

CHAPTER THREE: RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MIAMI AND BISCAYNE BAY, 1896-1945

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIAMI AS A VACATION RESORT

The completion of Henry M. Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway in 1896 opened southeastern Florida to overland commerce and travel for the first time. The railroad, which connected older cities in northern Florida, like Jacksonville and St. Augustine, with the largely undeveloped lower half of the state, permitted the development of new resort communities for the rich in Palm Beach and Miami. The tropical climate of South Florida quickly became popular with vacationers from the Northeast and Midwest, particularly during the winter months. In 1912, Flagler realized his dream of connecting Jacksonville to Key West with the completion of the Overseas Railroad, which traversed a number of long bridges across the keys; this new railway effectively opened the keys to recreational development.³³

Miami developed quickly after the arrival of the railroad in the late nineteenth century. The city incorporated in July 1896 with a population of 502 voters;³⁴ by 1915, the total population had grown to 15,000. The boom following World War I more than doubled the population in five years, from fewer than 30,000 in 1920 to 71,000 in 1925.³⁵

A number of factors contributed to the phenomenal growth of Miami and South Florida. The subtropical climate of the region attracted many visitors and new residents after the completion of the railroad, which provided cheap and easy access to an area previously accessible only by water. The outbreak of war in Europe also increased travel to the area, as many wealthy Americans accustomed to vacationing in the Mediterranean sought new playgrounds closer to home. South Florida became the destination of choice for many of these people.³⁶

³³Gloria Jahoda, *Florida: A Bicentennial History*, The States and the Nation Series (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1976), 119.

³⁴Hanna and Hanna, 370.

³⁵Frank Parker Stockbridge and John Holliday Perry, *Florida in the Making* (New York: de Bower Publishing, 1926), 193.

³⁶Gene M. Burnett, *Florida's Past: People and Events That Shaped the State* (Sarasota, Fla.: Pineapple Press, 1986), 233.

At the conclusion of World War I, Americans possessed more disposable income than ever before. The affordability of the Ford Model T resulted in an increasingly mobile population, and new roads like the Dixie Highway, which opened in 1925 from northern Michigan to Miami, made traveling to the vacation resorts of South Florida much easier. These factors, combined with large-scale advertising and promotions by area developers, led to the Florida land boom of 1922 to 1926.³⁷



Figure 6. Ocean side of Miami Beach, looking north from about 1st Street, 1920

In Miami, the development and promotional activities of Carl Fisher transformed the small coastal town into a tourist mecca. Fisher, founder of the Prest-o-lite Company and the Indianapolis Speedway, purchased a winter home in Miami in 1910. Three years later, Fisher financed the completion of a bridge connecting the city to a barrier reef across Biscayne Bay. He then secured the approval of the State of Florida and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge Biscayne Bay for sand to fill the mangrove swamp on the reef.

Within a short period of time, Fisher had transformed his offshore reef into one of the preeminent resorts of the first half of the century—Miami Beach. Fisher sold the first lots on Miami Beach in 1919, and tycoons and other wealthy visitors soon populated the island on their own private estates and in the lavish new hotels. Fisher advertised his development heavily, employing a number of marketing gimmicks to focus media attention on the area. The popularity of Miami Beach, combined with that of nearby developments like Coral Gables,

³⁷Ibid., 233.

caused property values to skyrocket in Florida between 1922 and 1926; according to one author, in 1925, at the height of the land boom, the assessed value of beach property “had been boosted 200 times.”³⁸ The exorbitant prices associated with the land boom extended to the keys in Biscayne Bay as well. Commodore Munroe related in his memoirs the story of two brothers, Brainerd and Charley Ball, who were approached to sell property they owned on the narrow peninsula at the north end of Sands Key. “While they were debating whether they should ask two hundred or three hundred for it, the buyer lost patience and demanded, ‘Well, will you take four thousand for it?’” Munroe considered this “typical of the breathless absurdity” of land speculation at that time.³⁹

The Florida land boom crashed in 1926 for several reasons. The realization by some investors that prices had spiralled out of control with no regard to actual value was one reason; another was a government investigation of fraudulent exchanges. Perhaps most important was the breakdown of transportation to the area in 1925 and 1926: the railroad closed temporarily to repair its heavily used lines, and a disabled ship blocked the entry to the harbor for an extended period. The *coup de grace* was the hurricane of September 1926, the first major storm to strike the Florida mainland since 1910. The storm killed nearly 400 people, injured another 6,000, and destroyed thousands of buildings. The Florida economy fell into depression with the collapse of the land boom that had been driving it.

Nevertheless, the Miami area rebuilt. Although applications for building permits almost ceased immediately following the storm, the construction industry began to grow again in the early 1930s. Between 1930 and 1939 the number of hotels on Miami Beach grew from sixty to 250, and hundreds of new apartment and commercial buildings appeared on the Miami skyline. The main emphasis of new construction, however, was single-family homes.⁴⁰

Although most Americans faced financial hardship during the Great Depression of the 1930s, some continued comfortable lives, while others prospered. By the middle of the decade an estimated 600 millionaires spent the winter in Miami Beach. In 1939 the Beach was described as “a world of moneyed industrialists, boulevardiers, and stars of stage and screen, its atmosphere gay, carefree, and expensive.”⁴¹ Unlike nearby Palm Beach, Miami Beach tended to attract the new-money millionaires, many of whom were Midwesterners. In 1925 Will Rogers

³⁸Ibid., 205.

