

# A DREAM OF ARABY

GLENN H. CURTISS AND THE FOUNDING OF OPA-LOCKA

By

Frank S. FitzGerald - Bush



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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

At the time we met Frank FitzGerald-Bush, we were attempting to put together a local newspaper. An interview with Mr. Fitzgerald-Bush was obtained through our local librarian, Mrs. Prudence Pritz, who knew of Mr. FitzGerald-Bush's lifelong interest in the City and was at that time working with the memoirs and diaries which he and his father had kept.

As we parked the car in his driveway, we were approached by a slender, gray-haired gentleman, who with his open collar, spectacles resting below his line of sight, and polished mannerisms and speech made us immediately put him into the category of "typical American author." The only thing missing from the "author portrait" was a pipe.

After being led through his old wooden home, filled with memories of years past and reflecting much of this man's personality, we had the opportunity to meet his mother, Lady Irene Bush. In a gracious and dignified way, she began to speak of past memories as though they had happened yesterday. She spoke of her husband, the late Frank S. Bush, who came to Opa-locka with her and the children as an associate of Glen Curtiss in 1926, and built the first house, a two-story dwelling that still stands in the 1300 block of Peri Street.

During our conversation, we learned that Frank was a graduate of Miami Edison high school and studied further at several schools and colleges across the United States and in Canada, receiving his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Miami, where he majored in English and History. His education did not come easily, being interrupted three times by military service, starting with his enlistment in the Royal Canadian Air Force. After recovering from an aviation accident, he was discharged from the R.C.A.F. and enlisted in the American Ambulance Service, attached to the British army, serving in India and Burma until 1945.

For Hubert Heelman,  
Poet to poet -  
Frank

Frank S. Fitzgerald Bush



A DREAM OF ARABY

1875-1900  
Fonds of Opus  
CLEM H. CURTIS  
1976  
Opus, Florida



**GLENN H. CURTISS**  
Founder of Opa-locka  
1878-1930

To my mother  
and to  
who shared the dream with her:  
my father, Aunt Lila, her son Glenn, and Uncle Ben.

**A DREAM OF ARABY**

**Glenn H. Curtiss And  
The Founding of Opa-locka**

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FIRST EDITION

by  
**Frank S. FitzGerald-Bush**

**South Florida Archaeological Museum  
Opa-locka, Florida  
1976**



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FIRST EDITION

To mark the Bicentennial of the United States of America, and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Opa-locka, Florida, the South Florida Archaeological Museum of the Miami-West India Archaeological Society (Dade County Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society) has sponsored this edition of *A Dream of Araby: Glenn H. Curtiss and the Founding of Opa-locka*, limited to one thousand numbered copies, of which this is copy No. \_\_\_\_\_.

Manufactured in the United States of America by E. and J. Printing, Inc., Opa-locka, Florida.

South Florida Archaeological Museum  
Opa-locka, Florida  
1976  
GLENN H. CURTISS  
Founder of Opa-locka  
1876-1951

To my mother  
and to the memory of those now gone  
who shared the dream with her:  
my father, Aunt Lua, her son Glenn, and Uncle Ben.

In compiling this work I was inspired by the memory of my father, the late Frank S. Bush, and constantly assisted by my mother, Irene Bush. I must also acknowledge my indebtedness to the following individuals and organizations whose kindness in sharing photographs and information, as well as untiring aid and encouragement, made this book possible:

Anna Harris Alley	Rose Griffiths Mead
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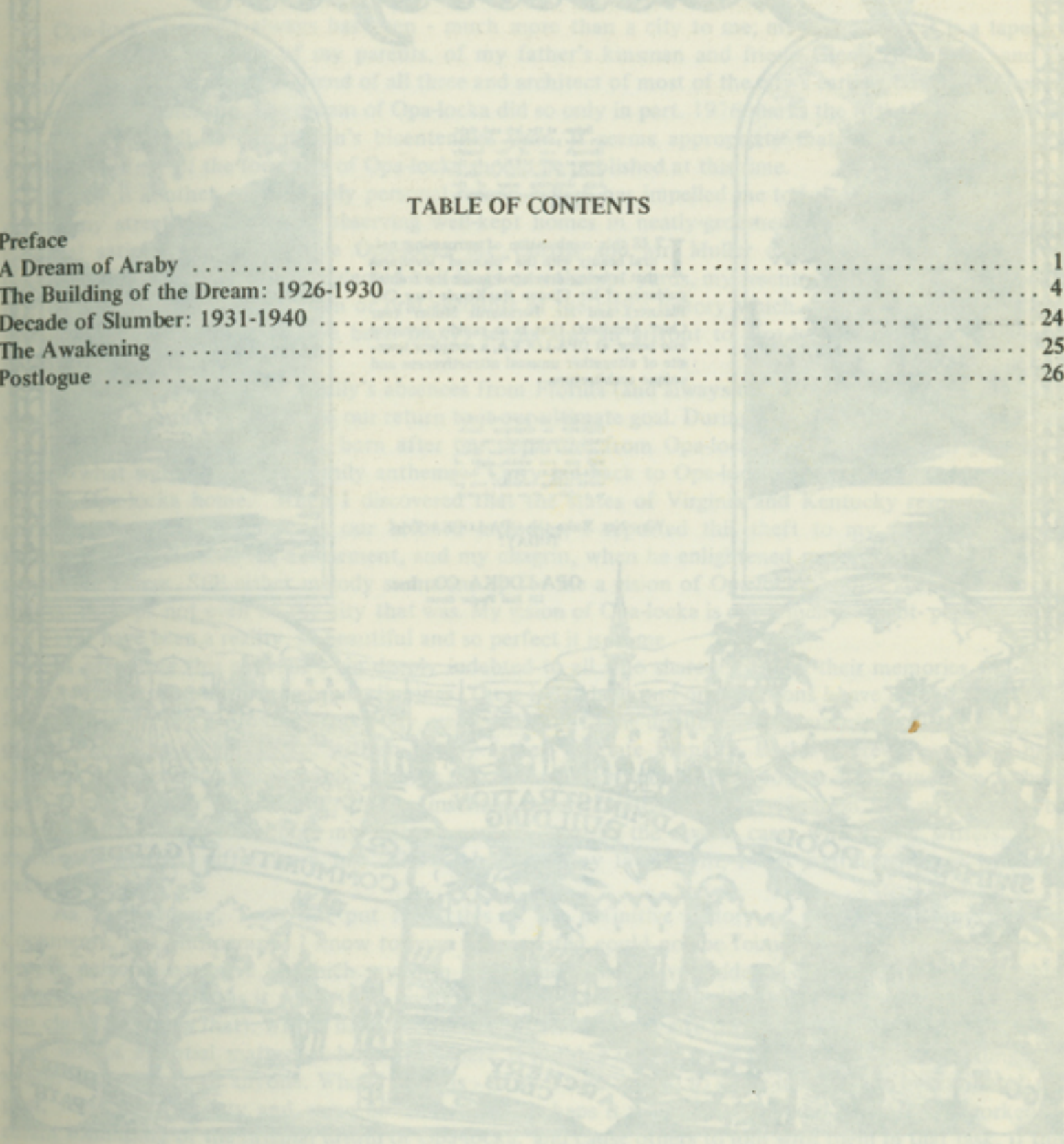
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Produced by the Superintendent of the United States of America, and the Florida State Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, Florida. The South Florida Archaeological Museum of the Miami-Dade County is a member of the Florida Archaeological Society. The Florida Archaeological Society has sponsored the printing of a series of studies on the history and the prehistory of the state, which is now being published in a series of volumes. This volume is one of the series, of which this is the first.  
Manufactured in the United States of America by E. and J. Printing, Inc., Opa-locka, Florida.

OPA-LOCKA

# Beautiful

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An early advertisement of the Opa-Locka Company. All the amenities mentioned in it have since vanished and my often spoken of as never having existed. The promise: "Opa-Locka will be beautiful," was fulfilled. One may hope that so much of that beauty which was lost may yet be restored.

1976 Journal

# OPA-LOCKA

*Will Be*

# Beautiful

Below, at the left and right, are two photographs of drives through some of the beauty spots at OPA-LOCKA. At the bottom of this page are drawings depicting some of the sports and other activities at OPA-LOCKA.

**I**T IS this combination of surpassing natural beauty with the "planned" loveliness that is being developed under the trained guidance of Mr. Clinton MacKenzie (our City Planner) and Mr. Bernhardt Muller (our Chief Architect) that is so rapidly bringing into being, at OPA-LOCKA, a complete town-site of altogether unusual attractiveness and unique architecture.

A drive out over the Dixie Highway to Gratiety Boulevard, then turning west until you come to Le Jeune Road, will put you within sight of OPA-LOCKA. It's a drive worth taking—whether you go as a visitor or as an investor.

Why Not Make the OPA-LOCKA Trip TODAY?

OPA-LOCKA CO., Inc.  
122 East Flagler Street



An early advertisement of the Opa-locka Company. All the amenities mentioned in it became a reality, though many have since vanished and are often spoken of as never having existed. The promise: "Opa-locka will be beautiful," was fulfilled. One may hope that so much of that beauty which was lost may yet be restored.

## PREFACE

Opa-locka is - and always has been - much more than a city to me; my thought of it is a tapestry interwoven of the dreams of my parents, of my father's kinsman and friend Glenn H. Curtiss, and of Bernhardt E. Muller, mutual friend of all three and architect of most of the city's earliest buildings. Dreams do not often come true. The dream of Opa-locka did so only in part. 1976 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Opa-locka, as well as our nation's bicentennial year. It seems appropriate that the first attempt at a thorough history of the founding of Opa-locka should be published at this time.

There is another, more deeply personal reason, which has impelled me to write this book. When I pass down any street in Opa-locka, observing well-kept homes in neatly-groomed gardens, I feel a strangely personal satisfaction. This is the Opa-locka Mr. Curtiss and Mr. Muller dreamed of and worked for. Conversely, when I encounter neglected buildings or unkempt yards, my resentment is similarly a personal one. When confronted by written or oral accounts of the city's history which depart from or distort the facts, each error (and there have been many) seems also an affront to Opa-locka's founder, and hence painful to me.

During the years of my family's absences from Florida (and always they seemed like exile) Opa-locka was for us a constant beacon, and our return to it our ultimate goal. During our many travels my sisters and I - and later our brother Jason, born after our departure from Opa-locka - often joined our parents in singing what were to become family anthems: "Carry me back to Opa-locka," and "The sun shines bright on our Opa-locka home." When I discovered that the states of Virginia and Kentucky respectively had purloined for their state songs our beloved melodies, I reported this theft to my father with great indignation. I still recall his amusement, and my chagrin, when he enlightened me as to who had been the actual borrowers. Still either melody summons up for me a vision of Opa-locka - not a vision of the city that is; perhaps not even of the city that was. My vision of Opa-locka is one which may not - perhaps could not - ever have been a reality, so beautiful and so perfect it is to me.

In preparing this account I am deeply indebted to all who shared with me their memories and their treasured photographs or newspaper clippings. These individuals and organizations I have listed elsewhere in this book, with my profound thanks. My greatest debt is to the unpublished manuscript entitled Memories of the Founding of Opa-locka, written by my father, the late Frank S. Bush. Wherever possible I have checked his account against public records or contemporary published accounts and found him to have been correct in his recollection. In rare instances where contemporary verification was nowhere to be found, I have depended upon my father's version, even in the several cases where later writers, using secondary sources, differ from him. Those who knew my father well, I feel confident, agree with this decision.

As an historian, I do not put forth this as the definitive history of Opa-locka. Many records, documents, and photographs I know to have once existed could not be found. What is here presented is a deeply personal narrative in which my own involvement may have rendered cold objectivity impossible. Nonetheless, in so far as it was within my power, I have told only the truth - not the truth entire (no man can claim to possess that). What I have left out was whatever might give pain to anyone. These few deletions were not of essential matters. I hope that there is nothing in this book which is false, and nothing that would cause injury to anyone. What I offer is - or so I have strived to make it - a poetic evocation of the past, with all its beauty and some of its tragedy. Perhaps it will help those who have always worked to retain something of the original dream of Opa-locka, and cause others to join with them in that task. If this should prove to be so, I shall be content.

Frank S. FitzGerald-Bush  
January 1976

## A DREAM OF ARABY

The earliest of the race of Man to have left some trace of his presence at Opatishawockalocka were the Tequestas, who inhabited the southeastern portion of the Floridian peninsula long before the first Europeans had ventured into the Western hemisphere. The record of their presence at what more precisely - but rather prosaically - one may locate as approximately the northwest portion of the southwest quarter of section twenty, range forty-one east, township fifty-two south, Dade County, is fragmentary and inexact.

