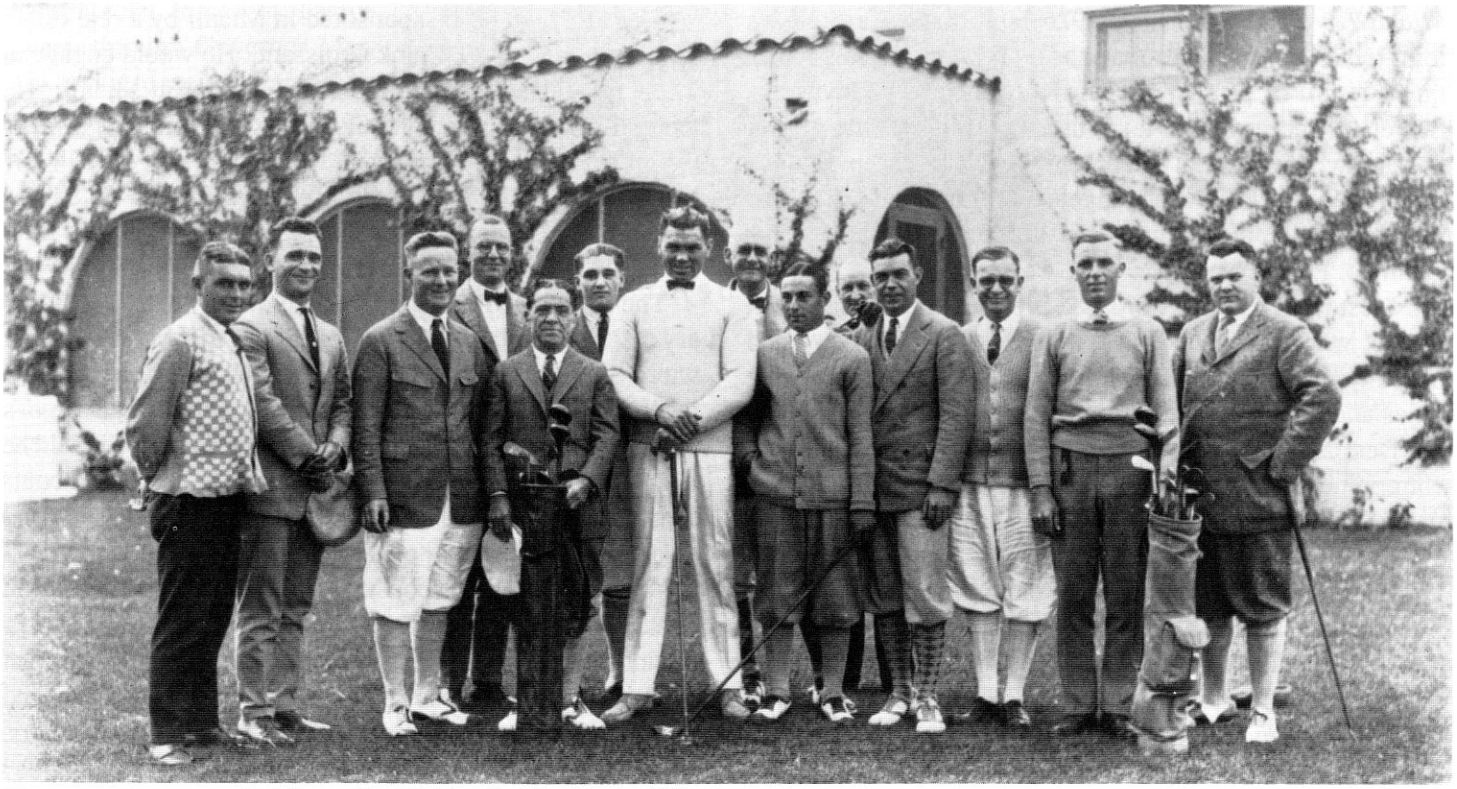
Although still a great favorite with many boxing fans, Dempsey had to work hard, in the words of biographer Randy Roberts, to "be liked, even loved in the same manner as the public took Babe Ruth and Little Billy Johnston [the tennis player] to their hearts. Therefore, during his hiatus from the ring, Dempsey courted the public." He had what today would be termed an image problem, and apparently he felt appearances in Florida would help enhance his image.

Dempsey must have known that he should arrange his Florida visit carefully. In early November of 1925, he experiemced a fiasco in Mexico that had begun triumphantly, and he would not want to repeat that misadventure. On November 2, the *New York Times* reported that some 20,000 spectators had seen "Dempsey in Mexican Bouts," including "Generals And Cabinet Members In Throng."

A correspondent glowingly declared that "the fight game here has received a tremendous boost with the presence of the champion, who has dispelled the belief that the fighter is always in trouble with the authorities." But, a follow-up *Times* story November 5 scuttled the idea of Dempsey as a tranquil goodwill ambassador, revealing that "Gambling Raid Made Dempsey Flee City, Monterey Reports Say: Called Frame-Up."

Dempsey was to have fought further exhibitions in Monterey and Tampico but an arrest for card gambling at his hotel intervened. After his temporary release, Dempsey boarded a train for Laredo, Texas, so quickly he had to abandon his baggage at his hotel. Quite possibly ethnocentric American fans would not have treated seriously charges Dempsey incurred in a land they felt was characterized by pervasive corruption. Neither, however, would the debacle have helped Dempsey achieve the solid, respectable status he sought.

A 1925 *Tampa Tribune* item gossiping about Dempsey's Florida plans stated that Dempsey and his wife would soon travel to Miami as guests of C. Frank Croissant. "Main idea of the visit is to help Frank sell real estate," the story said.



Dempsey surrounds himself with South Florida golf fans.

Heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey preferred slacks to the knickers most of his entourage chose to wear.

Croissant, identified in the item for the benefit of sports fans as a "horseman," was actually a property development entrepreneur in Fort Lauderdale who also raised and raced horses. Miami newspapers frequently featured advertisements for his projects.

His company generally employed copy calculated to project an image of high-toned sophistication and financial security for the elite buyer. One such advertisement in the *Miami Herald* (February 4, 1926) emphasized a project's long-term benefits rather than shrilly hawking claims for its quick return of profits. Labeled "A Successful Investor's Secret of Success," the text used an urbane, first-person narrator who suggested that potential buyers--or "investors," rather--should "follow the judgement of those whose record has proved their judgment good. Where Ford will invest, for example, I must."

Presumably Henry Ford had invested in a Boca Raton project whose name was lacking equally in euphony and humility: "Croissantania, the most promising of all the many cities and hundred subdivisions he has helped to develop." So Dempsey's name was linked to that of a real estate entrepreneur who was presented to the public as a high class nation builder.

Variety, the show business weekly, simply said that Dempsey was traveling to Florida and the south to ply his boxer's trade. "Dates have already been booked in Miami and Tampa on January 16-17," *Variety* reported, prematurely and incorrectly. "Dempsey contemplates giving exhibitions in about 20 different cities, figuring on getting a guarantee of not less than $5,000 an exhibition."

The Tampa Morning Tribune printed under the headline "Champion to Invade Florida For Bouts" the news that Dempsey would fight an unnamed opponent in Miami on January 16, but said nothing about a Tampa appearance. The article added that Dempsey's representative Eddie Conner had been in Miami for several weeks "negotiating for the champion's appearance in a local ring," and that he would be the guest in Miami of a prominent real estate man."

Dempsey would be sponsored in Miami by a real estate developer, but not G. Frank Croissant. He would engage in a few exhibition bouts in the south but not in Miami. He would fight in Florida, but only after some fancy legal steps were tapped out in Tampa and Tallahassee.

A headline in the *Tampa Morning Tribune* stated one reason for Dempsey's change of plans: "Governor To Stop Boxing Exhibitions By Professionals."

The Associated Press article datelined Tallahassee, January 13, reported that "Governor [John W.] Martin tonight wired Sheriff Henry R. Chase of Miami, to enforce the law against professional prize fighting in Florida. The governor's message was sent in reply to one from the sheriff who said he had been requested to grant permission for exhibition bouts 'using professionals such as Dempsey and Tunney [who was also in the Miami area] or that class of fighters.'"

The governor's response was definite, but the matter it concerned seems as muddled as the sheriff's letter was ambiguous: who, after all, was in the high quality "class" of fighters such as Dempsey and Tunney, except Dempsey and Tunney and a few other skilled champions and challengers, such as Paul Berlenback, Mickey Walker and Harry Wills?

Or did the sheriff mean by "class," the heavyweight class in which Dempsey, Tunney (and Wills) belonged?

Governor Martin firmly replied according to the Associated Press, "Professional prize fighting is clearly against the law of the state. I expect you to enforce the law!"

Sheriff Chase, however, had asked about exhibition bouts, which were not always treated in law as actual professional bouts, though fighters could be paid for them.

More confusing still, professional prize fighting was clearly a very popular sport in Florida at that time. Fights were regularly held in Miami, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Jacksonville and elsewhere.

The very same *Tribune* issue containing Governor Martin's telegrammed injunction against professional prize fighting in Florida also reported news of the forthcoming scrap to be held in Tampa on January 21. It would feature the Canadian heavyweight titleholder, Jack Renault, whom Dempsey had faced in a three-round exhibition in 1922. Another story reported that local favorite Frankie Fardini had lost in ten rounds to Joe "Kid" Peck in St. Petersburg.

Although it seems farfetched to suggest that rival commercial forces in Tampa were, through Governor Martin, trying to prevent Dempsey's appearance in Miami, Dempsey would in fact never fight there. However, he would fight in Tampa through a ploy; no admission would be charged fans who watched him spar.

Dempsey demonstrates his follow through.

Whatever Governor Martin said to Sheriff Chase, and whatever Martin thought about Dempsey fighting in Miami, the issue continued to be news practically as long as Dempsey stayed in the state.

Martin, visiting in Fort Myers January 20 "announced that he will not approve or forbid the proposed Dempsey bout in Miami until he learns full details." A day later the contemplative governor was still "pondering whether he would allow the champion to appear in a Miami ring for an exhibition fight."

A nationally distributed Associated Press article reported that Dempsey, accompanied by his actress wife Estelle had arrived in Miami "for a brief vacation." He was not the guest of Croissant, and obviously his plans were not as clear as newspapers had earlier presented them.

An astute self-publicist, Dempsey told the Miami reporters that he had received an offer of $500,000 to fight Harry Wills from Wills' manager Paddy Mullins. The same news item noted, however, that Gene Tunney was also in Miami, and that Tunney's manager, Billy Gibson, "here acting as an erstwhile real estate agent salesman, is expected to return Saturday to Miami to join Tunney." Since his arrival, Dempsey, the story said, "has been frank in declaring that he believed his next opponent would be Tunney." It seems incredible that when both Dempsey and Tunney were in Miami, they or their spokesmen did not speak directly about a Dempsey-Tunney fight, but I have found no record of such discussion.

Dempsey's great personal allure and charm were strongly in evidence in Miami. On January 20 he "caused a near riot" in a real estate office, when he called on J. S. Blain, president of an acreage concern, who was host to the champion and his party. Traffic was halted and police were asked to start it rolling again.

The great champion was not simply vacationing and making courtesy calls, however. His entourage included his trainer and two sparring partners, and he was "up early this morning and took a two-mile jog along the bay front," showing that he was not letting himself get too greatly out of fighting shape.