³⁹R. Munroe, 187.

⁴⁰Cleveland Amory, *The Last Resorts* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1952), 368; Howard Kleinberg, *Miami Beach: A History* (Miami, Fla.: Centennial Press, 1994), 128; Reinhold Paul Wolff, *Miami: Economic Pattern of a Resort Area* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1945), 101; Polly Redford, *Billion-Dollar Sandbar: A Biography of Miami Beach* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970), 205.

⁴¹Works Progress Administration, *The WPA Guide to Florida* (reprint, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 210.

described Carl Fisher as “the man that took Miami away from the Alligators and turned it over to the Indianians.”⁴² Although the occasional Vanderbilt or Astor was found in Miami Beach, most of the names—Maytag, Hertz, Florsheim, Firestone, and Honeywell—held different associations.⁴³

DEVELOPMENT IN BISCAYNE BAY AND THE UPPER FLORIDA KEYS

As Miami Beach grew and prospered in the 1910s and 1920s, Carl Fisher began to plan further development in Biscayne Bay. Encouraged by the success of the dredging operations at Miami Beach, which were relatively inexpensive because of the bay’s geological and geographical features, Fisher decided to build artificial islands in the bay using the same method. Star Island was the first of many man-made islands built in Biscayne Bay between 1917 and 1945. The five islands along the Venetian Causeway connecting Miami and the Beach, completed in 1926, are perhaps the most prominent of the man-made islands in the bay.

Developers also planned to build artificial islands and expand shorelines in lower Biscayne Bay. Although most of these projects were never completed, portions of the Coconut Grove and Key Biscayne shorelines were extended, and Boca Chita, Adams, and Elliott Keys were enlarged. More ambitious plans for the construction of artificial islands off Coconut Grove and on the Safety Valve shoals south of Key Biscayne failed.⁴⁴ The result of dredging and the creation of artificial islands in Biscayne Bay during the first half of the twentieth century was dramatic: it has been estimated that about 20 percent of what had been open water in the upper bay in 1877 was filled, while another 20 percent had been dredged.⁴⁵

While the popularity of the Miami area as a vacation resort drove development activities in Biscayne Bay, it also fueled change on the existing keys. Destructive hurricanes and exhausted soils had brought the decline of agriculture on the keys by the 1920s, and the rapid development

⁴²Ann Armbruster, *The Life and Times of Miami Beach* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 59. The Will Rogers quote is found on page 15. Marion Post Walcott, a Farm Security Administration photographer, visited Miami and Miami Beach in 1939 and has left a file of 77 prints from her trip in the Library of Congress. See Carl Fleischhauer and Beverly W. Brannan, eds., *Documenting America, 1935-1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, in association with the Library of Congress, 1988), 174-87.

⁴³“War profits and the Harding-Coolidge ‘normalcy’ had created a brash new aristocracy, which, since it could not break into Newport and Palm Beach, took over Miami and the Catskills.” Cabell Phillips, *From the Crash to the Blitz, 1929-1939* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 361. “The honky-tonk Broadway-Bagdad atmosphere of Miami Beach is entirely lacking at Palm Beach, and Palm Beachers who journey down to bet on the races at Hialeah... could wish for no worse fate than to have to spend even one night in their sister resort.” *Amory*, 368.

⁴⁴R. Munroe, 336, 339-43.

⁴⁵Redford, 236; Roland E. Chardon, “A Geographical History of the Biscayne Bay Area,” in *Biscayne Bay-Past/Present/Future: A Symposium Presented by the University of Miami, April 2-3, 1976*, edited by Anitra Thorhaug (Coral Gables, Fla.: Information Services, University of Miami, 1976) 240.

of the Miami area eventually ended their agricultural use. The advent of the motorboat made the keys easily accessible to residents and visitors in the Miami area, and some wealthy individuals began to purchase keys to build weekend retreats. The development of these millionaires' retreats sealed the fate of agriculture on the keys.