Our knowledge of the Tequestas at Opatishawockalocka is likely to remain limited. Only twice was the site visited by archaeologists before the ancient hammock was bulldozed by the U.S. Navy in 1938. Of the first investigation, I have only the memory of my father and others of Glenn H. Curtiss's friends who recalled his telling them of bringing to Opatishawockalocka an archaeologist, who informed him that evidence indicated presence of Tequestas there about five hundred years before the discovery of America. The name of this archaeologist I can find nowhere recorded; if he made notes or published any account of his investigations, I have not been able to locate them, despite diligent search. The second scientific research done on the site is mentioned on page 24 of Guide To Miami and its Environs, produced by the Federal Writers Project and published in 1941, where one learns only that "it was not until 1933 that an extensive archaeological project was launched in Dade County. In 1934 over 3,000 specimens of burial materials were taken from mounds at Miami Beach and Opa-locka and removed to the Smithsonian Institution for study." Again, all my attempts to trace the results of this excavation resulted in failure. Officials at the Smithsonian whom I contacted were unable to shed any light on the matter. It is my assumption - and a cautious one at that - that fragments of the Tequesta pottery design called Opa-locka incised must have come from this excavation, since such designs are customarily named for the site where they were first found.

It is not even possible precisely to date the time when Glenn Curtiss first visited Opatishawockalocka. By 1921 it had become a part of the more than 120,000 acres of the Curtiss-Bright Ranch, operated by Mr. Curtiss in partnership with the late James H. Bright. The 1921 plat of Hialeah, a Curtiss-Bright Company project, shows what is now East Second Avenue in Hialeah as Opa-locka Avenue. This confirms Mr. Bright's recollection, and my father's as well, that Glenn Curtiss, who coined the name from the beginning and the ending of Opatishawockalocka, was already thinking of a city to be built on the site near the ancient hammock. It also disproves the often repeated myth that the U.S. Post Office or the Seaboard Railway requested the shortening of the name; neither post office nor railway - nor indeed town - existed when Mr. Curtiss coined the name Opa-locka.

Over the spelling of Opa-locka there has long been heated dispute. On the first plat of the subdivision, filed in May of 1926, the name is spelled Opa-Locka for the subdivision, while the name of the Company is spelled as one word, Opalocka. On the first town charter the spelling is Opa-Locka; when that charter was superseded by the city charter of 1928 the spelling is Opalocka. This was very soon altered to Opa-Locka, and finally to Opa-locka. The office of the Florida Secretary of State says that the legal spelling of the city is that which appears on its current charter - Opa-locka. What Mr. Curtiss's own intention was cannot clearly be stated without fear of contradiction, for not only did he himself use, and cause to be used in printed matter or documents, the three variations, but a fourth as well, Opa Locka. The late R. A. Samson always and heatedly insisted that the name was intended by Mr. Curtiss to be spelled as one word, Opalocka. It is curious to note, however, that during the years when Mr. Samson was editor of Opa-locka Times, a fortnightly newspaper subsidized by Mr. Curtiss, the name on the masthead was given as OPA LOCKA TIMES, while the editorial box states that it was published on every other Wednesday by Opa-locka Publishing Company. In stories appearing in surviving issues of that paper, all four variations of the spelling are found in profusion. My own family was divided on the question; my father's checks surviving from the period of 1926 to 1928 bear the imprint Bush Electric Co., Opa-Locka and Hialeah, yet he habitually wrote the name with a hyphen and a small "l". My mother's papers from the same period show that she wrote the name with no hyphen but a capital "O", making it two words. I at length surrendered to my father's wishes, and to the logic of the Secretary of State, and adopted the spelling

Opa-locka, which must remain its legal form until the city charter is changed to make it otherwise (bearing in mind the while that I am - as all are - at the mercy of typesetters).

The meaning of the town's name is equally a subject of controversy. Most reference works state that it derives from the Seminole "opilwa," meaning swamp, and "lako," meaning big - hence "Big Swamp." Not only is this an affront to any loyal Opa-lockan, but it ignores the fact that the name was coined from Opatishawockalocka, and any attempt to translate must begin with the original name, not with the coined version. Not being versed in the Seminole or Creek tongues, I must depend upon authority or tradition. In Opa-locka it has always been said that the name Opatishawockalocka meant "big island covered with many trees in the swamp," which is, of course, the definition of the Florida work hammock. The Guide to Miami and its Environs, to which I have already made reference, states (page 138) that Opatishawockalocka is the Seminole word for hammock, and that from this word the city (which this work spells Opa Locka) derived its name.

I should be pleased to rest my case here, but for the existence of an article clipped from the Miami Herald of January 26, 1925, announcing the intention fo the Curtiss-Bright Company to begin construction of a new community at Cook's Hammock, to be called Opa-Locka (note the capital L). This account ends with the statement that the Indian name from which Opa-Locka derived literally translated means "the high land north of the little river on which there is an old camping place." Nowhere else can I find this translation, and none of those whom I knew connected with the founding of Opa-locka recall having heard of it. It is necessary to add that the Curtiss-Bright Company did not continue its plans for a city at Cook's Hammock. Mr. Bright considered the project Mr. Curtiss proposed too costly, and asked his partner to abandon the plan. Mr. Curtiss at once did so, though the dream of Opa-locka remained in his mind. To deduce from this that there was any strain between Curtiss and Bright would be utterly false. Mr. Bright, who out-lived Mr. Curtiss by twenty-nine years, never spoke of his partner save in terms of affection and praise. When Mr. Bright spoke of Mr. Curtiss he never failed to end his statement with these words: "No man could have asked for a better partner or a better friend.

The great Florida real estate boom was at its frenzied peak in late summer of 1925, and Mr. Curtiss again began to think of the Opa-locka project. With his partner, James Bright, he had laid out Hialeah, and in the southernmost section of that Community - The Deer Park area - had built his own home in 1921. But the character of Hialeah had changed with the rush of the boom. And the change, to Glenn Curtiss, was not for the better. Across the Miami River Canal from Hialeah, he had in 1924 begun the building of another community, called Country Club Estates. With an eye toward what his friend George Merrick was accomplishing in Coral Gables, he planned a city where careful and rigid zoning would control the character of the community. For the architecture of the town he selected a Spanish-Pueblo style, designing many of the buildings himself, with the assistance of a young architect. Among these was a new home for himself, which his wife Lena named Dar Err Aha, a Persian phrase meaning "house of contentment." (Again one must wrestle with the myth-makers; it has long been said that Dar Err Aha is Seminole for "chickee of Contentment;" knowing neither the seminole nor the Persian language, I can only report that Lena Curtiss is the source of my version. For all I know it may be Hindustani, but Lena, who as a widow married Sayre Wheeler, lived in that house until her death in 1949 and continued to tell it her way.) From his house on Deer Run, with its magnificent gardens, Mr. Curtiss watched this second town grow, and yet was not content. When he had come to live in Florida in 1921 he had withdrawn from the aircraft manufacturing business which still bore his name, having amassed a fortune estimated at some \$32,000,000. His ventures into Florida real estate with his friend Jimmy Bright had brought him a second fortune, though more modest than his first. In such a position, any man ought to have been content. But money, though he had come from poverty to great wealth, had never been a primary concern to Glenn Curtiss. Conceiving an idea, and the challenge of making it a reality, had always been his greatest pleasure. Opa-locka was still burning in his brain.

In the autumn of 1925, Glenn Curtiss began again to plan his dream city for the old hammock Opatishawockalocka. It would be, he said, the most perfect city that planning and engineering could



achieve, and the most beautiful that the art of man could conceive. It must be planned to meet all the needs, physical and mental, of its citizens. Above all it must be beautiful, beautiful as the name he had coined for it - Opa-locka. But it must be unique, and its uniqueness must be expressed in its architecture. The Spanish style which had transformed Palm Beach and formed Coral Gables - no; it must be something different.

Mr. Curtiss was a silent, almost taciturn man. Courteous and kind he always was, but conversation to him was a waste of time unless it was for the purpose of transmitting ideas. Staying with his mother, Lua Andrews Curtiss, in the house he had built for her on Deer Run, was a young man - a distant kinsman - and his wife and children. Strangely, Glenn Curtiss had found an affinity with this young couple, Frank Shepard Bush and his pretty British-born wife Irene. Only recently arrived in Miami, the Bushes had been taken under the wing of Lua Curtiss - quite literally, for Aunt Lua (she was, in fact, a cousin of Frank Bush's grandfather, Frank Lyman Shepard, and only an aunt by courtesy) had picked up the Bush family and moved them into her house. It must have been a crowded house, with Aunt Lua, her spinster sister, Aunt Katie Andrews, Frank and Irene Bush, their two daughters, Janet and Judith, and a new child (myself), "Conceived in Elmira," as my father used to say, "And brought forth in Hialeah." I was only a few weeks old when we went to stay with Aunt Lua, and just three months old when we moved into the house my father was to build in Glenn's new city. I have, of course, no personal memory of that time, nor, regrettably, of Mr. Curtiss, who died before my fifth birthday, and only a faint image of Aunt Lua, who died when I was nine. But the events that transpired there, the people who took part in them - all are etched upon my consciousness forever. The months spent in Aunt Lua's house, when Opa-locka was being planned, and the little more than two years my family were a part of building that city, were a part of my infancy, and but a fraction, in time, of my parents' lives. To few is it given the privilege of seeing a city rise as if at a magician's command in a wilderness. So exciting was that relatively short time, so much a part of my parents' lives was it to become, so often was I to hear it all spoken of, that it seems even now that, if I but close my eyes, I shall see it all, hear it all, relive it all again.

My parents, my sisters, and I - and my brother, who was to be born long after we had left Opa-locka - traveled widely and had many grand adventures and misadventures. Somehow to none of us did any of it seem as wonderful as that brief period when each of us was a part, however insignificant, of the building of a dream. Thus this book could be written - indeed, had to be written.

Having stepped out of the impersonal role of the historian, I seem to have abandoned as well the discipline of narrator, but only in so doing can I make plain how it is that I speak of events that took place when I was an infant, yet know whereof I speak.

It was a short walk from Glenn's house on Deer Run to his mother's on Hunting Lodge Drive, but in the fall and winter of 1925 it was a walk he made almost daily. He would stop in most evenings after dinner, to talk of his dream city of Opa-locka. Aunt Lua had suggested an architect who might find him the theme he wanted for Opa-locka. A devout convert to Christian Science, Lua Andrews Curtiss had, while living in Long Island, New York, attended regularly a Christian Science Church designed by Bernhardt E. Muller, A. I. A., himself a member of that denomination. By coincidence, Mr. Muller had designed a church edifice for the Christian Science Church in Elmira, New York, of which my parents had been members before coming to Florida. (Sadly, that church was never built; I still possess Mr. Muller's lovely water-colour sketch of it.) Mr. Curtiss had taken up his mother's suggestion and entrained for New York City for a conference with Mr. Muller. He returned, having had no more than a luncheon conversation with his new architect, full of the scheme Mr. Muller had suggested - a medieval English village, at its center a castle with towers and embattlements to serve as the civic administration center; along winding lanes would stand thatched-roof cottages, or small English manor houses of brick and half-timber. Mr. Curtiss had engaged Clinton McKenzie, who had laid out the street plan of Coral Gables, to design the layout of Opa-locka. The hammock would be a park, around it a golf course would be laid out. To the east of this the city would stand.

On a cold but sunny afternoon in November Mr. Curtiss took my parents to Opatishawockalocka. In

the pine-dotted prairie to the east of the hammock they stood, listening to Glenn Curtiss describe his city. So vivid was his description, as both my parents were often to recall, they almost saw the buildings and gardens transform the wilderness about them. In her excitement, my mother turned to Mr. Curtiss, clapping her hands together, and exclaimed, "Oh, Glenn, it's like a dream from the Arabian Nights!" On the drive back to Country Club Estates, my father recalled, Mr. Curtiss was unusually silent, even for him. The next morning, before breakfast, Mr. Curtiss went to his study and took from a shelf a volume of *The One Thousand and One Tales From the Arabian Nights*, illustrated with many water-color drawings. He instructed his secretary to send it at once to Mr. Muller; with it went a note from Mr. Curtiss saying, "This is what I want Opa-locka to be like."

Mr. Muller was at first not pleased by the peremptory change in architectural motif. He had never worked in the Arabian style; in fact, his favorite style, and the one for which he was most noted, was what he called his "Robin Hood" style. This was an eclectic blending of elements of buildings from medieval, Tudor, and Elizabethan periods. Each of his Robin Hood houses, including his own home in New Jersey, looked like an illustration from a book of fairy tales. He was to tell my mother later in the summer of 1926, when family affairs required her to make a short trip to New York, how he had sat for hours with the book Mr. Curtiss had sent him and several other illustrated editions of the same volume, seeking inspiration. At one point, as he related it, he had looked up to the view of mountains outside his window, and suddenly the vision he had sought appeared. He quickly made a pencil sketch, then tinted it with water colors. A palace with domes and minarets, that sketch became the basis for the civic administration building (now the Opa-locka City Hall). Faded with the years, that sketch hangs still in the parlor of my mother's present home.

As November of 1925 drew to a close, and Mr. Muller worked busily with his staff in his Manhattan office, Glenn Curtiss began to take stock of the economic developments in Florida. He saw then what was only to be apparent to others months later, that the great Florida boom had peaked. A leveling off had already begun, and he could see a sharp drop in the economy within the next year. Sadly, the dreamer in him was overcome by the practical engineer, the man who, possessing only an eighth-grade education, had become known as the mechanical genius of his time. Opa-locka was not to be built. Having promised my father a gift of land on which to build his home, Mr. Curtiss felt that he should be the first to know. My father told me only many years after how, stopping at the office of the Everglades Construction Company one cold November day, he found a note from Mr. Curtiss, asking him to stop by at Dar Err Aha on his way home to Aunt Lua's house. When my father reached the great house, Mr. Curtiss led him into his study, and there explained to him why he felt impelled to abandon the Opa-locka project. He ended with an apology to my father, who replied, "Glenn, I understand."