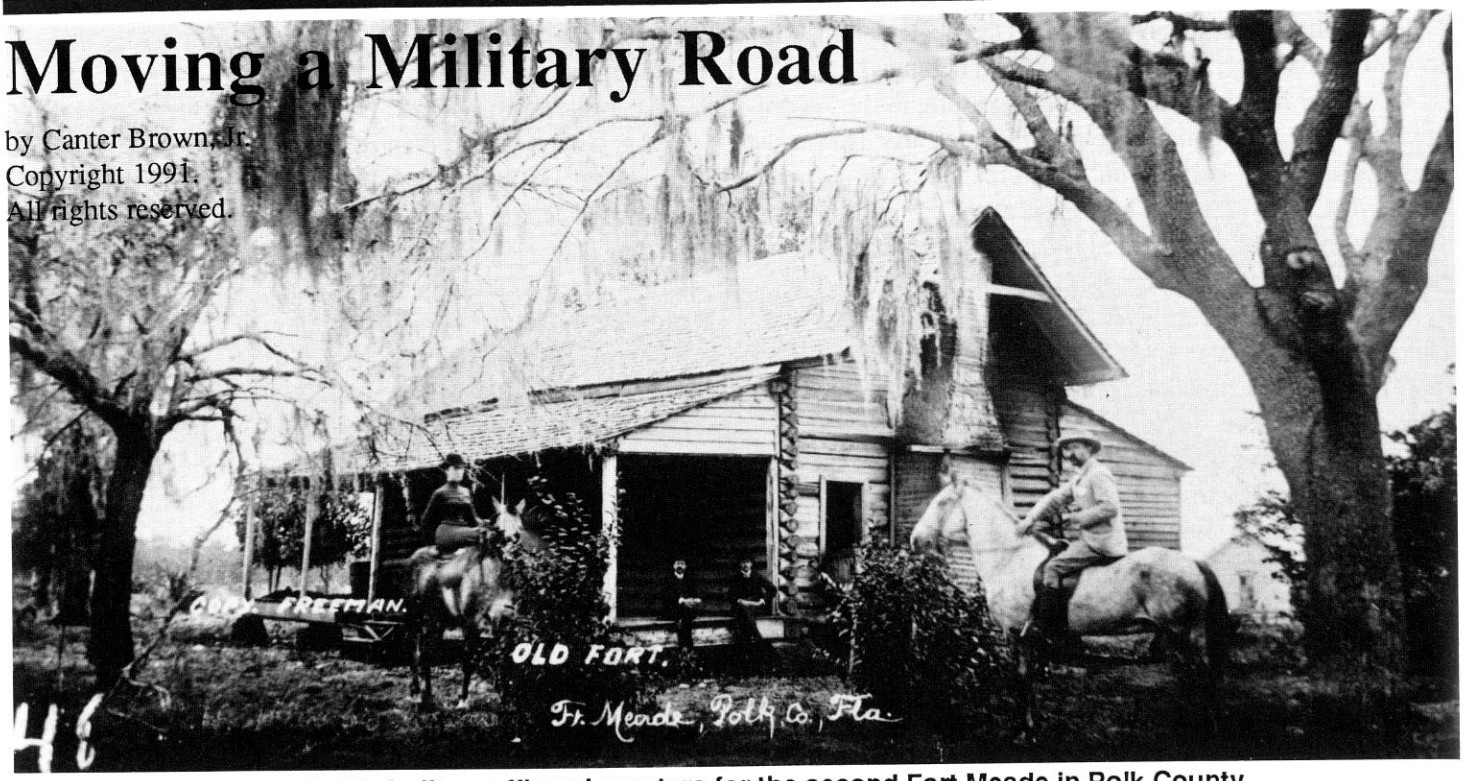
On January 21, the champion reiterated for the AP that "Dempsey Thinks Tunney Is Next Title Opponent," but his fellow tourist Tunney "denied they had been matched for a fight on any definite date." The next day, Tunney again "denied knowledge of any contract matching him with Jack Dempsey." Tunney's manager, Billy Gibson, who had by this time returned to Miami to sell property, added that discussions had been held only to match Tunney with a "logical heavyweight."

Dempsey, assuredly a logical enough heavyweight champion who had induced more than a reasonable amount of publicity mileage from a long-standing non-news item, now played mouse instead of cat with reporters, remaining "inaccessible as ever" in his "private suite at a Miami Beach hotel

(Continued on page 25.)

Moving a Military Road

by Canter Brown, Jr.



This log house was probably built as officers' quarters for the second Fort Meade in Polk County.

The morning of December 13, 1849, found George Gordon Meade a very unhappy man. At the time "a gaunt, thin man, with a hatchet face and a prominent aquiline nose," the 34-year-old Army lieutenant had spent the previous two damp, cool months slogging across south Florida swamps and prairies in an attempt to site the route of a military road intended eventually to link Florida's west coast at Tampa with her Atlantic coast at Fort Pierce.

That morning, in particular, the burden of Meade's fatigue must have weighed ever more heavily as he surveyed the status of his military career. Although honored three years previously "for gallant conduct in the several conflicts at Monterey, Mexico," Meade held the permanent rank of a lowly second lieutenant, a position he had held since his graduation on July 1, 1835, from the United States Military Academy.

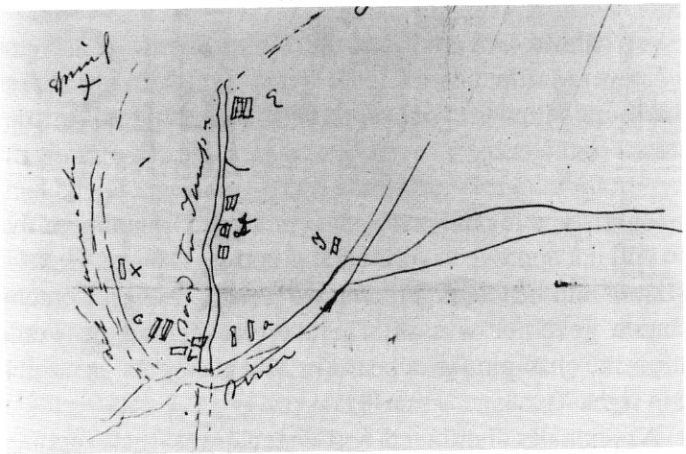
To make matters worse, Meade's commanding officer in Florida, General David E. Twiggs, was a man whom Meade suspected of harboring a grudge due to "some unpleasant passages" occurring between them during the Mexican War.

The events that had drawn Meade and Twiggs together in south Florida were sparked the previous summer when a small band of renegade Indians emerged from remote havens near Lake Okeechobee to attack a small settlement on Indian River. Thereafter, the outlaw party had crossed the peninsula to rob and burn the main trading station for Florida's Indians, established only that spring at Peace River near modern Bowling Green.

In the smoldering ashes of that trading station the bodies of George Payne, clerk of the Indian store, and his assistant, Dempsey Whidden, son of James W. Whidden, the only American settler in the vicinity were later found. Wounded during the attack were Dempsey's sister, Nancy, and her husband, twenty-eight year old William McCullough. James W. Whidden's homestead, located six miles to the north on a creek already bearing Whidden's name, also was fired upon and another of his sons wounded.

Within a very short time, the creek where the store had been, was renamed Paynes Creek, and the site itself became known as "Chokonikla," the Creek and Seminole word for "burned house."

James W. Whidden should not have been living on Whidden Creek when his family was attacked. Since 1845, by order of President James K. Polk, American settlement had been prohibited within twenty miles west of the bound-



Rough sketch of the location of buildings at the first Fort Meade.

George G. Meade in 1859. A captain at the time, he would later become a major general, USA.

ary of the Indian nation, which lay to the east and south of Peace River.

Within the several months prior to the attack at Chokonikla, however, Whidden had entered the vicinity as had several families in the area just north of modern Bartow. Most south Florida frontier families remained to the west of Hooker's Prairie at Alafia, Itchepuckesasa (Plant City), and Thonotosassa. Their cattle though, ranged south to the Myakka and as far east as the Peace River.

The attack at Chokonikla created panic among these frontier settlers. They understandably feared for their lives if the attack signaled, as it seemed, a general Indian uprising. Military authorities had assured themselves in only a short time that the attack was an isolated incident. However, the fears of frontier families were whipped to a fever pitch by Tampa merchants and politicians desirous of an Indian war, as well as by prominent cattlemen anxious to acquire, for their own use, the vast range lands that lay to the east and south of Peace River. Demands naturally were made for the expulsion of all Indians from south Florida or, barring that, for their extermination.

In any event, cooler heads prevailed. By mid-October 1849 President Zachary Taylor, at the urging of General Twiggs and Indian Agent John C. Casey, decided that "if the Indians comply with their obligations by surrendering the murderers, the question of removal is not be be forced upon their decision."

To separate American frontiersmen and those Indians who chose not to leave for the west, Twiggs proposed the construction of a line of military posts from the head of navigation on the Manatee River to the Atlantic coast. Linked by a reliable, well-designed road capable of supporting heavy artillery wagons during all seasons of the year, these posts would protect inhabitants on both sides of the Indian boundary. On the morning of December 13, 1849, Lieutenant George G. Meade had been working on this military road for the previous two months. The road had created a problem for Meade, however, and Meade in turn had been forced to lay the problem in the lap of his commanding officer and former adversary, General David E. Twiggs.

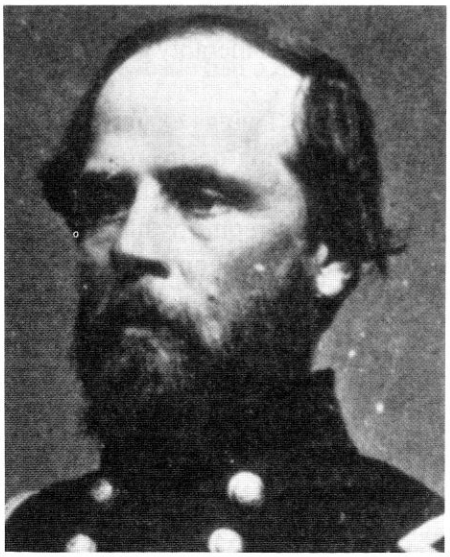
One of the owners of the trading store burned at Chokonikla, who also was one of the prime instigators and supporters of an Indian war, was Tampa merchant John Darling. Darling had determined the site for the Indian store the previous spring and now was adamant that General Twiggs' line of posts should be anchored on Peace River at Chokonikla.

To placate the influential merchant, Twiggs, in mid-October, had ordered the construction of a post near the burnt store. The action seems to have been conditioned upon Darling's assurance that the site lay well north of the Indian boundary.

The problem was, as Lieutenant Meade had discovered, that Darling's designated boundary line, the Big Charlie Apopka Creek, was not the true northern limit of the Indian nation. The lieutenant's careful examination had disclosed, on the contrary, that the agreed treaty line was Bowlegs Creek on the eastern side of the river just to the north of the mouth of Whidden Creek.

As if that were not bad enough, Meade also had concluded that the route Twiggs had selected for the military road, a course running from the Manatee River to Chokonikla, was poorly suited for a military road of any kind.

If George Meade's findings were correct, the entire line of the proposed military road would have to be shifted at least ten miles north of its originally intended route. At the same time, the post at Chokonikla—so recently and laboriously constructed—would have to be abandoned.



Major General Darius Nash Couch, USA.

Not anxious to confront Twiggs

with any problems, Meade did hold one card he could play to soften the general's possible reaction. The lieutenant believed he had found the perfect site for the new road and for a fort to protect its crossing of Peace River.

On that morning of December 13, 1849, he was preparing to depart from Chokonikla with General Twiggs and his aides to present the new site, a location chosen in defiance of the will of John Darling. Meade's career and advancement in measure depended upon the decision of the man with whom he had quarreled three years past.