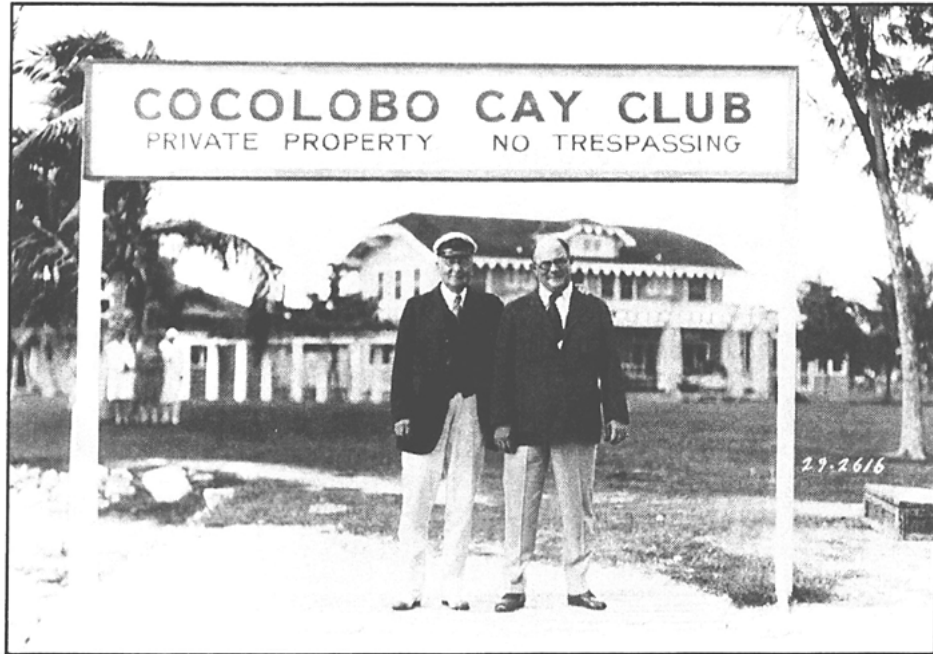


Figure 7. Carl Fisher (right) and guest at Cocolobo Club

In 1904, Henry Flagler opened the first fishing lodge and resort facilities in Biscayne Bay on Soldier Key. The club was an extension of his famed Hotel Royal Palm, located in nearby Miami. The *Louise* made daily steamer runs between the Royal Palm and Soldier Key.⁴⁶ Twelve years later, Carl Fisher and two partners, Charles W. Kotcher and Jim Snowden, established a vacation lodge in the upper keys, the Cocolobo Club,⁴⁷ on Adams Key. The lodge was located on Caesar's Creek, reputedly one of the premier fishing spots in the area, as an offshoot to Fisher's Miami Beach development. Fisher brought prospective buyers to the Cocolobo on his fleet of motorboats to take them fishing and acquaint them with the beauty of the Florida Keys, with the hope that they would then want to purchase property on nearby Miami Beach. Among Fisher's guests at the Cocolobo Club were President Warren G. Harding and Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall, entertainer Will Rogers, prizefighter Jack Dempsey, and Coleman du Pont. Many wealthy men and captains of industry became members of the club;

⁴⁶Jim Adams and Terence L. Helmers, "History of Soldier Key: A Preliminary Historical Study and Annotated Listing of Historical References," Biscayne National Park, 1996, typescript.

⁴⁷Named for the *Cocolobo diversifolia*, also known as the pigeon plum, a native tree.

however, membership began to decline during the Great Depression, and the key was sold to Gar Wood, who eventually disbanded the club and maintained the key as a private retreat.

Resort developments emerged on other keys as well. On Elliott Key, Dr. John C. Gifford subdivided and sold twenty-acre lots stretching across the key, from bay to ocean. Buyers built weekend residences and private fishing camps on the lots. Charles Brookfield operated a fishing camp, the Ledbury Lodge, on Elliott Key during the 1930s. Stiltsville began as a private club in the shoal waters south of Key Biscayne in the late 1930s; over the next three decades, between sixteen and twenty residences arose on bay bottom parcels leased from the State of Florida.⁴⁸

Even as the keys in Biscayne Bay began their transformation from sparsely populated agricultural islands to resort communities, their relative isolation and proximity to the burgeoning Miami area made them scenes of intrigue in the early twentieth century. The enactment of national prohibition in 1920 brought a new type of commerce to the area—bootlegging. The vacationing populations of Miami and other Florida resort cities provided a strong demand for liquor,⁴⁹ and the Bahamas provided a nearby source, reached easily within a few hours by motorboat. The Biscayne keys and reefs provided convenient transshipment points and hiding places for the rumrunners to await their chance to dash across the straits.⁵⁰

The keys sheltered other illegal activities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well. Both illegal drugs and illegal aliens, primarily Asians, entered Florida through Biscayne Bay.⁵¹ At the same time, smugglers utilized the bay and Elliott Key as cover for the transport of guns from Florida to revolutionaries in Cuba. The best known of these gunrunners was Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, later governor of Florida.

Throughout the early twentieth century, the only route between the upper keys and the mainland was by water. The Overseas Railroad, completed in 1912, had bypassed the upper keys, leaving the mainland at a point south of Elliott Key on the way to Key West. Local residents began to demand construction of a road in 1929, when the “Upper Keys Improvement Association” published a pamphlet proposing a road from Key Largo to Elliott, using ferries to cross over Broad and Caesar Creeks. The text of the pamphlet was primarily a reprint of a

⁴⁸Jim Adams, “The History of Stiltsville,” Biscayne National Park, 1996, typescript.