That night, after dinner, Mr. Curtiss appeared at his mother's house, repeating to her the reasons he had given for the termination of the plans for Opa-locka. My father recalled that Aunt Lua listened attentively, making no response. When her son had finished, there was a long silence before Aunt Lua spoke. "Glenn, you can't back out now, no matter what. There are too many people counting on you." Glenn replied in a low voice, "You're right, Mother." and left.

On December 11, 1925, Glenn H. Curtiss formed the Opa-locka Company. His half-brother, G. Carl Adams was president and Fred S. Arnold assistant secretary. Among the few stockholders was Roddy Burdine. The vast majority of stock, however, was held by Glenn H. Curtiss. It was his dream, and it was his money that was to make it a reality - or be lost.

### The Building of the Dream: 1926-1930

The date of the beginning of construction at Opa-locka, and the date of its Municipal charter, have been variously given in newspaper articles. One amateur historian wrote that the town was begun in 1917 and chartered in 1925. Both dates are palpably inaccurate. Construction began in February of 1926 and the municipal charter was dated May 14, 1926. Exact dating of the earliest buildings is less easily established,



Above: Opatishawockalocka, called variously Ford's or Cook's Hammock, as it appeared in 1921, looking to the north along a dirt road about where present-day LeJeune Road enters the Opa-locka Airport.



Right: Glenn H. Curtiss, hunting in the prairie east of Cook's Hammock, in 1925. A year later the city of Opa-locka was to rise on the spot.



Irene Bush (left), wife of Frank S. Bush, with Margaret Russell, wife of Charles Russell, in Cook's Hammock, February, 1926.

since neither the Dade County records nor those of the city contain building permits for the period. Working from dated photographs, old newspaper clippings, and the memory of the few survivors among those who were involved from the very start, a reasonably accurate chronology can be constructed.

The earliest building erected within what was to become the municipality of Opa-locka was a wood-frame house built in 1921 to house the foreman of the Curtiss-Bright ranch. The house was destroyed in the hurricane of 1926 and, though a photograph of it survives (taken in June of that year), its exact location cannot now be established with certainty. One Opa-locka pioneer places it in, and another just outside, the hammock called Opatishawackolocka, Cook's Hammock, or Ford's Hammock. It must have been in this house that Thelma Opa-locka Harris, youngest of the children of ranch foreman Clyde Harris, was born on January 3, 1926. The Miami Herald of July 30, 1973 carried the obituary of Arline B. Macaluso, identified as the former Thelma Opa-locka Harris. The heading of the obituary refers to her as "named Opa-locka after the city charter," and elsewhere she is spoken of as "the first female child born in the newly chartered city." She was certainly not named after the charter, nor the first child born in the municipality, since neither community nor charter existed. It would be safe to state (after making exception for any Seminole or Tequesta child born at Opatishawockalocka during the preceding thousand years or so) that this lady was the first child known to have been born in what was soon to become Opa-locka.

To the confusion of historians, the human desire to cite the first (or largest, smallest, or what have you) of anything however insignificant, there are three other candidates for whatever honor may abide in the title of Opa-locka's first child. One I can correctly and happily dismiss as a candidate for the title - myself. An eager publicist of the Opa-locka Company gave to me the undeserved designation as Opa-locka's first child, presumably because my father was the first to build a private residence in Opa-locka and take up residence in it with his wife and three children, of whom I was the youngest. He had, in fact, been preceded by four employees of the Opa-locka Company who, though only a few weeks ahead of my father, moved into four frame houses built by the company as temporary quarters for those in charge of the construction of the community. Of no particular style, they were to be dismantled as soon as the construction of the town was completed. At this writing they still stand on Sharar Avenue, three of them on the north side and one on the south, of the first block of Sharar west of Twenty Seventh Avenue (at that early period called more grandly Grapeland Boulevard). Each of the four employees brought with him his wife, but none had children. I can see the public relations value of my father's having built with his own funds (though on land which was a gift from Glenn Curtiss) a house designed by himself in what he thought to be Arabian style. Why my sisters were ignored, however, and I was chosen for the undeserved title of Opa-locka's first child escapes me; perhaps the publicity man responsible felt that my sisters, being respectively five and nine years old, were able to fend off attacks of alligators, wild cats and rattlesnakes, while the public would be more impressed that my parents risked their three-and-a-half month old son in the Opa-locka wilds. Thelma Opa-locka Harris either escaped his notice, or seemed to him to be born protected against these dangers. Because this unknown writer's fiction has been several times repeated in print, I hereby formally disclaim any right to the title of Opa-locka's first baby.

Another claimant to that title is less easily dismissed. Glenn Curtiss Lauderdale, I have been told, was born in a tent set up in Opa-locka by his father, Willis G. Lauderdale. His birth date is given as February, 1926; if his place and date of birth are as thus stated, he was certainly the first child born in the unregistered subdivision and not yet chartered town of Opa-locka which was indeed being constructed in February of 1926.

The official claimant to the title (and I in no way mean this to be my endorsement of his claim) is the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. William Bunton, who came from Des Moines, Iowa, to Miami in August of 1925, and moved to Opa-locka in May of 1926. The Opa-locka Times of September 8, 1926, hailed him as the first child born in the town of Opa-locka, chartered May 14, 1926. The story further relates that the infant Bunton was presented with a deed to a lot in Opa-locka, gift of the Opa-locka Company. Named for his father, William Banton's present whereabouts remains unknown. My father's view was that Thelma

Opa-locka Harris, Glen Curtiss Lauderdale, and Baby Bunton each had a claim to some sort of first; I am inclined to agree with him.

As to the first building in Opa-locka, that was the aforementioned Foreman Harris house. It may be argued that it was simply there already and Opa-locka grew around it, thus disqualifying it. The hurricane of '26 eliminated the structure from the scene, and thus from the competition for Opa-locka's oldest structure. There can be no doubt that the oldest existing structures in Opa-locka are the four company houses on Sharar, already mentioned; though intended to be temporary, they still stand. A fifth structure on Sharar, long since vanished, appears from the only known photograph of it to have been a warehouse for storage of construction materials. The sixth structure to be built in Opa-locka, and the first built privately, was my father's house at 1340 Peri Street, since 1935 owned by the Strickland family and long since converted to an apartment house.

The exact dating of these structures is, as stated before, now impossible. Charles R. Welch, then a young salesman for the Opa-locka Company, recalls setting up a table at the point where Lejeune Road ended at Cook's Hammock on January 20, 1926. There, from a plat of the non-existent town, he sold lots to those purchasers who took the free ride from the Opa-locka Company's Flagler Street offices in the company's luxurious buses. I have this plat before me as I write. It is unregistered - indeed, no more than a copy of Mr. McKenzie's city plan. On it are such then non-existent and now long vanished landmarks as the golf course, observation tower, aviation field, archery club, and Ebony Horse Circle, north of which is shown a lake (this last either never came into being, or was filled in and totally forgotten.) Mr. Welch has stated that at that date, nothing of Opa-locka had even begun.

The first anniversary issue of the Opa-locka Times, dated Wednesday February 23, 1927, carries a story which states that the first load of rock for construction of the first road was hauled into Opa-locka on February 10, 1926. This would tend to confirm my father's memory that construction of his house began in early February of 1926, and that he moved his family into it in late February, before it had been half completed. My sister Janet (now Mrs. Hall) was nine years old at the time, but remembers of the move only that one day she went to school in Hialeah from Aunt Lua's house in Country Club Estates, having been told that her family were moving to Opa-locka that day and that an Opa-locka Company bus would take her from school to her new home. When pressed for further details she recalls only that she had never known there could be so much white sand, pine trees, and nothing else. For the remainder of the school term, being the only child in Opa-locka of school age, she recalls being taken to Hialeah Elementary school each day and returned in an Opa-locka Company bus containing no one but the driver and herself.

My mother recalls that when she moved to Opa-locka there were piles of building materials here and there, roads being built, and only five structures in the town besides her own home - those already mentioned on Sharar. Charles Russell, project chief for the Opa-locka Company, and his wife Margaret were living in one of these, that at 1311 Sharar. The others, she thinks, were then vacant, but within a few weeks to be occupied, that at 1345 by Mr. and Mrs. William H. Euchner. The others who came later she cannot recall, but thinks Hugh Robinson, who later moved to 721 Sharar, first lived in the house next to the Russells. My mother feels certain that the Russells were alone in Opa-locka for a brief time before she and her family moved to Peri Street, because she recalls meeting them at church services in Hialeah and remarking to them that in a few days we would be joining them in the wilderness, to which Margaret Russell replied with delight at the prospect of no longer being alone there. The Russells and my parents became very close friends, according to my father because for some weeks at least, they were the only inhabitants of Opa-locka, save for the workmen there during the day, and the wild cats at night.

Construction then began at a rapid pace, and many of the men employed in the building of Opa-locka purchased lots there, built temporary houses, and brought their families to live there. Among those my father recalled were Harry Griffiths, his wife Mathilda, and their children, Rose, Bill, Marion, and Buddy. They first lived in a small frame-house built on the east side of Grapeland Boulevard (now Twenty Seventh Avenue) a block or so south of Pine Shadows, the Bush home on Peri Street. Mr. Griffiths and his wife were from Connecticut, of what my father called "fine New England stock." My father remembered them with

great respect, and the children with much affection. Rose, the eldest, I think, became almost like one of our family, helping my mother, who rarely had more than one servant, and especially caring for my sisters and me. Though she was scarcely out of her childhood, she was friend, companion, and helpmate to my mother. My sisters remembered her with great fondness, and I, who have not seen her since I was a little more than two years old, share their feeling for her. When we returned to live near Opa-locka in 1940, Rose had become Mrs. Mead and returned to New Haven to live. We have not seen her since those early days, yet we have had from her a loving letter at every time of loss through those years, and are grateful that she recalls us with the same affection we all still hold for her.

Bill Griffiths, a school-boy when he came with his family to Opa-locka, has come to be one of the city's finest citizens - the very type of man Mr. Curtiss would have wished for his city. He has served his community as Postmaster and at present is its City Manager. An active member of the Methodist Church, he was also, along with my father, one of the charter members of the Opa-locka Masonic Lodge.

Buddy Griffiths, younger brother of Opa-locka's city manager, has also been a credit to his community, for a time as its chief of police, and for many years as a well-liked and respected businessman. Marion Griffiths, youngest of the family, has worked at City Hall for as long as I can remember, an honorable and devoted public servant dedicated, like her brothers, to the civic ideals which Mr. Curtiss held in such high esteem.

Much has been said and written about Glenn H. Curtiss that has been sometimes distorted and at times entirely false. My parents both loved and respected him, and knew him, I think, as intimately as anyone whose path crossed his. His mother, Lua Andrews Curtiss, had been the daughter of a small-town merchant, modestly prosperous, who gave her an education not impressive, perhaps, but more than was thought required for a young lady of her day. She was a talented musician and a painter of some skill. Her mother had been a Miss Morse, niece of Samuel F. B. Morse, an important American Artist as well as developer of the telegraph. Her influence on her son was considerable, and the charge made by a recent biographer of Curtiss that she and her son were never close both my parents dismissed as absurd. She was a complex and difficult individual to understand, as indeed was her son, though in a different way. A correct understanding of them is, in my view, important in recounting the story of the building of Opa-locka, a town which might well fit the description of Coral Gables by the modern architectural critic, Wayne Andrews, as "the last outburst of Victorian romanticism in America."

During most of his married life, Glenn Curtiss and his wife Lena had her mother, Mrs. Jennie Neff, living in their home. During most of that same period, whether that home was in Garden City, Hialeah, or Country Club Estates, Mr. Curtiss provided, not far distant, a home for his mother. One may suspect that Lena Curtiss may have found the proximity of her mother-in-law burdensome, as Glenn Curtiss may have found the constant presence of his mother-in-law. Whether this was the case or not, no one with whom I have spoken who truly knew the Curtiss family well ever commented on it. My parents felt that Aunt Lua and her daughter-in-law Lena did not understand each other, or find great pleasure in each others company. Their conduct, however, was, according to my parents, always correct. When Lena Curtiss took a trip to Europe, she unfailing returned with presents for her mother-in-law. One such trip took place during the winter of my parents' stay in Aunt Lua's house; on her return, Lena Curtiss had not only a gift for Aunt Lua and for Aunt Katie, but one for my mother, whom she barely knew. Each gift had been selected with great care and consideration of the interests of the recipient. Mr. Curtiss, on his part, was equally correct in his treatment of Mr. and Mrs. Neff. When Mr. and Mrs. Curtiss went out, as they did only rarely, often the Neffs accompanied them. Aunt Lua, who led a rather active social life until her sight failed (and that was sometime after my family had left Opa-locka), was never accompanied by her daughter-in-law. During the years of our stay in south Florida between 1925 and 1928, my mother was almost invariably Aunt Lua's companion when she went out.