At 6 a.m. on the morning of December 13, General Twiggs, Indian Agent Casey, Lieutenants Meade and Darious Couch, and others departed the confines of Fort Chokonikla and directed their horses to the north, along a route surveyed by Meade just two weeks previously.

Three and one-half hours later they arrived at a swamp and hammock, which in the future would be called Kendrick Branch. Located a little more than three miles above and on the same side of the river as Whidden Creek, the branch was shaped like a crescent. It ran south to east, and enclosed an area of high-quality land approximately one-half mile square. Dotted with pine and oak trees, the area promised shade from summer sun and protection from winter winds.

Near to Kendrick Branch was a grove of sour orange trees, and stretching for several miles to the north were the ruins of the great Indian town of Talakchopco, which had been destroyed in April 1836 during the opening months of the Second Seminole War. The banks of the river at that spot were high and firm, and overlooked an ancient Indian ford, which had allowed generations of Creeks and Seminoles access to the South Florida hunting grounds. The river coursed by with a stream only forty to fifty yards in width.

The opposing or eastern bank opened, after a short passage through river hammocks, into a high open area almost denuded of living trees. That area, which ran roughly northeast to southwest with a width of seven to eight miles and a length considerably greater, already was known as "the Deadening."

As David Twiggs examined the area enclosed by Kendrick Branch, his desire to placate John Darling and his natural reluctance to undo the construction work of two months was overcome by his delight at the beautiful location and its obvious superiority over Chokonikla.

So pleased was he that Twiggs turned to a surprised and relieved Lieutenant Meade and, in the words of Meade's son, "[confirmed] Lieutenant Meade's selection, and as a recognition of his judgement in the special case, and of his general good service and conduct, he caused the post to be named Fort Meade."

Within hours of the party's return that day to Chokonikla, Meade had transmitted to Twiggs a large personally drawn map of the entire area that stretched from Lake Hancock on the north to below Chokonikla on the south and extended

Major General David Emanuel Twiggs, CSA.

eastward to the Kissimmee River. On the map, signed "Geo. G. Meade, Lt. Topogl. Engineers, Chokko-nikla, Decr. 13th 1849," Meade carefully and boldly entered the route of a military road leading to the east of a new post, "Fort Meade."

Four days after the designation of Fort Meade as a military post, Lt. Henry Bainbridge, with two companies of the Seventh Infantry, was ordered to garrison and begin construction of the new fort. Arriving on December 19, 1849, Bainbridge was greeted with orders to "cut down the banks and make a good crossing for wagons over Peas Creek as soon as possible" and "with all dispatch to put up light frame houses and cover them in with clapboards, for the stores which will be collected at that place."

Additionally he was instructed to employ available troops "in opening the road some four miles, by the trail from Peas Creek to Hatche-thlocco [Bowlegs Creek]."

Falling to the effort, Bainbridge's men began the construction of Fort Meade. Within four days they were joined by additional elements of the Seventh Infantry, as well as by companies of the First, Third, and Fourth Artillery. At month's end the post boasted a complement of 22 officers and 397 men.

The decade of the 1850s opened with feverish activity at Fort Meade, aimed primarily at the completion of the military road from Tampa to the Atlantic coast. Along that road, to the east, passed troops of the Fort Meade garrison ordered to establish and maintain additional posts between the Peace and Kissimmee rivers. Sited by Lieutenant Meade and built

by troops under the command of Lieutenant Ambrose Powell Hill, the new forts were named, respectively, Clinch and Arbuckle.

As efforts continued to induce voluntary emmigration by the remaining natives, Indian delegations from west of the Mississippi passed through the post. In turn, parties of natives resigned to a departure from their Florida homes gathered at the new camp on Peace River to await transportation west.

The Indian scare of 1849 and its attendant excitement waned in 1850. In short order most of General Twiggs' new military posts were closed. Fort Arbuckle, for instance, fell victim to the trend on May 15, 1850, and Fort Clinch followed on June 8. When Fort Chokonikla was abandoned on July 18, Fort Meade remained the only garrisoned post in interior South Florida east of the Manatee River.

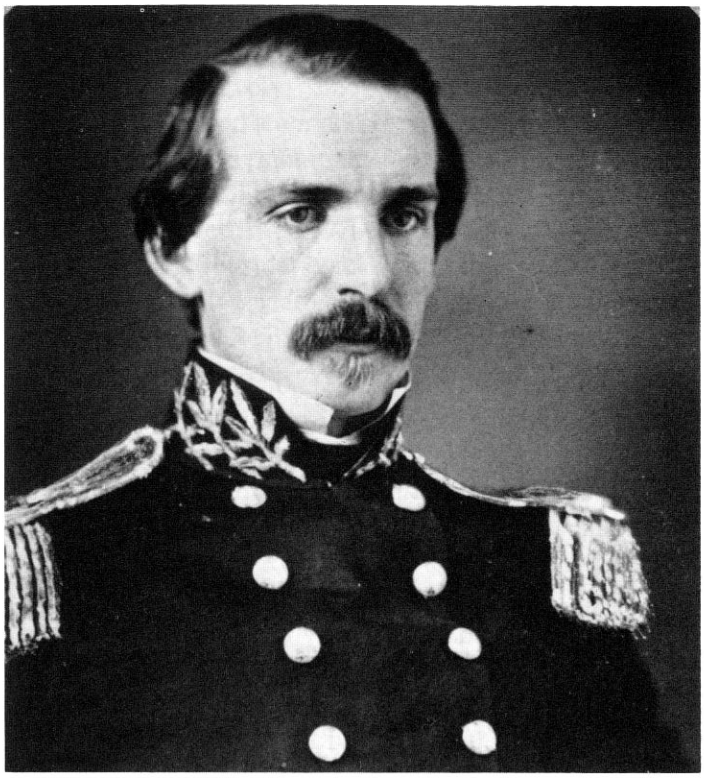
Fort Meade, as it existed during that summer of 1850, was not a fort in the traditional sense of a blockhouse or palisaded enclosure. Rather, it was a collection of wooden buildings clinging for the most part to the western bank of the Peace River astride the military road to Tampa. On Kendrick Branch to the south was located the beef contractor's house and pens. Between the branch and the river, stables had been erected. Just to their north, but south of the military road, were the store houses.

Enlisted men's quarters were positioned north of the road and a little further north was a cabin used for an officer's family. Perhaps a few hundred yards along the road, to the west of the ferry, which had been established at the ford near the present Peace River bridge, lay what were described as "officers shed." Another couple of hundred yards along was a hospital building which consisted of "one large room for the sick of all diseases."

However humble that hospital may have been in the summer of 1850, it proved to be sorely needed. Because of its location near mosquito breeding grounds in the swamps and hammocks of the river and of Kendrick Branch, Fort Meade's garrison was struck by malaria and "intermittent fevers." During the months of July, August, and September almost one-third of the garrison, numbering between 185 and 200 men was listed as sick. At least two privates died.

In response to the situation, most of the garrison was transferred to the recently commissioned Fort Myers. By November, Fort Meade held a total complement of only 41 men and two officers. The post still suffered from the sickness of 13 men.

It was apparent to all concerned that something had to be done about Fort Meade. On December 2, Major William H. French, commanding the post, took the first step by requesting permission from his superior, General Thomas Childs, to move all quarters to a ridge about one mile north and west of the river. The site was higher than any other land for miles to the west, and was surrounded on all sides by gentle slopes.



Ambrose Powell Hill, a US Army captain in 1859 when this picture was taken. He would later become a lieutenant general in the army of the Confederate States.

French's recommendation claimed Childs' immediate attention, and on December 23 he responded: "You will immediately erect quarters at the point indicated, for officers and men. In the position of the new quarters, you will have regard to symmetry and defence, when further additions are made, such as the removal to the new site of commissary, quartermaster and sutlers stores."

Upon that authority and within a matter of weeks, Major French undertook the transfer of Fort Meade to the west of its original location. Under the supervision of his second-in-command, Major Thomas J. Jackson, later called "Stonewall," the old buildings were dismantled and re-erected upon the new site. The original Fort Meade had a lifespan of only a little more than one year.

Before we leave the old Fort Meade, it should be mentioned that sickness was not the only danger at hand in the area. The weather could, on occasion, pose just as great a threat. An August 1850 letter from future Confederate general A. P. Hill well illustrates that fact.

Hill, who thought Fort Meade "a very pretty post," wrote: "[T]he lightning came near extinguishing my youthful aspirations yesterday. Coming from Fort Meade a violent storm passed over, such a one as you read of in books but never see except in these tropical latitudes, in which the trees are seen skylarking in the air. Jupiter Tonans hurled a bolt at my head, but being too quick for him I dodged it and a tree by my side was mangled shockingly 'I was not kilt, but spacheless.' My eyes haven't stopped blinking yet - Oh for an iced Julep!"

Blacks and Seminoles

by George Klos

In the last week of 1835, Major Francis L. Dade led a column of 108 troops from Fort Brooke at Tampa Bay to Fort King (near present-day Ocala). From there they would move into Indian country and begin rounding up Seminoles and Miccosukees for removal to the Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River.

Guiding the troops was a black man named Luis Pacheco, who had been hired by the army for his knowledge of the Seminole country and language. Eleven years earlier, because of bad treatment from his master, Luis ran away to Indian country, where he lived for several years before he was captured and sold back into slavery.

Luis was used as a scout, walking ahead of the troops. He later admitted he resented Dade for making him go out alone to look ahead for signs of trouble.

In the mid-morning of December 28, in an area of pines, scrub palmettos, and tall grass, 180 Indians and blacks rose from a cover of tall grass and fired a barrage.

"I immediately threw down my gun and laid down behind a tree, very much frightened," Luis recalled. "As I could speak the Seminole language, I begged each one for my life as they levelled their guns at me."

Black warriors were with the Indians and, according to Private Ransom Clarke, one of the two Army survivors, were "more savage than the Seminoles." Clarke was shot in the right shoulder blade by a black man "who, when he fired, cried out, "there, damn you!'" Later, Clarke heard blacks discussing whether to kill the wounded or leave them to die slowly.

Four hours after the first shots, the battleground was quiet, and bodies littered the ground. Forty or 50 blacks proceeded to cut the throats of soldiers known to be still alive. Alligator, a Seminole chief, recalled, "When I got inside the logpen, there were three white men alive, whom the negroes put to death after a conversation in English."

Luis left with the victors and continued to live with them through their removal to the west. His role in Dade's fatal march has always been controversial. To his dying day he maintained he knew nothing in advance about the ambush, that he was as surprised as anyone when the Seminoles jumped out of the grass.

Most whites, however, believed he deliberately led Dade into a trap. Charles Coe's 1898 book *Red Patriots*, for example, said he "secretly planned to inform the Indians and Maroons of the intended march through their country."

Gopher John, Seminole interpreter.

Whether Luis told the truth or his detractors did, blacks certainly did pass information on Dade's march to the Indians. Major F. S. Belton wrote in the national weekly *Niles Register* that "a negro . . .named Harry, controls. . .about a hundred warriors, forty miles southeast of Fort Brooke, [and] keeps this post constantly observed." They were probably the source of Seminole knowledge of troop movements from Tampa Bay.

Just before Dade's command met its fate, Indians and blacks raided plantations outside St. Augustine and along the St. Johns River. More than 300 slaves joined the Seminoles, and many knew of the raids in advance, because blacks, who lived with the Indians secretly, went to the slave quarters beforehand for assistance. One leader of the Seminole war parties was a black named John Caesar, who had a family enslaved on one plantation.

Thus began what is known as the Second Seminole War, the longest (1835-42) and most expensive ($30 million) Indian war the United States government ever waged.