⁴⁹“Downtown saloons operated on an open-door policy and tourists accepted this freedom as part of the June-in-January setting. In Miami it was not so much that people did not observe Prohibition—they blatantly ignored its existence.” Muir, 121.

⁵⁰For an idea of the amount of liquor illegally brought into South Florida one can consider the amount legally imported into the Bahamas. In 1917 the islands imported 38,000 gallons of liquor. In 1922 1,340,000 gallons were imported. Paul Albury, *The Story of the Bahamas* (London: Macmillan Education Limited, 1975), 179.

⁵¹Stan Windhorn and Wright Langley, *Yesterday's Florida Keys*, Seeman's Historic Cities Series, No. 12 (Miami, Fla: E. A. Seeman Publishing, 1974), 11; Niedhauk, 73.

newspaper article by John Gifford, a landowner on Elliott and a member of the association. Gifford predicted that, if the road were constructed, the keys in Biscayne Bay “will soon become developed ocean and bay fronts with high taxable value.” The road was not built, perhaps due in part to the stock market crash in the same year.⁵²

From the 1930s to the 1950s, the ranks of absentee landowners expanded on the keys. Promoters revived development plans for the Biscayne keys in the late 1950s; again, the centerpiece of the proposal was the construction of a road to connect the keys with the mainland. Supporters discussed several possible routes: some envisioned connecting the keys to the mainland by a causeway over the shallow bay waters, while others advocated construction of a causeway from Key Largo on the south or over the Safety Valve from Key Biscayne on the north. Property owners and other proponents envisioned extensive residential and resort development on the keys and on filled land; they also considered the construction of an oil refinery on the adjacent mainland.

Despite these efforts, Dade County officials decided not to pursue the construction of a causeway to the islands. The county advised landowners that they would have to finance and build the road themselves if they wished to connect the keys to the mainland. Property owners on the islands responded by seeking to incorporate, and the City of Islandia became a municipality in December 1960.⁵³

The city quickly met with opposition in its efforts to build the causeway. Conservationists organized to seek national monument status for the largely undeveloped keys in lower Biscayne Bay and received a favorable report from a National Park Service study of the area in the mid-1960s. In 1965, conservationists secured the support of the Hoover Foundation, and the tide of local public opinion turned toward preservation rather than development. In late 1967, the Islandia city government, feeling that the battle was nearing a close, approved the bulldozing of a 120-foot-wide strip down the center of Elliott Key. The road, which became known as “Spite Highway,” resulted in a lawsuit by the county because it passed through a county park without authorization, destroying 6.3 acres of vegetation.⁵⁴

In 1968, Congress held hearings to consider the creation of a national monument in the area. In the hearings, Islandia Mayor Ralph A. Fossey testified that twelve to fifteen people lived on Elliott Key and approximately twenty-four structures stood on the island. Despite the vocal opposition of Fossey and some other island landowners, Congress approved the creation of

⁵²The map included in the pamphlet shows the new road leaving the mainland at Mangrove Point, crossing Old Rhodes and Porgy Keys, and continuing the length of Elliott to Sands Key. John Clayton Gifford, “County Road Needed to Elliott’s Key,” in *The Upper Keys: Playground of the Presidents* (Coconut Grove, Fla.: The Upper Keys Improvement Association, 1929).

⁵³E. Carter Burrus, Jr., “A History of the Islands and Waters of the Biscayne National Park—A Multi-media Interpretive Program” (Ph.D. diss., University of Miami, 1984), 87.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 87-92.

Biscayne National Monument, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the bill into law on October 18, 1968. The bill authorized the National Park Service to spend \$25 million over five years to buy and develop the 164-square-mile park.⁵⁵

THE HONEYWELL ERA ON BOCA CHITA KEY, 1937-1945

Like other islands in Biscayne Bay, Boca Chita Key experienced development and change as a result of the growth of the Miami area in the 1910s and 1920s. Carl Fisher, F. A. Seiberling, and some business associates purchased the key in 1916. Seiberling probably initiated recreational development on the island, building a wooden bulkhead and one or more buildings to house visitors; however, the hurricane of 1926 obliterated all of these improvements. Seiberling also oversaw the enlargement of the key, which proved to be a more permanent alteration to the island. Workers added fill material five to thirteen feet deep on top of the existing limestone, bringing the key to something like its current size.

After Milton W. Harrison purchased Boca Chita from Seiberling and his partners in 1926, he made several improvements to the island. Harrison built a two-story frame house on the man-made north end of the key; he also dredged the boat basin and installed steel bulkheads around 1934, replacing the wooden ones destroyed in the hurricane of 1926. However, despite these alterations, the island was relatively undeveloped when Harrison sold the property to Mark C. Honeywell in 1937.

Honeywell and his wife, Olive Lutz Honeywell, purchased Boca Chita Key as a vacation retreat from their winter home in Miami Beach.⁵⁶ The Honeywells maintained their primary residence in Wabash, Indiana, where Mark Honeywell was born in 1874. Honeywell entered the heating business in 1902⁵⁷ and found success in the 1910s, when his firm began to produce and sell an improved version of the thermostat, or heat regulator.