Lua Curtiss's genuine affection for my mother was something of a surprise to all. Her love for my father was understandable; she would frequently say, much to my father's embarrassment, "Your grandfather Frank Shepard was the most beautiful man I ever knew, and you're the living image of him."

She had confessed to my father that, as a girl, she had felt a childhood infatuation - unrequited, it would appear - for her cousin Frank Shepard. This everyone found understandable. But my mother was a foreigner - worse yet, Irish-born. Aunt Lua had a firm distaste for all Roman Catholics, and, not unlike many other people, assumed all the Irish were of that faith. Somehow she loved my mother anyway, and after coming to love her, confessed her delight on learning that my mother had been born into the Church of Ireland (that is protestant) faith. That my mother and father had each become Christian Scientists in 1917 pleased her even more, since she had also embraced that faith. When, after investigating discreetly into my mother's ancestry, she learned that her father was English-born, she was even further relieved. (That my mother's father was at the time of his death Erbprinz of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha Aunt Lua chose to ignore, since she held the Germans only a little above the Irish; that his mother had been a Romanov, she either never discovered or succeeded in blotting from her consciousness, for the Russians ranked even below the Irish in Aunt Lua's judgement.)

The same biographer whom I have previously mentioned states that Glenn H. Curtiss was also a Christian Scientist. This, much to his mother's regret and to that of my parents, was not so. Indeed, Mr. Curtiss eschewed the use of tobacco and alcohol, but for reasons of health rather than religious principles. He gave generously to churches of every denomination (including the Catholic, though one suspects he did not mention this to his mother), and he felt churches a required part of the communities he built. Each of my parents made their separate attempts to interest him in Christian Science. To each he listened attentively and courteously, and to each made no reply whatever. My father said of him, "I never knew a more honorable man than Glenn, or a more moral man. If he had any religious convictions, he never spoke of them to me. Once, at my invitation, he attended the informal Christian Science Services at Pine Shadows, but he made no comment on them, and never attended again, though he later offered us the use of the Archery Club or the Administration Building when the services had outgrown our livingroom. If he had any religion - and I could never convince myself that he did not, despite his reticence on the matter - I think it must have been just a firm faith in honesty, decency and goodness."

Those informal Christian Science services to which my father referred were the first religious services ever held in Opa-locka. Aunt Lua had once said to my father, "Frank, I want a Christian Science church in each of Glenn's towns, and I want you to promise to form one in Opa-locka." My father never forgot that promise, though it was not until 1950 that he was at last able to fulfil it. That first service at Pine Shadows was attended by friends of Aunt Lua's whom she had rounded up from all over Dade County, since among the then small population of Opa-locka, only my parents, the Russells, and the Euchners were Christian Scientists. My father's memories of that first service provide a touching picture of the great sense of hope and optimism that seemed to mark that early period in Opa-locka's history. My mother and father read the service, and Aunt Lua played the prelude, hymns and solo accompaniment on the new grand piano which was my mother's great pride. The opening hymn, my father recalled, was number 153 in the old Christian Science Hymnal (it is number 2 in the edition now in use). My father selected it because the melody, "Missionary Hymn," was a favorite of his, and because the words seemed to be symbolic of all the hopes for Opa-locka. For this reason, I think they deserve to be quoted here:

A glorious day is dawning, and o'er the waking earth  
The heralds of the morning are springing into birth.  
In dark and hidden places There shines the blessed light;  
The beam of truth displaces the darkness of the night.

The advocates of error, forsee the glorious morn,  
And hears in shrinking terror, the watchword of reform.  
It rings from hill and valley, it breaks oppression's chain,  
A thousand freemen rally, and swell the mighty strain.

The watchword has been spoken, the light has broken forth,



Far shines the blessed token upon the startled earth.  
To hearts and homes benighted the blessed truth is giv'n,  
And peace and love united, point upward unto heav'n.

The solo at that service was sung by the lovely Baroness Royce-Garrett, a great opera singer who, though her story touched Opa-locka only briefly, deserves mention in its history.

The Baron and Baroness Royce-Garrett had suffered terribly in the Russian Revolution and ensuing civil war. (Despite his British surname, the Baron was Russian, a descendant of a Scots engineer who had assisted in the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and for this had been raised to the nobility by Czar Nicholas I, great-great grandfather of my mother,) Baroness Royce-Garret had made her debut at the Paris Opera at the age of sixteen, singing the lead in Aida. Her husband, an Imperial officer, had lost a leg in the Civil War and both he and his wife were imprisoned by the Bolsheviks. Without medical care, the Baron suffered great pain, and his wife frequently attempted to take his mind from his agony by singing to him in their cell. Charmed by her beautiful voice and devotion to her husband, a Bolshevik guard arranged their escape from prison. They made their way to Paris, and at last to the United States. At Ellis Island they were held by immigration authorities who, fearing her maimed husband might become a public charge, were about to refuse them entry into the country. The Baroness sang for the immigration authorities, convincing them that no one with so great a voice would ever lack employment.

For one season Baroness Royce-Garrett sang the leading role in a successful operetta in New York City. A sudden and grave throat ailment threatened her with the loss of her voice, and physicians suggested a stay in Florida. After her arrival in Miami with her husband, she was able to sing a few times, earning little money. My mother was among the many kind people in the area who had tried to help them. A devout member of the Russian Orthodox Church, she had sung at our Christian Science services in gratitude for my family's hospitality. A short time later, her throat condition worsened, and in despair she and her husband left Opa-locka, checking into a hotel on Biscayne Boulevard in Miami. She telephoned my mother to thank her and to say goodbye, but something in the finality of her farewell alarmed my mother. She persuaded Margaret Russell to go with her to Miami, and when they reached the hotel they found a great crowd milling around the entrance. The lovely Baroness had leaped to her death from the roof of the hotel. Soon after the Baron left Miami, promising to keep in touch with all who had helped him. We never heard of him again.

The first formal religious organization in Opa-locka was not to be a Christian Science Church; with only three families of that faith in town, the group was fated to failure. E. Bruce Youngs, who was to be a member of the first Opa-locka Chamber of Commerce and Chief of Police in Opa-locka, was an Episcopalian, as were the Griffiths family. Mr. Youngs, according to an item in the Hialeah Press, dated July 20, 1926, is credited with having started the Episcopal organization in Opa-locka, a mission of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Miami. Their first service was held in July of 1926, but where I am unable to discover. A newspaper item in 1955 stated that the first service was held in the Archery Club, but this cannot be correct since the workbooks of the architect, Bernhardt E. Muller, and such records of the Bush Electric Company which installed the electrical wiring, show the building not yet begun in early August. Holy Cross Episcopal Mission was only a little more successful than the attempted Christian Science group; there were too few Episcopalians. The Griffiths family loyally supported the mission, and when it failed, continued to attend services at Holy Cross Church in Miami. Here, as with the Christian Scientists, it was not until another - this time successful - attempt was made, that Opa-locka was to have an Episcopal Church.

The third attempt at establishment of a church in Opa-locka - and the only one to have survived continuously to the present - was begun by the Rev. Harvey E. Ressler. A clipping, unfortunately undated, from the Opa-locka Times announced that the Rev. Mr. Ressler was holding community church services in the social hall of the Hurt Building on Sundays. My father's recollection was that this was in late summer of 1926. Harry Hurt, owner of the Hurt building, was an Episcopalian I have been informed, but my father

said that Mr. Curtiss ( whose Opa-locka Company held a heavy mortgage on the Hurt Building) had requested that he give the use of the hall for that purpose as a community service. Such a suggestion from Mr. Curtiss was rarely refused, and it was not in this case. These meetings flourished, and within a year Dr. Ressler had organized the Opa-locka Temple, which held services in a wood-frame building (long since vanished) on land supplied by Mr. Curtiss on Ebony Horse Circle, Jann Avenue. Like the building, Ebony Horse circle has long since vanished, but eventually the Opa-locka Bank building on Bahman Avenue was purchased by the congregation and became First Baptist Church of Opa-locka, and remains a part of that church complex, although a larger building was erected many years later. The bank, it must be recorded, never opened. The building was designed by Mr. Muller to resemble an ancient treasure vault of an Arabian Prince. Completed late in 1926, it remained vacant until acquired by the Baptists, one of whom recalls with what difficulty they finally removed the vault in order to adapt the structure to use as a church. A Gothic window was installed in the north wall and is still visible, oddly out of place on the original Arabian-Egyptian building Mr. Muller had designed. Fortunately, the columns, with their Lotus capitals, which appear in Muller's original drawing, seem never to have been set in place. I cannot think that they, modelled as they were on the columns of the temple at Karnak, would have seemed at home with the Baptists, or the Baptists with them.

Dr. Ressler, my father regretfully recalled, shared Aunt Lua's sentiments concerning Catholics. Unfortunately, he considered Christian Science even more devilish, and was determined to save my parents from its clutches. My father had endured such treatment before; he told me once, very late in life, how his own mother said, when he told her of his decision to follow that faith, "Frank, you are my son and I have always loved you, but I would rather see you in your grave than following that heathen worship." His father's attitude had been much the same. My mother, whose own father had died before she was born and whose mother died some seven years later, had no parental objections to contend with. Her Great Aunt Louise, who with her husband had been appointed mother's guardian, took a broader view of religion, as did most of her relations. They regarded the presence among them of a convert to Mary Baker Eddy's teachings as merely odd, if not rather charmingly quaint.

Dr. Ressler apparently made several attempts to redeem my parents from what he first thought to be their folly. My father endured his visits at first with courtesy, but in the end, having heard his religion denounced as devilish idolatry and worse, my father requested the good reverend to leave, and enter his house no more. The years permitted my father at last to look back on that experience with humor, and the good reverend doctor has long since gone to his reward. My father used to suggest that, whichever direction he had taken, the good man would doubtless be astonished to find all faiths represented there.

In the first months since the building of Opa-locka had began, buildings began to rise as if by magic. Construction of the civic administration building was still under way when, at eight o'clock on the night of May 14, 1926, twenty eight registered voters and qualified electors residing in the subdivision called Opa-locka met in the firehouse (now the office of the water department), the only completed building large enough to hold that number of people. Unfortunately, the names of those twenty-eight are not recorded. Carl Adams was present, acting as chairman of the meeting long enough for the group to elect as permanent chairman Dan Chappell, and Mrs. Myna McCarter as secretary. Having determined that the twenty-eight represented more than two thirds of the qualified electors residents in the area, it was unanimously voted to charter the town of Opa-locka (this was the spelling consistently used in the charter - the only place where any consistency in spelling can be discovered in those earliest documents.) John C. Secord was elected Mayor; H. Sayre Wheeler, President of the Town Council; Harry Hurt, Charles Russell, C.E. Long, and J. W. Leigh, Councilmen; H. S. Conklin, Town Marshall; and R.A Samson, Town Clerk.

Other institutions befitting to the newly acquired status of a town were shortly afterward established in Opa-locka. Again owing to the loss of early records, the precise dating of these is not possible. Surely the earliest of the groups formed must have been the Hunt Club. This was a project undertaken jointly by Mr. Curtiss and Mr. Merrick, founder of Coral Gables. Mr. Curtiss had long been a hunting enthusiast, and had even leased a grouse moor in England for his use on his visits there. The Opa-locka Hunt, Mr. Curtiss felt,

would be appreciated by my mother, remembering her British birth. Mr. Curtiss did not know (and was never told, though he must have guessed it) that my mother was an ardent foe of blood sports. Only once did she don the full hunting kit the group adapted and ride with them, and this was for the Opa-locka Progress Parade down Flagler Street in Miami, part of the promotional scheme to advertise the new community. My father, similarly garbed, rode in that same parade - proof of his devotion to his friend Glenn Curtiss; my father disliked horses and riding and, in fact, rode very poorly, as he insisted sailors did by tradition.

A riding academy was already established, with a fine stable just north of Cook's Hammock. Here Mr. Curtiss kept the pair of fine riding horses, a gift from James H. Bright to Glenn and Lena Curtiss. Glenn disliked riding almost as much as did my father, and his wife (despite one biographer's vivid description of Lena's love of horses and riding skill) disliked the creatures even more than her husband or my father did. Not one of her friends could remember Lena Curtiss on, or even very near, a horse. This proved a great advantage to my mother, who rode daily on Glenn's mount during the years of her stay in Opa-locka. She was not only an enthusiastic, but an expert horsewoman. Carl Jensen, Mr. Muller's assistant architect, rode with my mother with instructions from my father to try to prevent her from taking spectacular jumps. Mr. Jensen lived with us during the two years he served as Mr. Muller's architect-in-residence, reporting constantly to Mr. Muller's office in New York on the progress of the building of Opa-locka.