Yet it was not strictly an "Indian war." One army commander, General Thomas Jesup, went so far as to call it "a Negro, not an Indian, war." While he may have exaggerated, blacks were involved in virtually every aspect of the war. They added numbers to the Seminoles' fighting strength and provided useful contacts in the slave quarters of the whites' rear guard.

During the war, the interests of the blacks had to be addressed in negotiations with the Seminoles. General Jesup eventually agreed to allow blacks to be sent out of Florida rather than be sold into slavery. Jesup addressed a serious impediment to Indian removal -- the black resistance. His desire to end the Florida war as expediently as possible led him to protect blacks from chattel slavery. During this process, an alliance of sorts formed between the blacks and the army.

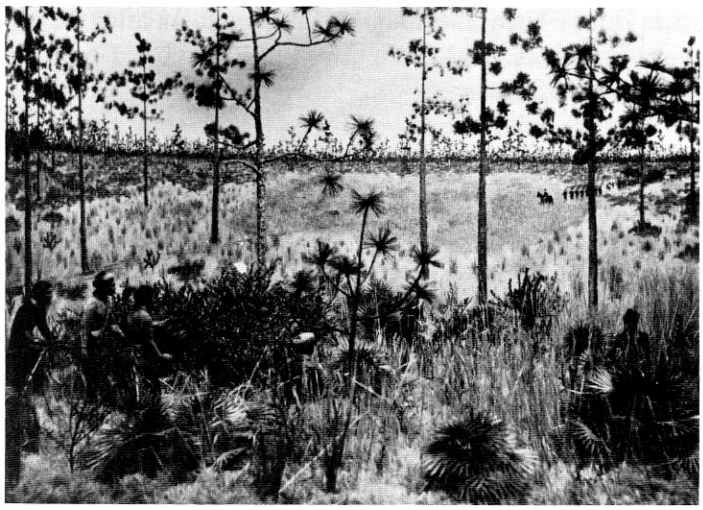
The relationship between blacks and Seminoles had existed for decades before the Seminole war. Some black families, in fact, had lived with the Seminoles for two and three generations.

Blacks lived with the Seminoles almost from their beginning as a distinct tribe in the 1700s, but they were not noticed by observers until the 1800s. The early years of the black Seminoles are unclear, but we do know that blacks came to the Seminoles in three general ways: as purchased slaves, as plunder and as escaped slaves forming Maroon (fugitive slave) communities allied with the Seminoles.

Spanish Florida was a popular destination for slaves escaping from English and American plantations, since the Florida peninsula was thinly populated. How many escaped slaves sought refuge in Florida is unknown, and so are the locations of their settlements. These communities of escaped slaves are the least understood of all the black-Indian towns in Florida, and for that matter, in all of North America. They allied with the more powerful Seminole bands and existed within the political system of autonomous Seminole townships as villages paying tribute to the regional chief.

The largest black village was Pilaklikaha, with a population of 160 and entirely self-sufficient in food. Archeologist Brent Weisman, in his book *Like Beads on a String,* located Pilaklikaha in present-day Sumter County.

Some blacks were slaves of Indians and others were free. Some were interpreters and advisors of great importance and others were field hands and warriors.



Seminoles await Major Francis L. Dade's troops in this artist's rendering of the Dade Massacre of 1835.

It is important to understand that even a black of the lowest status among the Seminoles believed it to be a better life than chattel slavery. They were not precise equals of Indians, but they had a remarkable degree of freedom. And they were willing to fight to keep it.

The Florida Seminole perspective of their relations with the blacks, recorded in the 1970s by Robert T. King, explains that they did not consider blacks a part of the tribe, but only allowed them to live nearby.

"White men and Seminoles first fought over slaves," said a resident of the Brighton reservation near Lake Okeechobee. "When the white men came to get the slaves there was trouble."

The largest and most heavily armed Maroon settlement in United States history was on the Apalachicola River in a fort abandoned by the British at the end of the War of 1812 and then occupied by escaped slaves. American officials worried that the very existence of such a settlement would encourage slave escapes throughout the South.

The fort was in Spanish territory, but Andrew Jackson, commander of U.S. troops in the South, said that "it ought to be blown up regardless of the ground it stands on." With the concurrence of Spanish officials in Pensacola, American forces destroyed it in 1816, killing nearly 270 blacks.

The destruction of the Negro Fort, as it was known, did not relieve border tensions. A year and half later, Jackson led a campaign through north Florida against the Seminoles and other black settlements. It is known as "the First Seminole War," although Jackson called it "a savage and Negro war."

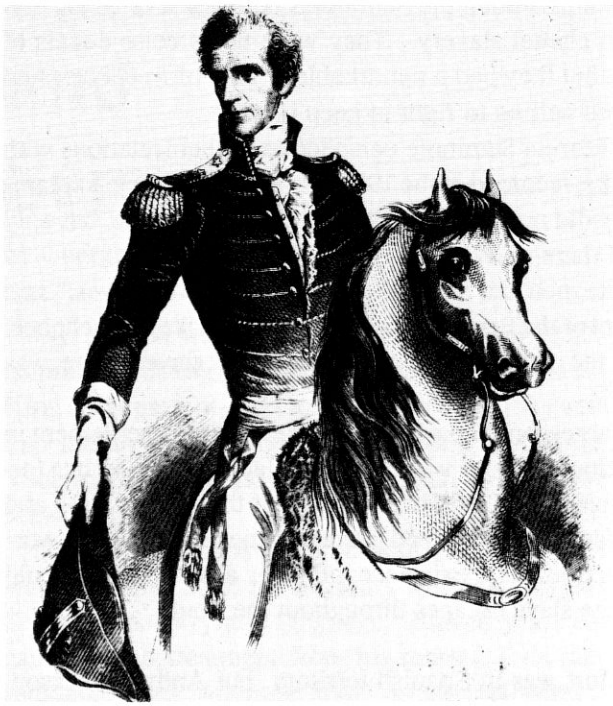
John Prince, a black who fought Jackson's army, recalled that the Indians felt that "they would not have been attacked at the Suwannee if they had not these Negroes among them; that the hope of getting possession of them invited the attack and proved the destruction of the town."

When Florida became an American territory in 1821, plantations were established, and whites and blacks moved to the area in larger numbers. Black Seminoles established relations with plantation slaves when Seminoles took blacks with them on trade excursions to serve as interpreters.

Slaveowners complained that many slaves ran away to the Seminoles and the Indians refused to return them. Seminoles also complained that whites stole their slaves and refused to return them.

When government officials tried to convince the Seminoles to cede their Florida land and move west, they relied on two black interpreters who advised the Seminole council. The treaty of Paynes Landing in 1832 budgeted $7,000 specifically for slave claims against the Indians.

Another clause paid $200 each to Abraham and Cudjo, black Seminole interpreters. Their role is unclear, but in the end federal officials induced a handful of chiefs to sign two removal treaties. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, an Army officer



General Andrew Jackson, later Governor of Florida and President of the United States.

who fought in the war that resulted from these treaties, called the money paid to the two black men a bribe.

The majority of Indians and blacks, however, resisted removal. The contact between the Seminoles and the blacks living among the whites, so essential, as we have seen, to the initial surprise attacks that began the war, continued and were a source of fear for whites.

The Florida Herald of St. Augustine reported, in 1837, the hanging of a black man who killed a white while attempting to steal a horse and join the Indians. That same year a militia patrol on the outskirts of the city killed black Seminole leader John Caesar and several others. The buckshot, calico, needles and thread found in their packs indicated that blacks within the city limits had been supplying the hostiles.

In the winter of 1836-37, General Thomas Jesup swept through central Florida, burning villages and fields and keeping the hostiles on the run. Jesup, more than anyone else, understood the need to appeal to the blacks in negotiations to end the war.

As a result, Jesup and the Seminole chiefs, through black interpreters, agreed to a cease fire in March 1837. The Seminoles agreed to assemble at Tampa Bay in preparation for removal to Indian Territory. One clause of the deal specifically related to blacks: "Major General Jesup, in behalf of the United States, agrees that the Seminoles and their allies, who come in and emigrate to the West, shall be secure in their lives and property; that their Negroes, their bona fide property, shall accompany them to the West; and that their cattle and ponies shall be paid for by the United States at a fair valuation."

Blacks were referred to as both allies and as property, as Maroons and as slaves. Even those considered property were mentioned separately from other property. Blacks would go west; cattle and ponies were to be sold in Florida. It was important to Jesup that blacks "should feel themselves secure; if they should become alarmed and hold out, the war will be renewed."

The tenuous agreement was threatened by whites who hovered near the removal camps to seize Seminole blacks. Jesup's fears that they would jeopardize removal by alarming the blacks proved correct in early June 1837, when the blacks and Indians abandoned the camps and continued their resistance. Jesup blamed this partly on whites "with their pockets full of powers of attorney" who attempted to enslave the black Seminoles.

The war continued for five more years. Jesup's campaign, in the winter of 1837-38, drove the Seminoles deeper into south Florida. In March 1838, Indians and blacks met Jesup at Jupiter Inlet to discuss once again an end to the war.

The Seminoles proposed to allow the whites to have all of Florida except the southwestern corner of the peninsula, bounded by the Caloosahatchee River on the north and Lake Okeechobee on the east. Jesup was willing to accept these boundaries, but he was told by the Secretary of War that Indian removal was national policy and no other end was permissible.

On the night of March 20, Jesup's troops surrounded the Seminole camp and took 527 Indians and 166 blacks prisoners. Only 16 people managed to escape. A few days later, another 88 people, including 27 blacks, living west of Lake Okeechobee on Fisheating Creek were convinced to surrender by blacks working for the army.

At the war's outset, the black Seminoles fought because their only option was enslavement by whites. Jesup moved them out of Florida with the Indians. He promised to protect them from whites who sought to enslave them after the prewar way of life they had enjoyed in Florida had been destroyed by the Army.

Blacks appear to have changed sides, but they really fought for their own interests. Examples of black and Seminole cooperation had always been balanced by social separateness. As the war dragged on, blacks realized that removal to the West, and away from southern slavery, would only occur if they cooperated with the army.

Just as blacks proved valuable to the Seminole war effort, they were equally valuable to the army as guides and interpreters. Some blacks did stay with the Seminoles until the war's end in 1842, but after 1838 they were found in greater numbers either in Indian Territory or with the Army.

Jesup called the blacks "the only guides from whom correct information has been obtained." One captain com-

mented that existing maps of Florida were so inaccurate "any Negro guide could make a better one in the sand."

Abraham was the best-known black guide, having remained with the Army in 1837, when most other blacks escaped from the removal camps. While other blacks were paid a dollar a day, Abraham was paid $2.50. Abraham was with Jesup at Jupiter Inlet, although it was another black, Sandy, who convinced the blacks and Indians to attend the peace talks that led to their capture.

A former slave named John Crews led William Harney to the camp of the warrior Chakaika in a hammock 25 miles west of Key Biscayne. In a brief fire fight, Chakaika was killed and some Indians dispersed, but 10 warriors and several women and children were captured. Harney hanged the warriors in the presence of the women and children.

The soldiers returned to their camp at Cape Florida with the women and children as prisoners, leaving the twisting corpses in the trees as an omen to any Indians who sought shelter there.

John Crew's role in this attack points out the importance of some blacks in guiding whites through the uncharted Everglades. Crews was the first black to claim to know the Everglades, and when he turned himself in at Fort Dallas (now downtown Miami) he offered to work as a guide.

Navy Lieutenant John T. McLaughlin requested Crews be assigned to him, but Army officials were uninterested and kept him in irons. Harney liked McLaughlin's idea and managed to secure Crew's release for his expedition to Chakaika's camp.