In 1927, the Mark Honeywell Heating Specialties Company merged with the Minneapolis Heat Regulator Company, owned by W. R. Sweatt. The new public company that emerged, the Minneapolis Honeywell Heat Regulator Company, posted annual sales of \$3 million after the



Figure 8. Mark C. Honeywell, ca. 1938

⁵⁵Ibid., 92-94.

⁵⁶The *Miami Social Register* listed the Honeywells' address as 4567 Pine Tree Drive in Miami Beach; their "northern address" as 394 North Wabash Street in Wabash, Indiana; and their summer address at Lake Wawasee, Indiana. *Social Register of Greater Miami* (Miami Beach, Fla.: Blue Book Publishing, 1936).

⁵⁷*Who Was Who in America; with World Notables*, Vol. 4 (1961-1968) (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1968), 457.

merger. Honeywell was the company's first president and later became chairman of the board, a position he held until 1953. Despite initial success, the company suffered during the early years of the Depression, and sales had dropped back to around \$3 million by 1933. Business was so bad at one point that the company produced flour sifters for another Minneapolis firm. Nevertheless, the business recovered by 1935, and sales soon climbed to \$9 million annually.⁵⁸

The Honeywells were prominent in Miami Beach society, associating with other wealthy industrialists. The couple belonged to the most prestigious clubs in the area: Mrs. Honeywell was a member of the Miami Beach Women's Club, and Mr. Honeywell belonged to the Indian Creek Golf Club, the Surf Club, the Cocolobo Club, and the Miami Beach Committee of One Hundred.⁵⁹ Honeywell served as president of the Committee of One Hundred from 1936 to 1951.

The Honeywells purchased Boca Chita Key in 1937 and soon after began building a vacation retreat on the island. They retained the frame house built by Harrison as the primary residence, building a number of support structures and landscape features in the vicinity of the house on the north end of the key. The new structures included a lighthouse, chapel, picnic pavilion, and a barn or garage.

Honeywell employed the architectural firm of August Geiger to design and build the lighthouse on Boca Chita. Geiger, a well-known Miami architect, had also designed the Honeywells' Miami Beach home and a studio for their Wabash, Indiana, residence. According to Jim Church, a junior draftsman who worked on the plans for the lighthouse, Leon Angle Camp was the designer of the lighthouse, and Jack Hunt was the contractor.⁶⁰

Camp designed the 65-foot masonry lighthouse to sit at the harbor on the north end of the key, where yachts belonging to Honeywell and his guests moored during their visits. A popular story about the lighthouse claimed that it was shut down by the U.S. Coast Guard after one lighting because it was not an approved navigational aid;⁶¹ however, the absence of hardware for affixing a light in the floor of the lantern suggests that the lighthouse may never have been intended for navigational use.

⁵⁸Edson W. Spencer, *Honeywell After 100 Years* (New York: Newcomen Society of the United States, 1985), 14-15.

⁵⁹The Miami Beach Committee of One Hundred has been described as the richest and most elite club on the Beach. With a few exceptions the members all had their permanent residences outside of Florida. The committee was organized after the 1926 hurricane and met weekly for discussions and lectures. The annual "stag party" was held at the Cocolobo Club on Adams Key. Armbruster, 62.

⁶⁰Beverly Yelen, "Historical Information Relating to Boca Chita Cay," (Biscayne National Park, photocopy), 1-2.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 2.



Figure 9. Yachts lined up in Boca Chita Harbor for the annual Committee of One Hundred party, ca. 1938

The lighthouse was constructed of Miami oolitic limestone, as were the other structures built during the Honeywell era. This limestone was a popular building material in South Florida as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Although no documentation exists regarding the design and construction of the picnic pavilion, chapel, and other structures on the island, it appears likely that the Geiger firm built the entire Honeywell estate on Boca Chita. The design and materials employed are similar in character and suggest the work of a single individual or firm.

The Honeywells built their vacation retreat between the time they purchased the key in 1937 and Mrs. Honeywell's death in 1939. During this two- to three-year period, Mark and Olive Honeywell built the lighthouse, chapel, picnic pavilion, engine house, and garage; they also constructed a stone wall around the main complex, retaining walls at the water's edge, concrete sidewalks from the harbor to the house and generator building, and an arched bridge across an existing canal. Other support structures were built on the island as well, but none of these buildings remain.

The Honeywells used the complex at Boca Chita as a rural retreat from their home in Miami Beach. They often entertained friends on the island, ferrying themselves and visitors over on their three yachts, the *Olivette*, *Harpoon*, and *Semego*.⁶² Honeywell reportedly fired a cannon, which sat at the opening of the harbor near the lighthouse, to welcome his guests arriving on the island. The Honeywells hosted the annual charity party of the Miami Beach Committee of One Hundred on Boca Chita, a tradition that continued with the next owners of the property, the

⁶²*Social Register*.



