

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Marjory Stoneman Douglas House

Other Name/Site Number: Marjory Stoneman Douglas Residence

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 3744 Stewart Avenue

Not for publication:

City/Town: Miami

Vicinity:

State: Florida County: Miami-Dade Code: 086

Zip Code: 33133

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: X

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ Entered in the National Register
- ___ Determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ Removed from the National Register
- ___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 4

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Summary of Significance

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas House is nationally significant as the home and workspace one of the most important environmentalists of the twentieth century and the author of *The Everglades: River of Grass*, one of the most important books in the pantheon of twentieth-century environmental literature. In the early twentieth century, Marjory Stoneman Douglas was an accomplished journalist, poet, short story writer, and keen observer of South Florida politics, society, and environment who was at the vanguard of the women's reform movement in Florida. At mid-century, Douglas wrote *The Everglades: River of Grass*, a book credited with forever changing America's understanding of the relationship between its citizens and the Everglades. Previously understood to be a swampy backwater whose value could only be realized through drainage, Douglas helped the nation reimagine the Everglades as a globally distinct, complex ecosystem in desperate need of protection. The book's famous opening sentence powerfully encapsulates the importance of the Everglades in the global environment: "There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they always have been, one of the unique regions of the earth," Douglas wrote.¹ Since its publication in 1947, *River of Grass* has become one of the canonical works of twentieth-century environmental literature. Indeed, Paul Sutter argues that *River of Grass* marked a significant turning point in twentieth-century environmentalism. *River of Grass* "charted a transition from the concerns of the early conservation movement to those of postwar environmentalism."² In the late 1960s, Douglas founded the Friends of the Everglades, an environmental activist organization, and subsequently led the group for three decades. Her leadership contributed to the organization's central role in the conservation and restoration of the Everglades as well its national significance to the late twentieth-century U.S. environmental movement. As a whole, Marjory Stoneman Douglas's writing, advocacy, and activism, spanning most of the twentieth century, have solidified her national significance as the singularly most important person associated with the conservation and restoration of the Florida Everglades.

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Historic and Present Physical Appearance

Marjory Stoneman Douglas's longtime residence has remained essentially unchanged since architect George Hyde designed and completed the home between 1924 and 1926. The building retains a high degree of historic integrity. No major alterations have been made to the home with the exception of a small addition added to the home's west façade in 1948 (during the property's period of significance), and structural and roof repairs made in the 1990s by the State of Florida.³ A 2013 visit to the house by National Park Service staff confirmed the structure's integrity as "excellent."⁴

Location and Setting

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas House is located just west of Southwest 37th Avenue on the south side of Stewart Avenue in Coconut Grove, a community within the City of Miami, Florida. Coconut Grove is one of the oldest communities in Miami, located approximately five miles southwest of the center of the City of Miami. The lot is approximately 50 x 175 feet, and rectangular in shape, containing 8,300 square feet or about

¹ Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *The Everglades: River of Grass* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1997).

² Paul Sutter, introduction to *An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century* by Jack Davis (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), xiv.

³ See "Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, 3744 Stewart Avenue, Miami, Miami-Dade County, FL." Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS FLA,13-MIAM,34-) (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service).

⁴ James Gabbert, National Register of Historic Places Program staff, email communication with author, January 27, 2014.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 5**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

0.19 acres. The lot is approximately level with the grade of Stewart Avenue, excepting the rear part of the lot which slopes gently downward.

The house faces north and is located at the rear southwest corner of a 50 x 175 foot lot. It is a wood frame, asymmetrical English Cotswold Revival Cottage and a good example of the Masonry Vernacular architecture of 1920s Dade County. It contains both elements of Medieval and Tudor Revival Styles. The house is noteworthy for its roof type, half-timber details, and materials.

Exterior

The house's primary facades are faced with stucco with wood half-timber details. The rest of the facades are of board and batten. A hipped roof and a rear gable roof cover the house, both of composition shingles. The roof has wide, rounded eaves.

The house is a one-story inverted "T" plan. Its walls are of heavy exposed natural wormy cypress sills, beams, and half-timbered bracing. Between the vertical timbers, brick infill is covered by stucco with a matte glazed finish. The roof of the cottage is composed of randomly-sized thin steam-bent wood shingles with curved eaves. The walls are irregularly punctuated with hand-hewn single and double casement windows of varying sizes.⁵

The house is domestic and unassuming in design, featuring only a small lean-to roof and a door constructed of thick vertical tongue and groove boards with heavy dark bronze hardware.⁶ The main entry is off-center from the front, or northern, facade, located on the northwest corner.⁷ This entrance has a wood pouch door with stucco and vertical beam surrounds. The front façade also contains a masonry fireplace. Opposite the front door on the front façade is a massive but plain stucco-finished chimney. The area below the foundation at the front door along the south elevation and wrapping around the rear elevation, is a narrow brick sidewalk and terrace laid on sand. The architectural character of the house is completed by a massive oak tree at its front façade that provides an umbrella of shade and vernacular domesticity to the entire house, complemented by the surrounding lush natural South Florida vegetation. The house has "the distinct look of an English country cottage," writes historian Jack Davis of Douglas's home. "Though hers was nestled in a tropical garden."⁸

Douglas took inspiration from the tropical flora and fauna of both Coconut Grove and the home. The neighborhood was, and is, a "half garden, half community" covered by a rich canopy of palm trees and banyans. She especially admired the sweet smells of growing lime, grapefruit, and flowers that wafted across the community while "dashing blue jays," woodpeckers, and songbirds flitted between the trees.⁹

The home is also closely surrounded by vegetation that provides constant shade and attracts wildlife. Douglas would often write while seated on the open back patio, listening to songbirds and marveling at the trees in the evening twilight.¹⁰

⁵ See HABS FLA,13-MIAM,34-.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See photos of north façade in this nomination.

⁸ Jack Davis, *An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 317-8.

⁹ Ibid., 317.

¹⁰ Ibid., 319; Matt Schudel, "Marjory's Place," *Sun-Sentinel* (Fort Lauderdale, FL), May 2, 1999, http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1999-05-02/features/9904290453_1_everglades-national-park-marjory-stoneman-douglas-woman/6.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 6

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Interior

The interior of the home features a living room with hardwood flooring, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling with exposed decorative beams. The living room contains a fireplace with a copper hood and chimney that has been sealed. The living room contains doors which open to the kitchen and a dressing room. French doors lead to a rear patio. The kitchen has vinyl tile flooring, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling. The kitchen contains wood base cabinets, formica countertops, an enamel sink, and overhead pantry shelves. Doorways lead from the kitchen to a utility room, a bathroom, and outdoors. The utility room contains vinyl flooring, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling. This room contains storage cabinets and a small sink. The dressing room located off of the living room has hardwood flooring, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling with exposed decorative beams. It also has a unit air conditioner and three closets. The bedroom contains hardwood flooring, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling. The bedroom windows have interior shutters. The bathroom has vinyl flooring, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling. It has three fixtures, including a bathtub and shower. The walls around the bathtub have ceramic tile finish.¹¹

The house was the home of eminent writer and environmentalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas from 1926 until her death more than 70 years later. It served as her residence, writing workshop, home for her hundreds of books, and site of numerous social gatherings. Later in her life, when infirmity inhibited her movement, she simply held press conferences on environmental issues on the house's front lawn, drawing scores of media and important political figures. In 1991, Florida's Internal Improvement Fund purchased the home because it was the lifetime home of "one of Florida's most distinguished citizens." The Dade Heritage Trust took ownership of the house 1994. The building maintains a high level of historic integrity.¹²

Current Ownership and Use

Most recently, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas House has been managed by the Land Trust of Dade County. It is owned by the State of Florida and is currently vacant.

¹¹ Information from this description is from Mary-Therese Delate and Sarah E. Eaton, "Report of the City of Miami Planning and Zoning Department to Historic and Environmental Preservation Board on the Potential Designation of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas House," City of Miami, 1988, and "Appraisal Report of Two Single Family Residences Located at 3744 Stewart Avenue and 3754 Stewart Avenue, Miami, Florida, Prepared for the Land Trust of Dade County," Report No. 5914, Cole & Kerestes, Inc., 230 Palermo Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida, 33134. Appraisers: Carlton W. Cole, Bruce Kerestes, and Phillip Focaracci. Appraisal Date: January 1, 1989, included in the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, 1988. Both in author's possession.

¹² Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 571. On integrity, see note 2.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 7

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National
Register Criteria:

A B X C D

Criteria Considerations
(Exceptions):

A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria:

1, 2, Exception 8

NHL Theme(s):

II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements

1. clubs and organizations

III. Expressing Cultural Values

1. educational and intellectual currents

3. literature

VII. Transforming the Environment

2. adverse consequences and stresses on the environment

3. protecting and preserving the environment

Areas of Significance:

Conservation, Literature, Social History, Women's History

Period(s) of Significance:

1926-1998

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s):

Marjory Stoneman Douglas

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder:

George Hyde

Historic Contexts:

Women's History Initiative

XXXII. Conservation of Natural Resources

C. The Conservation Movement Matures, 1908-1941

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 8

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.*Statement of Significance*

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas House is nationally significant as the home and workspace of one of the most important environmentalists of the twentieth century and the author of *The Everglades: River of Grass*, one of the most important books in the pantheon of twentieth-century environmental literature. In the early twentieth century, Marjory Stoneman Douglas was an accomplished journalist, poet, short story writer, and keen observer of South Florida politics, society, and environment who participated at the vanguard of the women's reform movement in Florida. At mid-century, Douglas wrote *The Everglades: River of Grass*, a book credited with forever changing America's understanding of the relationship between its citizens and the Everglades. Previously understood to be a swampy backwater whose value could only be realized through drainage, Douglas helped the nation reimagine the Everglades as a globally distinct, complex ecosystem in desperate need of protection. The book's famous opening sentence powerfully encapsulates the importance of the Everglades in the global environment: "There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they always have been, one of the unique regions of the earth," Douglas wrote.¹³ Since its publication in 1947, *River of Grass* has become one of the canonical works of twentieth-century environmental literature. Indeed, Paul Sutter argues that *River of Grass* marked a significant turning point in twentieth-century environmentalism. *River of Grass* "charted a transition from the concerns of the early conservation movement to those of postwar environmentalism."¹⁴ In the late 1960s, Douglas founded the Friends of the Everglades, an environmental activist organization, and subsequently led the group for three decades. Her leadership contributed to the organization's central role in the conservation and restoration of the Everglades as well its national significance to the late twentieth-century U.S. environmental movement. As a whole, Marjory Stoneman Douglas's writing, advocacy, and activism, spanning most of the twentieth century, have solidified her national significance as the singularly most important person associated with the conservation and restoration of the Florida Everglades.

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas House represents the life of an active participant in more than seventy years of U.S. environmental history. The sheer longevity, scope, and depth of Marjory Stoneman Douglas's defense of Florida's natural environment have contributed to her national significance as "the poet, the sledgehammer advocate, the constant conscience of the Everglades."¹⁵ Scholars believe that Douglas provides a rare link between early twentieth-century movements for conservation and women's reform, and late twentieth-century environmentalism and feminism. "Marjory Stoneman Douglas embodied not only the American environmental century," writes environmental historian Paul Sutter, "but a century of American feminism as well."¹⁶ Historian Jack Davis, author of the most comprehensive extant biography of Douglas, writes that Douglas "personified both the tradition and legacy of early conservation and extended that tradition into mid-century advocacy and late twentieth century environmentalism."¹⁷ The long arc of her active participation in conservation, along with the national impact of her career, have made Douglas a nationally significant figure in the struggle to protect and restore the natural environment in Florida.

¹³ Douglas, *Everglades*.

¹⁴ Sutter, introduction to *Everglades Providence*, xiv. Her inclusion in the twentieth-century volume of the highly selective biographical dictionary *Notable American Women* is further testimony to her importance in US women's history. See Polly Welts Kaufman, "Marjory Stoneman Douglas," in *Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary Completing the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan Ware and Stacy Bauckman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 180-82.

¹⁵ Mary Schmich, "Lady Of Legend Still Fighting For Her 'Glades At 95," *Chicago Tribune*, March 26, 1986.

¹⁶ Sutter, introduction to *Everglades Providence*, xvi.

¹⁷ Jack E. Davis, "Up from the Sawgrass: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the Influence of Female Activism in Florida Conservation," in *Making Waves: Female Activists in Twentieth-Century Florida*, ed. Jack E. Davis and Kari Frederickson (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 148.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 9

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas House is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 for its association with the U.S. environmental movement in the twentieth-century. The property is significant under NHL Criterion 2 as the residence and primary workspace of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, one of the nation's most important environmentalists. The period of significance for this property begins with its construction in 1926 and ends in 1998 when Douglas died there.

The house is also significant under NHL Criterion Exception 8 for its exceptional national significance. Scholarly research and evaluation have determined Douglas to be the singularly most important person associated with the protection and restoration of the Florida Everglades. When Douglas began living in the home in 1926, she had already begun to develop the fundamental ideas that would guide her writing and activism for decades, and she continued her intellectual and activist work from inside the home for more than seventy years. Scholars have argued that Douglas's participation in the long history of movements for environmental advocacy have contributed to the power of her image as the most important defender of the Everglades, a singular environment not only in the United States, but globally.

Early South Florida and the Everglades

Hundreds of years before Marjory Stoneman Douglas first stepped off a train into Florida's subtropics, South Florida was home to around 20,000 indigenous peoples comprising at least five separate tribes.¹⁸

The first notable European to have contact with these indigenous societies was the Spanish *conquistador* Ponce de León in the early sixteenth century. In 1565, Pedro Menéndez de Aviles established the longest continuously-occupied European settlement in present-day United States at St. Augustine. The Spanish presence was marked by conflict with the peninsula's indigenous peoples and with French and British colonial powers. The region's unique geography—especially the Everglades, the massive expanse of water and sawgrass that covered much of the peninsula—prevented Europeans from expanding stable settlements in South Florida until well into the nineteenth-century.

The Spanish held a tenuous foothold in the peninsula from the late sixteenth century until the early 1800s when U.S. General Andrew Jackson, ostensibly responding to concerns over the peninsula's runaway slaves and "rogue" Seminoles, wrested the peninsula from Iberian control via a controversial scorched-earth march through northern Florida. As President, Jackson used the Indian Removal Act of 1830 to attempt to expel Florida's remaining indigenous peoples, sparking armed conflict between the U.S. and the Seminoles. One of the conflicts, The Second Seminole War, fought from 1835-1842, became the longest and most expensive conflict of the Indian Wars. The U.S. government lost \$20 million and 1500 lives, and the Seminoles successfully fought the U.S. military to a stalemate from positions deep within the Everglades.¹⁹

For the U.S. government and civilians, fierce Seminole resistance from the depths of the Everglades only added to the swampy backwater's reputation as a mysterious, impenetrable landscape of muddy water and sawgrass.

¹⁸ Gail Clement, "Everglades Timeline: European Discovery & Settlement in South Florida (1500-1819)," Florida International University Libraries, accessed Oct. 25, 2013. <http://everglades.fiu.edu/reclaim/timeline/timeline2.htm>.

¹⁹ Michael Grunwald, *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 37; Alejandro Portes, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), 68-9; Clement, "Everglades Timeline." New scholarship has examined whether the Second Seminole War could also be understood as a massive slave uprising, see Larry Eugene Rivers, *Rebels and Runaways: Slave Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Florida* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013).

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 10**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The few whites who spent any extended time in the Everglades were mostly U.S. soldiers fighting a frustrating battle against Seminoles who had a superior knowledge of the harsh landscape.²⁰

“It was certainly the most dreary and pandemonium-like region I ever visited,” wrote Jacob Motte, an army surgeon who served in the Seminole Wars. “It is in fact a most hideous region to live in, a perfect paradise for Indians, alligators, serpents, frogs and every other kind of loathsome reptile.” Motte and his fellow militiamen waded through deep mud until their ankles and legs swelled with disease. One soldier found conditions so difficult that he stabbed himself in his own eye, and hundreds of others simply quit. Another soldier reported that, “every rod of the way swarmed with rattlesnakes, moccasins, and other deadly reptiles,” while another lamented the hordes of mosquitoes that buzzed around his head. “Their everlasting hum never ceases,” he wrote.²¹ A Florida politician described Florida as “a land of swamps, of quagmires, of frogs and alligators and mosquitoes! A man, sir, would not immigrate into Florida...no, not from hell itself!”²²

However, not all Florida settlers saw the Everglades as a dark, valueless morass. In the years after Florida was admitted to the Union in 1845 as the twenty-seventh state, many Florida newcomers began to believe that the watery land could be drained and put to productive agricultural use. Would-be developers hoped drainage would draw new residents to round out the area’s sparse population. Wetlands were considered an obstacle to “proper” development and were to be conquered through levees, drains, and federal funding. In 1847, engineers were hired to survey South Florida’s expansive swamp to assess the feasibility of drainage and reclamation. Three years later, the Swamp Lands Act passed 20 million acres—almost 60% of Florida’s land—to public control.²³ By 1855, the Florida legislature had created the Internal Improvement Fund (IIF) to manage the drainage, reclamation, and sale of South Florida lands. The IIF would play a major role in South Florida reclamation politics for decades to come.²⁴

New government policies aimed at exploiting the Everglades reflected larger shifts in nineteenth-century American cultural attitudes toward wetlands. By the 1860s, other thinkers had begun to question the swamp’s representation as the geographical embodiment of the dim reptilian margins of civilized society. Literary magazines like *Harper’s Monthly*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *Ladies’ Magazine of Literature* began to print stories of swampland adventures that indicated the deep significance landscapes held in the minds of nineteenth-century readers. In 1856, abolitionist novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Dred, A Tale of the Dismal Swamp*, a tale that used the wild darkness of swamplands as a metaphor for the brutal landscape of the South’s slaveholding society.²⁵

New ideas about the profitability of the Everglades did not, however, necessarily lead to profits. After the Civil War the State of Florida was broke. While the rest of the U.S. boomed, Florida was the scene of misguided investment and land reclamation schemes, and remained mostly undeveloped. In 1876, says one historian, Florida remained “a frontier state, isolated from the rest of the South, and it would remain so for many decades.”²⁶ The IIF faced bankruptcy. Florida needed help.