Although Crews was wounded in the fight, he continued to work for the Army and Navy. Later, he helped a joint Army-Navy expedition become the first whites to traverse the width of the Everglades.

Black guides faced violence both from Indians, who felt betrayed, and white soldiers who resented them.

"The fire of the enemy was concentrated principally upon the Indian guides and Negro interpreters," noted John Sprague of an 1842 fight near Panasofkee.

Abraham, best known of the black guides for the Seminoles.

Theodore Rodenbaugh, the historian of the Second Dragoons, noticed the same in a battle in the Wahoo Swamp, where the black Seminole, Gopher John, "well known to the Indians as he was, made him a conspicuous object of assault."

Gopher John was his Army name; blacks and Indians knew him as John Cowaya (spelled variously in the sources, but his last name means "horse"). He was born among the Seminoles, and descriptions of him indicate that he looked part Indian.

In his early thirties during the war, he originally resisted removal as an ally of the war leader Coacoochee (Wild Cat), even escaping from St. Augustine's imposing fortress with him in 1837. Gopher John fought for the Seminoles at the battle of Lake Okeechobee on Christmas Day of that year. He was recaptured shortly afterward, and, from then to the war's conclusion, he worked for the Army.

In the summer of 1841 he convinced the chief Hospetarke and a group of lesser chiefs to board a boat for talks. There they were held hostage to guarantee the surrender of the rest of their band.

"When the shock had passed, several began talking loudly, gesticulating in a violent manner, brandishing their knives and threatening the interpreter," reported Sprague.

Blacks were not entirely safe even among soldiers. A letter to *Niles Register* from Fort King reported the shooting of black interpreter Murray "by a scoundrel named Edgar, who is orderly sergeant of the company." Edgar complained to his colonel about Murray's "insolence" and was told that it would be looked into.

Unsatisfied, Edgar took his rifle and shot Murray as he slept. Less than an hour after the fatal incident some Indians came to the fort to talk, but no interpreter was available.

Most black Seminoles had, by 1842, been taken to Indian Territory (where their descendants live today in Seminole County, Oklahoma), but a few remained with the isolated bands that stayed behind in the hammocks of south Florida. Few in number and remote from slaves of white settlers, they had little influence on white-Seminole relations in Florida after the war. White-Seminole contacts were so few and far between after the war that they were rarely needed as interpreters.

R. H. Pratt noted in 1879 that three blacks were "held as property" in an Indian settlement near the town of Fort Meade and that one Indian offered to sell him a slave.

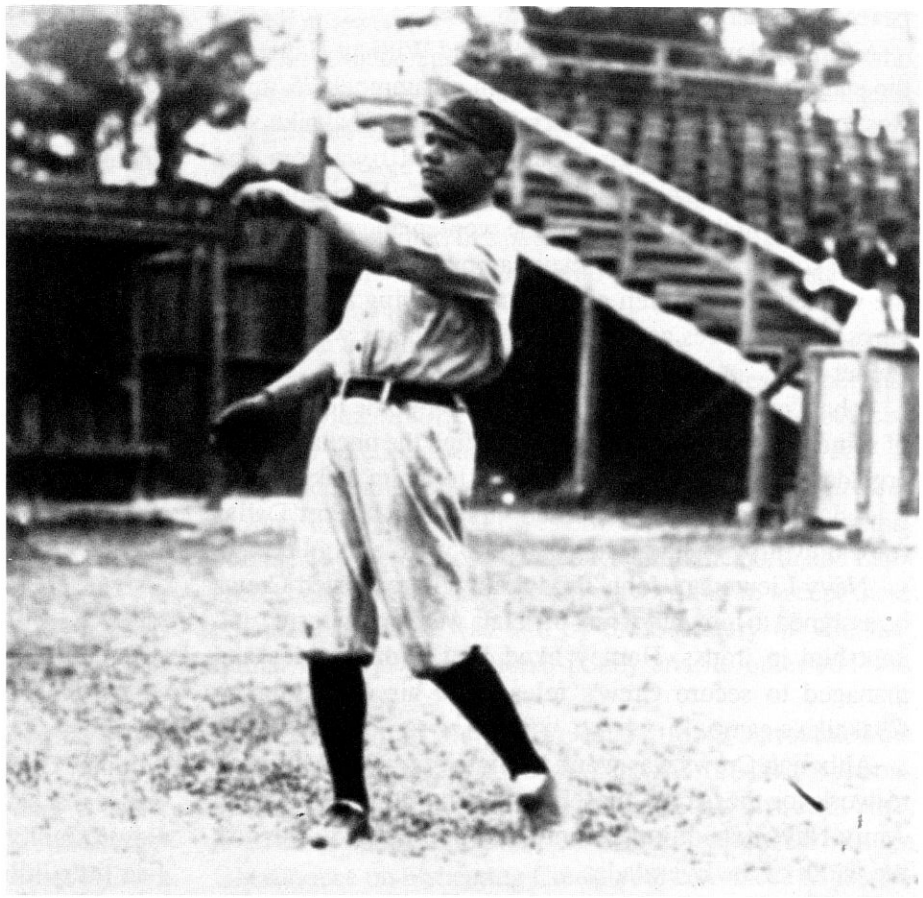
Clay MacCauley visited the Seminoles a few years later and said that Seminole men still took local black women as wives. He did not interpret Seminole interracial relations as slavery because of the freedom of movement he observed.

Anthropologist Alanson Skinner's 1910 visit to several Everglades settlements included the brief comment, "Negro slaves are still held by some of the Indians," with no further explanation.

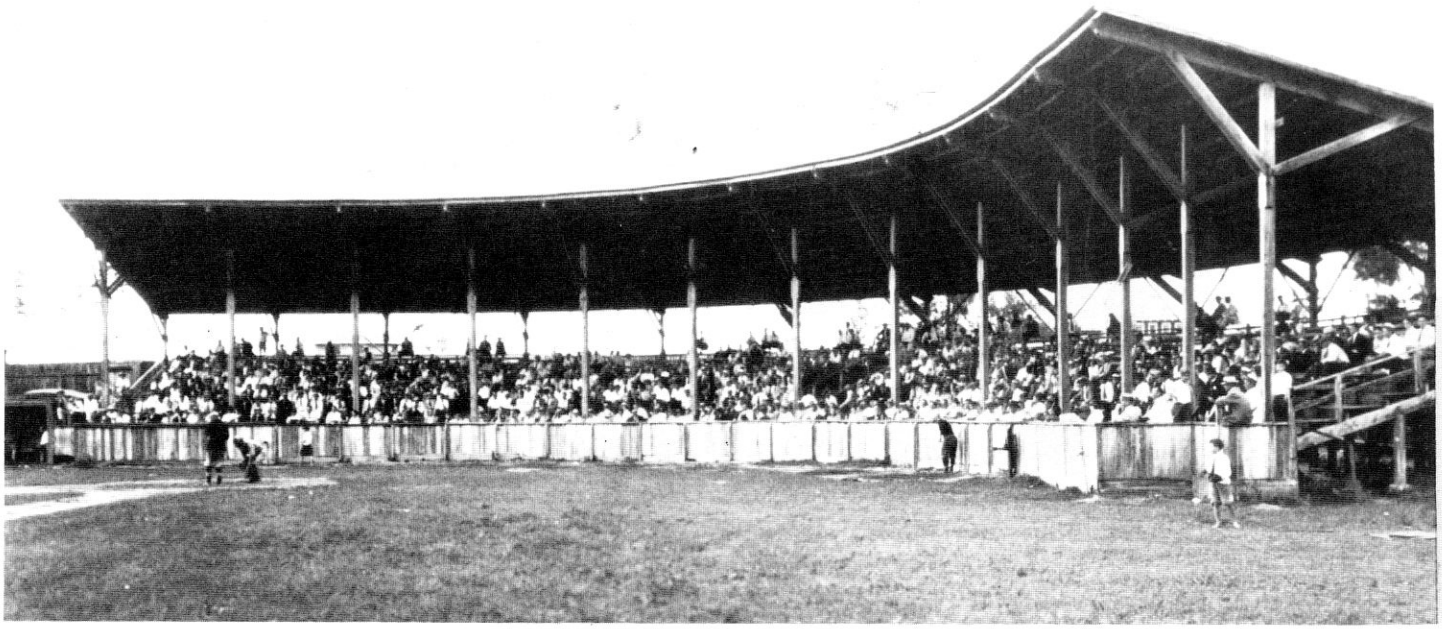
Seminoles told Robert King that black "slaves" lived among them as recently as the 1930s, and they are aware that some tribal members have black ancestry. As one Seminole told King, "we know who they are, and we don't let them forget it."

Through the Lens

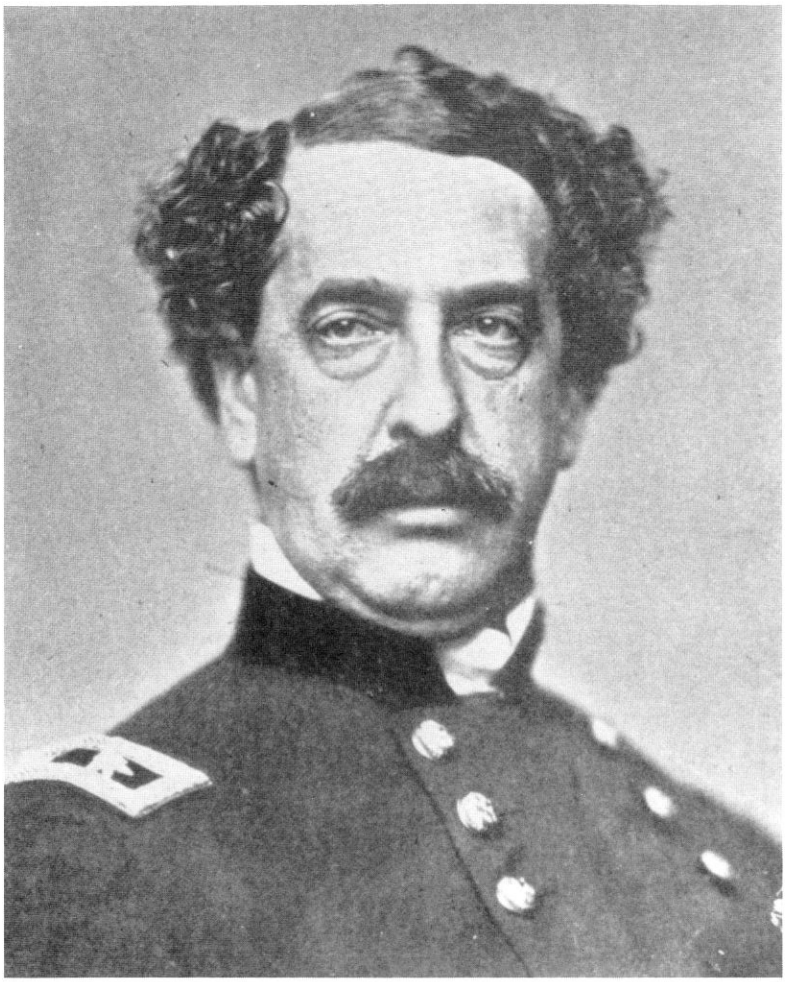
Todays' South Floridians enjoy many sports, NFL football and NBA basketball, University of Miami football, world-class golf and tennis tournaments, first rate horse racing and many others for both spectators and participants. This issue's pictorial feature takes a look at South Florida sports through the years.