Figure 10. Picnic pavilion with the Honeywells' yacht, *Olivette*, moored alongside in the harbor, ca. 1938



Figure 11. Lighthouse, ca. 1938

Emermans. The annual party was an exclusive event, with the guest list limited to members, the media, celebrities, and politicians.⁶³ It was also an extravagant affair: photographs from one party show a gaily decorated elephant in attendance.⁶⁴



Figure 12. Elephant rides (at left) at annual party of the Committee of One Hundred on Boca Chita Key, ca. 1938

Although Honeywell continued to host the annual charity party of the Committee of One Hundred on Boca Chita, he lost interest in the property after his wife's death. In 1942 he married Eugenia Hubbard, and three years later he sold the property to Florence Emerman. Mark Honeywell died in 1964 at the age of 89.⁶⁵

⁶³Yelen, 3.

⁶⁴The elephant was probably Rosie, the popular pachyderm maintained at Miami Beach by Carl Fisher. Rosie had acted as President-elect Warren G. Harding's golf caddy during his visit to Miami Beach in 1925.

⁶⁵*Who Was Who*, 457.



Figure 13. Mark Honeywell and guest enjoy Committee of One Hundred fete, ca. 1938



Figure 14. Partygoers enjoy barbecue in the picnic pavilion, ca. 1938

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

The Honeywell complex on Boca Chita Key, which includes the lighthouse, chapel, picnic pavilion, garage, engine house, bridge, canal, cannon, stone walls, retaining walls, and concrete walkways is associated with the context, "Recreational Development of Miami and the Florida Keys, 1896-1945." The complex illustrates the growth of the Miami area in the early twentieth century and the spread of development onto the keys in Biscayne Bay. It is also typical of the weekend retreats built by the wealthy elite of Miami during this period.

Physical Characteristics

The complex of buildings and structures built by Mark and Olive Honeywell on Boca Chita Key between 1937 and 1940 forms a locally significant historic district on the north end of the island. All of the structures have exterior surfaces of quarry-faced Miami oolitic limestone. The use of this limestone throughout the area visually unifies the structures and the district.

The lighthouse rises 65 feet from its position north of the harbor entrance. The tower is a tapering cylinder constructed of concrete bricks laid in common bond, with the exterior clad in uncoursed limestone. The base of the tower is approximately 21 feet in diameter and sits on a terrace-like base 28 feet square. An observation deck with painted steel railings projects outward near the top of the tower; the lantern rises from the reinforced concrete deck. The lantern is a dome-shaped steel frame, originally set with glass lights, topped by a small metal finial. Small, deeply inset, rectangular window openings pierce the column of the tower; the doorway has a smooth stone surround that projects slightly from the walls. The interior of the tower houses a circular staircase cantilevered from the walls.

Across the harbor entrance from the lighthouse stands the picnic pavilion. The pavilion rests on a concrete slab measuring 15 feet by 52 feet. Ten squared limestone piers rise from the slab foundation along the long sides of the pavilion; the piers support a simple classical cornice and frieze, above which rises the hipped asphalt shingle roof. The roof framing and two metal tie-bars that extend the width of the structure are visible from the interior of the pavilion.

The chapel is a 12- by 20-foot concrete block building covered with rock-faced, uncoursed oolitic limestone. The chapel has a steeply pitched concave roof with asphalt shingles. The building has two symmetrically arranged openings in each wall; doorways are on the north and east walls. A low wall curves out from the southeast corner of the building to flank the south door.

The garage (or barn) is a 71-foot by 31-foot concrete block building with a reinforced concrete frame. The gabled asphalt shingle roof shelters limestone exterior walls. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation and has low chimneys at either end. The north facade features one standard-size door and four large garage door openings with transom windows; the south or rear facade has five windows, also with transoms.

The engine house or generator building has concrete block walls with limestone facing rising from a concrete slab foundation. The building measures 15½ feet wide by 23½ feet long and has an asphalt shingle, front gable roof. The front facade has a door and window, and the