Aunt Lua Curtiss, who had founded the Hialeah Women's Club, requested that my mother found one in Opa-locka. My mother loved Lua Curtiss dearly, and her wish was usually my mother's command. But mother thought women's clubs a bit exclusionary - if not snobbish. She solved her dilemma by founding the Thursday Club, open to any Opa-locka woman who cared to join. It had neither charter nor rules, and totally ignored parliamentary procedure. It met each Thursday in a member's home, and the programs varied widely, including informal concerts by Mana-Zucca, noted composer and concert pianist, or readings of her own poetry by Mrs. Robert Eugene Laramore (already in 1927 author of two volumes of fine poetry, and in 1931 to be appointed Poet Laureate of Florida, a post she held until her death on December 21, 1975, making the name Vivian Yeiser Laramore Rader - she married in 1946 Paul Rader, pioneer Miamian - synonymous, as the great Robert Frost once observed, with Florida poetry). The lovely Russian soprano, Baroness Royce-Garrett, has already been mentioned as one of the feature guest of the Thursday Club. Rufus Steele, noted columnist of The Christian Science Monitor and a winter resident of Miami, was guest speaker on at least two occasions, and - a curious juxtaposition - so was Prince Sali, an English-educated member of an ancient Hindu family in Ceylon, who talked to the ladies on the subject of astrology.

Only a few are left to recall these exciting times when Opa-locka was host to all the great and the near-great who visited south Florida. A trip to Opa-locka, with its unique architecture and its bustle of construction, was considered a must for visitors to greater Miami in those days. And for those who were neither great nor near-great, the Opa-locka Company's luxuriose buses brought visitors (free of charge) to the new town from its Flagler Street offices. Early in 1926 Mr. Curtiss had caused the erection of a zoo, displaying animals typical of the Florida wilds, to provide entertainment for visitors and townspeople. (This survived into the mid-thirties, when lack of funds forced the city to sell the animals.) An afternoon visit on weekends to Opa-locka was a popular jaunt for people from all over Dade County. The zoo was almost certainly the first - and long the only - one in Dade. Allen Morris, founder and editor of The Florida Handbook and long the secretary of the Florida House of Representatives, only recently recounted how, as a young reporter in Miami, he would bring his children to Opa-locka to visit the zoo and wander along the streets of what he still recalls as a beautiful little town.

In August of 1926 the Dade County school board set up two portable schoolrooms on Dunad Avenue. In September, the Opa-locka Elementary School opened with two teachers, Mrs. Katheryn Bennet and Miss Mary A. Borosky. The Opa-locka Parent Teachers Association was formed, and Mrs. Frank S. Bush elected its first president. The some twenty-five students enrolled (among whom were my sister Judith, entering first grade, and sister Janet, relieved at last of her solitary trips to Hialeah), but they were not to occupy their wooden schools for many days. Both the buildings, and a third smaller building between them housing

boy's and girl's washrooms, were swept away on the night of September 17-18, 1926 by a hurricane, the traumatic effects of which on Opa-locka were to be both immediate and long-lasting.

My mother recalls that August and September of 1926 had been especially warm. It was her second summer in Florida, and the first for many of Opa-locka's inhabitants. Friday, September 17, was windy and overcast, and she remembers that as she was leaving the bank in Country Club Estates a black workman she knew from Opa-locka said. "Mrs. Bush, the black and red flags are up." This was meaningless to my mother, who proceeded on her errand to Moore Furniture Company to purchase a piece of furniture, for which she had drawn cash from the bank. The cashier at the furniture store mentioned that hurricane warnings were up. "I had only a vague notion that a hurricane was a wind storm, rather dangerous sometimes," my mother related. "Just as I was about to pay for my purchase, I drew back the cash - a rather large sum - and told the clerk to charge it. My husband had made it a rule that I pay cash - he was so proud of the fact that Pine Shadows had been built and furnished without credit - but something made me think I might need the money. It was a fortunate impulse; it was a long time before things were to be normal, including banking, and that sum of money, several hundred dollars as I recall, proved useful."

That evening, back at home, my mother noticed that the wind was rising in ever increasing gusts. The maid had done the laundry and hung it out to dry late in the afternoon, and mother went to check it. Though it was still damp she took it down and brought it into the house, so fiercely was it flapping in the wind. Carl Jensen retired to his first-floor room in the east wing, my mother tucked my sisters and me into bed in the upstairs nursery, where Rose Griffiths also slept, then she and my father retired to their room downstairs in the west wing. At about midnight the french doors which opened from the nursery to a wide canopied balcony crashed open, waking Rose and my sisters. (I am informed that I slept peacefully through what was to be the historic hurricane of 1926, so all the information herein derives from the memories of others; had I awakened, I would scarcely have been much more reliable as a witness, since I was then eleven months old.)

Summoned from their room by Rose, my parents managed to close the french doors, but had to move heavy furniture against them to keep them shut, so strong was the wind. Mother, father, and Carl Jensen then proceeded to check the windows downstairs. Many years later Rose Griffiths was to recall vividly watching from the upstairs room the umbrella-table on the south terrace dancing wildly but briefly in the wind, then vanishing. Curiously, the umbrella, ripped to shreds, was later found caught in a pine tree blocks away; the cast-iron table was never seen again. After the flight of the umbrella-table Rose saw, to her horror, her family's house lifted by the winds from its foundations and crash to the ground, where it began to disintegrate in the wind.

Rose at once fled downstairs to inform my parents of what she had seen. Mother immediately insisted that she and father, with Carl, go to the Griffiths aid. Both Carl and my father tried to convince my mother that it was hopeless, insisting that no one could survive in the wind and the blowing debris. Tree-branches, timber, and great slabs of metal roofing were flying through the air. They tried to conceal from Rose their conviction that her family were already lost. They locked all the doors, ordered my mother to remain in the house, then proceeded to the task of securing windows and mopping up water that seemed to be coming in at every crack. Water coming through the windows and french doors upstairs had already begun to form a rapidly increasing flow down the staircase.

My mother simply donned a bathing suit and a raincoat and slipped out the kitchen door. She made her way to the porte-cochere, where her car was parked, and turned on its headlights, aimed in the general direction of the Griffiths home. "I can't imagine how I made it, or how long it took. I simply prayed silently and tried to dodge the hurtling debris. When I reached the place where their house had been, only a few blocks of the foundation remained. Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths and their children had taken refuge in the family car, and I could not persuade them that they must come with me. They were trying to convince me that I must join them in the car, before I was killed. I finally won out by the expedient of grabbing their youngest child, Marion, and starting out. The other children and then their parents followed me, each clinging to the other and crouching as low as possible in the shallow ditch along the roadside. We were like a

human chain, crawling through the darkness and the terrible wind, not even sure we were headed in the right direction until I caught a glimpse of the headlights of my car."

Rose Griffiths, now Mrs. Mead, has written of my mother, "I have always felt she saved the lives of my parents, four brothers and three sisters." Her memory of the trek through the storm is identical to that of my mother, though she has added that: "She had no more than gotten them out of the car - and far enough away - when a huge tree fell on the car. I have never forgotten the courage she had - no thought of danger of herself, but to save others."

It was a terrifying night but at last, around eight in the morning, the wind abated. Like most newly-arrived Floridians, few were aware that the eye of the storm had passed and that the winds would soon return from the opposite direction. My mother started out on foot to the Locke Grocery, in the Hurt building. En route she met Clyde Mott, a friend and employee of the Bush Electric Company, who was coming to see how our family had fared through the storm. He joined my mother in the walk to the Hurt Building, where they found little that was not water-soaked. They carried off as many canned things as they could, though most of the labels had been soaked off, and they were all to make a guessing game of what was to be found in each tin. Shortly after they returned to the house on Peri Street, the winds began to return, raging again until late in the afternoon of Saturday, September 18.

Northern newspapers reported that south Florida had all but been swept off the map. Glenn H. Curtiss and his family, according to New York City papers, had all been killed in the storm. It was days before communications were restored and northerners were able to learn the fate of friends or relatives here. Damage had been considerable throughout south Florida, but Opa-locka had suffered less than many areas. The Opa-locka Times may, however, have been guilty at least of understatement when in its issue of Wednesday, September 22, it carried the somewhat conservative headline "Tropical Hurricane Visits Lower East Coast of Florida But Causes Only Slight Damage to Opa-locka." This issue, reduced to one fourth its normal size due to lack of paper, also carried on its front page a photograph of the two portable schools which, with their adjoining necessary, had been demolished by the storm. With the photograph was printed a sketch of the magnificent new school in the Arabian style which Mr. Muller had drawn. This building, however, was a part of the dream that was not to be.

It is true that those buildings constructed to Bernhardt Muller's design had survived with relatively slight damage. The cap of the tallest minaret of the civic administration building had been blown away, but this, and all other traces of the hurricane in Opa-locka, was the subject of instant attention. Even while directing (and financing) most of the relief work in the Hialeah, Country Club Estates and Opa-locka area, Mr. Curtiss at once set workmen to the task of eliminating all evidence of the tropical fury. The damage to his own home had been minimal, though its extensive gardens were almost totally destroyed. Hialeah had suffered the greatest damage of the three communities, and there Mr. Curtiss, with his friend James H. Bright, concentrated much of their relief efforts.

My father's house remained in sound condition, though very much dampened and its stucco walls, both interior and exterior, badly cracked. This gave Mr. Muller the opportunity to alter those features in my father's design which he so greatly disliked. The stucco work Mr. Muller thought too rough-textured, and this now was completely redone. The arches of which my father was so proud, but so offended Mr. Muller, were completely rebuilt, as were the parapets - all to Mr. Muller's satisfaction. The many temporary homes thrown together by workmen drawn to Opa-locka by the building boom its creation had brought in its wake were nearly all destroyed. The Griffiths family were not alone in being homeless. My father moved his family into a smaller house west of Pine Shadows on Peri Street, leaving his own home to the Griffiths family until such time as a new home had been built for them, (they remained for some weeks, but, much to my parents' regret, moved into a tent before their new home was completed. My father felt, that since their family was larger than ours, they should stay at Pine Shadows until their home was ready. Both Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths felt that they ought not keep a family out of its own home.)

Mr. Curtiss and Mr. Bright at once organized a relief service for everyone in the three communities on the land formerly the Curtiss-Bright Ranch. F. B. Squires was placed in charge of the Opa-locka relief

efforts, and gave my mother the assignment of driving a truck to carry milk to families in the area. She was also given a shovel, which came in handy to dig herself out when her truck was stuck in the sand. The repair of Opa-locka and the continuation of its construction continued, but Mr. Curtiss gave much of his attention - and his money - to relief of those hurt by the storm. It was not to become apparent for another year that among the chief casualties of the storm was Opa-locka itself; the hurricane brought an immediate end to the already dwindling land boom in south Florida. But Mr. Curtiss refused to accept the fact. "In times like this, Frank," my father recalled Mr. Curtiss saying, "it's men with capitol who must keep things going. To hold back will bring on economic collapse." Loyal, Mr. Curtiss continued to build houses no one could buy, and my father followed his example. My father's investment was less, but unlike Mr. Curtiss's, it was total.

The optimism of the Opa-locka Times made even the hurricane seem an advantage. The bridal paths, it reported, were greatly improved by fallen trees which made for interesting hurdles. Construction of the eighteen-hole golf course continued, and the Archery clubhouse was begun in late August of 1926. In December the clubhouse opened, with a party for all the children of Opa-locka. Mr. Curtiss sent my mother to Miami to purchase an individual present for each of the town's children. That same month the olympic-sized swimming pool of the Archery Club was opened, with Alexander Ott as director of an elaborate water show, starring his son, little Jackie Ott, to be joined by Johnny Weismuller early in 1927. "Robin Hood Golf," or archery golf was introduced by Howard Hill, a strapping young man, part Cherokee Indian, from Alabama. Who invented the game is not recorded: Mr. Curtiss, Howard Hill; perhaps both together. Certainly I never heard of it save in Opa-locka, and even there it is all but forgotten. It was, I am told, played by shooting with bow and arrow at a coconut, mounted on the poles marking each hole of the golf course. Score was kept in the same manner as in golf, counting shots of the arrow rather than strikes of the club. Mr. Curtiss, my mother, Carl Jensen, and Mr. and Mrs. Hill became the most enthusiastic practioners of the sport, and all became adept at it. Many others tried it as something new. It appears to have vanished now, save from the few survivors from those days.

A Chamber of Commerce - that essential to the American community - was founded, though at what date one can now but surmise. All records of it have vanished save for a newspaper clipping (undated) which my sister preserved. The account states that the chamber was founded at the newly-completed archery clubhouse, so one may guess that the date was early in December of 1926. Initial membership was seventy-eight, and F. B. Squires was elected president; John M. McGreevy, first vice-president; J.W. Proctor, second vice-president; E. Bruce Youngs, secretary; Harry Hurt, treasurer. Directors were H. Sayre Wheeler, J.C. Secord, William Bryden, Frank S. Bush, and James C. Richardson. The present Chamber of Commerce, founded many years later, has no records of this organization, and its members appeared never to have heard of it.

A volunteer police force was also formed, its members supplied with handsome uniforms of horizon blue, black puttees and Sam Browne belts of the same color. Mr. Curtiss was the donor of the colorful uniforms. Chief of Police was E. Bruce Youngs; assistant chief, Charles S. Russell; duty sergeant, A.E. Tompkins; traffic sergeant, M.J. Johnson; captain, C.E. Long. The assistant chief was mounted on horseback, and the traffic sergeant was provided with the finest of motorcycles - again gifts of Mr. Curtiss.