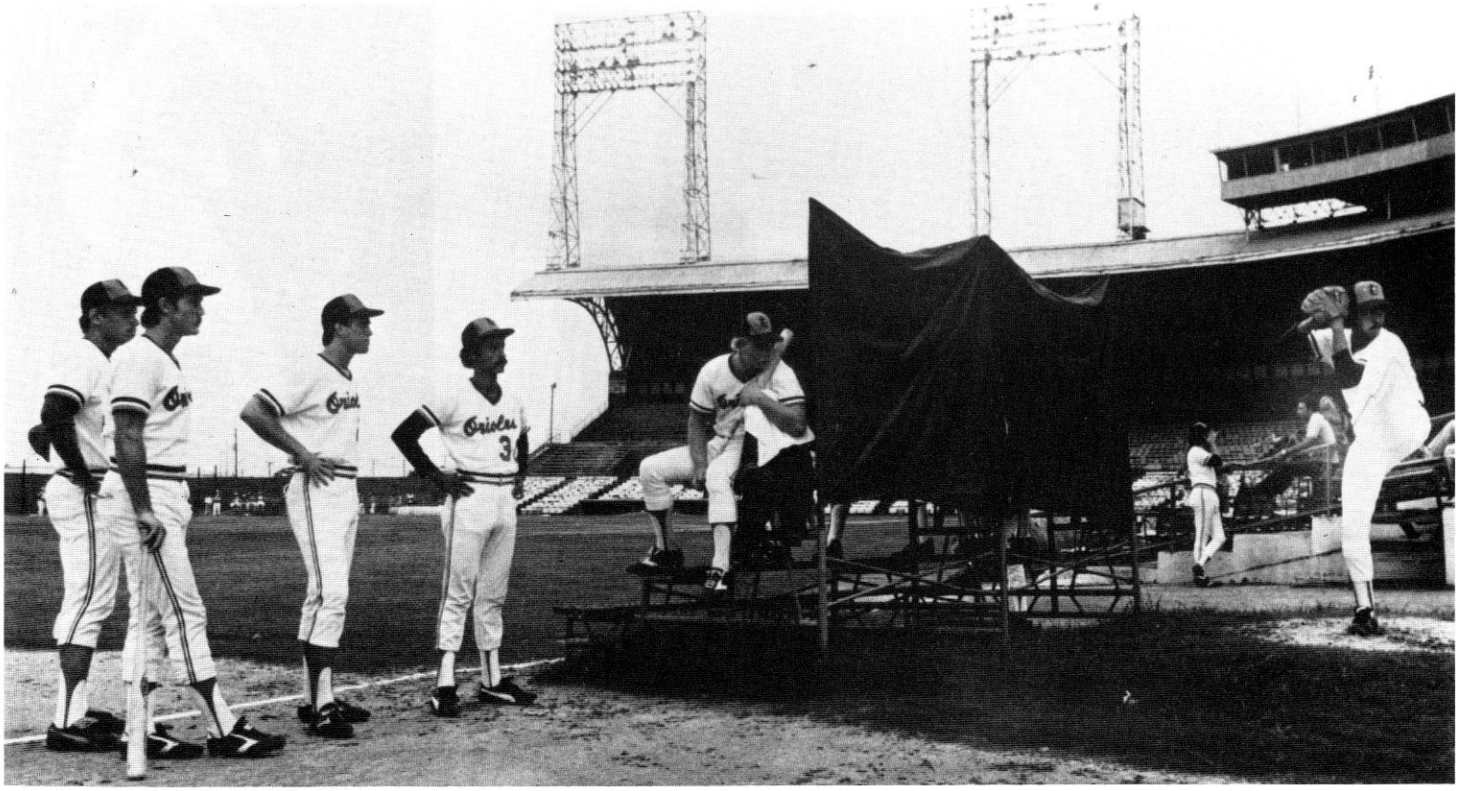
George Herman "Babe" Ruth, regarded by many as the greatest of all baseball players, warms up for an exhibition game in Miami. The Babe, also known as the "Sultan of Swat," the "Terror of the Twirlers," and the "Biffering Bimbo," revolutionized the game with his mighty home runs.



This early ball park would have hardly landed Miami a major league franchise.



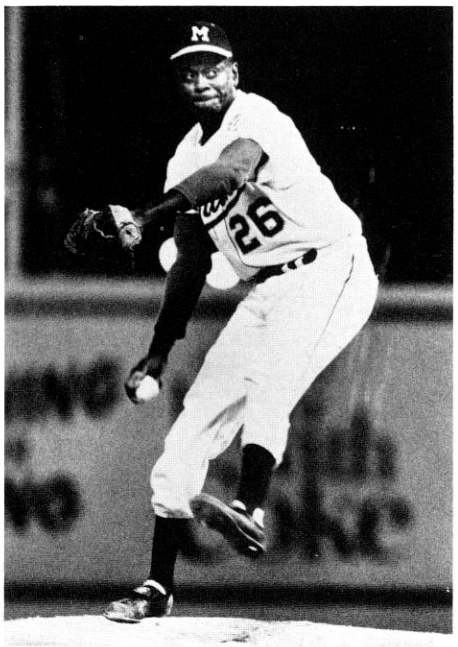
Questionable reasoning honors General Major Abner Doubleday as "the father of baseball." There is no question, however, that he served at Fort Dallas, on the Miami River, 1855-57, as commander of Company B, First Artillery, United States Army.



Miami Orioles watch as their star pitcher, Dennis Martinez, from Granada Nicaragua, warms up at Bobby Maduro Stadium. He would later become the first Nicaraguan to reach the Big Leagues as a pitcher for the Baltimore Orioles.

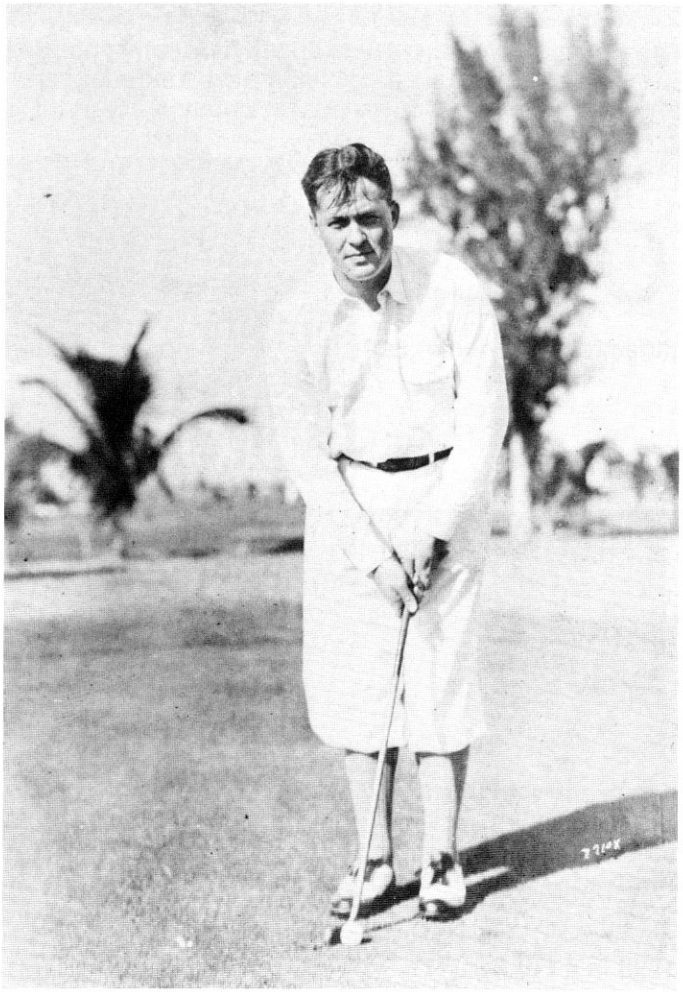
Action at Bobby Maduro Stadium draws a large gathering of baseball fans.

On a hot summer's day Dick Bunker, seated, left, cools off after winning the first game of a doubleheader. Satchel Paige, at right, gets ready to work the second game at Bobby Maduro Stadium.

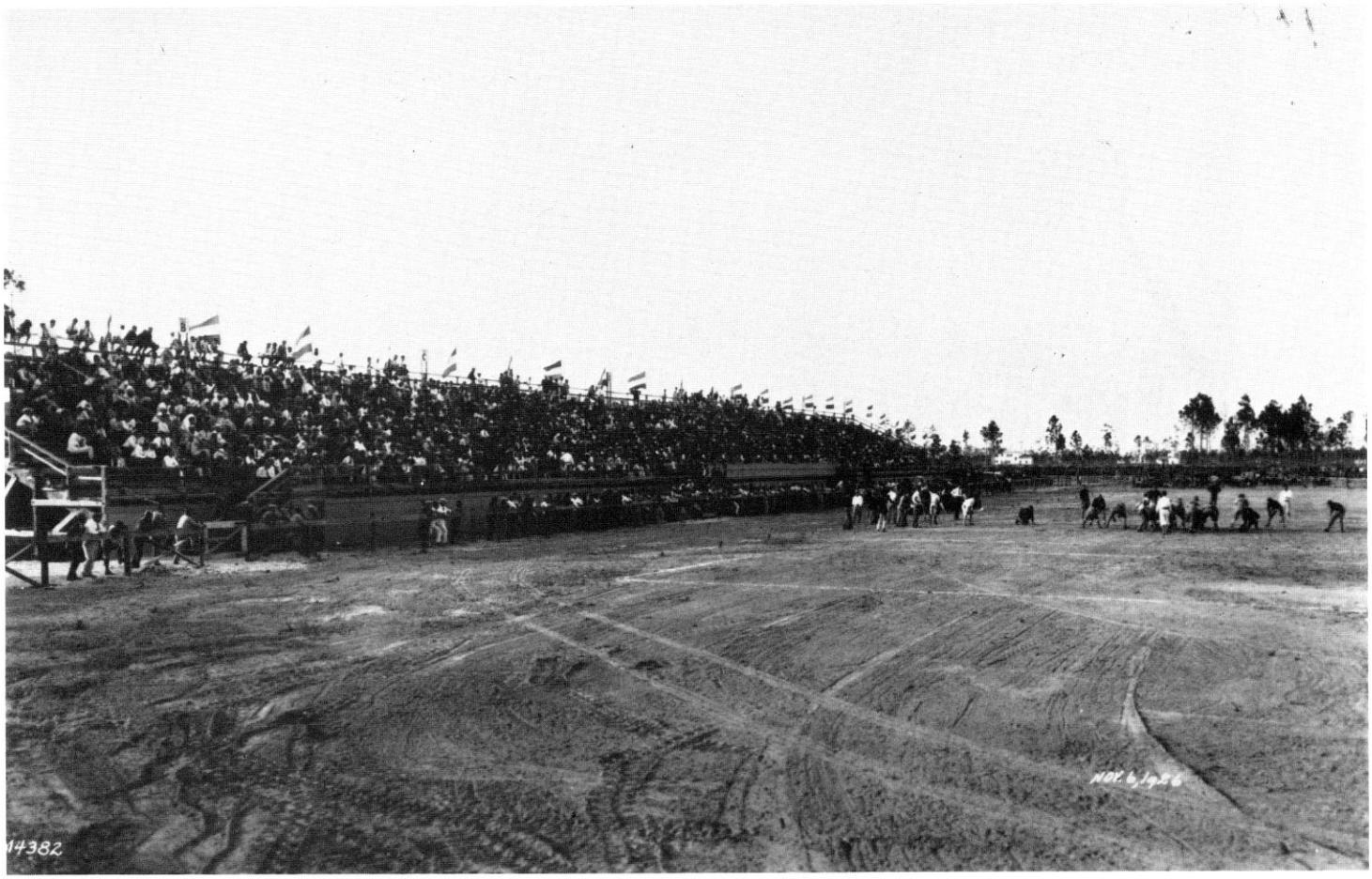


Leroy "Satchel" Page, generally regarded as one of baseball's greatest pitchers, spent most of his pitching days in the negro leagues. After the color barrier was finally broken, an aging Satchel pitched for awhile for the Miami Marlins.