Figure 15. Chapel, 1997

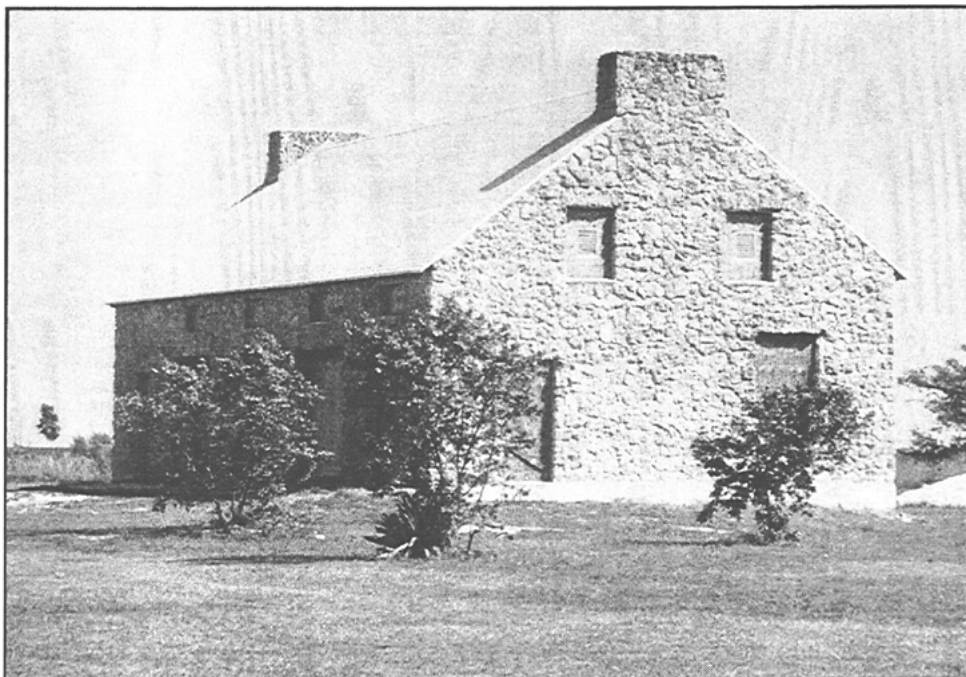


Figure 16. Garage, 1997

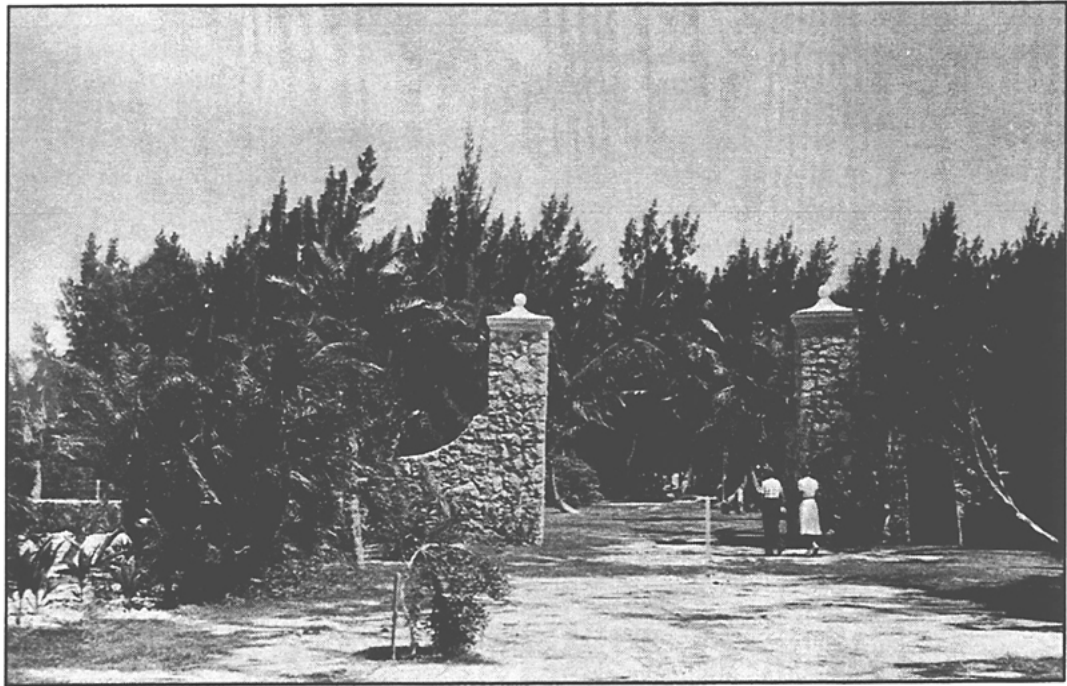


Figure 17. Gate posts in stone wall, ca. 1938



Figure 18. Bridge over canal, ca. 1938

north and south sides have three windows each. The rear (east) wall has no openings; an octagonal concrete cistern with sides of 15 feet each is attached to this facade.

A simple arched concrete bridge spans a narrow, bulkheaded canal, the remains of a channel built from the harbor to the center of the island prior to 1932. The rectangular canal extends approximately 45 feet south beyond the bridge and has walls of uncoursed limestone topped with a concrete coping. The north end of the canal was blocked by the addition of a new metal bulkhead in the harbor in 1995, which left the canal dry. The canal has since been partially filled with dirt. The bridge spanning the canal is 14 feet long and 6 feet wide; 3-foot-high walls of uncoursed limestone rise from the concrete deck. The walls originally flared out into low scroll forms at each end. Hurricane Andrew destroyed about two-thirds of the south wall of the bridge in 1992.

A cannon resting in a stone base sits on the northwest tip of Boca Chita Key near the bottom of the lighthouse. The sloped base has small depressions at the top on either side of the cannon to hold the gun's trunnions. The metal of the cannon is severely corroded. The cannon is classified as an object for National Register purposes.

A concrete slab walkway extends from Boca Chita Harbor east to the main house site, then proceeds south to the engine house. A short walkway also extends northeast from the intersection with the modern boardwalk around to the rear of the house site. The walkway is continuous, except where it crosses the boardwalk at two separate points.