²⁰ Grunwald, *Swamp*, 38.

²¹ Quotes and descriptions from Grunwald, *Swamp*, 42-44.

²² Quoted in Grunwald, *Swamp*, 32.

²³ Ann Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America’s Wetlands* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1997), 135.

²⁴ Clement, “Everglades Timeline”; USGS, “Wetlands of the United States: A Century of Wetland Exploitation,” last modified February 2, 2013, accessed October 1, 2013, <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/wetlands/uswetlan/century.htm>.

²⁵ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 95-103.

²⁶ Michael Gannon, *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 268.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 11**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Help came in the form of developers like Hamilton Disston and Henry Flagler. In 1881, Disston, a Northern businessman, swooped in to purchase \$4 million of Florida land from the IFF while promising to drain a full third of the state's territory. In 1885, Flagler's work teams began constructing railroads, towns, cities, and massive hotels to draw tourists and settlers to Florida.²⁷ Initially, resistant to extending his railroad to South Florida, Flagler's mind was changed by Julia D. Tuttle, a Cleveland businesswoman who relocated to the settlement of Miami in 1891. She set upon trying to convince railroad owners to extend a line to Miami. After the devastating crop freezes of 1894-95, Tuttle famously sent Flagler a bouquet of orange blossoms, evidence that Miami had escaped the record-breaking freezes. Flagler, convinced, extended his track in 1896.²⁸

Boosted by generous privileges granted by local government, bulging corporate treasuries, and the ebbing and flowing waves of eager visitors and new settlers, Disston and Flagler's schemes marked the beginning of Florida's development in the twentieth century. They also birthed tensions between the ideas of men like Flagler's vision of progress and other voices that would question how such progress, particularly the drainage of the Everglades, would affect Florida's natural environment and, indeed, humanity. The most important and lasting of these voices was that of Marjory Stoneman Douglas.²⁹

Initially, Douglas supported drainage as the efficient use of a natural resource, a position consistent with Progressive-era approaches to conservation. She would later dramatically revise this position devoting the rest of her life to denouncing the folly of drainage. Developers' drainage dreams were no more than "schoolboy's logic," she believed. For Douglas, men like Disston and Flagler erroneously believed that "the drainage of the Everglades would be a Great Thing. Americans did Great Things. Therefore Americans would drain the Everglades...They saw the Everglades no longer as a vast expanse of saw grass and water, but as a dream, a mirage of riches that many men would follow to their ruin."³⁰

Instead, as Douglas and others came to understand, drainage would irreparably damage the Florida Everglades and, unbeknownst to most at the time, the entire South Florida ecosystem. Indeed, one scholar called the changes wrought by drainage in South Florida wetlands as "among the most dramatic of any in the Americas." Massive drainage schemes so upset the region's environmental conditions that they "assured the eventual demise of not only the region's indigenous plants and animals, but also the very soils that supported this flora and fauna."³¹

Across most of the twentieth century, Marjory Stoneman Douglas delivered countless biting critiques of the destruction of South Florida's environment in newspaper columns, articles, short stories, fictions and non-fiction books, and public speeches. Describing her celebrated wit, one Florida environmentalist said, "When Marjory bites you, you bleed." Douglas's eloquence informed her work as a journalist, reformer, and activist and helped spread the message of Everglades protection and repair throughout the twentieth century. Douglas led and collaborated with a diverse set of actors, including her father, newspaper editor Frank Stoneman, early twentieth-century clubwomen concerned with conservation, mid-century scientists and burgeoning ecologists,

²⁷ One of these hotels, The Hotel Ponce de León (now Flagler College) in St. Augustine, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2006.

²⁸ Donna Pazdera, "Miami: 100 Years as Hot Spot After a Killer Cold Snap," *Orlando Sentinel*, 28 July 1996, B5; Grunwald, *The Swamp*, 107; Gannon, *New Florida History*, 269. See Douglas's short story, "Pineland," for a powerful fictional representation of the 1894-5 freezes, in Kevin M. McCarthy, ed. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *Nine Florida Stories by Marjory Stoneman Douglas* (Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, 1990).

²⁹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 110.

³⁰ Quoted in Michael Branch, "Writing the Swamp: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and *The Everglades: River of Grass*," in *Such News of the Land: U.S. Women Nature Writers*, eds. Thomas S. Edwards and Elizabeth A. De Wolfe (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001), 132.

³¹ David McCally, *The Everglades: An Environmental History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), preface.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 12**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

and late twentieth-century environmentalist organizations. Through decades of work on behalf of one of the world's most unique ecosystems, Douglas became the most important voice in defense of the Florida Everglades.³²

Marjory Stoneman Douglas's Early Life

Marjory Stoneman was born on April 7, 1890, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Florence Lillian Trefethen and Frank Bryant Stoneman. Trefethen was a talented musician who, Douglas boasted, had "perfect pitch" and played any stringed instrument with ease. Stoneman was raised in an Indiana Quaker colony (though he later converted to Episcopalianism) and was a descendant of Quaker abolitionist and Underground Railroad pioneer Levi Coffin, a fact Douglas repeated with pride.³³ When Marjory was three, the family moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where they struggled to make ends meet and Trefethen began to exhibit early signs of mental illness. In 1895, Trefethen left Stoneman and, with young Marjory, moved to her parents' house in Taunton, Massachusetts. Stoneman later moved to Florida.

In Taunton, Trefethen suffered serious nervous breakdowns and was temporarily institutionalized in Providence. Marjory was mostly cared for by her Aunt Fanny and grandmother during this time. The period was difficult for Douglas and as her mother's mental illness worsened, Trefethen became increasingly dependent on her young daughter.³⁴

Douglas was baptized as an Episcopalian, like the entire Trefethen Family, but Christian faith and the ideology of the church never seemed to make sense to her.³⁵ Even at a young age, Douglas never fully adopted religion. Later she began identifying as an atheist and would continue to do so until the end of her life.

She attended Taunton public schools and began to read voraciously, combing through novels, encyclopedias, and developing what she called a "writer's temperament." She spent hours exploring the Taunton Public Library, Carnegie Library, and, later, the Boston Library. Indeed, Douglas even met her husband in a Newark library years later. Douglas fondly remembered the influence Taunton's teachers had on her intellectual development. Her sixth grade teacher, Miss Dartt, likely noticed Marjory's intelligence and visited the family at home to encourage Marjory to attend college at Wellesley, which she later did. Douglas also fondly remembered her high school Latin teacher Mary Hamer, saying, "if I got any education at all I got it from her."³⁶

Douglas enrolled in Wellesley College, west of Boston, in 1908, and the experience helped form her feminism and social consciousness.³⁷ For her, the all-female student body allowed her to mature intellectually and socially, free of the pressure of competing with male students. "I could be myself as an individual, as opposed to a young girl. There were no men to take over," she remembered.³⁸ Douglas admired Wellesley as an institution run by women and for women, and joined the campus women's suffrage group.³⁹ Douglas also encountered figures like Emily Greene Balch, Wellesley professor of economics and sociology. Balch was

³² Smich, "Lady of Legend."

³³ Marjory Stoneman Douglas with John Rothschild, *Voice of the River* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1987), 32-40. The Levi Coffin House in Fountain City, Indiana was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965.

³⁴ Douglas, *Voice*, 53.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 52, 67.

³⁷ Florida Department of State, "Marjory Stoneman Douglas," Great Floridians Film Series, accessed January 20, 2014, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANSQIT4sW_M.

³⁸ Douglas, *Voice*, 72.

³⁹ Davis, "Up from the Sawgrass," 150.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 13**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

well-known for taking her students to observe the saloons, prisons, and slums of Boston's North End. Such trips were often the first time students like Douglas witnessed poverty firsthand.⁴⁰

Douglas graduated from Wellesley in 1912. Tragically, her mother died that same year. In 1914, she married Kenneth Douglas, a man thirty years older who, within a few months of their wedding, was arrested for check forgery and given a six-month jail sentence. The marriage soon fell apart and Douglas decided to join her father in Florida.

Florida's New Arrivals

Douglas took one of Henry Flagler's railroads down the Eastern Coast of Florida and stepped off the train into Miami. The city was a young and subtropical city of a few thousand residents; it had been founded only nineteen years earlier.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas was only one of many new arrivals to Florida. Speculation around the value and purchase of Florida land spiked dramatically during the early twentieth century, initiating a massive influx of new Florida residents. New arrivals were delivered by Flagler's new railroads, a growing road system, and the state's first airports. Northern newspapers and tens of thousands of real estate brokers hawked the opportunity to make handsome profits buying land with skyrocketing value. Much of it—it was claimed—was recently drained and reclaimed swampland. Miami, which had recorded just over 500 registered voters upon its founding in 1896, grew to 30,000 residents before 1920.⁴¹

By the early 1920s, Miami's building permits had grown 1,300 percent, and the volume of people buying and selling real estate had grown by 1,700 percent. In 1925, the state scrapped income and inheritance taxes, and even more land hungry settlers moved in. Stoneman's newspaper even set a world advertising record in the 1920s when it published a 504-page, seven-pound daily flush with real estate ads. Douglas herself worked for a short time doing publicity journalism for George Merrick, a wealthy developer who erected the upper-class suburb of Coral Gables during this period.⁴² Fifty to seventy-five train cars full of eager visitors rolled into Miami daily, and around 300,000 people decided to settle in Florida between 1923 and 1925 alone. Thirteen new counties sprang up in the state.⁴³ "Was there anything like this migration to Florida?" wrote one excited observer. "From the time the Hebrews went into Egypt, or since the hegira of Mohammed the prophet, what can compare to this?"⁴⁴

When Douglas and her father were reunited in Florida in 1915, Frank Stoneman had been editor of the city's first morning newspaper, later renamed *The Miami Herald*, for five years. Douglas recalled that Stoneman had a distinctly "Quaker sense" regarding the sexes and believed that there was little intellectual difference between women and men. "As far as he was concerned," said Douglas, "it didn't matter whether I was a boy or a girl if I showed the ability, which he felt that I did."⁴⁵ Similarly, Douglas respected her father's stern work ethic and

⁴⁰ Douglas, *Voice*, 76. Wellesley later fired Balch for her opposition to World War I. Balch went on, alongside Jane Addams, Carrie Chapman Catt and others to found the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She also won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. See Kristin E. Gwinn, *Emily Greene Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

⁴¹ Grunwald, *Swamp*, 172.

⁴² Douglas, *Voice*, 108; "Coral Gables Work for George Merrick," Florida International University Libraries, accessed November 1, 2013, http://everglades.fiu.edu/two/transcripts/SPC956_5.htm.

⁴³ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 265; Gannon, *New Florida History*, 291.

⁴⁴ Grunwald, *Swamp*, 176.

⁴⁵ Florida Department of State, "Marjory Stoneman Douglas."

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 14**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

commitment to rigorous journalism. This mutual respect no doubt nurtured the intellectual relationship between father and daughter and provided a space for Douglas to continue to develop as a writer and a feminist.⁴⁶

Soon after her arrival, Stoneman put Douglas to work as a writer for the newspaper. “I was delighted to be working on the Herald,” Douglas wrote later. “It was as if everything else that I had been doing since college had been all wrong and suddenly I found what I was meant to do—even if it was as simple as writing society blurbs in a small city newspaper. I didn't care what I was writing about as long as it was writing. It was a great leap forward in my individuality.”⁴⁷

Douglas's position as a female writer at the *Herald* was a relatively rare opportunity for her ideas to be consumed by a wide readership. Female journalists had been around since the colonial period and enjoyed a small spike in numbers when writing about social causes like abolition or temperance in the nineteenth century. In the late 1800s, women were increasingly targeted as consumers by advertisers. They also became important activists when women's suffrage started winning national attention. By the 1910s, thousands of women worked as journalists in American newspapers with many of them, like Douglas, starting their careers by writing for female-focused society pages.⁴⁸

At the *Herald*, Douglas began to develop Progressive ideas that would inform her later writing and activism on behalf of Florida's natural environment. Douglas used the society page as a platform for ideas on women's suffrage and advancement that she had developed at Wellesley. One of her first columns dealt with women's suffrage, and Douglas often highlighted the achievements of the many accomplished and educated women she met in Florida.⁴⁹

Progressive Florida

Many of the women Douglas encountered as a journalist were also reformers. Douglas had arrived in Florida at the height of women's and Progressive activism in the state. The turn of the century saw a rising Florida Progressive movement whose mostly middle and upper class participants sought to put an end to government corruption and cheap land and financial grants to corporate moguls like Flagler. Progressive politicians questioned the costs of laissez-faire market capitalism and the power granted to corporate tycoons. The emergence of the Progressive Movement split Florida politics in two. The “wool hats” included those that sympathized with Progressive and Populist causes—mostly small businessmen and farmers. The “silk hats” were conservative railroad owners, professionals, bankers, and developers.⁵⁰ Despite their differences, both sides generally supported Everglades drainage as a mark on the march of progress.

In 1900, Florida's Progressives elected William Sherman Jennings into the statehouse. Cousin to William Jennings Bryan, “the Great Commoner,” Jennings was a populist governor critical of the power of railroad magnates and the cheap land grants they received from friendly government officials. Jennings sought to reclaim the public control granted by laws like the 1850 Swamp Lands Act. “His message to corporations was simple,” says one account: “If you want state lands, buy them.”⁵¹ During his term, Jennings, to the ire of railroad corporations, began the transfer of millions of acres from the federal government to the State of Florida, including the whole of the Everglades.⁵²

⁴⁶ Douglas, *Voice*, 100-1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 101-2; Davis, “Up from the Sawgrass,” 152.

⁴⁸ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 209-10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 228-9; Florida Department of State, “Marjory Stoneman Douglas.”

⁵⁰ Gannon, *New Florida History*, 278.

⁵¹ Grunwald, *Swamp*, 113-4.

⁵² McCally, *Everglades*, 91.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 15

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

It was Florida Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, however, who would come to represent Florida's Progressive Era more than any other. Broward was anti-railroad and vehemently opposed cheap land grants to corporations. He instead envisioned the government draining wetlands water to the ocean, with the profits of new productive land filling public coffers. In plain, commonsense language, Broward convinced many Florida residents that he would "stand between the people of Florida and the rapacity of the land grant corporations," and allow taxpayers and common folk to benefit from government-run drainage of the Everglades and the subsequent creation of productive land. He marched around the state with drainage plans under his arm and asked Floridians: "Shall the sovereign people of Florida supinely surrender to a few land pirates and a few purchased newspapers and supinely confess that they cannot knock a hole in the wall of coral and let a body of water obey a natural law and seek the level of the sea?"⁵³

Broward believed that as the water flowed out, up to \$60 million would flow into state accounts. To accomplish such a project, Broward passed the Drainage Act of 1905, continuing the tradition begun by Jennings of state-level control of the Everglades. The act also established a new drainage commission and obligated swampland owners – mostly silk hats – to pay five cents for every acre they owned towards the drainage projects.⁵⁴

The railroad companies, of course, opposed Broward's plan. They filed lawsuits and used what Broward alleged were "purchased newspapers" to rail against the plan. Meanwhile, Broward's grandiose plans sputtered under this resistance, and because of more IIF financial woes. By 1907, less than five miles of canals had been dug. Broward left office soon after with most of South Florida's land still waterlogged.⁵⁵

Florida Women's Conservation: Plume Birds and Paradise Key

Marjory Stoneman Douglas and other middle- and upper-class activists would articulate a different Progressive vision of the relationship between humans and the natural environment than that of Progressives like Broward. For these reformers, conservation and efficient use of natural resources became a critical issue. When historian Frederick Jackson Turner famously declared the western frontier closed in 1893, many of the nation's residents began to reexamine their relationship with the environment. "The perception of abundant and unexploited lands teeming with wildlife and fertile soils began to turn to one of wasted resources and inefficient use," says environmental historian Carol Merchant of the period.⁵⁶

Florida reformers like Douglas were the first women of the southern states to stake a place in the national conservation movement.⁵⁷ One of those reformers, May Mann Jennings, is recognized as "arguably the most important suffragist and conservationist in early twentieth century Florida."⁵⁸ Wife of Governor Jennings, May Mann Jennings served on the executive committee of the Florida Audubon, founded in 1900, and was president of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs (FFWC) from 1914-1917. Many female reformers, like Jennings, successfully used the powerful political positions occupied by their spouses to advance their own causes. They also organized and ran civic groups such as the Audubon Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, the

⁵³ Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, "Open Letter of Governor N. B. Broward to the People of Florida," University of North Florida, accessed September 20, 2013, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/NF00000128/00001>.

⁵⁴ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 136-7.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁵⁶ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," from *The Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1893; Carolyn Merchant, *American Environmental History: An Introduction* (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 141, 147.

⁵⁷ Davis, "Up from the Sawgrass," 148.