Bill Tilden, legendary tennis star in the 1920s, exhibits his noted reach. Tilden won the US grass court singles championship seven times and the US clay court title six times, as well as three singles championships at Wimbledon.

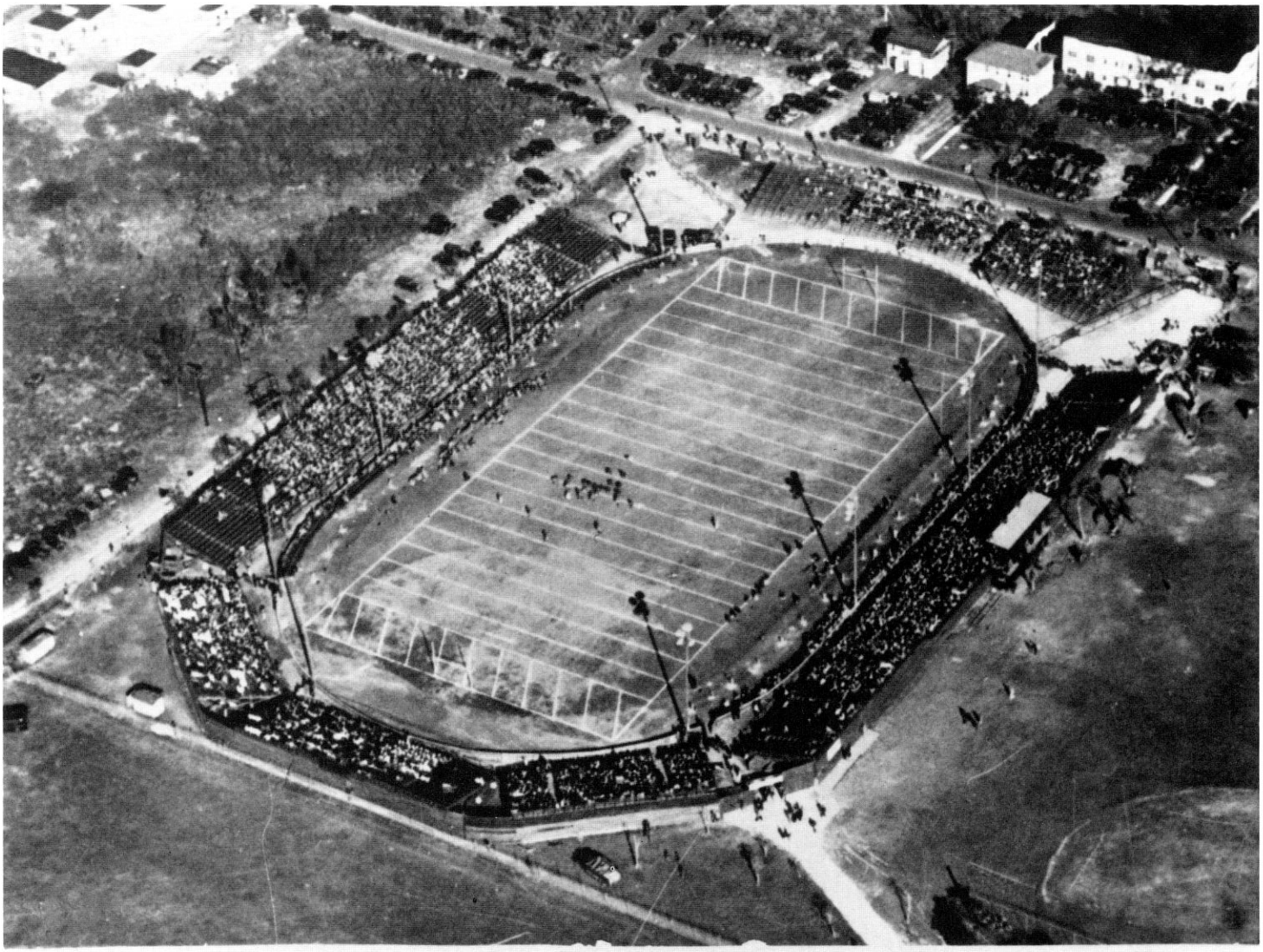


Bobby Jones was a golfer so proficient that even his putter, Calamity Jane, was famous. An amateur, Jones won the U.S. Open four times, the British Open three times. In 1930 he scored the Grand Slam, winning the U.S. and British open and amateur championships. After that he retired while still in his twenties. There was nothing else left for him to win.



The University of Miami started out modestly enough in 1926 on this barren field called Sandspur Stadium. Playing a freshman schedule, the 'Canes were undefeated in their first season, including two victories over the University of Havana. In this picture they are busy defeating Mercer, 22 - 6, on November 6.

Apparently a little light on reserve strength, this Cuban football team prepares to fly Pan American to Miami in 1928 in a Fokker F-7.



1935 - MIAMI STADIUM - 8,500

The annual Orange Bowl football game, now a New Year's institution, dates back to 1935, when the makeshift bleachers could seat only 8,500 cheering fans.

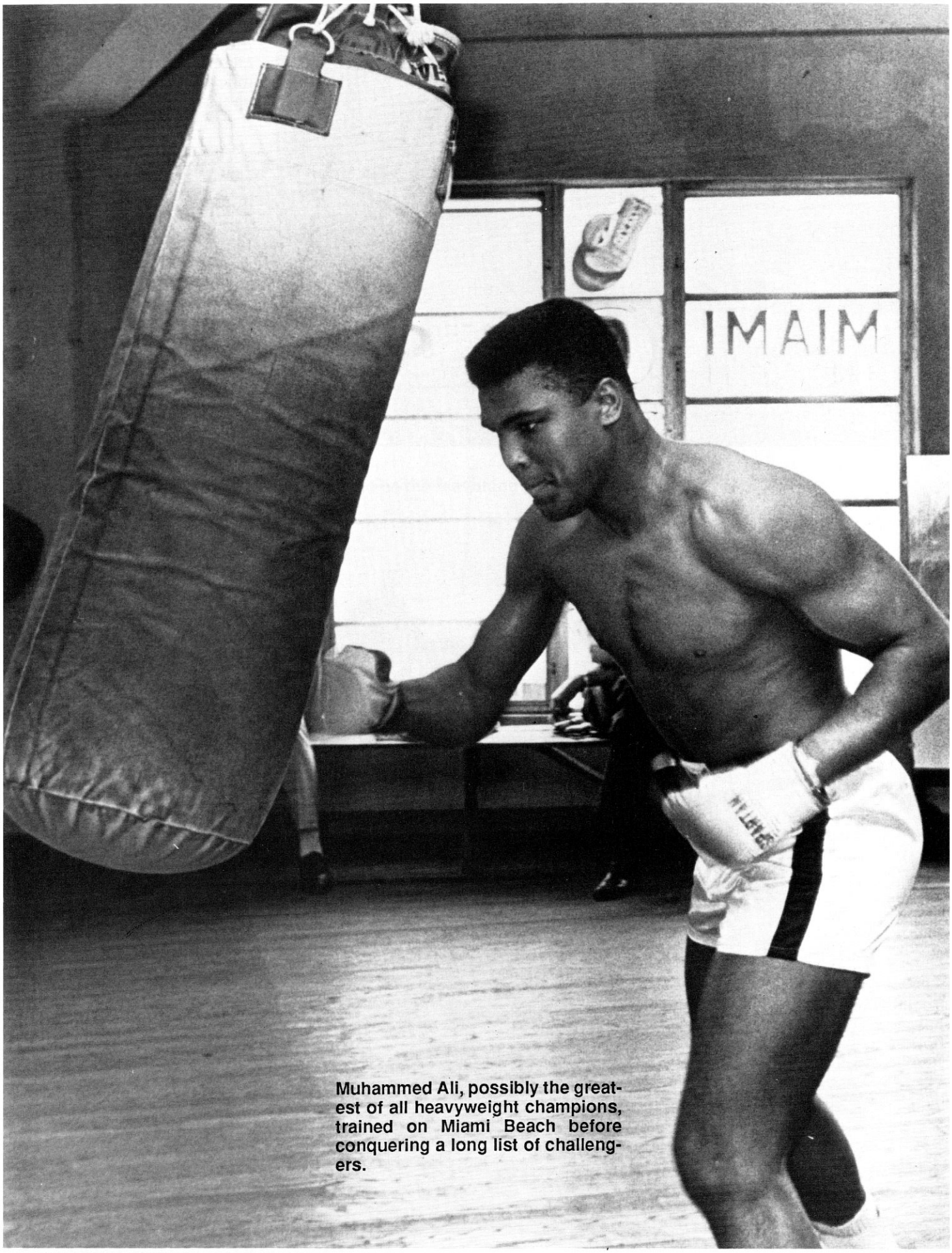
You could buy a ticket for the 1949 Orange Bowl game for a mere $6. But be on time. Pageantry, as the ticket says, starts at 1:30.

Anything for a photo opportunity seems to be the reasoning behind this strange Miami Beach picture - - tennis on roller skates.

Charlie Thompson, at left, was Miami's most popular fishing guide. Among his delighted anglers were four presidents. He once caught a whale shark so big it became known as Thompson's Big Fish. How big was it? Forty-five feet long, 30,000 pounds. There was nothing that big for this group of fishermen but they seem to have done all right.

Bicycle racing had its day in Miami, but apparently it wasn't much of a day, judging by the sparse crowd.

Racing at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale has attracted some of America's best horses over the last half century. Here Alydar, at right, races home to win the 1978 Florida Derby.



Muhammed Ali, possibly the greatest of all heavyweight champions, trained on Miami Beach before conquering a long list of challengers.

(Continued from page 7.)

with his wife, Estelle Taylor, of screen fame."

His unnamed representative gravely stated "we will not speak for publication." Briefly, very briefly, he would let his image and not his person speak for him. His picture with his lovely new, remodeled nose appeared in the *Miami Herald's* Sunday edition under the heading "Men and Women of International Prominence Among Winter Visitors in Miami" along with photographs of Tunney, golfer Gene Sarazan, baseball's George Sisler, writer O.O. McIntyre, entertainer Elsie Janis, and humorist Will Rogers. But among these luminaries, only Dempsey was called "the great American hero."

On January 25, the hero probably paid some of his bills in Miami by appearing at the offices of his host, real estate agent J.S. Blain. A full page advertisement declared in bold type, "JACK DEMPSEY IN ACTION TODAY" at Blain's development "Lido Villas" in North Miami, near Gratigny Boulevard and Palm Avenue.

Blain proudly invited Dempsey's fans "to be his guest and witness the first Florida workout [not fight or exhibition] of the World's champion." No admission would be charged.

To judge from his advertisements, Blain appealed more to middle-class home buyers than to the "investors" Croissant sought for "Croissantania," though Blain's pitch was in its own way no less grand, or grandiose, than Croissant's. A full page advertisement in the *Herald* the day previous to its announcement about Dempsey depicted a man leaping from an elegantly drawn biplane and announced that a "Parachute Jump And Stunt Flying" would take place a Bain's Lido Villas.