The Honeywells constructed a stone wall around the primary structures in the original complex on Boca Chita. This wall, constructed of limestone on a concrete foundation with vertical steel reinforcing rods, originally ran southeast from the Biscayne Bay shore south of the picnic pavilion about 400 feet, curved tightly east for 35 feet, extended to the east for another 309 feet, then turned north for 155 feet, terminating near the engine house. Seven gateways passed through the original wall, although only three remain. Two of these have 10-foot-wide openings flanked by tall gateposts; the third has a 4-foot-wide opening topped with an arch rising from the wall. Hurricane Andrew destroyed the eastern two-thirds of the wall, including a one-room stone gatehouse.

Honeywell also built a limestone retaining wall along the north side of the island. The dry-laid stone walls extends along the side of the fill. The wall is slowly deteriorating due to the action of wind and waves; some of the stone has fallen away, and all of the surfaces are eroding.

Associative Characteristics

The structures built by Mark Honeywell on Boca Chita Key represent the growth and development of the Miami area in the early- to mid-twentieth century. South Florida, and particularly Miami Beach, grew rapidly during this period because of a combination of factors, including improvements in transportation, increased disposable income, and tireless promotion. The development of Miami Beach spread onto the keys in Biscayne Bay, and the Honeywell complex reflects this development trend.

The complex on Boca Chita is closely associated with the wealthy class of industrialists that emerged between the world wars. These individuals had large disposable incomes, which they

often used to entertain themselves and their friends. Thus they made their winter homes in Miami Beach, joined numerous clubs and social organizations, and built weekend retreats on the keys. Mark Honeywell was an influential member of this wealthy class, and the structures he built on Boca Chita illustrate the interests and inclinations of this class.

The structures also represent typical resort architecture for the Miami area in the 1930s. Popular architectural styles during this period included the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and varying Mediterranean influences. The architectural firm of August Geiger, which designed the lighthouse and probably the rest of the complex as well, often employed the Mediterranean style in its resort designs. The Honeywell complex on Boca Chita, with its quarry-faced Miami oolitic limestone exteriors, provides an example of this type of resort architecture.

Significance

The Honeywell complex on Boca Chita Key, including the lighthouse, picnic pavilion, garage, engine house, chapel, bridge, canal, cannon, stone wall, retaining walls, and sidewalks, forms a locally significant historic district under National Register Criteria A and C. These structures are significant because they are typical of the architectural styles employed on weekend retreats in the Florida Keys during the 1930s. As such, they suggest the growth and development of the Miami area during the early- to mid-twentieth century. They also represent in a broader sense the activities of the wealthy industrial class that emerged between World Wars I and II.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS/INTEGRITY

The complex of structures built by Mark Honeywell on Boca Chita Key forms a locally significant historic district with integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association. The lighthouse, picnic pavilion, chapel, garage, engine house, bridge, canal, cannon, walkways, and walls retain integrity of location, materials, and workmanship. All of the structures are in their original locations, and changes to materials and workmanship have been minimal.

All of the buildings in the Honeywell complex on Boca Chita possess integrity of design. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew partially destroyed the stone wall and bridge on Boca Chita. Although the damage impaired the design integrity of these two structures somewhat, enough structural integrity remains to illustrate the original design; function, and use of each. Likewise, time, weather, and erosion have impacted the retaining walls, but not to such a degree that they have lost design integrity. The canal is perhaps the most altered structure; a new steel bulkhead installed in the harbor in 1995 blocked the flow of water into the canal, and dirt fill has been added in the channel. Nevertheless, the original function and use of the canal remains apparent.

The structures built by the Honeywells were laid out on the north end of the island, in the vicinity of the main house built by the previous owner. This house burned in the 1960s, altering the historic setting on the key. The building was not replaced, and only concrete foundations remain. Despite this loss the overall historic setting remains essentially intact; no infill construction exists in the area, and the historic spatial relationships have been maintained. The integrity of setting contributes to the integrity of feeling and association retained by the complex.

Several structures within the proposed historic district are not eligible for the National Register and should be considered noncontributing properties. The foundations of the main house lack sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register. While they mark the location of the main house in relation to the existing structures on the island, the foundations do not contribute to the significance of the district. The bulkhead, built in 1934 by Harrison, predates the other resources and lacks significance and integrity. It is a functional landscape feature that was recently altered by the addition of a second bulkhead by the National Park Service. The ruins of these structures should be listed as historical archeological sites in the park's Archeological Overview and Assessment.

Two other structures, the shower house foundations, which are located near the site of Grandma's Hut, and the boardwalk, which is near the main house foundations, are less than fifty years old and do not relate to the areas or period of significance for the site. As a result, they are ineligible for inclusion on the National Register.

CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

Picnic pavilion

Chapel

Garage

Engine house and cistern

Bridge

Canal

Cannon

Stone wall

Retaining walls

Concrete walkways

NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

Bulkhead

Foundations of main house

Shower house foundations

Boardwalk