⁵⁸ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 110.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 16**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Women's Country Life Movement, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Florida chapter of which Marjory Stoneman Douglas and May Mann Jennings helped lead.⁵⁹ In Florida, conservation organizations like the FFWC and Audubon were overwhelmingly run by women. In fact, women outnumbered men two-to-one in the Florida Audubon, and Miami's chapter was entirely female.⁶⁰

Groups like the FFWC and the Florida Audubon found a cause among perhaps the state's tiniest residents: plume birds. By the late nineteenth century a booming industrial capitalism shifted women's and men's gender roles considerably, particularly among the middle and upper classes, and both men and women were also reinventing their respective relationships with the natural world. Enjoying expanded access to the public sphere in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, women "spoke forcefully on behalf of vanishing resources such as forests, wildlife, and birds and joined in efforts to mitigate the detrimental effects of garbage, sewage, smoke, and noise." Men struggled to find a new masculine relationship with "untamed nature" that resembled the explorers and hunters of old while also conforming to a new gentility. Men's sporting, hiking, and mountaineering clubs, emerged during this period, as did an increased interest in the hunting of plume birds.⁶¹

Conservationist George Grinnell had founded the Audubon Society in 1886 amid widespread concern that the spike in plume bird hunting was decimating the population of small birds in places like the Everglades. Florida in particular had long been rich with birdlife, as observers like Marjory Stoneman Douglas took poetic note:

Newcomers to Florida were startled to see snowy egrets, great egrets, little blue herons, great blue herons, roseate spoonbills, ibises, and wood storks stepping about on their stick legs in marshes and along pond and bay edges. Some birds stood the height of a grown man's chest. Before hunters disturbed the wild, a flock in flight could form a "perfect cloud" against the sun...[Marjory Stoneman] Douglas captured the evening retreat of birds making their way overhead from the coast back to Everglades: "At sunset with full crops they would move in the white thousands and tens of thousands, with the sounds of great stiff silk banners, birds in flocks, birds in wedges, birds in wavering ribbons, blue and white crowds, rivers of birds pouring against the sunset..."⁶²

The killing of such beautiful birds was offensive to turn-of-the-century definitions of gender and genteel leisure. Small birds were not only less masculine prey than big game animals like bear and elk, but they were also hunted to provide the ornate plumage fastened to hats atop the heads of high society women.

The same year Grinnell founded the Audubon Society, ornithologist Frank Chapman conducted a famous study of plume birds observing 542 plumes from twenty different types of birds in one afternoon—all fastened on the hats of women strolling through New York City.⁶³ As editor of the conservation journal *Forest and Stream*, Grinnell urged readers to play their part in conserving birds and waterfowl. Within a year of the Audubon's founding, nearly 39,000 people had pledged they would not harm birds.⁶⁴ Grinnell specifically called on women to protect birds, writing that "the reform in America, as elsewhere, must be inaugurated by women, and

⁵⁹ Mary K. Flagler was also a participant in the early twentieth-century women's reform movement and was a member of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs and the Florida Audubon Society. See Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 219.

⁶⁰ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 215.

⁶¹ Carolyn Merchant, "George Bird Grinnell's Audubon Society: Bridging the Gender Divide in Conservation," *Environmental History* 15, issue 1: 4-5.

⁶² Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 172-3.

⁶³ Frank M. Chapman, "Letter – Birds and Bonnets," *Forest and Stream: A Journal of Outdoor Life, Travel, Nature Study, Shooting, Fishing, Yachting* 26, no. 5 (February 25, 1886): 84.

⁶⁴ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 153.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 17**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

if the subject is properly called to their notice, their tender hearts will be quick to respond.”⁶⁵ As such, small bird hunting provided both an important impetus for the founding of the Audubon Society and a target for turn-of-the-century women’s organizations.⁶⁶

For reformers, the task of ending plume hunting was immense. Statistics indicated that some hunters might kill as many as 70,000 birds in four months; one Florida hunter bragged that he and his friends bagged 130,000 birds in one season.⁶⁷ In New York alone the hat-making industry drew in \$17 million, and was buoyed by twenty thousand people laboring in sweatshop conditions and countless plume hunters in South Florida and elsewhere who sold the feathers for between \$12 and \$17 an ounce. But the price for birds was heavy: one ounce of egret feathers—the most valuable plume—meant killing four egrets.⁶⁸

Guy Bradley was plume bird hunting’s most famous casualty. Bradley, a rugged man who had been both a former plume hunter and surveyor for Flagler railroads, was hired by the National Audubon Society to protect plume birds by patrolling, interrupting hunts, and issuing fines. Though Bradley was part of a national team of thirty-four plume wardens in ten states employed by Audubon, he was assigned to one of the most active and difficult jurisdictions in the country—Monroe County, Florida, which included the Florida Keys and a large swath of the Everglades.⁶⁹ One morning in July 1905, Bradley found himself cutting across the water towards the Oyster Keys where he had heard shots from suspected bird hunters. He came upon Walter Smith, a plume hunter accompanied by four other men, including one of Smith’s sons that Bradley had arrested at least once before for illegal hunting. The details of what happened next are unclear, but Smith fired several shots. Bradley was found a few days later face down in his boat in a pool of blood.⁷⁰

By organizing around issues like plume bird hunting, the FFWC grew its influence during the first decade of the twentieth century. Every year, female conservationists made demands on state legislators pushing for improvements in education, healthcare, women’s municipal participation, and, importantly, conservation. Indeed, in 1903 the Florida Audubon Society won a major victory for plume birds when it helped convince President Theodore Roosevelt to designate Pelican Island, located off Florida’s eastern shore, as the nation’s first federal wildlife refuge. The island refuge served as a “forerunner” to a subsequent national network of over fifty bird reservations and represented how the presence of wildlife was increasingly understood to confer value on natural areas in the early twentieth century. Pelican Island’s place as the first federally-protected bird refuge also signals the unique importance of Florida’s natural resources in the period’s national conservation movement.⁷¹

Paradise Key boasted the largest native grouping of royal palms in the U.S., and many of the majestic trees stood over one hundred feet tall. Much of the island’s plant life was unique to the key, and the hammocks, vines, wild orchids, and wading birds were much admired by area residents.⁷² Many were disturbed when a Flagler railroad subsidiary built a new road near the hammock to more easily access the Everglades for a drainage project. In Florida around the turn of the century, a new road was usually followed by new residential or agricultural developments.

⁶⁵ Merchant, “George Bird Grinnell’s Audubon Society,” 11.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁶⁷ Merchant, *American Environmental History*, 11; Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 175.

⁶⁸ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 173-4.

⁶⁹ Grunwald, *Swamp*, 126; Davis, *Everglades Providence* 187.

⁷⁰ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 190.

⁷¹ “Pelican Island National Refuge,” U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, accessed June 9, 2014,

<http://www.fws.gov/pelicanisland/history.html>.

⁷² Linda D. Vance, “May Mann Jennings and Royal Palm State Park,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (July 1976): 1-17.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 18

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

One of the state's important conservation leaders was Mary Barr Munroe, head of the Dade County Federation of Women's Clubs and a tough anti-hunting advocate that sometimes reduced plume-wearing women to tears. She was nicknamed "the most militant power" by Florida conservationists.⁷³ Munroe proposed that the company donate the island directly to the FFWC and enlisted support from Mary Kenan Flagler (wife of Henry) who later donated 960 acres for the park, and May Mann Jennings.⁷⁴ Jennings and her husband, the former Florida governor, stumped the state and drafted a bill calling for protection of the hammock and an appropriation to maintain it. Many female reformers similarly used the powerful political positions occupied by their spouses to advance their own causes.

In 1916, Paradise Key was included in the dedication of Royal Palm State Park in a grant to the FFWC. The FFWC's ability to win protection for a portion of the Everglades was an important precedent for shifting public opinion about the area. Instead of a musty backwater awaiting drainage and reclamation, activists had successfully defined the island as a natural area worthy of protection. Subsequent Florida conservation activists would use the same strategy to protect other Florida natural areas.⁷⁵

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Joins Florida Women's Reform

In 1916, the same year Royal Palm State Park was dedicated and only a year after her arrival in Florida, Marjory Stoneman Douglas founded the Business Women's League in Miami to help women prepare for entering the workplace and find jobs; she also joined Mary Munroe's Dade County Federation of Women's Clubs, later becoming an officer. Women reformers must have also recognized early signs of the eloquence and forcefulness with which Douglas delivered political speeches for the rest of her life.⁷⁶ The following year, Douglas made one of her first public speeches to the Florida Equal Suffrage Association (FESA) in which she demanded, "equal industrial opportunity and equal pay for equal work." She went on to chair the FESA's press committee.⁷⁷ Douglas was later invited by the FESA to accompany Annie Broward (wife of Napoleon Broward), May Mann Jennings and Mary Bryan (wife of William Jennings Bryan), to speak to Florida legislators on behalf of a bill that would grant Florida women the vote. Douglas's speech to the Florida legislature was her first encounter with state-level powerbrokers, and she was unimpressed with the tobacco-chewing "wool hats" who occupied the statehouse:

We had to speak to a committee of the House, which we did. It was a big room with men sitting around two walls of it with spittoons between every two or three. And we had on our best clothes and we spoke, as we felt, eloquently, about women's suffrage and it was like speaking to blank walls. All they did was spit in the spittoons. They didn't pay any attention to us at all.⁷⁸

Through such experiences, Douglas continued to develop a feminist critique of male power and women's supplementary social role in the 1910s, a critique that she had begun to develop at Wellesley.

But while Douglas enjoyed close proximity to the women's club movement and its causes, the nexus of her feminism and conservation complicates the traditional clubwomen paradigm. Florida's clubwomen mostly

⁷³ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 212-3.

⁷⁴ Davis, "Up from the Sawgrass," 155.

⁷⁵ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 156-9; Clement, "Everglades Timeline."

⁷⁶ Davis, "Up from the Sawgrass," 168.

⁷⁷ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 233. Douglas chaired the FESA press committee until leaving for naval duty in 1917. See Davis, "Up from the Sawgrass," 153-4.

⁷⁸ "Women's Suffrage," Everglades Digital Library, Florida International University Libraries, accessed November 2, 2013, http://everglades.fiu.edu/two/transcripts/SPC956_6.htm.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 19

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

sought the vote to empower their abilities as “public housekeepers,” which would add a female sensibility to the male political world. Indeed, in closing her suffragist speech to the Florida legislature, May Mann Jennings told male legislators that women could be trusted not to overstep, promising that “the hand that rocks the cradle will never rock the boat.”⁷⁹

Douglas, unlike most clubwomen, was an ardent feminist and advocated for political and social equality of the sexes throughout her life. She also unapologetically upset gender and social paradigms in other ways as well. “It’s not difficult to talk about my sex life – it can be dealt with in one sentence,” she wrote in her autobiography. “I didn’t have any sex life. Sex ended with my marriage. Marriage taught me that sex can be a good and healthy thing, and I enjoyed it while it lasted...So I haven’t had any sex since before 1915 and I’ve done very well without it, thank you. It hasn’t been any great loss. People don’t seem to realize that the energy that goes into sex, all the emotion that surrounds it, can be well employed in other ways.” Indeed, from the time her marriage ended in the early twentieth century, Douglas mostly eschewed romantic relationships with men and was not interested in raising children. “I never wanted children. I wanted books,” she said. “I didn’t want a normal family life, I wanted my own life in my own way.” Indeed, Douglas argued that romantic relationships with men made women unwittingly dependent and “dominated by the force of masculinity.” Instead of such relationships, Douglas preferred a robust social circle of intellectual colleagues and friends.⁸⁰ She was also critical of the conservatism of clubwomen, including those who identified themselves in writing by their husbands’ names, like “Mrs. Napoleon Bonaparte Broward,” and, in so doing, diminished their own independent existence and significant accomplishments. “It is getting a little bit late in the day for men to object that women are outside their proper sphere,” she wrote.⁸¹

Douglas also believed that equality for women would improve the general social welfare. Men, she believed, were not sensitive enough to make decisions that would affect the country. Women, on the other hand, were uniquely positioned to more broadly consider the effects of their decisions, and as such would add a great deal to politics.⁸² Such ideas, developed and honed by Douglas during her experiences in Florida’s women’s reform movement, would significantly inform her later criticism of the degradation of the Everglades.

The first half of the 1920s was marked by several significant changes in the life of Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Previously, Frank Stoneman had sent his daughter to report on the first Florida woman to enlist in World War I. Instead of merely reporting, Douglas simply signed-up for the Navy, becoming the first enlistee herself. “They didn’t know what to do with a woman that didn’t obey orders very well,” Douglas laughingly remembered of the Navy.⁸³ Douglas went on to spend eighteen months in war-torn Europe with the Red Cross and came back to the United States in 1920 significantly affected by her experiences there. By then, Douglas believed she could best achieve social change by influencing the world of ideas through her writing and she now created her own column at the *Miami Herald*.⁸⁴

Her ideas were on full display in her column, “The Galley,” in which she devoted significant space to her own poetry, women in politics, and South Florida social issues. “The more you read books about women written by

⁷⁹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 225, 235-7.

⁸⁰ Douglas, *Voice*, 127-128. See also “Coconut Grove’s Early Social Scene,” Florida International University Libraries, accessed September 30, 2013, http://everglades.fiu.edu/two/transcripts/SPC95A_8.htm.

⁸¹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 237.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 235-7. On “public housekeepers” Nancy C. Unger, *Beyond Nature’s Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Jack E. Davis, “Green Awakening: Social Activism and the Evolution of Marjory Stoneman Douglas’s Environmental Consciousness,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (Summer 2001): 52.

⁸³ Douglas, *Voice*, 112; Florida Department of State, “Marjory Stoneman Douglas.”

⁸⁴ Davis, “Green Awakening,” 51-2; Davis, “Up from the Sawgrass,” 152.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 20**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

men,” Douglas wrote in one column, “the less surprised you are that men don’t believe that women are people.”⁸⁵

It was in “The Galley” that Douglas also first started to examine the relationship between area residents and the South Florida natural environment. During this period a friend and social reformer, Jessica Waterman Seymour, had introduced Douglas to the ideas of “regionalism” that were explored in the pages of the academic journal *Social Forces*. Regionalism advanced the idea that the regional natural, cultural, and social diversity of a nation enriched its totality. Douglas began to conceive of South Florida’s natural diversity—its wading birds, subtropical climate, and, eventually, the Everglades—as a regional strength, and she promoted the importance of maintaining its regional strength in her *Herald* column. Indeed, the iconic first line of her most important book, *The Everglades: River of Grass*, proclaims the regional strength and global importance of the South Florida wetlands: “There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they always have been, one of the unique regions of the earth.”⁸⁶

Douglas’s early twentieth-century understanding of the regional importance of South Florida’s natural environment, informed by an early twentieth-century feminist social critique, would become central to the rest of her life’s work. And by 1923, Douglas’s interest lay in promoting change through such ideas. That year, she quit the *Herald* and decided to become a full-time writer, exploring South Florida’s natural beauty and drama through both non-fiction and fiction such as stories and poems. In the early 1920s, Douglas published several stories, many with emotionally, sometimes physically, strong female protagonists who confronted social and ethical issues in South Florida. Her stories took place in Miami, along the Tamiami Trail and the Florida Keys, and deep in the Everglades.⁸⁷

A Lifelong Home in Florida

By 1925, Douglas was financially stable enough to buy a house. She had published several stories in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1924 and 1925, and later called her new home “the house the *Post* built.” Douglas decided to build the home in Coconut Grove, a quiet community populated by a vibrant society of architects, writers, and intellectuals, and accented by palm and banyan trees.⁸⁸ Douglas bought a portion of a lot on Stewart Avenue and hired architect George Hyde to design a “sensible house open to the breezes.” The house reflected Douglas’s personality – it was settled within the natural environment, unpretentious, and almost wholly constructed to facilitate intellectual work. “All I needed was one big room with living quarters tacked on,” she said. “This is a workshop, more than a house,” she added later. It was her “writing factory,” confirmed Martha Hubbart, Douglas’s personal secretary in the 1980s and 1990s, adding that, “it was like an artist’s studio, except her art was writing.”⁸⁹ The house was constantly jammed with books, and gave the appearance of being singularly devoted to a life of the mind. In fact, Douglas never owned a stove, oven, or refrigerator – she cooked with a two-burner hot plate, a toaster, and used an icebox to store food.⁹⁰

Hyde designed a house with a large room with French doors and a fireplace for entertaining guests, and attached a ten-by-ten foot bedroom. He placed pine wood floors inside the house and a cypress wood trim against

⁸⁵ Douglas, *Voice*, 127.

⁸⁶ Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *The Everglades: River of Grass* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1997).

⁸⁷ See *Nine Florida Stories* for a collection of her *Saturday Evening Post* work.

⁸⁸ On Stoneman Douglas’ social life in Coconut Grove, see “Coconut Grove’s Early Social Scene,” Florida International University Libraries, accessed September 30, 2013, http://everglades.fiu.edu/two/transcripts/SPC95A_8.htm.

⁸⁹ Jerome Liebling, “Marjory’s Place,” *Sun Sentinel* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL), May 2, 1999; Liz Doup, “The Old Lady & the Swamp,” *Sun Sentinel* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL), September 14, 1986.

⁹⁰ David McCally, Review of Marjory Stoneman Douglas: One Woman, the Everglades and the Rest is History, Loxahatchee Historical Society, *The Public Historian* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 133-136.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 21

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

cream-colored stucco walls on the outside. The sloped roof was covered with scalloped-edged steam-bent cedar shingles. “All of these features gave the house the distinct look of an English country cottage,” writes Jack Davis, likely the most important scholar of Douglas’s life, “though hers was nestled in a tropical garden.”⁹¹

By the time she moved into the house in 1926 Douglas had developed a unique nexus of ideas around feminism, conservation, and regionalism that would inform her writing and activism in subsequent decades and the house on Stewart Avenue was the physical and intellectual center of that work. Douglas would live, write, socialize, and hold political meetings, press conferences, and interviews in the house for the next seventy-two years.