A special Federal Census taken at Opa-locka on December 15, 1926, showed the population of Opa-locka at that date to have been 251 persons. As late as 1976, the Census Bureau refused to reveal any information other than that figure; the bureau must have been less tight-lipped in 1926, however, since it released to the Opa-locka Times who proudly published it in its edition of January 26, 1927, the information that Opa-locka's population included 162 white males, 89 white females, 25 black males, and 4 black females. The curious arithmetical discrepancy is not mine, but that of the Opa-locka Times; I derive a total of 280, but make no conjecture as to the proper solution to the problem. The same article gives the former residences of the population as: Georgia 43; New York, 36; elsewhere in Florida, 20; Alabama, 19; Kentucky, 19; Connecticut, 15; Massachusetts, 11; Pennsylvania, 10; Virginia, 10; Missouri, 9; Ohio, 8; New Jersey, 7; Cuba, 5; North Dakota, 4; England, 3; West Virginia, 3; California, 3; Iowa, 3; Illinois, 2;

Maine, 2; Michigan, 2; Minnesota, 2; North Carolina, 2; Texas, 2; Colorado, 1; District of Columbia, 1; Indiana, 1; Maryland, 1; Wisconsin, 1; Wales, 1. Again, my arithmetic does not agree with that of the Times (or the Census Bureau, whichever is to blame). One can at least gather that Opa-locka's first citizens represented a wide cross-section of humanity.

The same edition of the Opa-locka Times from which these figures are taken (one of the few copies of that paper which seem to have survived), one learns that Fire Chief Wade A. Bortle has resigned, and that the Town Council has appointed in his stead Hugh Robinson, former captain of the Keyport, New Jersey, fire department. Further intelligence has it that the Locke Grocery and Market in the Hurt Building has been purchased by Frederic B. Squires, in partnership with Ray & Ray, "who have served this Community so faithfully with their wagon service. The new store was to bear the proud name of The Post Office Market, since Opa-locka's first postmaster, Mrs. Parthenia Samson, was to dispense the United States Postal services there. One may also learn that Mrs. Margaret Hurt have an informal supper party at the home of her son, Harry. The guests included most of the important citizens of the Miami area, and dined in "a charming patio, where colored lights and garden flowers made a festive scene." Among the guests listed as in attendance, I think only my mother and Alfred I. Barton, not yet the arbiter elegantiarum of Miami society he was later to become, survive. Mr. and Mrs. Glenn H. Curtiss are also listed; Mr. Curtiss was there, according to my father's recollection, but not Lena, who rarely visited Opa-locka.

The year 1927 was to open with a bright - if somewhat tense - optimism for Opa-locka. The Seaboard railine had been completed on the right-of-way given by Mr. Curtiss to induce its builders to curve it to include Opa-locka and Hialeah. The first great event of 1927, and perhaps the most memorable in its history, was the celebration planned by Mr. Curtiss for the inauguration of the Seaboard's new Orange Blossom special, hailed as the most luxurious mode of travel between New York and Miami. The inaugural trip was to commence from Miami on Saturday, January 8, 1927. The first stop of the train's departure from Miami was to be at Opa-locka. Elaborate preparations for the event were begun months before the date. Rare trees, plants and shrubs from the vast slathouse Mr. Curtiss had erected near Cook's Hammock were offered at no charge to Opa-locka homeowners. To further encourage the citizenry to beautify their homes and grounds, contests were held for the best-kept house and the best-kept grounds, with cash prizes for the winners. The continued presence of the four temporary company houses greatly vexed Mr. Muller, since they stood out in such sharp contrast to his exotic buildings. These wooden houses were freshly painted, brightly colored awnings were hung at each of their windows, and their grounds lavishly landscaped to appease Mr. Muller.

Lest the reader think from this that Mr. Muller was a curmudgeon, something of his life and career and character ought to be included here. Bernhardt Emil Muller was born at Fremont, Nebraska on December 27, 1878. From 1903 to 1905 he had studied at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, after which he spent a year of travel and study of architecture in France, Italy, Austria, and Germany. After eight years with several architectural firms, as draftsman and later as designer, he opened his own firm in New York City in 1914, and in 1924 was honored by election to membership in the American Institute of Architects. (I might add that he was made a member emeritus of the Institute in 1952, continued his practice until 1962, and died in September of 1964). I have mentioned that he was a devout Christian Scientist and had designed many church edifices of that denomination, and that in this connection had first come to the attention of my parents and Aunt Lua Curtiss. He and Glenn Curtiss became - and remained - close friends, despite the considerable differences in their character. Mr. Curtiss was not a man of many words; Mr. Muller could, and often did, expound on theories of art, music, or literature. The differences between the two men were great, but so were the similarities. Both were men of great vision, of absolute integrity, and unimpeachable reputation. Both also commanded and retained the lasting respect and affection of those who truly knew them.

To Carl Jensen, Mr. Muller's associate, he was like a second father. Carl always addressed him as "Uncle Ben," as my parents also came to do. Since Mr. Muller and his wife were childless, I think that Carl and my parents were rather like surrogate children to both the Mullers. His German ancestry emerged in

this role; if he was affectionate and kindly, he could also be stern in his rebuke. He expected perfection from those in his employ, and from those whom he loved, as well. It was Mr. Muller who selected the elaborate Arabian costumes which were to be worn at the Arabian Nights Fantasy planned for the opening of the railroad. Authentic and costly, the costumes had been rented from a New York theatrical costumer and dispatched to my parent's house and entrusted into their care. One Sunday night, a week or so before the great pageant, the guests at my parents' Sunday evening "At Home," which had become something of a tradition at Pine Shadows, decided to try on the Arabian costumes. Delighted with their exotic appearance, they then piled into their automobiles, garbed as Arabs, and drove to Miami, making an impromptu late Sunday evening parade along Flagler Street. Inevitably, one or two of the guests had brought with them the flasks so essential in those days of prohibition (and always for guests of my parents, who neither then nor at any time served intoxicants in their home), had a touch or more from the flasks and became overly boisterous. One of these had the brilliant notion that it might be amusing to drive through the Halcyon Arcade (a pedestrian thoroughfare lined with elegant shops). This he did, followed by the entire cavalcade of cars, including even those whose drivers were intoxicated by nothing more than the gaiety of the moment. Conspicuous among the latter group was the dark Prince Sali at the wheel of his red Rolls Royce filled with ladies in harem costume, among them my mother and Margaret Russell. The impromptu parade must have been something of a surprise to those Miamians who may have been downtown that Sunday evening.

In defense of the respectable citizenry of Opa-locka, those involved in what was to become known as the Costume Scandal were largely people from Country Club Estates, Coral Gables, or Coconut Grove. My parents, Carl Jensen, and the Russells were the only Opa-lockans involved. The other members of the party shall go unidentified, though they represented families whose names were then and for many years afterward the most prominent in greater Miami. By the time reports of the incident, with considerable added embroidery, reached Aunt Lua Curtiss and Uncle Ben Muller, both were thoroughly outraged. Neither of my parents ever quoted to me in any detail the comments made to them by Mrs. Curtiss or Mr. Muller on the matter. They were, I have inferred, both lengthy and more than a little astringent.

Strange as it may now appear, in that brief but wonderful period of 1926 to 1928, coming to Opa-locka was considered to be very chic. Everyone, from socialite to ordinary tourist, made at least one trip to what one may appropriately say had become a mecca for Miamians. My father, who was himself free of any social pretensions and found them distasteful in others, often remarked that there seemed to be an unwritten law in the greater Miami area that no northwest address was socially acceptable, with the exception of Country Club Estates and Opa-locka. I need not point out that this observation still remains true of Country Club Estates (long since renamed Miami Springs) but not, I fear, of Opa-locka. In 1927 a young lady of good family but slim purse decided to establish the first Social Register for Miami, (She died not long ago, leaving a considerable fortune amassed from that enterprise.) Mr. Curtiss and my parents declined her gracious invitation to be therein listed. She bore, apparently, with great courage the absence of my parents from her blue book, but found Mr. Curtiss's lack of patronage more riling, and thereafter explained his absence on the grounds that she would not ask him since, after all, "he was only a mechanic; very rich, of course, but still a mechanic." Mr. Curtiss found this story very amusing, though my parents did not.

James H. Bright, beloved friend and partner of Mr. Curtiss, managed to survive some years despite exclusion from the little blue book. Eventually it became an absurdity to exclude him, though the editress was loath to have the inelegant name of Hialeah in the sacrosanct pages of her register. Mr. Bright, who contentedly lived in his Hialeah home from 1921 until his death in 1959, stubbornly showed no inclination to move. The prominence of Mr. Bright demanded that his name be listed, so the enterprising lady did so, giving his address as "Olive Drive, Deer Park, Miami Springs." The fact that neither Olive Drive nor Deer Park was in Miami Springs - both are and have always been in Hialeah - never perturbed the patrician editress who thus kept from her elegant pages the inelegant name of Hialeah. Mr. Bright, a grand old man who needed no assurance as to who and what he was, found this solution to the lady's grave problem very



entertaining.

The great day of the Arabian Nights Fantasy which was to mark the first stop of the Orange Blossom Special in Opa-locka must also mark the highwater of the town's success. The many varieties of tropical trees which Mr. Curtiss, with the advice of Dr. John C. Gifford, had caused to be planted along Opa-locka's streets, were not yet a year old. Potted palms by the hundreds, and potted flowering plants of every available kind, were placed about the city's main buildings and along its streets. Opa-locka bore a remarkable resemblance to an Arabian village at festival time when the train arrived on that Saturday afternoon of January 8, 1927. Turbanned sheiks on snow-white chargers rode to greet the train, from which alighted, perhaps somewhat shaken, the Governor of Florida, John W. Martin, the President of the Seaboard Air Line Railway, S. Davies Warfield, and a score or more of officials and notables of every degree, representing politics and commerce throughout the state, and the Eastern Seaboard. "Everyone who was anyone was there," it has often been said. A few people, however, must be noted among the absent.

Mr. Warfield, president of the railway, was the uncle and had once been the guardian of one Bessie Wallis Warfield, at that time married to Lt. (j.g.) Earl Winfield Spencer, Jr., U.S.N., a pilot. Ten years and one marriage later, as Mrs. Wallis Simpson, this lady was to become a household word as the divorced American for whom King Edward VIII of Great Britain was to abandon his throne. She survives still, as Duchess of Windsor, perhaps no longer a household word, but certainly one of the century's celebrities. Ten years after the first trip of the Orange Blossom Special, in all the cities and towns along its route, the story grew that young Wallis, later to win the love of a King, accompanied her uncle on that tour. In newspaper accounts and town histories compiled long after the event, this statement continues to appear in the guise of fact. It appears not to have occurred to anyone to ask the lady herself except for a brash young man of twenty-one, myself. In the season of 1946-47 I was working in New York City, and was often found useful by hostesses as "an extra man" for dinners. At one such affair, the premiere performance of Gian-Carlo Menotti's "The Medium" and "The Telephone," my hostess was Jay Gould's daughter Anna, Duchess of Talleyrand, a noted celebrity hunter. Her catch for that night included the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Down the line a bit was my friend Count Lanfranco Rasponi, who doubtless was the reason I was selected when the "extra man" was needed. Thinking I might never have such an opportunity again, I asked the Duchess of Windsor if she had, in fact, been with her uncle on that great occasion for Opa-locka, and described something of the Arabian pageant. Her reply, rendered with admirable courtesy, was to the effect that had she ever been present at so charming an event, or heard of a town with so lovely a name, she could never have forgotten it. As it happened, she added, on that date she was returning from China to Maryland, where (as her published memoirs reveal) she was to divorce Lieutenant Spencer.

Among the other notable absentees on that memorable January day must, I fear, be added the name of Lena Neff Curtiss, Glenn's wife. Nowhere in the printed reports of that great day is she mentioned, nor did anyone ever recall her being there. Mr. Curtiss (not in costume, it must be noted) was everywhere, yet unobtrusive, snapping pictures with his favorite camera, a 1918 Kodak which he later gave to my father. The ceremonial duties of greeting the visiting dignitaries Glenn had surrendered to his half-brother, G. Carl Adams, who, richly garbed as the Grand Vizier of the Sheikdom of Opa-locka, mounted on a fine Arab steed, rode up to the assemblage of visitors, leaning from his mount with a flourish captured by his half-brother's camera, presented to Mr. Warfield a scroll of welcome, prepared in what Mr. Euchner, publicist for the Opa-locka Company, had presumed was a suitably Arabian style.

All who remember that day - and, alas, there are not many left - recall it as if it were an enchanted dream. I, who have no personal recollection of it, yet have heard it so often and so vividly described, can almost summon up a vision of it. Yet every attempt to write out a description of it falls short of my aim. The newspaper accounts printed at the time make it sound like the typical real-estate hokum of the twenties, yet the photographs of the event which have survived capture something of the mysterious charm it left in the minds of those who recall it. The Jewish peddler, passing out candy to all the children, an Arab riding a camel past the graceful archway of the entrance to the Administration Building, my father, as Ali Baba, standing in the courtyard of that beautiful building, Charles R. Welch as a muezzin calling the faithful

to prayer from one of the building's graceful minarets - all give some hint of the wonder of that day. Nothing, I fear, can quite transmit the moment's magic to those who were not a part of it.