Such popular enticements were common in the Miami newspapers, bloated as they were with alluring calls to purchase property in the region. Miami was experiencing the biggest of its periodic booms, prior to the biggest of its periodic busts, and its papers were filled with siren songs luring buyers to invest in the cities, or lots anyway, of their dreams: Dixie Villas; Aladdin City; Avocado Villas where "It's pickin' time now"; Opa Locka, "the City Substantial" (later mocked as "the City Sub-standard"); Indrio, north of Fort Pierce, Spanish for "Indian River...When it's Zero in the North, It's Late Spring in Indrio".

The planned and sometimes even constructed sites, so fabulously or evocatively named, were all located in Florida, but also moored at other dream lands even more grand: nothing was simply what it was, but was somehow magically something else far more splendid. The Floranada Club was "the Future Biarritz of America," quiet Miami Shores was really "America's Mediterranean."

The Miami Herald could swell with both advertisements and pride when it proclaimed that "only eight cities have higher building permit totals for last year." New York was first.

Here was a boom city where full page ads in the *Herald* regularly declared the opportunities advanced even by the Florida Muck Farm, "America's Everproducing Soil Empire."

One advertisement for this development featured a large picture of the Emperor Napoleon himself, uniformed and paunchy as a fat robin redbreast, calling out to customers: "The lust for empire obsessed Napoleon. It fed the fires of his ambition. It led him to fame and fortune, but it also paved his way to defeat and downfall... He yearned for world dominance and overlooked the opportunity to enjoy life and make others happy. Napoleon possessed the average man's ambition greatly magnified. Every man, if he is normal, wishes to own a home and be comfortable, physically and financially." Napoleon had missed out on the Muck Farm--but other normal American men did not have to.

So Dempsey was harnessing his body and lending his name to a powerful commercial movement. In turn, the proud, developing city was enhancing his fame, establishing his legitimacy as a reputable and admired public figure.

His actions were followed closely. At one time fighters were pugs, admired if highly successful but otherwise only half respectable socially. Anyone who followed boxing knew that as a young man the uneducated Dempsey had been a hobo.

Now, married to a movie star, possessor of a finely sculpted, new nose, he wished to be known as a man of honor, worthy of respect. The afternoon of the last day he showed his training routine at Lido Villas, he also attended the greyhound races in Miami as the guest of Jack Fisher, presiding steward of the track. Probably he lost a few dollars on a racer named "Jack Dempsey," whom the *Herald* said finished fourth and therefore out of the money "again." No one suggested this might be an omen.

Self-promotion and reinforcing the image of his respectability were two reasons for Dempsey's Florida tour, but so was money. Million dollar gates came only with big fights, but small exhibition routines could be fairly remunerative too. And money conferred a kind of respectability in the entertainment world anyway. Dempsey bragged in the *New York Times* that he had received "$10,000 A Day Shaking Hands: Says He Is In a $5,000,000 Florida Deal." Perhaps the performer was about to become a speculator, and at a high financial level.

Dempsey told the same *Times* reporter "he was about to close a deal for the purchase of the Fleetwood Hotel on Miami Beach for $4,000,000 and if negotiations are successful he will not return to California." Investors were being sought at the time for a new Fleetwood Hotel under construction in Daytona Beach, "sister" to hotels in Miami and Palm Beach.

His commitment to publicize Blain's development concluded, Dempsey left Miami by ship and traveled to Havana where he arrived on January 28. He did not return to Miami that season.

Disembarking in the evening with his wife and three sparring partners, Dempsey planned originally to fight an exhibition in Havana that Sunday night, January 31, but the bout unfortunately never materialized and Dempsey was out a paycheck.

Another fight that--this time fortunately--never took place in Havana would have pitted Dempsey against "six bluejackets of the American transport Antarea, now in Havana harbor." According to a *New York Times* correspondent, they "decided to call upon Jack Dempsey at his hotel here today and tell him what they thought about his fighting ability, especially during the World War. Timely interference by military police and American residents plus the fact that Dempsey was attending the races probably saved the champion a losing battle."

Back in Miami, Will Rogers would draw a laugh at Dempsey's failure to fight for the title. Appearing at the Miami Beach Gardens, he picked a presidential cabinet of his own. He would, he said "have Jack Dempsey as secretary of war . . . because he knew we then never would get in war." He expanded upon this theme. "Dempsey would ask too much of his opponent and then would refuse to fight."

Will Rogers then introduced Gene Tunney, one of the celebrities in the packed audience, and said "I would have Dempsey as my secretary of war until we got in a war, but then I would choose Tunney". The crowd roared.

Rogers' jabs at the champion were clearly friendly, however, even affectionate, and reflect Dempsey's acceptance, not his rejection, by Rogers' Miami audience.

Apart from the issue of whether or not he would be Dempsey's next opponent, Tunney received far less attention in the Miami and Florida press during his stay in the area than did Dempsey. After Dempsey left Miami to sail for Cuba, Tunney was photographed by *The Miami Herald,* "Limbering Up With British Poloists.

Tunney lacked the common touch. He was shown awkwardly "sparring" on the beach with Major H.E. Lyons and the Marquis of Waterford.

Where Dempsey had been reported attending greyhound races during his stay in the city, Tunney is depicted with a polo player. Polo, of course, held no great mass appeal for Americans, and for some was suspect as an elitist hobby for Argentinian gigolos, Long Island playboys or affected British noblemen.

In the *Herald's* "Sports Done Brown" column distributed throughout the state, Tunney was predicted to be Dempsey's next opponent, a pronouncement readers were warned not to take lightly since Brown claimed he "enjoy[ed] the close acquaintanceship of a personal friend of Dempsey."

On February 3 the *Herald* announced that Tunney had signed for an exhibition to fight in Miami. No mention is made of the supposed ban on such fights then in place, though there is also no record that the planned fight ever took place.

Jack Dempsey's stay in Miami in January, 1926--in high season for the busy, bright city--illustrates what could be termed a process of mutual legitimization. As heavyweight champion of the world, Dempsey possessed a substantial--if impermanent--honor.

As one of the country's most popular sports figures, his glamor exceeded celebrity status, endowing him with almost a mythic quality few other entertainers or performers of his day would attain. He was truly, in the words of *The Miami Herald,* "the great American hero." Somewhat like a king of old, he lifted, if only slightly and briefly, the land in which he traveled into a country of greater majesty.

But he was also a pug who needed the adulation of his fans to remain a leading contender for the crown of all-American money-maker. Perhaps most of all, at the time, he needed good publicity to counter his occasional unpopularity, to cover the clay feet most public idols stand not so firmly upon.

Whether to combat his image as draft-dodger, title fight evader, drawer of the color line, or just plain tough guy, Dempsey wanted to appear to the public not only as an athlete of great power, but as a good man of civic responsibility, solid means, and decent repute. He was not the first nor would he be the last athlete to establish a symbiotic relationship with commerce or community, but he was one of the greatest.

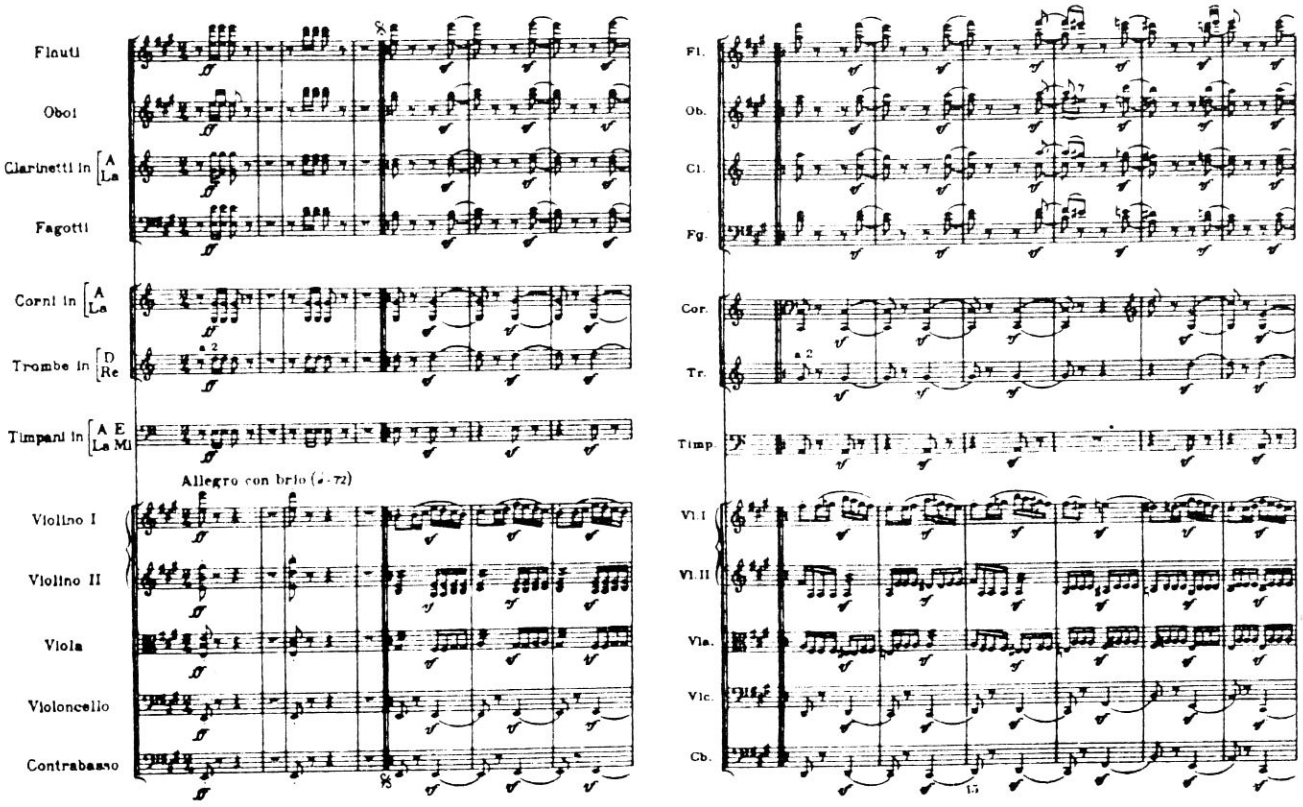
He sold Miami, Miami sold him, and both benefited from the image enhancement each provided. In the sense that he was a real hero and Miami a truly distinctive city, the two deserved each other.

(Continued from page 3.)

South Florida canoeists, rises in Polk County's Lake Hamilton, just north of Bartow, and flows into Charlotte Harbor near Punta Gorda. The author concentrates on the valley during the frontier days of the 19th century when the river flowed through the Seminole Wars, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the development of the Florida Cattle industry. It's a fascinating picture of an important phase of our state's development.

Steve Glassman, whose stories on aviation and the building of the Tamiami Trail have been featured in this publication, has brought out his first book, *Blood of the Moon,* a novel of Old Florida, Quality Books, $9.95. His historical novel deals also with the Second Seminole War. His cast of characters in this fast-paced novel includes such memorable Florida figures as Prince Achille Murat (Napoleon's nephew), Osceola, Sam Jones, Col. William S. Harney and Dr. Henry Perrine, killed in the Indian Key Massacre. Steve Glassman is also a co-editor of *Zora in Florida,* a forthcoming book on the writings of Zora Neale Hurston. It will be published by the University Presses of Florida.

WTMI Gets Into Some Rowdy Bars



These bars open the last movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Aaron Copland called it "the apotheosis of the dance." We don't seriously suggest you can dance to it. But the way it rollicks along, you may not be able to sit still to it. WTMI broadcasts this rowdy music in a variety of interpretations. One month it may be Mr. Ormandy's; at other times those of Bernstein, Boult, von Karajan, Monteux, Reiner, Steinberg, Stokowski or Toscanini.

(*PSSST!* There are some bars in Richard Strauss' *Salome* we wouldn't dare print anywhere.)

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