Winning the Everglades National Park

By the time Douglas moved into her Stewart Avenue home in 1926, the boom in Florida real estate was declining. Critics began complaining of the swindlers and hustlers that were inflating Florida’s land values.⁹² But the biggest blow was a pair of hurricanes in 1926 and 1928 that all but devastated Florida’s runaway economy. In 1926, winds were clocked at over 125 miles per hour as waves began crashing over the dykes. Boats were tossed about, and 13,000 homes were destroyed. Official reports guessed that over 400 people had been killed.⁹³ The 1928 storm was one of the worst in U.S. history. Living in South Florida it was impossible to ignore such violent interactions between humans and the natural environment. Douglas had friends who suffered some of the most devastating effects of the hurricanes. Douglas later wrote two short stories dealing with hurricanes, including “Remember—September,” inspired by the 1935 Labor Day Hurricane that killed over 4,000 people. Later, she also wrote *Hurricane*, a comprehensive history of hurricanes from pre-colonial times to the 1950s.⁹⁴

In the aftermath of the 1928 hurricane, federal officials proposed unprecedented intervention to control Florida’s unruly waters. Until then, local flood control had been under the strict jurisdiction of local and state governments, but the problem was too massive to be ignored. In 1930, President Hoover signed a bill that allowed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build a multi-million dollar massive levee around Lake Okeechobee. Eight years later, the Hoover Dike stood around three quarters of the lake.⁹⁵

While such structures protected people, both flood control and agricultural development continued to threaten the Everglades. Congress pushed for more reclamation of Everglades land for sugar production, and other proposals to commodify the Everglades’ natural resources were proposed at a rapid pace.⁹⁶ Hunters continued to decimate the plume bird population, clams were ripped from their beds for canning, timber and charcoal companies targeted mangrove and cypress trees, and oil companies searched below the gently flowing water. One company even proposed a scheme to make paper from the Everglades muck.⁹⁷

In response, a Coconut Grove landscape architect named Ernest Coe, along with other Florida naturalists, formed the Tropical Everglades National Park Association in 1928 in hopes of making the Everglades a national park. Coe hoped to imitate the FFWC’s successful bid to protect Paradise Key. He worked tirelessly on the project making it his singular mission for many years. Coe enlisted Marjory Stoneman Douglas in the cause, and she became a member of the association.⁹⁸

⁹¹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 317-8.

⁹² Grunwald, *Swamp*, 178.

⁹³ Clement, “Everglades Timeline.”

⁹⁴ See Douglas, “Remember—September,” in *Nine Florida Stories*.

⁹⁵ Clement, “Everglades Timeline.”

⁹⁶ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 187.

⁹⁷ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 329.

⁹⁸ Davis, “Up from the Sawgrass,” 155-6.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 22**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

It made sense that Coe would seek out Douglas's support—she had developed a reputation as a prominent part of the local Florida naturalist community and spent her free time watching birds with local ornithologists. Coe had also personally led her on several trips into the Glades. Douglas's *Miami Herald* columns had included eloquent defenses of the South Florida environment and called for a new relationship between the human residents and the natural environment. "You and I have ample reasons to be friends," Coe wrote to Douglas. "We both have a common interest in the Everglades National Park."⁹⁹ Coe also invited University of Miami president Dr. Bowman Ashe and other local and national figures to join his side. Coe cultivated an important relationship with Ruth Bryan Owen, Florida's first female member of Congress and daughter of William Jennings Bryan.

In 1930, Coe and his team had convinced the director of the National Park Service to lead a group of experts, including NPS Director Horace Albright and Congresswoman Owen, through the Everglades to consider the idea. Coe, Douglas, and others hoped to convince the team that a "tropical" park like the Everglades should be included in a national park system that until then privileged lofty mountain peaks, scenic canyons, and cascading waterfalls. In a *Miami Herald* column, Douglas challenged the idea that a "national park must have mountains sticking up rockily in it, or canyons gashing dizzily through it, or geysers sizzling or any other sight that assaults the astonishment."¹⁰⁰ Rather, she believed, it was the Everglades' subtropical environment—unique to the continental United States—and flora and fauna that made the region worthy of protection. During the trip, the team was exposed to this expansive beauty through a flight over the Everglades. In the air, Douglas sat next to Coe who quietly threw up into a bucket.¹⁰¹

Despite Coe's nervousness, the expansive Everglades impressed the group, which Coe had proposed as the nation's first "tropical" national park. Douglas later told of how the group was spellbound by the Everglades wildlife:

Those white, white wings roofed the evening wind above us. The men were standing up in the boats, breathless. All they could say was, "Oh—more birds—more birds," as the wings went over in their hundreds, their thousands. The sunset died. An enormous white moon rose out of the east with the flying processions of birds dark against it, their wings still whispering.¹⁰²

By the end of the trip, Douglas remembered the group "unanimously decided that it must be a great National Park."¹⁰³ Later, Douglas remembered Coe as a "prophet," celebrating his tireless single-mindedness in the successful pursuit of the park.¹⁰⁴

Douglas spent the decade following the Everglades tour by incorporating the environmental and political issues she encountered as a *Miami Herald* columnist into fictional stories.¹⁰⁵ Douglas memorialized Guy Bradley, the

⁹⁹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 335.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹⁰¹ Gail Clement, "Everglades Biographies: Ernest F. Coe," *Reclaiming the Everglades: South Florida's Natural History, 1884 to 1934*, Florida International University Libraries, accessed November 2, 2013, <http://everglades.fiu.edu/reclaim/bios/coe.htm>; Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 334-6; Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 187.

¹⁰² Marjory Stoneman Douglas, "The Forgotten Father," *Audubon Magazine*, 1974, accessed November 4, 2013, <http://www.evergladesonline.com/50years/forgot.htm>

¹⁰³ Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 336; Marjory Stoneman Douglas "Early Pioneering Efforts to Establish the Everglades National Park," Florida International University Libraries, June 15, 1983, accessed December 1, 2013,

http://everglades.fiu.edu/two/transcripts/SPC950B_5.htm.

¹⁰⁴ Douglas, "The Forgotten Father."

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 23**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

murdered plume bird warden, in one of her most powerful short stories, “Plumes,” published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1930. Douglas had been inspired to write the story when the Everglades tour participants came across poachers preparing to empty a plume bird rookery of its live inhabitants. Douglas’s story featured a protagonist that harkened back to Bradley’s story. The next year, the *Post* published “Wings,” another article Douglas wrote against the plume feather trade.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, between the Everglades tour and the park’s official dedication in 1947, Marjory Stoneman Douglas published over fifty stories and articles, mostly for the *Saturday Evening Post*, that have comprised a significant record of early twentieth-century interactions between South Floridians and their natural environment. Her articles often focused on South Florida’s environment while her stories took place in Miami, along the Tamiami Trail and the Florida Keys, and deep in the Everglades.¹⁰⁷

Despite Douglas’s stories and the successful 1930 Everglades tour, four years of heated partisan debate passed before the official declaration that the Everglades were to be a national park. Despite Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s appointment of Progressive Harold Ickes, whose lengthy term as head of the Department of Interior involved conservation victories like the establishment of Olympic and Kings Canyon National Parks, the Great Depression dominated politics and some Congress members attacked the proposal as the creation of “a snake swamp park on perfectly worthless land.” At one point, Ruth Bryan Owen, in defense of the proposed park, stood before Congress with a live snake on her shoulders declaring, “That’s how afraid we are of snakes in the Everglades.” The Everglades National Park bill was signed into law by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1934 but heated opposition over the park’s boundaries, often from private owners of Everglades land, caused thirteen years to pass before the park was finalized.¹⁰⁸

At the park’s dedication ceremony on December 6, 1947, Marjory Stoneman Douglas was recognized as one of the most important contributors to success of the Everglades National Park. She was invited to sit on the platform along with Coe, May Mann Jennings, and others to listen to President Harry Truman’s speech hailing the park as unique in the national park system. Truman acknowledged the new park’s uniqueness, saying, “Here are no lofty peaks seeking the sky, no mighty glaciers or rushing streams wearing away the uplifted land. Here is land, tranquil in its quiet beauty, serving not as the source of water but as the last receiver of it.” Truman called the new park a “great conservation victory,” though Truman’s conservation reflected the fundamental understanding that had informed the relationship between humans and the Everglades for the previous century. “Our parks are but one part of the national effort to conserve our natural resources,” explained Truman. “Upon these resources our life as a nation depends. Our high level of employment and our extraordinary production are being limited by scarcities in some items of our natural wealth.” Conservation, Truman explained, involved the efficient exploitation of natural resources for human consumption. Like most of his contemporaries, Truman saw conservation more as an efficient mechanism of free enterprise and capitalist development than as a tool to preserve the natural landscape.¹⁰⁹

But the designation of Everglades National Park was no small matter and has been described as the nation’s “first unmistakable pledge to total preservation.”¹¹⁰ Indeed, the Everglades National Park was one of the first

¹⁰⁵ Davis, “Green Awakening,” 65.

¹⁰⁶ See Douglas, “Wings” and “Plumes” in *Nine Florida Stories*.

¹⁰⁷ See *Nine Florida Stories* for a collection of her *Saturday Evening Post* fiction. For a comprehensive list of her South Florida environmental nonfiction for the period see Rosalie E. Leposky, “Marjory Stoneman Douglas Bibliography,” University of Miami, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www6.miami.edu/english/msdouglas/>.

¹⁰⁸ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 189; Douglas, *Voice*, 194. On Ickes, see Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington DC: Island Press, 1993), 35-6.

¹⁰⁹ Harry S. Truman, “Address on Conservation at the Dedication of Everglades National Park, December 6, 1947,” The American Presidency Project, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, accessed October 7, 2013, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12798>.

¹¹⁰ Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), last modified March

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 24**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

wilderness parks, natural spaces preserved in recognition of the value of their flora, fauna, and unique landscapes rather than for their ability to allow tourists to appreciate towering peaks, cascading waterfalls, and other natural majesties. And Marjory Stoneman Douglas' masterwork would help steer the nation towards this unique and, for wetlands, revolutionary understanding. A month before the Everglades National Park dedication ceremonies, Farrar and Reinhart published Marjory Stoneman Douglas' *The Everglades: River of Grass*, the book that would forever change the understanding, articulated by Truman, of the relationship between American citizens and the Everglades. Douglas helped convince the nation that the Everglades were neither a valueless swamp nor an esteemed mountain; rather, they were part of an interconnected ecology that were important both to South Florida's humans and wildlife and the region's entire natural environment.¹¹¹

A singularly important achievement in twentieth-century environmental literature, *The Everglades: River of Grass* helped Americans permanently reimagine the Everglades as a unique and valuable ecological treasure rather than a useless swamp waiting to be drained and developed. Along with other works of 1940s environmental literature, including Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*,¹¹² published two years after Douglas's work, *River of Grass* marked a turning point in twentieth-century environmentalism. *River of Grass* taught Americans to re-conceptualize the value of the Florida Everglades and, in turn, the entire natural environment. Douglas's genius was to equate, in a brief book title, what had previously been dismissed as a valueless swamp with a familiar natural feature whose value and interconnectedness with the rest of the ecosystem was well understood. Historian Jack Davis writes that the book's title grew from a clever metaphor into a powerful symbol of the twentieth-century environmental movement:

It was a poetic subversion at first, merely dismissing the swamp for the river. Eventually, though, it would undermine the principle of those who churlishly treated the Everglades as a wasteland, who thought to discard, ruin, or remain indifferent to them. The full impact of revision—imagery and meaning—built gradually over the ensuing decades. No one, including Douglas, foresaw the changing context of the environmental century and the evolving importance of her book.

The book is a rigorous work of literature, science, and cultural anthropology written “with the fiery conviction of an environmental advocate,” a combination that has made *The Everglades: River of Grass* one of the monuments of twentieth-century environmental writing.¹¹³

Writing the River

When she composed *River of Grass*, Marjory Stoneman Douglas was almost sixty years old and an experienced reformer with a lengthy portfolio, including nearly fifty published short stories from twenty years of magazine writing.¹¹⁴

Douglas had been approached by friend and famed author Hervey Allen to write a nonfiction book for Farrar and Reinhart's *Rivers of America* series. Allen, who had written one the most popular American novels of the 1930s, *Anthony Adverse*, initially wanted Douglas to write a book about the Miami River. She thought it over

17, 2004, accessed December 17, 2013, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/runte1/chap6.htm.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² The Aldo Leopold Shack and Farm was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2009.

¹¹³ Branch, “Writing the Swamp,” 134-5.

¹¹⁴ Davis, “Up from the Sawgrass,” 152.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 25**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

and decided to write something that would incorporate the Everglades. She received an advance for her proposal, “Miami River, South, and the Everglades,” in 1943.¹¹⁵

The book was a major departure from her decades of fiction writing but Douglas’s endless intellectual curiosity served her well. She dove into several years of unprecedented research on the Everglades developing an understanding of the emerging field of ecology to provide her book’s foundation. She also established important relationships with scientists that helped round out her understanding.

Douglas adopted the insights of ecology, still a young discipline, to compose a masterwork whose jarring combination of scientific and literary insights avoids easy categorization. The field of ecology had its American roots in late nineteenth-century scientists who began to understand the natural environment as a holistic system. One of the first glimmers of the field came in 1887 when a University of Illinois professor read a paper arguing that a lake was comprised not of separate components but rather was a “little world within itself” in which a change to one piece has inevitable effects on the other parts of the whole. The field advanced when young researchers like Henry Cowles, Roscoe Pound, and Frederick Clements began expanding the concept of ecology as students and later, in Cowles and Clements’ cases, in the field. Cowles would continue on to help found the Ecological Society of America in 1915 and the academic journal *Ecology* in 1920 while Clements’ writings helped craft a “coherent and elaborate system of ecological theory” in the decades before 1940.¹¹⁶

By the 1930s, ecology had gained purchase among New Deal bureaucrats and scientists who applied new ideas about the interrelated nature of the environment to massive land-use projects. However, American wetlands and federal environmental policy history has long been defined by competing interests, often working at cross-purposes with each other while existing under the same governmental umbrella. In Roosevelt’s New Deal government economic development and the exploitation of natural resources were often given priority over conservation, even while other governmental sectors took the lead in highlighting environmental problems.¹¹⁷

But by the 1940s, Douglas had modified her views from those of a progressive conservationist who believed in the rational exploitation of natural resources to an ideology that mapped ecological ideas onto her regionalist beliefs. Indeed, Douglas’s work described the Everglades as “one vast harmonious whole,” and referred to the Glades not in isolation from the rest of the South Florida environment but instead correctly described it as “the Kissimmee—Lake Okeechobee—Everglades watershed.”¹¹⁸

Douglas had gleaned much of her knowledge from conversations and correspondence with scientists who understood the complicated nature of the Everglades. Foremost among her influences was Garald Parker, a scientist assigned to the Miami Water Resources Division office to map saltwater encroachment into the area’s potable water wells. In search of the point where saltwater and freshwater met, Parker and his team would trek through the harsh Everglades like the explorers of old. Like the previous explorers, Parker found the Everglades to be a frightening environment. On one trip, Parker’s team awoke one morning to find their horses dead, surrounded by thick clouds of mosquitoes.¹¹⁹

Despite these difficulties, Parker developed a unique understanding of the Everglades ecosystem. He was the first to decipher the system of aquifers that, through replenishment from rainfall over the Everglades, provided

¹¹⁵ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 349-50.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.; Donald Worster, *Nature’s Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 206-212.

¹¹⁷ See Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape* and Adam Rome, *Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10.

¹¹⁸ Branch, “Writing the Swamp,” 132.

¹¹⁹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 355-6.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 26**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

all South Florida's drinking water; he named the system the Biscayne Aquifer. Parker also determined that Everglades' drainage had upset the balance between the freshwater and saltwater wells causing saltwater to flow up freshwater canals. He proposed a series of "saltwater control dams" to keep freshwater levels high and prevent saltwater intrusion. The installation of these dams was the first time that scientific study dictated Everglades water control, marking the beginning of constant monitoring of the fragile Glades environment.¹²⁰

For several years, Douglas engaged in a dialogue with Parker and developed an understanding of the Everglades as a complex ecosystem that had been understudied and, thus, misunderstood as isolated from the rest of Florida's environment. Douglas also spent countless hours in conversation with John Goggin, a University of Florida professor and expert on Florida's native peoples, and David True, an expert on the Spanish history of Florida.¹²¹ Douglas then took these countless hours of investigation, research, and conversation, sat in a small wooden chair looking over the back patio of her Stewart Avenue home, and wrote down, in longhand on yellow legal pads, her thoughts on the Florida Everglades.¹²²

The result was a true masterpiece. *The Everglades: River of Grass* combined Douglas's developed sense of literary aesthetic with a then little-known scientific understanding of the Everglades' value. Nature writer and friend Helen Muir proclaimed that Douglas's genius was turning the country's most despised swamp into its most revered wetland.¹²³ Scholar Michael Branch argues that, because it is so difficult to categorize, the book should instead be understood as a "work of epic literary environmental history," a landmark in mid-century literary conservation literature that anticipated several strains of thought in environmentalism, environmental history, and cultural anthropology. The most important accomplishment of *River of Grass*, Branch says, is its nexus of the early insights of scientific ecology and the rhetorical techniques of a place-based style of nature writing with the fiery conviction of an environmental advocate." *River of Grass* was the first to argue for the preservation of the Everglades on the basis of both its natural and aesthetic values.¹²⁴

The book has also been praised for its thorough treatment of the Everglades' native peoples. At a time when historians mostly dismissed the achievements of America's indigenous peoples, and US politicians were drawing up large-scale plans to force them to culturally and politically assimilate into mainstream America, Douglas wrote a serious study of American Indian history in the region. Indeed, ten of the book's fifteen chapters examined indigenous peoples and Douglas was unapologetic in her condemnation of the enslavement and genocide of American Indians.¹²⁵ Historian Jack Davis writes that such a historical approach received little professional acclaim at the time because the book's serious study of indigenous peoples made its analysis "the academic if not moral superior of professional historians" of the time and foreshadowed late twentieth-century strains of American Indian historiography.¹²⁶

Since first hitting the presses in 1947, the book has become the definitive interpretation of the Everglades. It has been published by five separate presses, has enjoyed six editions, including an extended fiftieth anniversary addition, has undergone more than twenty printings, and has continued to sell over 10,000 copies annually.