None of the photographs taken that day that have come into my possession show the delightful railroad station which Mr. Muller designed for Opa-locka, nor among surviving witnesses to that day can I find any who are quite certain whether it had been built yet at that date. A worksheet from Mr. Muller's office stamped as received August 12, 1926, refers to the railway station as "proposed - estimated cost, \$50,000." An advertisement of the Opa-locka Company, distributed in December of 1926, shows a drawing (recognizable, though considerably larger than the structure actually built), and a photograph of the station under construction is undated. Mr. Muller's work books, of which I have but two, do not show the date request for plans was received, or date of completion of the plans, in 1926. Since it is certain that Mr. Muller was the architect, I conclude that the station must have been built after January 1927. In any case, it is, in my opinion, one of the three most beautiful of the more than eighty-six buildings Mr. Muller designed for Opa-locka, the other two being the Administration Building and the apartment house on Sesame Street designed for my father. All have suffered from neglect, alteration, or the ravages of time.

Looking backward, one seems to sense an anti-climax setting in upon Opa-locka after the great Arabian Nights fantasy. Clearly this was not apparent to those taking part in the events of the time. Mr. Curtiss continued to order buildings constructed by the Opa-locka Company, and my father, who had ordered plans for his apartment house in late December of 1926, received Mr. Muller's designs in early 1927 and began construction. This was the first point at which my father had gone into debt. His house, the several small houses he had built to sell or to rent, his electrical shop, and the laundry-dry cleaning establishment which he had purchased (from an owner who had gone bankrupt), all had been cash transactions. Now, for the first time, the handsome cash flow from the Bush Electric Company which had, since his arrival in Florida in 1925 been very ample, was insufficient to support his projects of expansion. Wisdom would have suggested that he postpone or abandon altogether his plans for expansion. But, despite the increasing depression throughout south Florida, accelerated by the terrible hurricane of September 1926, Opa-locka was humming with activity. When one examines the matter from hindsight, it is clear that this activity was generated primarily from one source - Glenn Curtiss, who continued to pour into Opa-locka his own funds. My father's income had derived almost entirely from his company's work on Opa-locka Company projects. This exclusive use by the Opa-locka Company of the services of the Bush Electric Company did not pass unnoticed, and was to produce at least one uncomfortable personal problem for my father.

When Harry Hurt began construction of the building which still bore his name until after World War II, when it was altered and renamed the Opa-locka Hotel, my father asked Mr. Hurt if he wished the Bush Electric Company to install the wiring. Mr. Hurt replied that he had already selected another contractor and my father, having ample work, took this with no ill feeling, nor did Mr. Hurt display any unfriendliness in the matter. However, when the building was ready for wiring, Mr. Curtiss stopped by to check the progress - a not unreasonable action, since the Opa-locka Company had a first mortgage on the structure. Learning that another electrical contractor had been selected, he informed Mr. Hurt that he expected the contract to be given to the Bush Electric Company. How he expressed this idea, my father could only guess. In any case, Harry Hurt came to my father and asked him to take the contract. When my father replied that he had thought the contract had already been given to another company, Mr. Hurt responded with some heat that he had been informed that only Frank Bush's company was going to wire any building financed by the Opa-locka Company. Mr. Hurt's displeasure at the state of affairs was very clear, and my father was quite disturbed by it. When he spoke to Mr. Curtiss about this contract, he suggested that, while grateful for Mr. Curtiss's kindness, he felt that such preferential treatment was unfair to other contractors, and would create ill feeling. Mr. Curtiss replied simply, "Frank, I want everything in Opa-locka to be perfect - even the wiring - and you're the only man I can trust to make sure things are done right." That remained the Opa-locka Company policy and, much to my father's regret, he never felt that Harry Hurt entirely forgave him for a situation over which he had no control.

— If my mother felt that my father's venture into projects on borrowed money was as a cloud, however small, on the horizon, her misgivings were not shared by others in Opa-locka. Building continued and, if buyers were few - and if among them defaulted mortgages were rather more than usual - the trend did not become apparent for many months. The Thursday Club, the Home Demonstration Club, the Opa-locka Hunt, and the Music Club Sayre Wheeler founded continued to provide entertainment for leisure hours. The Archery Club also brought visitors from all the area, and mother and Carl Jensen continued their morning rides, despite increased duties for Mr. Jensen as architect in residence, and for mother both as housewife and hostess, as well as companion to Aunt Lua on her social forays. One of the great events of that first month of 1927 was the holding of the Miss Miami Beauty Pageant at the swimming pool of the archery club. Curiously, I can find no local record of who won the title, or how she fared at the Miss Florida competition. Perhaps she became Miss America of 1927;

The other most exciting event of that time must have been the arrival of Johnny Weismuller as added attraction to Alexander Ott's weekly aquatic shows at the Archery Club Pool. I have mentioned Jackie Ott, billed as the "Most Perfect Boy" by his father. My sister Janet, whom Mr. Ott had instructed, became (and remained) an expert swimmer and diver. Even my sister Judith, billed as "little Judy Bush," with a year taken off her age for dramatic effect, joined the show. Although I have no recollection of it, one event was - for my family at least - to stand out and be repeatedly told. On one of these Sunday afternoons when the show was in progress, I (then about fourteen months old), seeing my sisters enjoying the waters, decided to join them and stepped into the deepest end of the pool. Not surprisingly, I sank at once to the bottom, where no doubt I should have drowned, had not Johnny Weismuller rescued me. I am sorry to have no personal memory of the feat, but in later years, when Weismuller was playing Tarzan in the movies, I felt very special; not many boys I knew could truly claim that Tarzan had once saved their lives.

At the peak of the golden period of my father's - and Opa-locka's - prosperity, Papa had leased a yacht called the Rowena. My father had always a passion for the sea; he had joined the Navy at fifteen, after completing one semester of college, and had served for a year as an officer in the Merchant Marine in 1920-21. To him, sailing was the only proper form of going to sea, but the Rowena was a diesel-powered vessel, with luxurious saloon and staterooms, I suppose because no one but my mother ever shared his pleasure in sailing. The Rowena made many trips to Bimini and to the Keys. The Bimini trips proved to be a problem to both my parents, since many of their guests persisted in taking advantage of these to purchase good British liquor to bring back to the mainland. Not only was this contrary to the Volstead Act, but to my father, a teetotaler, it was immoral as well as illegal. My mother's feelings were even stronger, for she was not only a teetotaler, but so strongly so that her children were to invent for her the word teetotalitarian. Both were terrified that their guests would one day be discovered, and they themselves be suspected as bootleggers. Fortunately this never happened, though later a far deeper tragedy was to result from one of these Bimini trips.

Among the new arrivals attracted to Opa-locka by its aura of prosperity was L. M. Taber. The exact date of his arrival cannot now be fixed, though Mr. Muller's work book shows an order for plans for apartments and shops ordered by Mr. Taber and Sayre Wheeler in December of 1926. The same work book indicates that the plans were not finished and the project was never undertaken. Mr. Wheeler, a man of careful habits and moderate fortune, seems an odd partner to the flambuoyant Lew Taber (whom even I remember, since his path was to cross ours again in New York City in 1931). Perhaps Sayre himself sensed this, and terminated the planned partnership. In any case Lew became a friend of my parents and of many other Opa-lockans. Charming, urbane, sophisticated, though apparently without fortune. Lew was a popular guest in many homes around Miami. His tendency to imbibed too freely was offset by his great skill as conversationalist and raconteur. About August of 1927 he, in partnership with Arthur Higgins, completed two duplexes on Sesame Street, just west of my father's apartment house, completed about the same time. Mr. Higgins and his wife Alice, with their three children, moved into one of these, and Mr. Taber with his family occupied another. Alice Higgins recalled that Mr. Curtiss had given the land on which the duplexes were built, and the Opa-locka Company loaned a part of the funds for their construction. The plan of

earning income from the two remaining units was subject to the same problem my father faced with his rental properties; there were plenty of people in need of homes, but none with money to pay for them. My father's apartments and houses were always occupied, but by friends (and sometimes strangers) who were homeless and penniless. Lew Taber eventually gave up the struggle and left Opa-locka forever. Arthur and Alice Higgins remained, and in 1940 purchased the house at 705 Sharar Avenue, designed by Mr. Muller and earlier the residence of Mrs. Horace McCormick. Mr. Higgins was among the small handful of citizens who remained in Opa-locka through economic collapse and depression, and to share the prosperity which was one day to return. He was to serve as a councilman, his children were to grow up in the town, and his widow still lives in the Sharar Avenue house, active in the Woman's Club and the Library Board.

Early in 1927 Major Henry W. Baird and his wife came to Opa-locka and purchased a house designed by Mr. Muller for Mrs. Myna McCarter, secretary of the Archery Club. The Bairds, aside from absences required by his military service, remained permanent residents of Opa-locka. Mr. Muller's work book shows an order placed on May 31, 1927, for designs for an addition to the house at 401 Dunad, which the Bairds named "Three Arches." Avid gardeners, the Bairds made and kept their property a showplace with rare plants and trees. Mrs. Baird became an active member of the South Florida Garden Club, and a close friend of its founder and president, Mrs. Harold Dorn. They acquired the four acres adjacent to their house and transformed it into a garden, with a pool and waterfall. Later promoted to Colonel and recalled to duty, Baird finally retired with the rank of General and returned to Opa-locka at three different times in the late 1940's.

I have already mentioned Charles and Margaret Russell, and their friendship with my parents. That friendship meant a great deal to my father and my mother, though it ended before my parents role in the building of Opa-locka had closed. The cause of the termination of that friendship has both its pathetic and humorous sides - perhaps even an important social moral. Charles Russell was a Tennessean, and in his double role as police chief and chief engineer of the Opa-locka Company, it appears that he built a kind of sweat-box in Cook's Hammock, into which it was his custom to place from time to time some black employee whose work or conduct did not please him. My mother, who had assumed the small structure to be a tool shed, was driving through Cook's Hammock on the way to Hialeah one day early in the summer of 1927. As she passed the small structure she heard shouts of distress emitting from its interior. Stopping to investigate, she learned that the shouts were coming from one of the Opa-locka Company's black workmen. His work had not been satisfactory to Mr. Russell, and he had been locked in the sweat-box to develop a more respectful and dutiful attitude. Mother was to recall that her first impulse was to take a tire-iron from her car, break the lock on the door, and free the poor man. This would have had an immediate effect upon the man's problem, but would have provided no permanent solution to what my mother regarded as a dreadful situation. Reared in the tradition of her forebears, she could not but regard the instance from a long historical perspective. She was, it must be remembered, very conscious of the role played by her mother's ancestors, the FitzGerald Dukes of Leinster, who had long aligned themselves to the great Whig families of England (to most of whom the FitzGerald were related) in support of political reform, and especially in staunch opposition to slavery and the slave trade. She was proud, too, that it was her Russian great-grandfather, Alexander II, "The Liberator," who had abolished serfdom in his domains. She liked to call attention to the fact that this action preceded by some years the abolition of slavery in the United States. Further, as an American by adoption, she had been imbued with the Jeffersonian idealism of my father, whose Bush forebears had been ardent in support of Thomas Jefferson's party from the days of its founding.

Assuring the black man that he would be released, mother drove to the Curtiss-Bright Company's offices in Country Club Estates and left a message for Mr. Curtiss. She then drove to Aunt Lua's house, where she informed her of what had transpired. The black man was freed and the sweat-box demolished. Not long thereafter Carl Long replaced Charles Russell as assistant chief of police. Mr. Russell, not unjustifiably, considered his demotion as a result of my mother's actions. He came to Pine Shadows in great wrath and ventilated his views to my mother. My father recalled that Carl Jensen, who was present at this

tempestuous meeting, suggested that father ought to intervene in his wife's behalf. His reply was, "Irene can take care of herself." She very certainly did. Both my parents regretted that the Russells chose to terminate what had been a warm friendship, but my mother never regretted her action in the matter. If my father ever felt that she might have achieved her ends in any other matter, he never said so. They bore without complaint the several harrassments - not always pretty - to which they were to be subjected by partisans of Mr. Russell on the police force and the council. They retained their affection for both Mr. and Mrs. Russell, though the feeling was not reciprocated.

Charles Russell was to regain his position as chief of police (as a result of my father's pleas to Mr. Curtiss, though this I am sure Mr. Russell never knew). When Sayre Wheeler resigned as mayor of Opa-locka, Russell served for more than a year as acting mayor. In November of 1929, he resigned and, I have been told, left Opa-locka. The last news my parents had of him was from Lew Taber, whose path crossed their's in Manhattan in 1930. Lew reported that Charlie Russell had taken a position with the National Geographic Society. He appears never to have contacted anyone in Opa-locka thereafter, according to Alice Higgins, whose husband, as senior councilman, replaced Russell as acting mayor on his resignation. To the end of his life, my father recalled Mr. and Mrs. Russell with affection and wondered about their fate.