Most importantly, however, *River of Grass* helped steer national ideas about the environment from those of conservation to environmentalism. In the first four decades of the twentieth century, the conservation

¹²⁰ McCally, *Everglades*, 145-7; Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 356-7.

¹²¹ Douglas, *Voice*, 191-3.

¹²² Doup, "The Old Lady & the Swamp."

¹²³ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 5.

¹²⁴ Branch, "Writing the Swamp."

¹²⁵ Branch, "Writing the Swamp," 130-1.

¹²⁶ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 360-1; "Waters of Destiny," accessed December 2, 2013,

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 27**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

movement emphasized the efficient use and development of natural resources. As such, the Everglades were appreciated for their potential contribution to local and state economies, agriculture, and industry, made possible by drainage. By the postwar period, however, concern about environmental degradation began to replace concerns about efficiency. Postwar growth helped create a rising class of consumers who were more interested in an improved quality of life than efficiency; it also birthed postwar industries whose use of chemicals like DDT, detergents, and synthetics led to widespread worry over pollution.

In response, an environmental movement located in local, state, and national organizations coalesced around demands for legislation, government intervention, and the funding of environmental protection. And just as the nation began to reinterpret natural resources like the Everglades as worthy of protection, in large part because of the ideas expounded in *The Everglades: River of Grass*, Marjory Stoneman Douglas herself stepped into a prominent leadership role in the new environmentalist era.¹²⁷

Threats to the River of Grass

Although *River of Grass* dramatically reinterpreted the Everglades, in the 1940s and 1950s the idea that the Everglades was to be tamed for profitable investment and exploitation remained, and it informed both private developments and public policy. The year after the Everglades National Park was dedicated and *River of Grass* was published, the US Army Corps of Engineers announced the Central & Southern Flood Control Project, the most massive system of water control in American history.

For more than one hundred years, the Corps had directed federal navigation projects for small waterways and lakes, and left flood control to local and state authorities. The 1926 and 1928 Florida hurricanes, however, pushed Congress to recognize the Corps' national role in flood control. The Central & Southern Flood Control Project, initiated in 1948, would cement the Corps' permanent place as the "major driver of water management in the region." Indeed, in the twentieth century the Corps significantly expanded its water control activities, particularly in irrigation, dam construction, and flood control.¹²⁸

Based on conclusions drawn by Garald Parker, the Project hoped to prevent saltwater intrusion into South Florida's freshwater supply and allow control of water levels to prevent deadly and expensive flooding. It also sought to construct 2,000 miles of levees and canals and hundreds of miles of smaller water routes, making it equivalent in scale to the building of the Panama Canal. The new water control project ambitiously "incorporated elements of almost every Everglades plan of the last century."¹²⁹ At first, even Marjory Stoneman Douglas was hopeful. Decades of "bungling, inadequate methods" that hoped to control the Everglades would be replaced by the "first scientific, well-thought-out plan the Everglades has ever known," she wrote in a pamphlet.¹³⁰ The Army Corps of Engineers later commissioned a film, *Waters of Destiny*, an unabashed celebration of the flood control project as "mastery by the determined hand of man." Since then, even the Army Corps of Engineers has acknowledged that the Central & Southern Flood Control Project had irreparable long-term unintended consequences for the Everglades ecosystem. Douglas also revised her position and instead spent time publicizing the substantial environmental damage caused by the project.

¹²⁷ Samuel Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3. See also Rome, *Bulldozing*, 6.

¹²⁸ Matthew C. Godfrey, *River of Interests: Water Management in South Florida and the Everglades, 1948-2010* (Historical Research Associates, 2012), ix, 8.

¹²⁹ McCally, *Everglades*, 146-153; Grunwald, *Swamp*, 221-2; See also "Development of the Central & South Florida (C&SF) Project," Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, accessed November 20, 2013, http://www.evergladesplan.org/about/restudy_csf_devel.aspx.

¹³⁰ Marjory Stoneman Douglas, "What Are They Doing to the Everglades?," Everglades Digital Library, Florida International University, accessed April 30, 2014, <http://purl.fcla.edu/fcla/dl/RTMD00350096.jpg>.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 28**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

But at the time, *Waters of Destiny* dramatically proclaimed that “flood control must proceed, as fast as humanly possible, so that everyone, not only in this particular 15 square miles of land, but everyone, everywhere, can share in the rich results of man’s mastery of the elements.”¹³¹

The Everglades were also threatened by postwar growth, particularly the boom in housing construction. After World War II, the builders of new suburbs across the nation were celebrated and their activities encouraged. Between 1947 and 1957, eleven million suburban homes were constructed in the US, and roads, supermarkets, and other amenities sprung up around them. Much of this suburban sprawl extended into wetland areas, enabled by new production techniques that allowed home construction on previously ignored areas like floodplains and swamps. In environments as distinct as Arizona, New York, Kansas, Ohio, Connecticut, and Florida, new buyers were encouraged to look to marshlands for space for their new developments.¹³²

Several postwar inventions also made Florida hospitable for growth while simultaneously threatening the environment. Pesticides developed in World War II started to take aim at the thick clouds of bugs that made the Everglades and South Florida home. In the mid-1950s, for example, Florida sprayed the pesticide dieldrin across thousands of miles of Florida marshes in an attempt to kill sandfly larvae. While the larvae died, so did millions of fish and other animals further down the food chain, like crustaceans. The chemicals also accumulated in animals, water, and soil, threatening entire ecosystems. In 1951, cheap air conditioning window units also hit the shelves, making the sweltering Florida summers easier for both homeowners and factory owners looking to move south for cheaper labor costs. By 1955, one in ten southern homes had an air-conditioner. In 1959, Florida’s largest home construction company announced it would abandon the sleeping porch, long a ventilating feature of the state’s homes, for the cheaper air conditioner.¹³³

New energy demands, however, led to more encroachment into wetlands which simultaneously led to increased energy usage.¹³⁴ Power plants located near wetlands created large streams of warm water that affected coastal ecology. Across the country, expanded transportation accompanied postwar growth as well. Rapidly growing postwar cities like Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia located their new airports in wetlands, the only available open spaces. Automobile ownership also exploded during this period with 25 million cars purchased between 1947 and 1957. During the same period, Congress spent \$28 billion on new roads and highways, creating 41,000 miles of roads with the passage of the Interstate Highway Act in the mid-1950s.¹³⁵

The postwar boom arrived in Florida with special fervor. The United States saw incredible growth during the postwar period but Florida grew at four times the national rate. In twenty years, the state grew from the twenty-seventh to the ninth largest population in the country, adding nearly 4 million new residents. Miami welcomed almost 1,000 new residents weekly during the 1950s. Several US Presidents made Florida their vacation destination (Truman even mentioned his home in Key West during the 1947 Everglades National Park dedication speech), and the new Everglades National Park enjoyed around 1 million visitors annually.¹³⁶

Douglas’s Writing and Activism in 1950s and ‘60s Florida

Marjory Stoneman Douglas spent the 1950s and early 1960s focused on full-length books and social causes. Her written work explored the interplay between South Florida society and its natural environment, while her

¹³¹ Alfred A. Pantano, foreword to *River of Interests*, v.

¹³² Rome, *Bulldozing*, 3.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 71-2; Vilesis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 206-8.

¹³⁴ Rome, *Bulldozing*, 3.

¹³⁵ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 206-8.

¹³⁶ Grunwald, *Swamp*, 229-30.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 29**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

activism sought to advance social justice. This nexus was a continuation of her earlier work, and would continue to develop until the end of the twentieth century.

In 1951, Douglas finished her novel *Road to the Sun*, a tale of drainage, murder, and hurricanes in 1920s South Florida.¹³⁷ Two years later she published *Freedom River*, which has been described, with the exception of *River of Grass*, as her “most powerful and encompassing work of contemporary social commentary.”¹³⁸ The book was set in 1845, the year Florida joined the Union, and its protagonists—three boys, a white boy, a black slave, and a Miccosukee Indian—navigate the complexities of Florida’s mid-nineteenth-century racial society with the Everglades as the drama’s natural stage.

By the end of the 1950s she had published four more books: *Hurricane*, her history of hurricanes; *Alligator Crossing*, a young adult novel in which a young boy leaves his Miami home to brave the Everglades wilderness; a travel guide titled *A Key To Paris*; and *Florida: The Long Frontier*, her *longue durée* history of Florida.

Meanwhile, the term *wetland* began to replace pejorative terms like “swamp” in the 1950s, signaling a shift in environmental consciousness. The term meant value had been assigned to a particular ecosystem that just a few years previous had been recognized as neither an interconnected ecosystem nor an appreciated landscape. By the end of the decade, *wetland* was included in Webster’s Dictionary. “With a word, an inventory, a taxonomy, and legislation to prevent federal drainage assistance,” says historian Ann Vileisis, “wetlands had taken a big step toward becoming a valued part of our landscape.” Wetlands and other natural resources, like rivers and forests, began to be understood by environmentalists, sports advocates, and wildlife preservationists as natural areas that should be protected. Douglas’s *River of Grass* stood as a landmark in that shift.¹³⁹

However, the destruction of the wetlands continued with the postwar boom. By mid-decade, the original 221 million acres of US wetlands had been culled down to just over 100 million acres. The Eisenhower administration saw conservation as a distraction and stacked government positions overseeing conservation with business-friendly appointees. The result was that water and air pollution was exacerbated in the North and began to spread to southern states with expanding manufacturing bases.¹⁴⁰

In Florida, the early 1960s also saw exacerbated environmental damage. Northern Florida rivers and streams were polluted by a reckless and unregulated paper pulp industry. In central Florida, phosphate mining operations left behind piles of sludge and toxic waste causing harm to rivers and their fish. Expanded phosphate mining and processing in Florida also significantly affected the area’s air and water supplies. This period saw the creation of so-called “industrial rivers,” a new invention designed to attract jobs and development to the state by eliminating almost any regulation against dumping pollutants.¹⁴¹

The Florida sugar industry also rose to political prominence in the 1960s and simultaneously expanded its reach into the Everglades. Stimulated by a ban on Cuban sugar after the 1959 revolution, the industry’s expanding profits allowed it to play an important role on the state and national stage.¹⁴² Florida saw the construction of eight new sugar mills on 170,000 reclaimed acres of Everglades land early in the decade. The result was that

¹³⁷ Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *Road to the Sun* (New York: Rinehart, 1952).

¹³⁸ Davis, “Green Awakening,” 69.

¹³⁹ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 209-10. See also, Hays, 3.

¹⁴⁰ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 209-10.

¹⁴¹ Scott Hamilton Dewey, “‘Is this What We Came to Florida For?’: Florida Women and the Fight Against Air Pollution in the 1960s,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 4 (Spring 1999).

¹⁴² Godfrey, *Rivers of Interest*, xi.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 30

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

priority was given to agricultural development over the Everglades: farmed areas around Lake Okeechobee were flush with water, while the Everglades started to dry up.¹⁴³

Between 1961 and 1966, a particularly long drought hit South Florida further damaging the Everglades. Water levels dropped dramatically leaving wetlands peat soils exposed to the sun. In an ironic natural twist, these peat soils—lamented for decades as too wet for development—went up in flames when dried out. In 1962, 500,000 acres of Everglades went up in smoke, depositing ashes across Fort Meyers.¹⁴⁴ Conservationists responded by calling the drought “man-made,” criticizing the US Army Corps of Engineers and Florida government’s prioritizing of business over the environment. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, two years before the onset of the drought, had begun to criticize the uneven water control projects arguing that only “great agricultural interests” were being protected, putting the Everglades in peril.¹⁴⁵

In Florida and across the nation, the 1960s saw increased organized opposition to such environmental stresses. Local and national environmental groups argued that suburbanization, population growth, and increased energy use represented dangerous and unprecedented threats to natural resources like the Everglades, and began to demand government intervention and funds to protect the environment. Across the 1960s, environmentalists chalked up important victories including the Clean Air Act of 1963 and the 1967 Air Quality Act, which provide important legal foundations for the powerful 1970 Clean Air Act. The 1964 Wilderness Act has also been described as “one of the benchmark environmental events” of the century, and the Water Quality Act of 1965 was an important precedent for the 1972 Clean Water Act.¹⁴⁶

In contrast to the mostly upper and middle-class white reformers of the conservation era, the new environmentalists were middle and working-class and more racially diverse participants in broad-based local, state, and national environmental organizations. National organizations like the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, and the National Wildlife Society expanded their ranks.¹⁴⁷ The new environmental movement understood natural areas as living ecosystems that were valuable in their own right rather than natural resources to be efficiently exploited.¹⁴⁸

Florida’s environmental movement also dramatically expanded during the period emerging as a significant national force. Historians argue that the 1960s national environmental movement “derived special impetus” from Florida environmentalists.¹⁴⁹ The most significant struggle waged by Florida environmentalists in the early 1960s involved a proposed oil refinery. In 1962, Seadade Industries proposed a massive petrochemical complex on the South Florida coast. The complex would take up thousands of square acres on Biscayne Bay, and would require the building of new channels and ports to receive oil tankers. Residents were concerned, however, that the site would be located only 15 miles from Everglades National Park and only a few miles from the Key Largo Coral Reef Preserve.

¹⁴³ Jack E. Davis, ‘Conservation Is Now a Dead Word’: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the Transformation of American Environmentalism,” *Environmental History* 8, no. 1 (2003): 311.

¹⁴⁴ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 209, 231; Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 404-9.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 439-40.

¹⁴⁶ “History of the Clean Air Act,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, last modified August 15, 2013, accessed January 10, 2014, <http://www.epa.gov/air/caa/amendments.html>; William Cronon, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), vii; “Water Quality Standards History,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, last modified April 3, 2012, accessed January 12, 2014, <http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards/history.cfm>; Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 52-3.

¹⁴⁷ Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 53.

¹⁴⁸ See Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*.

¹⁴⁹ Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 44.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 31

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Florida environmentalists organized in a citizens' group, the Safe Progress Association (SPA), to stop the complex, distributing a pamphlet titled *Creeping Peril! Industrial Pollution and You—Fact Book*, hoping to turn public opinion against the project. Though Seadade Industries continued pushing the project, the SPA finally killed the project by using an old South Florida conservationist strategy: they proposed that Biscayne Bay be named a national monument.

After several years of political wrangling and enlisting the support of congressional allies, President Lyndon Johnson approved the Biscayne National Monument in 1968.¹⁵⁰ Historian Jack Davis argues that rampant water and air pollution, along with threats to the Everglades environment like the Seadade Industries struggle, spawned a new phase of the Florida environmental movement. The Seadade struggle “signaled the beginning of something more epic than a national monument. A new generation of activists and organizations heeded the call to environmental protection.”¹⁵¹

A few years after winning the Biscayne National Monument, activists published *The Environmental Destruction of South Florida*, a series of essays that signaled more militant opposition to those that would harm the environment.¹⁵² Most of the book's authors were friends of Marjory Stoneman Douglas.

As these activists developed a more comprehensive vision of an environmental movement, the links between the landscapes that made up South Florida came into focus. Looming large among them, of course, were the Everglades. Indeed, says Davis, in the 1960s and 70s, “with each new stirring and grassroots campaign, seamless connections between the urban and extraurban environments became clearer. The Everglades were no longer an unknown landscape on a distant horizon that city dwellers tucked away in their subconscious. The Everglades were there at people's water taps and in the sugar and vegetables they put on their tables.”¹⁵³ The Everglades were at the center of the South Florida environment, and by 1969, they would be more threatened than ever.

Halting the Jetport: Douglas Joins the 1970s Environmental Movement

A new chapter in Marjory Stoneman Douglas's crusade to preserve the Everglades began in line at the grocery store in 1969. Douglas was shopping when she bumped into Judy Wilson, an assistant of Florida environmentalist Joe Browder at the Florida Audubon's regional office.¹⁵⁴ Douglas commended their environmental work and Wilson responded by looking Douglas in the eye and asking what she had done for the Florida environment. Douglas mentioned writing *River of Grass*, and Wilson responded: “That's not enough.” Douglas made a mumbled promise that she would do what she could.¹⁵⁵

The next day, Joe Browder was at the front door of Douglas's home at 3744 Stewart Avenue. On his first visit, Browder remembered entering the house's giant workroom, the most striking feature being its plethora of books; worn copies of classics covered shelves, tables, chairs, and Douglas's desk, while others were scattered across the floor, evidently left there amidst some large intellectual project.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 445-7.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 447.

¹⁵² Ross McCluney, ed., *The Environmental Destruction of South Florida: A Handbook for Citizens* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971).

¹⁵³ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 455.

¹⁵⁴ See Davis, *Everglades Providence*, chap. 31.

¹⁵⁵ Douglas, *Voice*, 225.

¹⁵⁶ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 475.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 32**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Browder had stopped at Douglas's house in Coconut Grove to encourage her to take a stand against a jetport that Dade County hoped to build in the middle of the Everglades. As Miami quickly modernized in the late 1960s, Port Authority officials started discussing the construction of a monstrous facility that would allow Miami's air travel to keep pace with the city's expansion. The jetport would be the largest in the world. It would be larger than the entire City of Miami and would dwarf the size of the next four largest US airports combined. There was even talk of a space-aged air-train that would zip passengers between Miami and the jetport at 150 miles per hour, right through the middle of the Everglades conservation area.¹⁵⁷

Douglas wanted to help oppose the project and when Browder suggested she start an organization, she accepted; Douglas named the organization Friends of the Everglades. The Friends of the Everglades joined local organizations across the nation that in the late 1960s and early 1970s lodged important environmentalist critiques of the adverse effects of industrial growth. And as the founder and leader of the organization, Marjory Stoneman Douglas had joined the burgeoning environmental era in defense of one of the world's most unique natural areas.¹⁵⁸ Though just one of many local environmental organizations, the Friends of the Everglades, led by Douglas, distinguished itself by converting local concerns over the destruction of the Everglades into a national cause.¹⁵⁹

At age 79, Douglas began promoting the organization and its fight against the jetport with the cool-headed, unrelenting passion that she had contributed to so many previous projects. "Soon, I started making speeches to every organization that would listen to me," she remembered. "I got 15 or 20 new members, at \$1 apiece, every time I spoke. In a year we had over 500, and in another year over 1,000, and later 3,000 members from 38 states."¹⁶⁰

The media loved her. Douglas always spoke with a strong understanding of the issues and a powerful moral authority, and she was assigned an endless list of nicknames: Our Lady of the Glades, Guardian of the Glades' Spirit, First Lady of the Everglades, Empress of the Everglades, the Grande Dame of the Everglades, the Mother Teresa of the Swamp. Photographers often bent down to shoot upwards at her, says Jack Davis, giving her the imposing quality of an aged crusader. "Combined with her almost incomprehensibly long life and undiminished vigor," writes Davis, "that crusader image suggested something messianic about her connection to the Everglades, a walk-on-water affirmation for everything she said or did in connection to them."¹⁶¹

Douglas helped spearhead national opposition to the project for several years, and Port Authority higher-ups damaged their image in the media by declaring that "a new city is going to rise up in the middle of Florida...whether you like it or not." By late 1969, national figures like Wisconsin environmentalist Senator Gaylord Nelson were speaking out against the project, and the US Geological Survey had reported that drainage would "inexorably destroy the South Florida ecosystem and thus Everglades National Park." Soon after, the governor of Florida and Nixon's Secretary of the Interior agreed the project should be relocated.¹⁶²

The victory over the Miami jetport marked a significant shift in US environmental history in the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1962, Rachel Carson's bestseller *Silent Spring* explained, through the maturing discipline of ecological science and data on DDT, the deep connection between humans and the natural world. If a poison like DDT was introduced into the environment, she said, it would not just impact sections of the environment

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 459-60.

¹⁵⁸ Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 55; Davis, "Up from the Sawgrass," 165.

¹⁵⁹ Dave, "Conservation is a Dead Word," 311.

¹⁶⁰ Douglas, *Voice*, 226.

¹⁶¹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 537. See also Doup, "The Old Lady & the Glades."

¹⁶² Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 224-5.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 33

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

but the whole of humanity.¹⁶³ Women were among the first to organize in response to Carson's revelations that the government had permitted untested chemicals to pollute the environment and threaten human health. And just as Marjory Stoneman Douglas had stepped into the jetport fray, sparking several decades of her own environmental activism, a broader section of activists and radicals soon coalesced into a more cohesive environmental movement by the early 1970s.

The April after Douglas and other activists halted the jetport, Senator Nelson led nationwide celebrations of the first Earth Day, a highly effective attempt to publicize growing concerns over pollution and other types of environmental destruction, and to unite mainstream and leftist approaches to environmental activism.¹⁶⁴ Earth Day has often been recognized as the beginning of a new phase in the twentieth-century environmental movement, although this environmentalism—as exemplified in the long career of Marjory Stoneman Douglas—certainly has deep ties to earlier conservation movements.

Miami held raucous Earth Day festivities that included a “Dead Orange Parade” and unapproved signs posted at local beaches warning, “Dangerously Polluted Waters!”¹⁶⁵ That year, Nelson and Maine Senator Edmund Muskie also secured a guarantee that the Everglades would receive a substantial portion of all water allotted during droughts.¹⁶⁶ Soon after the first Earth Day, President Nixon, anxious to capitalize on broad public approval for environmental regulation, supported the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Throughout the 1970s, many Democratic and Republican legislators would support laws that regulated toxins, pesticides, and other pollutants, and cleaned up water and air.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, “historians may one day call 1970 the year of the environment,” began the first report of President Nixon's Council on Environmental Quality. The CEQ called the year “a turning point, a year when the quality of life has become more than a phrase...Environmental problems, standing for years on the threshold of national prominence, are now at the center of nationwide concern.”¹⁶⁸

Florida continued to expand at a rapid pace in the early 1970s despite the national economic downturn. The state's population grew by 43 percent during the decade. But as the hordes arrived, so did new threats to South Florida water. Rising population density in the 1960s had strained the state's fresh water supply, and by 1970 Florida has lost almost half of its fresh surface water since becoming a state.¹⁶⁹

Simultaneously, the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Plan was making drastic changes to the Kissimmee River, upstream from the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee's largest tributary. The US Army Corps of Engineers began the project the previous decade, and by 1971, the entire river had been straightened into a channel eliminating hundreds of miles of meandering loops and turns that had led the Kissimmee along a two-mile wide floodplain from Orlando to Lake Okeechobee. The river's length was halved, and 45,000 acres of floodplain became grazing pastures for livestock. The Kissimmee had become Canal 38. Douglas, like many other environmentalists, believed the river was straightened as a favor to sugar cane growers who later occupied the reclaimed lands.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ See Linda Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997).

¹⁶⁴ See Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, chap. 3.

¹⁶⁵ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 503.

¹⁶⁶ Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 233.

¹⁶⁷ See J. Brooks Flippen, *Nixon and the Environment* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

¹⁶⁸ “First Annual Report on Environmental Quality,” Council on Environmental Quality, 1970. Quoted in Rome, *Bulldozing*, 221.

¹⁶⁹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 501.

¹⁷⁰ Clement, “Everglades Timeline”; Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 234; Davis, “Green Awakening,” 73-4.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 34**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Today, scientists recognize that the channelization of the Kissimmee wrecked the local ecosystem.¹⁷¹ Bird populations declined by 90 percent and six types of fish disappeared from the river. The floodplain that had served as a natural purification system was replaced by herds of livestock whose waste polluted the canal. Dirty water was then fast-tracked down the canal and into Lake Okeechobee, drastically damaging the state's most important fresh water supply.¹⁷²

In response, environmental activists organized into a movement against such dramatic destruction of Florida's natural environment. Florida's environmental activism in the 1970s was unprecedented in the South and nationally influential.¹⁷³ Indeed, nationally, says Jack Davis, "Only the cumulative West and perhaps California alone produced [environmental] movements that could compare with the robustness of Florida's."¹⁷⁴

As the 1970s Florida environmental movement took shape, Marjory Stoneman Douglas emerged as Everglades protection personified. More than a symbol, however, Douglas traveled across the state supporting environmental causes throughout the early 1970s. Her distinctive speaking style, coupled with her age and determination, helped her garner attention for her environmentalist message from media outlets, national magazines, and the Florida state government.¹⁷⁵ In the early 1970s, Douglas developed a relationship with Florida governor Reuben Askew, a determined supporter of environmental causes. After winning the gubernatorial election in 1970, Askew went on to promote sweeping environmental changes, particularly in the 1972 legislative session. In the early 1970s, Florida emerged as the vanguard in environmental protection among southern states, and among the leaders in the nation. One environmental activist declared early 1970s Florida "head and shoulders above any other state, as well as the federal government in land and water management."¹⁷⁶

Perhaps the most important early 1970s victory for Florida's environmental movement was the establishment of the Big Cypress National Preserve, a massive tract of Everglades land that had been slated for development. Douglas and the Friends of the Everglades understood that Big Cypress, located in southwestern Florida, played an important role in recharging the Everglades' hydrology. Douglas led the Friends of the Everglades in lobbying the Secretary of the Interior, and she herself met with Department of Interior officials to discuss the matter.¹⁷⁷ After a long, contentious struggle, Big Cypress was designated a national preserve in 1974. It was one of the first national preserves ever dedicated, and its designation was the largest National Park Service acquisition of private land in United States history.¹⁷⁸ Ten years later, representative of the Florida governor's office acknowledged the continuity in the period's environmental struggles saying that "the jetport controversy was the major impetus for the establishment of the 574,522 acre Big Cypress National Preserve."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷¹ D. H. Anderson. *Defining Success: Expectations for the Restoration of the Kissimmee River*, vol. 2, *Kissimmee River Restoration Study*, South Florida Water Management District, ix. accessed November 24, 2013, http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/pg_grp_tech_pubs/portlet_tech_pubs/era-433.pdf.

¹⁷² Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape*, 234.

¹⁷³ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 502.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 493-4.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Gordon E. Harvey, "We Must Free Ourselves...from the Tattered Fetters of the Booster Mentality: Big Cypress Swamp and the Politics of Environmental Protection in 1970s Florida," in *Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida*, eds. Jack E. Davis and Raymond Arsenault (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 362.

¹⁷⁷ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 507.

¹⁷⁸ Clement, "Everglades Timeline"; Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 507. Harvey, *Paradise Lost?* 385.

¹⁷⁹ Estus D. Whitefield, Sr. Government Analyst, Executive Office of the Governor, State of Florida, "The Save Our Everglades Program Keynote Address," University of Wisconsin Libraries, accessed November 2, 2013, <http://images.library.wisc.edu/EcoNatRes/EFacs/Wetlands/Wetlands13/reference/econatres.wetlands13.i0005.pdf>.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 35

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: the Lady of the Glades

Scholars argue that the flurry of victories in environmental protection and regulation in the early 1970s “established the foundation for Florida’s environmental policy for the rest of the century and into the next.”¹⁸⁰ And Marjory Stoneman Douglas’s role as the public face of the struggle to preserve the Everglades was a significant factor. Douglas had undergone a “green awakening,” yet another stage in her long-standing progressive political and social consciousness. In 1975, she was awarded the “Conservationist of the Year” award by the Florida State Attorney General. That same year, Douglas helped organize fifteen local environmental organizations into *WATER! A Coalition of Citizens Concerned with Florida’s Water Resources*. Douglas headed the group and was in charge of education and publicity. *WATER!* quickly racked up victories by helping streamline the long-stalled designation of the state’s water management districts. Staff at Douglas’s Friends of the Everglades also led a successful campaign to protect the Biscayne Aquifer under the Clean Water Act, giving the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to review whether any future federally-funded projects would harm the aquifer.¹⁸¹

Previously a journalist, poet, a utilitarian conservationist, and a writer whose work spoke out forcefully against environmental destruction, Douglas had become a full-time environmental activist with a widely-recognized public persona by the 1980s.¹⁸² When a journalist asked the ninety-five year old if she ever tired of activism, she replied, “Of course I don’t get tired of it. I don’t get tired of breathing either.”¹⁸³ For years, the Friends of the Everglades had led the charge towards a new vision of South Florida water management: restoration. Responding to state-wide concerns that Lake Okeechobee was becoming eutrophic due to nutrient-rich water that was regularly back-pumped from nearby agricultural lands into the lake, in 1977 Friends of the Everglades sued the State of Florida and the Florida Sugar Cane League demanding that the back-pumping be halted. The League used Lake Okeechobee water to irrigate cane fields and then back-pumped the water back into the same lake, and the State of Florida allowed them to do so. The effect on Lake Okeechobee was disastrous.¹⁸⁴

Douglas and the Friends also led the fight for an even more ambitious goal in the fight to restore Lake Okeechobee—the restoration of the channelized Kissimmee River. Since the early 1970s, it was clear that the channelized Kissimmee River (re-named C-38) had helped dump agricultural runoff into the lake upsetting the lake’s ecology. In 1981, the Friends were leaders in petitioning federal and state agencies to restore the original “sheet flow” of water that should move from the Kissimmee Lakes to the north, through Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades, and south to the Florida Keys.¹⁸⁵

Arguing for the repair of the Kissimmee River in 1982, Douglas continued expressing her belief that conserving natural resources was no longer enough. “Conservation is now a dead word,” she declared. “You can’t conserve what you haven’t got. That’s why we are for restoration.”¹⁸⁶ That same year, Douglas was the “star” of an event celebrating the designation of the Everglades National Park’s rare simultaneous designation as a World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve.¹⁸⁷ Although Douglas was by no means the only

¹⁸⁰ Harvey, *Paradise Lost?*, 367.

¹⁸¹ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 520.

¹⁸² However, Douglas resisted labels and often refused to identify as an environmentalist. Davis, “Green Awakening,” 44.

¹⁸³ Schmich, “Lady of Legend.”

¹⁸⁴ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 525-7.

¹⁸⁵ Gail M. Hollander, *Raising Cane in the ‘Glades: The Global Sugar Trade and The Transformation of Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 245-6.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 513.

¹⁸⁷ National Park Service publication, quoted in Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 536.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 36**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

defender of Florida wetlands, by the 1980s, says Jack Davis, “the public looked to her as the scion of a family of Everglades experts and as Florida history itself.”¹⁸⁸

Even the highest echelons of government counted on Douglas’s expertise and public profile. When Florida governor Bob Graham drafted his “Save Our Everglades” program, he assembled a team of three experts: two were professors—one an expert in urban planning and the other in water management—and the third was Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Over time, Douglas and Graham developed a friendship and mutual admiration. The governor later wrote to Douglas, “You have set a standard of commitment we all strive to emulate.”¹⁸⁹ In 1983, Graham announced the ambitious program for a phased restoration of the Kissimmee River to its original meandering form, the study and protection of Lake Okeechobee, the management of deer, panther, and alligator populations, and the restoration of sheet flow to the Everglades National Park.¹⁹⁰ A year later, Graham and Douglas stood in front of news cameras and planted a cypress tree at the edge of the Kissimmee, a symbol of the promise of its restoration. Douglas also demanded that Graham throw a shovelful of dirt into the river to send a stronger message, and he complied.¹⁹¹

Indeed, in the last decades of the twentieth century Marjory Stoneman Douglas had become the most important national symbol of Florida’s environmental restoration. One reporter called her “one of Florida’s natural resources” for her ability challenge the sugar industry, the Florida state legislature, private developers, the federal government, and any other entities that would harm the “River of Grass.”¹⁹² In 1985, both the Florida state legislature and the cabinet opened their sessions by acknowledging her ninety-fifth birthday.¹⁹³

In her mid-nineties, Douglas spent the late 1980s working six-day weeks, fulfilling a constant stream of speaking obligations and meetings coordinated by three personal secretaries.¹⁹⁴ But she also freely acknowledged her detractors. “I know I’ve got my enemies, and I feel fine about it, thank you,” she told a journalist in 1986. “The developers don’t like me. The farmers don’t like me. But I’m a dedicated environmentalist, and I want everyone to become aware of what is going on because that’s the only way we’ll stop all this terrible destruction.”¹⁹⁵

As she stumped the state on behalf of the environment, she also received a flurry of awards for a life of work even though, in the 1980s, her work was still in full swing. In 1989, she was awarded *Ms.* magazine’s “Woman of the Year” award. The next year, Broward County named an elementary school after her. Soon after, Dade County (now Miami-Dade County) named an elementary school, a park, a street and a day in her honor. She was also inducted into the Florida Women’s Hall of Fame. But one of the strongest statements of her importance to the state and national environmentalism came in 1980 when the State of Florida’s Department of Natural Resources unveiled its new headquarters in Tallahassee, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, review of the lengthy list of Douglas’s lifetime of recognitions and awards helps to understand her importance to twentieth-century American history (see appendix). Worth highlighting are multiple honorary degrees, the declaration of “Marjory Stoneman Douglas Day” in 1984, official recognition by the Florida House of Representatives, and, of course, her receipt of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1993.¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁸ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 530.

¹⁸⁹ Quoted in Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 546.

¹⁹⁰ Whitefield, “Keynote Address.”

¹⁹¹ Schmich, “Lady of Legend.”

¹⁹² Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 533.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 530.

¹⁹⁴ Schmich, “Lady of Legend”; Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 550.

¹⁹⁵ Doup, “The Old Lady & the Swamp.”

¹⁹⁶ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 552-3.

¹⁹⁷ The 1919 award is cited in Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 232-3; the 1966 Audubon Society is in Davis, *An Everglades*

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 37

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Douglas, however, never placed much value on awards. Her biographer John Rothschild found dozens of them scattered around her house or hidden under papers.¹⁹⁸ Late in life, she even unceremoniously donated her Presidential Medal of Freedom to Wellesley and forgot to tell anyone leaving historians scrambling to find it.¹⁹⁹

Back at Home

When Douglas turned one-hundred years old in 1990 she retired as president of Friends of the Everglades. She had devoted the final decades of her life to completing a comprehensive biography of William Henry Hudson, who Douglas admired as one of the first environmentalists. She took several trips to Argentina and England to research the book, which she never fully completed.²⁰⁰

During this time, macular degeneration had begun to set in and she was mostly blind by the end of her life. Blindness, however, barely seemed to slow her down. In fact, she claimed to be hardly bothered by it. She simply listened to “talking books” and dictated letters to an assistant. Her biographer remembers that Douglas knew her house so well that she could tell him about a specific passage of a specific book, on a specific shelf, and the information would be right where she said it was. Douglas’s other friends confirmed that, late in life, she maneuvered her way around the house using a combination of “memory-paths,” the light that shone in through the home’s doors and windows.²⁰¹ The house was her most familiar, private place. It was her most important, lifelong home.

Indeed, Douglas’s house had always been at the center of her life. Since 1926, when Douglas hoped for nothing more than a “sensible house, open to the breezes,” she had lived at the cottage on Stewart Avenue writing her poems and short stories on the back patio, completing *River of Grass* and other books and novels there, agreeing to found Friends of the Everglades there, and running the organization from Stewart Avenue as well. Indeed, Douglas often commented that the very openness of the home to the surrounding natural environment—the ocean winds, the birds, the flowers—inspired her to write and act. After turning 100, Douglas even held events in her front yard, including a 1992 press conference criticizing President George H. W. Bush’s harmful redefinition of wetlands.²⁰² The year before, Florida governor Lawton Chiles sat in a folding chair in the front yard of the home to sign a multi-million dollar cleanup of the Everglades.²⁰³

Her home for more than seventy years, the house on Stewart Avenue is the embodiment of Douglas’s personality and her life’s work. When he first walked into the house’s large living room, covered with endless piles of books, manuscripts and other papers, Douglas’s biographer John Rothchild said: “I couldn’t avoid thinking this room is actually Mrs. Douglas’s mind turned inside out.” Indeed, when Joe Browder first visited Douglas at her house to talk to her about the Miami jetport, he remembered the little cottage being full of books, including dog-eared copies of the completed works of Charles Dickens, which Douglas read in their entirety once a year. “The house was a great influence on my life,” wrote Douglas. “And so important that I often think of it more than the other things I was doing in those years.”²⁰⁴

Providence, 482; the 1989-1990 awards are in Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 552-3. The rest of the awards are found in the 1988 National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, in author’s possession.

¹⁹⁸ Douglas, *Voice*, 16.

¹⁹⁹ McCally, “Marjory Stoneman Douglas: One Woman, the Everglades and the Rest is History,” 135.

²⁰⁰ Douglas, *Voice*, 216.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 18; Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 549-50.

²⁰² Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 582.

²⁰³ Rick Bragg, “Glades Bill Signed into Law,” *St. Petersburg Times (FL)*, May 8, 1991: 4B.

²⁰⁴ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 475; Douglas, *Voice*, 173.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 38**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Douglas's friends and acquaintances weren't the only ones to know how important the house was to her life. In a strange historical twist, on her 101st birthday the Internal Improvement Fund—that infamous body founded in 1855 to reclaim Florida's natural landscape in the name of progress—voted unanimously to declare Marjory Stoneman Douglas's house worthy of purchase by the state, arguing it was the lifetime home of “one of Florida's most distinguished citizens.” The Land Trust of Dade County took over stewardship in 1994 and helped Douglas pay for minor structural repairs and the installation of central air-conditioning to replace the single, donated air-conditioning window unit she had been using for almost a decade.²⁰⁵

Douglas passed away in her home at age 108. Her ashes were scattered in the Everglades.²⁰⁶ She had spent a long, fruitful lifetime standing up to politicians, large corporations, hunters, the Army Corps of Engineers, and others that would do harm to Florida's natural environment. Today, much like Douglas when she was alive, her home on Stewart Avenue stands—strong, sensible, simple, distinct—surrounded by multi-million dollar mansions. “When I had this house built, I hoped it would do for my old age,” Douglas told a journalist at age ninety-five. “I think it has done quite nicely.”²⁰⁷

Comparative Properties

The only other residences associated with Marjory Stoneman Douglas are located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Taunton, Massachusetts. Douglas lived in Minneapolis for the first five years of her life and lived in Taunton until graduating from high school. Neither residence was a site of nationally significant writing, reform activity, or activism. Nor does Douglas's length of residence at either site compare with her seven decades of residence on Stewart Avenue.

²⁰⁵ Davis, *Everglades Providence*, 571.

²⁰⁶ Liebling, “Marjory's Place.”

²⁰⁷ Doup, “The Old Lady & the Swamp.”

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 39

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

APPENDIXMarjory Stoneman Douglas List of Awards

- (1919) *Award*, National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
- (1928) *O Henry Prize* for her story "Peculiar Treasure of Kings"
Miami Civic Theater Association Prize for her play "The Gallow's Gate"
- (1950) *Thomas Barbour Medal for Conservation* from the Fairchild Tropical Garden
- (1952) *Honorary Doctor of Letters*, University of Miami
- (1953) *Order of Merit*, University of Florida
- (1966) *Special Award of Merit*, Florida Audubon Society
- (1966) *Horton Hallowell Fellowship*, Wellesley College, 1966-67
- (197?) *"Women in Communications" Gold Medal*, Women's Newspaper Association
- (1972) *Distinguished Service to Florida History Award*, Peace River Historical Society
- (1975) *"Protector of the Everglades" engraved pewter tray*, Florida Audubon Society
- (1977) *Conservationist of the Year*, Florida Wildlife Federation
Conservation Award, American Motors
Alumnae Achievement Award, Wellesley College
Conservation Award, Tropical Audubon Society
- (1979) *Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters*, Florida Atlantic University
- (1980) *Citizenship Appreciation Award*, Garden Club Presidents of Dade County
- (1981) Dedication of the "Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building," State of Florida Department of Natural Resources Building, Tallahassee, Florida
Benefactors Award, International Oceanographic Foundation Society (first woman to receive this award)
- (1982) *Silver Seal*, National Council of State Garden Clubs
Phoenix Award, Society of American Travel Writers
Award, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Hannah Goddard Chapter
Annual award inaugurated as the "Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award," Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society
- (1983) *Trailblazer Award*, Women's Committee of One Hundred, Miami
Honorary Doctor of Humanities, Queens College, Charlotte, North Carolina
D. B. McKay Award, Tampa Historical Society
Floridian of the Year Award, Orlando Sentinel
- (1984) *Award*, Broward County Audubon Society
Honoris Causa and induction into the fraternity, Omicron Delta Kappa, University of Miami
Silver Pelican Award, Save Our Bays Association, Sarasota, Florida
Honorary Doctor of Letters, Florida International University, Miami, Florida
Valuable Citizen's Award, Women's Club of Hialeah
Commendation by Mayor and City Council, City of Miami Beach
Citation of Appreciation, American Business Women's Association, Banyan Chapter
Medal of Honor, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution
First Honorary Member of the International Medical Center, International Medical Center
Endowment of Marjory Stoneman Douglas Lecture in Environmental Geography, Wellesley College
Declaration of Marjory Stoneman Douglas Day, County Commission of Dade County
- (1985) *Community Headliner Award*, Women in Communications, Inc., Greater Miami Chapter
Environmental Leadership Award, Sierra Club of Broward County
Official Naming as "Lady of the Glades," Resolution by the Florida House of Representatives
Award, University of Miami Gold Cross of the Order of Merit

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 40**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

- Establishment of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award for Citizen Conservation, National Parks Conservation Association*
- Honorary Doctor of Laws, Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida*
- Spirit of Excellence Award, Miami Herald*
- (1986) *Election to Women's Hall of Fame, Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, Florida Award, National Wildlife Foundation*
- Honorary Achievement Award, National Rivers Hall of Fame*
- Honorary Doctorate, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida*
- Inauguration of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Environmental Award, Kiwanis Club of North Miami Award, Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects*
- Admission to Iron Arrow Honor Society, University of Miami*
- (1987) *Florida's Distinguished Service Award, Florida Cabinet*
- Premiere of film, "Marjory Stoneman Douglas: A Great Floridian," produced by the Florida Department of State and Florida History Associates*
- Women of Distinction Award, Soroptimist International of Miami*
- Anne Ackerman Distinguished Floridian Award, The Forum of North Dade, Inc.*
- Induction into Golden Key National Honor Society, University of Miami Chapter*
- Silver Medal Award, The Conservancy, Naples, Florida*
- (1988) *Lifetime Achievement Award, Florida Young Democrats*
- Honor, Department of Education of the Lee County Schools, Florida*
- Honorary Doctor of Letters, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida*
- (1989) *Woman of the Year Award, Ms. Magazine*
- (1990) *Opening of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Broward County, Florida*
- (199?) *Dedication of Marjory Stoneman Douglas Elementary School, Park, Street, Day, Dade County, Florida*
- (1993) *Presidential Medal of Freedom, United States Government*

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 41

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**Books**

- Branch, Michael. "Writing the Swamp: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and *The Everglades: River of Grass*." In *Such News of the Land: U.S. Women Nature Writers*, 125-135. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001.
- Cronon, William. *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.
- Davis, Jack. *An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009.
- Davis, Jack E. "Up from the Sawgrass: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the Influence of Female Activism in Florida Conservation." In *Making Waves: Female Activists in Twentieth-Century Florida*, edited by Jack E. Davis and Kari Frederickson, 147-176. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003.
- Douglas, Marjory Stoneman. *The Everglades: River of Grass*. Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1997.
- _____. *Nine Florida Stories by Marjory Stoneman Douglas*, ed. Kevin M. McCarthy, Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, 1990.
- _____. *Road to the Sun*. New York: Rinehart, 1952.
- Douglas, Marjory Stoneman with John Rothschild. *Voice of the River*. Sarasota: Pineapple, 1987.
- Flippen, J. Brooks. *Nixon and the Environment*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.
- Gannon, Michael. *The New History of Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996.
- Godfrey, Matthew C. *River of Interests: Water Management in South Florida and the Everglades, 1948-2010*. Historical Research Associates, 2012.
- Gottlieb, Robert. *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*. Washington DC: Island Press, 1993.
- Grunwald, Michael. *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- Gwinn, Kristin E. *Emily Greene Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010.
- Harvey, Gordon E. "We Must Free Ourselves...from the Tattered Fetters of the Booster Mentality: Big Cypress Swamp and the Politics of Environmental Protection in 1970s Florida." In *Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida*, edited by Jack E. Davis and Raymond Arsenault, 350-374. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 42

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

- Hays, Samuel. *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Hollander, Gail M. *Raising Cane in the 'Glades: The Global Sugar Trade and the Transformation of Florida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Lear, Linda. *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*. New York: Henry Holt, 1997.
- McCally, David. *The Everglades: An Environmental History*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.
- McCluney, Ross, ed. *The Environmental Destruction of South Florida: A Handbook for Citizens*. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971.
- Merchant, Carolyn. *American Environmental History: An Introduction*. New York: Columbia University, 2007.
- Portes, Alejandro. *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Rivers, Larry Eugene. *Rebels and Runaways: Slave Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Florida*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013.
- Rome, Adam. *Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Unger, Nancy C. *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History*. Oxford: University Press, 2012.
- Vileisis, Ann. *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America's Wetlands*. Washington DC: Island, 1997.

Reports

- Anderson, D. H. *Defining Success: Expectations for the Restoration of the Kissimmee River*. South Florida Water Management District. http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/pg_grp_tech_pubs/portlet_tech_pubs/era-433.pdf.
- Cole, Carlton, Bruce Kerestes, and Phillip Focaracci. "Appraisal Report of Two Single Family Residences Located at 3744 Steward Avenue and 3754 Stewart Avenue, Miami, Florida, Prepared for the Land Trust of Dade County." Report No. 5914. Included in the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, 1988.
- Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. "Development of the Central & South Florida (C&SF) Project." http://www.evergladesplan.org/about/restudy_csf_devel.aspx.
- Delate, Mary-Therese and Sarah E. Eaton. "Report of the City of Miami Planning and Zoning Department to Historic and Environmental Preservation Board on the Potential Designation of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas House." City of Miami, 1988.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE**Page 43**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Historic American Buildings Survey. "Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, 3744 Stewart Avenue, Miami, Miami-Dade County, FL." (HABS FLA,13-MIAM,34-). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior.

Jude, Sallye. "Marjory Stoneman Douglas House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Dade County, Florida). Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988.

Academic Articles

Chapman, Frank M. "Letter." *Forest and Stream: A Journal of Outdoor Life, Travel, Nature Study, Shooting, Fishing, Yachting* 26, No. 5 (February 25, 1886): 84.

Davis, Jack E. "Conservation Is Now a Dead Word": Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the Transformation of American Environmentalism." *Environmental History* 8, No. 1 (January 2003): 53-76.

Davis, Jack E. "Green Awakening: Social Activism and the Evolution of Marjory Stoneman Douglas's Environmental Consciousness." *Florida Historical Quarterly* 80, No. 1 (Summer 2001): 43-77.

Dewey, Scott Hamilton. "Is this What We Came to Florida For?": Florida Women and the Fight Against Air Pollution in the 1960s." *Florida Historical Quarterly* 77, No. 4 (Spring 1999): 503-531.

George, Paul S. "Colored Town: Miami's Black Community, 1896-1930," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 56, No. 4 (April 1978): 432-447.

McCally, David. Review of Marjory Stoneman Douglas: One Woman, the Everglades and the Rest is History. Loxahatchee Historical Society. *The Public Historian* 26, No. 4 (Fall 2004): 133-136.

Merchant, Carolyn. "George Bird Grinnell's Audubon Society: Bridging the Gender Divide in Conservation." *Environmental History* 15, No. 1 (January 2010): 3-30.

Vance, Linda D. "May Mann Jennings and Royal Palm State Park." *Florida Historical Quarterly* 55, No. 1 (July 1976): 1-17.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # HABS FLA,13-MIAM,34-

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 44

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

- Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository): University of Miami

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	17	574850	2843620

Verbal Boundary Description:

An unplatted parcel of land located in Section 29, Township 54, Range 41, of Dade County, Florida, more particularly described as follows: Beginning 418 feet north and 175 feet west of the SE corner of the NE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of said Section 29; thence running north 165.9 feet; thence running west along the southerly right-of way line of Stewart Avenue for 100 feet, more or less; thence running south 165 feet; thence running east 100 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the building and acreage located at 3744 Stewart Avenue, and that have historically been known as Marjory Stoneman Douglas's Home and which retain high integrity.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 45

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Antonio Ramírez, History Instructor, Elgin Community College

Address: 4144 ½ N. Keystone Ave., Apt 1E
Chicago, IL 60641

Telephone: (414) 379-0049

Date: February 24, 2014

Edited by: Caridad de la Vega, Historian
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor (2280)
Washington, DC 20005

Telephone: (202) 354-2253

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM
September 24, 2014

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Distant north façade, camera facing south.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.



North façade, camera facing south.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Northern door, camera facing southeast.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.



Southern windows, camera facing west/northwest.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Southern (right) and eastern (left) wall, camera facing southeast.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.



Northern (left) and eastern (right) interior walls, camera facing north.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Northern (left) and eastern wall (right), camera facing northwest.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.



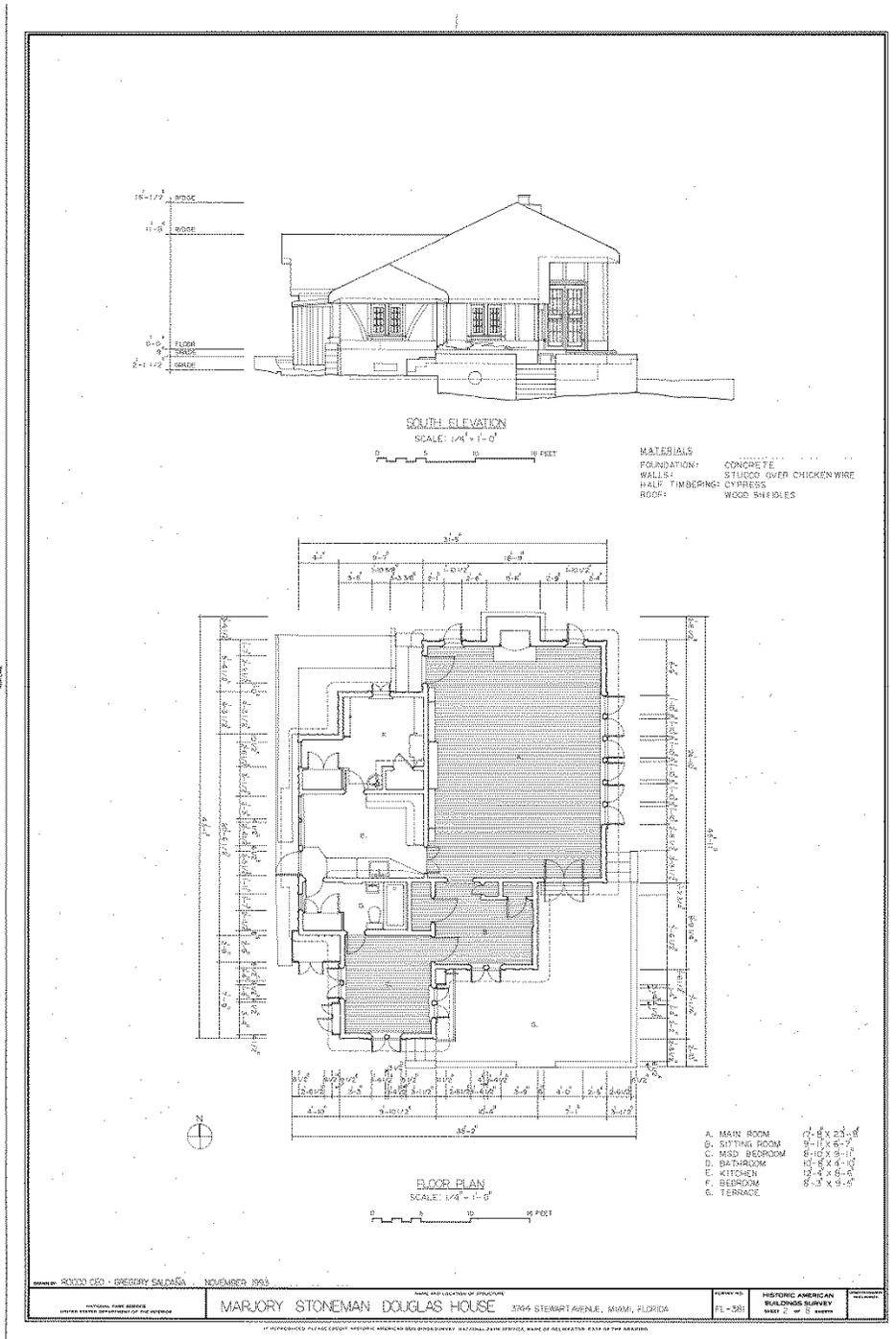
Western (left) and northern (right) interior walls, camera facing northwest.
Photograph by James Gabbert, National Park Service, 2013.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



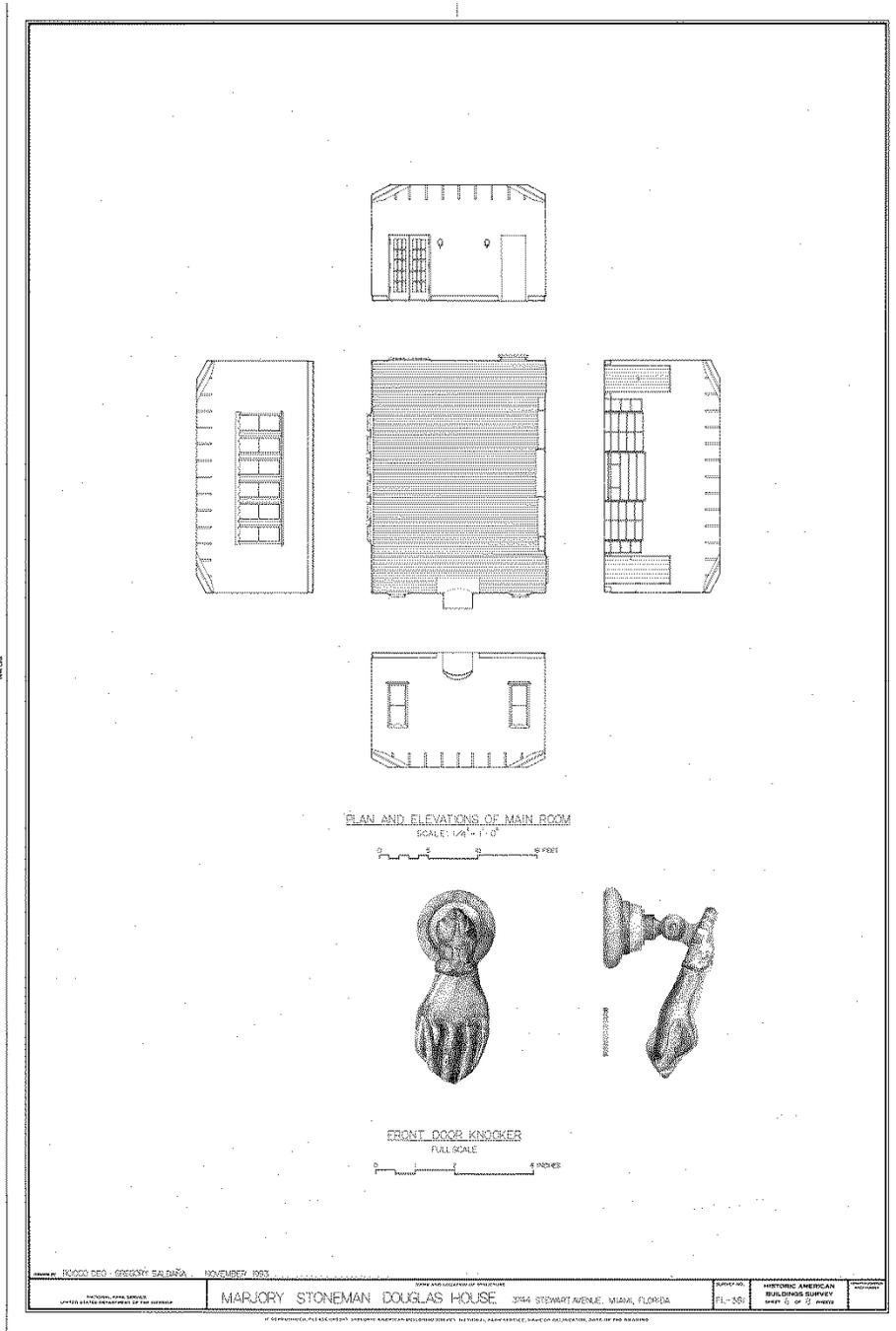
Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, HABS FLA,13-MIAMI,34- (sheet 2 of 8).
Courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service,
Rocco Ceo and Gregory Saldaña, November 1993.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



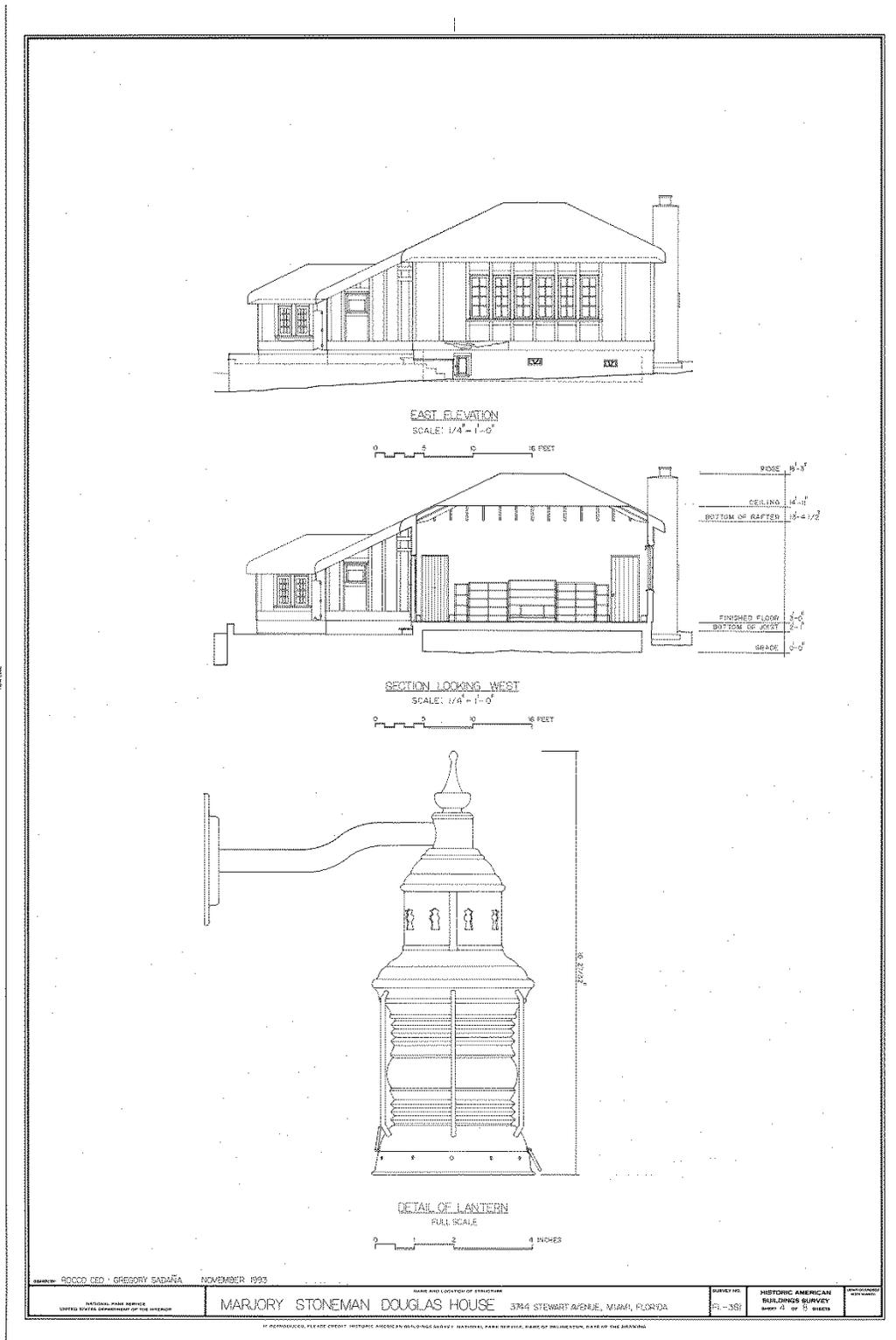
Main room, Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, HABS FLA,13-MIAMI,34- (sheet 6 of 8).
Courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service,
Rocco Ceo and Gregory Saldaña, November 1993.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



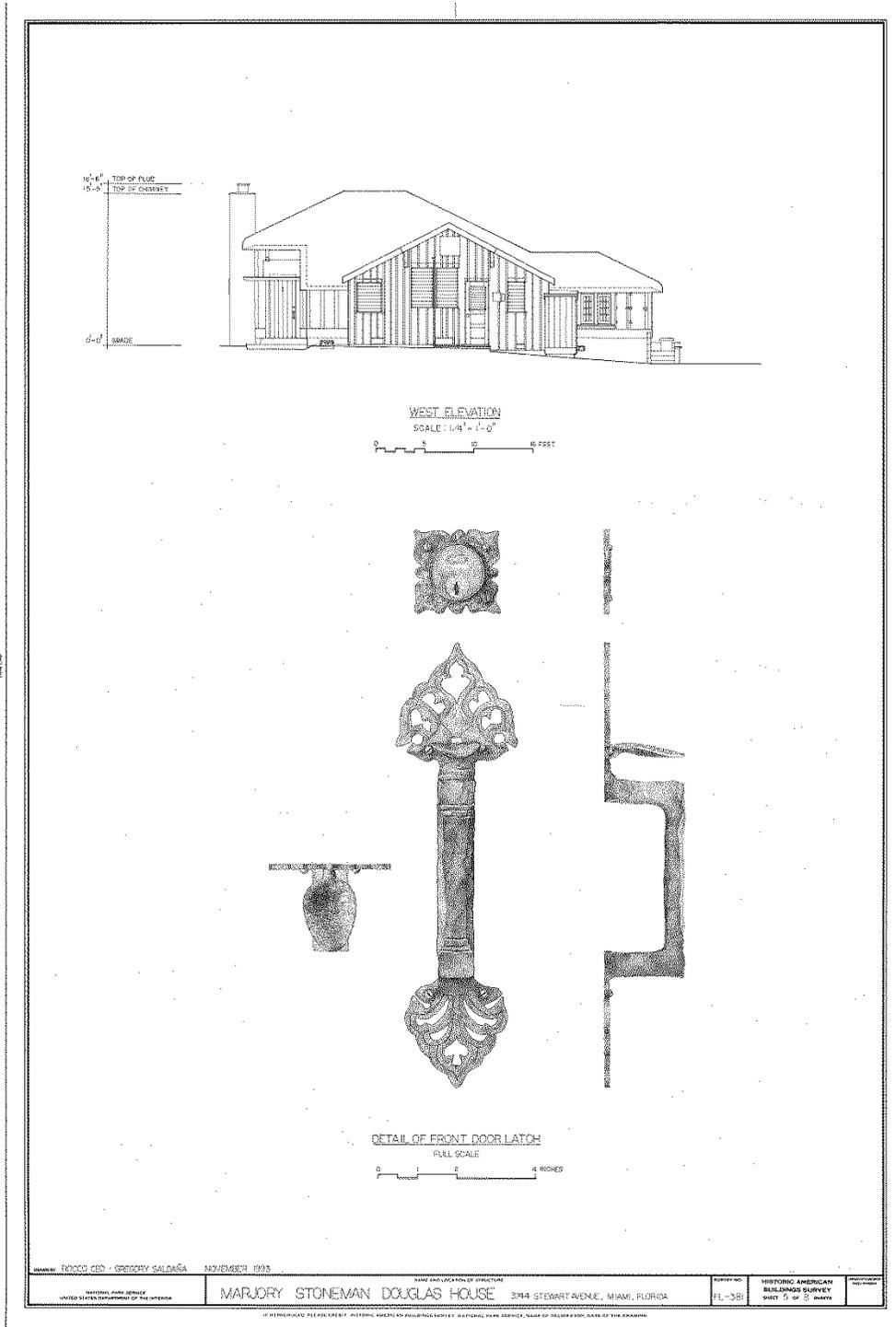
East elevation, west section, Marjory Stoneman Douglas House,
 HABS FLA,13-MIAMI,34- (sheet 4 of 8).
 Courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service,
 Rocco Ceo and Gregory Saldaña, November 1993.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



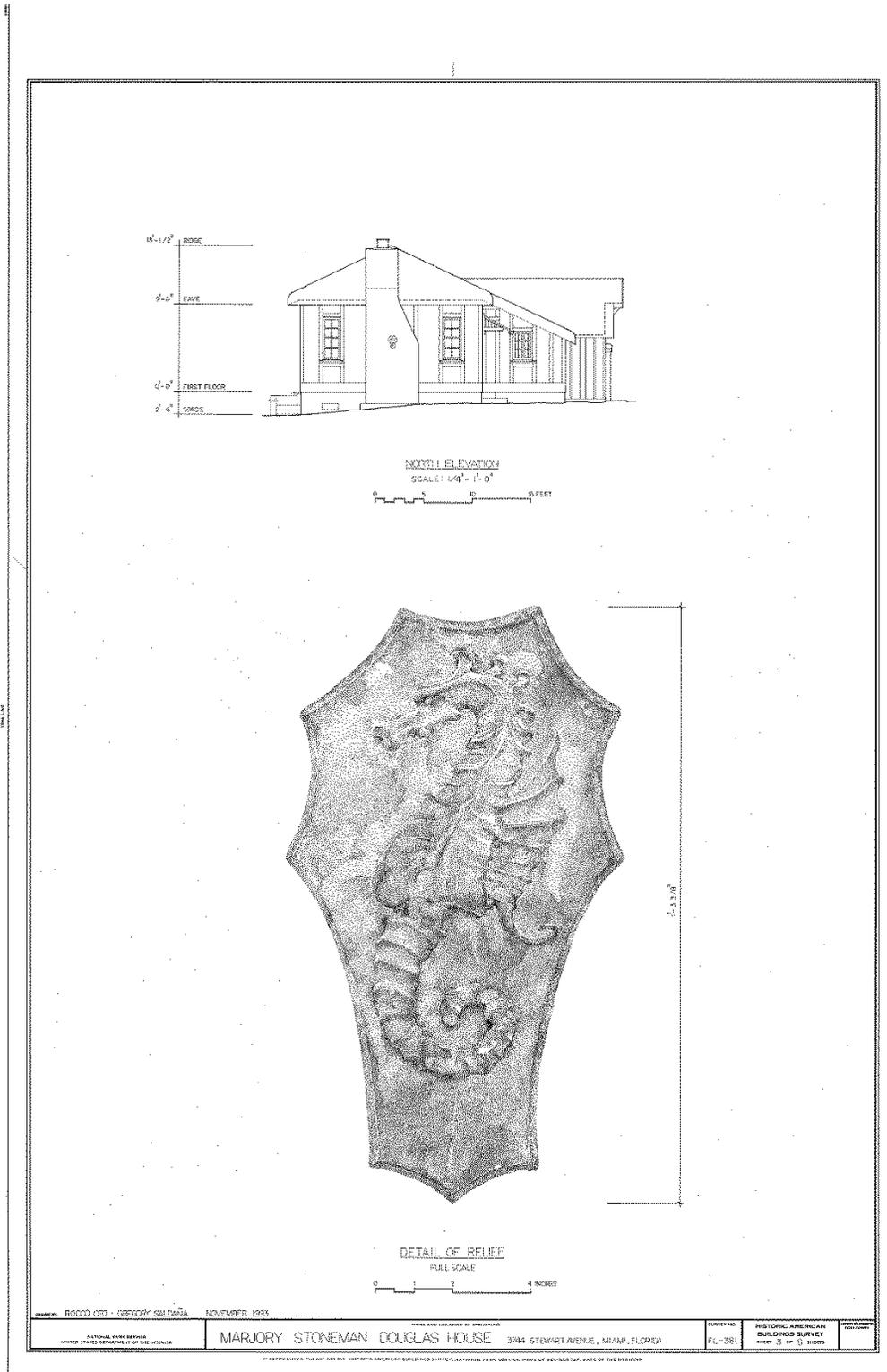
West elevation, Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, HABS FLA,13-MIAMI, 34- (sheet 5 of 8).
Courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service,
Rocco Ceo and Gregory Saldaña, November 1993.

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos and Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



West elevation, Marjory Stoneman Douglas House, HABS FLA,13-MIAM,34- (sheet 3 of 8).
Courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service,
Rocco Ceo and Gregory Saldaña, November 1993.