Douglas C. Carruthers and his wife Eva played an important role in the first years of Opa-Locka. Mr. Muller designed for them the house they built at 706 Sharar Avenue (still standing, though converted to a multi-family dwelling). John T. Rogerson boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers, and John and Doug were partners in the Aero Garage in the Hurt Building, as well as the operation of the Curtiss-owned Florida Aviation Camp, a small airport between Douglas Road and Cook's Hammock, about where the blimp hangar was later erected. Both Rogerson and Carruthers had been flying aces during World War I, and Mr. Rogerson was later to have a long career as pilot for Pan-American Airways. In those early days John was courting Miss Barbara Kendall, the pretty daughter of Colonel Hugh Kendall, an early friend of Glenn H. Curtiss, for whom Mr. Curtiss had built a house in Country Club Estates. The Colonel and his daughter were often at the Archery Club in Opa-locka, and had in fact hunted with Mr. Cutiss in the area before the building of the city. If I may leap ahead in time to a happy ending, John Rogerson was to marry Barbara Kendall, and Mr. and Mrs. John T. Rogerson at this writing still reside in the Kendall house on Pinecrest Drive in Country Club Estates (now Miami Springs).

At the suggestion of Mr. Curtiss, my father undertook to learn flying from Doug Carruthers. Papa's career as a pilot was still-born; on his first flight with Doug at the controls, Doug succumbed to the temptation to perform every piece of aerobatics in his extensive repertory. When the Curtiss Jenny in which they were flying at last came to land, my father got out a little greenish in the face and made a solemn vow never to take to the air again. That vow was not broken until the 1950's, when business required my father to fly to the Bahamas or to Cuba on a number of occassions. By then the aircraft were less fragile and the pilots less inclined to display their artistry. Despite the unhappy flight, Doug and his wife were friends of my parents until our departure from Opa-locka, from which time we heard of them no more. Only in 1974, after my father's death, did I discover the Rogersons and learn from them that Doug had gone to higher realms of flight.

Charles A. Anderson and his wife Mary were also among the early residents of Opa-locka, and among the hardy few who remained through storm, depression and war. Their first home was on Superior Street and, I think, was that house ar 2250 East Superior Street which remained their home until the close of Mr. Anderson's life. Of their children, I knew only the son Pierce Anderson, who was later to be electrical inspector for the city of Opa-locka. I only knew of - as all Opa-lockans must also have known - their daughter, who became Mrs. Burt Lancaster, whose long career in the theater, movies, and television is familiar to millions.

Frederick S. Arnold and his wife Beatrice had, I think, their first home at 1306 Jann Avenue. Mr. Arnold was secretary of the Opa-locka Company at its founding in December of 1925, which may account for the often-repeated error that he moved to Opa-locka in that year. He was certainly among the very first to come to Opa-locka in February of 1926, and I think may have lived in one of the Company houses

mentioned before, since I have not been able to date the construction of his house on Jann Avenue. No order for plans for the Arnold residence appears in Mr. Muller's work book, so I assume that he was not the architect. He became city clerk of Opa-locka in 1930, and was still serving in that post when he died in 1953, while on a visit to his daughter, Mrs. Harry Wallace, in Irving, Illinois. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, of a family settled in New England in the early seventeenth century, he was among the group of Episcopalians who started the first, official, but ill-fated, church organization in Opa-locka, the Holy Cross Mission. At his death he was a member of Holy Cross Church and an honorary member of the Opa-locka Masonic Lodge. As a man who worked in a position of high trust for Mr. Curtiss and long afterward for the city of Opa-locka, he was well-remembered. He had, I believe, succeeded R.A. Samson as city clerk, and was thus the second to hold that office. Mr. Samson was an advocate of the spelling of Opa-locka as one word, without the hyphen. Mr. Arnold appears to have been on the opposing side, since it was during his career as city clerk that the hyphen was restored from the brief period of banishment to which Mr. Samson had assigned it.

Mr. Samson, of whom much has been written earlier in this account, also remained in Opa-locka until his death. He long operated a drugstore and, as is often the custom in small town, as druggist was called by everyone "Doc" Samson. He and his wife Parthenia, already mentioned as first postmaster of Opa-locka, were, it appears, childless; their contributions to the city's history thus remain to be cherished in memories of others, and of those children who grew up during the long period of their residence in the city.

Henry M. Nay came to Opa-locka with his wife Daisy from Cuba, where they had been living. Mr. Curtiss asked him to become president of the Opa-locka Growers Association, formed to provide advice on farming and gardening. This was a project of special interest to Mr. Curtiss, since he had planned that, in addition to light industries, his city would produce both ornamental and edible plants, making the community not only more beautiful, but self-sustaining. In addition to the experimental farm which Mr. Nay operated, several small farms were begun by private growers in the Nile Gardens area, where also were provided small garden plots for each Opa-locka house-holder who chose to take advantage of this opportunity to provide himself and his family with fresh vegetables. Mrs. Nay, from her long stay in Cuba, had become fluent in Spanish, and conducted classes in that language for the ladies of Opa-locka. My mother was briefly one of her students, but regretted that she never became proficient in Spanish - the fault, she insisted, was her own and not Mrs. Nay's. My sisters, too, were taken to Mrs. Nay's classes, with similarly disappointing results.

Ralph W. Silver and his wife Frances, who lived on Sharar Avenue, managed the Archery Club. My parents and the few others who remember the club, recall that the Silvers made the club a most pleasant place for social gatherings, and saw to it that the food served there was excellent. Many of the people who frequented the Archery Club came from all over the Miami area during the club's brief period of glory. The Archery Club is now often spoken of as one of the projects which never became a reality, as is the 18-hole golf course, designed by W.S. Flynn, nationally known golf course designer. This, like the course laid out in Country Club Estates, was to be deeded to the city of Miami and was called the Second Miami Municipal Golf course. The archery clubhouse still survives, though buried under the additions and alterations added to it during its period as officers club for the U.S. Navy installation which replaced the golf course and the lovely city park of sixty acres which Mr. Curtiss made of the center of Cook's Hammock. The golf clubhouse was designed by Mr. Muller, but never built. The only memorial to it is the short street called Golf Course Drive, which now merely puzzles passers-by, since neither evidence nor memory of the course survives.

Another vanished landmark is the observation tower, designed by Mr. Muller in the Moorish style, which stood to the northeast of Cook's hammock. From its top, one could look southward across the hammock to the neat farmlands, northward and westward across the golf course, immaculately kept by Mr. Tubbs and his staff, or eastward toward the city itself, shining like an oriental jewel set in tropical shrubs and trees under the bright blue of the Florida sky. Fortunately, a photograph of the observation tower and one of the archery clubhouse survive, otherwise both would, like so much that has vanished from

Opa-locka, be dismissed as myths born of long-cherished memories of the few who remain to recall them.

In midsummer of 1927 even Mr. Curtiss was forced to accept the fact that the increasingly bad economic conditions in south Florida were not being turned back by his continued building at Opa-locka. All buildings which had been started were completed, but those planned and even designed by Mr. Muller, were postponed until a later time - a time which was never to arrive. Mr. Curtiss continued to underwrite the cost of maintenance of the community - until his death it remained well-kept and in repair. He also endeavored to provide employment for the people in his city by establishing a small factory for the manufacture of the Curtiss Aero-Car, built to his own designs. It was the first luxury trailer and made use for the first time, I have been told, of the principle of streamlining to reduce resistance to air, a transfer of an aircraft engineering concept to ground travel.

By this same period - midsummer of 1927 - my father had begun to suffer severe financial problems. In an attempt to increase his cash flow, he began to operate his yacht, the Rowena, for hire, but this merely delayed briefly the final collapse of his fortunes, and ended in a great personal tragedy for my parents through the departure of one who had become more than a friend to them, indeed, like one of their family. Perhaps his story is not a major part of the history of Opa-locka, though it was an important part of our lives. His connection with Opa-locka was brief, but so too was ours; so too was the stay of many of those who played major roles in the early years of the city.

Georgi, a young Russian emigre whose last name my parents never divulged (and hence, though he may well be dead by now, I shall not) had entered the United States illegally through Mexico. Born in 1906 of an ancient noble family of Russia, his father had been court-chamberlain to my mother's great-uncle, Grand Duke Serge of Russia. During the long civil war which raged between the Red and White forces following the Russian Revolution, Count Georgi's family home had been sacked and burned by a gang of Bolshevik thugs. Family and servants alike had been repeatedly shot and stabbed; Georgi alone had survived of his family, left for dead in the carnage. His last memory, after seeing his family butchered, was of a Red soldier who, not content with having shot and stabbed him, leaned down and with a sabre carved upon Georgi's cheek a cross, a gesture of the Red's contempt for Christianity and its symbols. That terrible scar remained, along with the awful memories of the Russia from which, by some miracle, he had been able to escape.

By yet another miracle he had made his way to Florida and encountered my family, who welcomed him as a brother. He had no personal memory of my mother, whose last visits to Russia with her grandmother Marie Alexandrovna had been made when Georgi was still an infant. He was able to bring to my mother the terrible details of the murder of her Great Aunt Ella, the beautiful and saintly widow of Grand Duke Serge, and of others of mother's Russian relatives, among them Aunt Ella's sister Alix, married to Nicholas II, first cousin of mother's father. Somehow in their shared loss, they were a comfort to each other, Mama and Georgi. Blonde, blue-eyed, extraordinarily handsome, he had a gentleness and naive charm that endeared him to all who met him at Pine Shadows. In that house where my father had expected to live out his days he seemed one of the family. He worked at any task, however menial, sometimes laboring in the garden at Pine Shadows, more often working on the Rowena, on which he slept at night, to guard it against vandals.

Writing of Georgi many years later my father said of him, "Everyone found in him a special joy, young and old alike. After the horrors through which he had passed, he seemed always to be able to sense the hurts of others, and to be able to help them. To both Irene and to me he was dearer than a true brother could have been. From the first, both my wife and I, and Georgi as well, envisioned our lives always together, always at Pine Shadows, which he loved as we did. To him, as to us, it was a haven, the home in which we imagined we would spend all our lives." Only now and then, my parents were to recall, Georgi's hand would touch the awful scar on his cheek, and for a moment his face would be clouded, as if by memory of past terrors. My father thought that at such times, touching that terrible cross somehow restored his faith in what the assassin who had carved it there had meant to show such contempt. He was dear to us all - even to me, whose memories of him are but borrowed ones.

Georgi's eagerness to help led to tragedy. On one of the Rowena's Bimini trips (made no longer for pleasure, but to try to earn a living), Georgi volunteered to go along as cook. My father, whose attention was on trying to keep his paying guests from smuggling liquor, completely overlooked the thought of Georgi's passing through customs on the return. His accent betrayed him and, asked for papers, he had none to show. The authorities released him into my father's temporary custody, and they returned to Opa-locka. Deportation meant certain return to Russia and to death. Late into the night my parents and Georgi awaited word from the authorities. Finally, near midnight, a call came from a high police official in Miami, one of those who had often been among the guests at the famous Sunday Evening "At Homes" at Pine Shadows. His advice: get the young Russian out of the county before morning, but not by bus or train. My parents drove Georgi as far north as they could - somewhere in Palm Beach County. Giving him all the cash they had, they told him to go into hiding in some large city and to keep in touch with them. It was a difficult parting for all three. Georgi started walking northward along the lonely road, while my parents started the drive southward to Opa-locka. Just before Georgi disappeared into the darkness, my father looked back and waved to him, and Georgi returned the parting gesture.

"I know he must have been killed," my father wrote in his memoirs, just before his death. "He had promised to come back to us. We never heard from him again. I know that he would have returned to us if he had been able." Once, when I was in Paris in 1954, I went into the Russian Church in which Georgia had worshipped during his stay there on the perilous journey that led to Opa-locka. I entered the church and lighted a candle before an Ikon of St. George, Georgi's patron, and said a prayer for him. Wherever he had gone, I hope this prayer, and the many prayers of my parents said for him, somehow reached their destination and brought for him some comfort, and the memory of a family's love.

For my parents, too, time was running out - as well as cash. Mr. Curtiss dropped by to visit now and then, and always after his departure it would be found that he had left for father a substantial check. Welcome as this was to us, and to many others who depended on my father, it was not a final solution, nor one which my father could endure. The daily delivery of flowers from Mr. Curtiss's hothouses, begun when first we had come to Opa-locka, also continued. These provided beauty, but an odd contrast to the worsening times. Of these last weeks I should comment that my father recalled how, with a few exceptions, other in Opa-locka as poor or poorer than we, shared what they could with one another. My mother still recalls that, during a bout with fever that came upon her, leaving her unable to care for her house and children, Alice Higgins came to her aid. That fine sense of community was, I later learned, to survive through the difficult years of the depression in Opa-locka and is not, I hope, entirely vanished today.

When and how my father finally reached the end of the tether is of no historical significance. Reach it he did, and, signing over all his remaining properties to the Opa-locka Company to cover his indebtedness to Mr. Curtiss, he left Opa-locka, hoping to recoup his fortunes elsewhere. Not more than two years later Glenn H. Curtiss died, and with it ended his dream of Opa-locka as the most beautiful city in Florida. For more than a decade my father dreamed of recovering his fortunes and returning to take up that dream. This was not to be.

#### DECADE OF SLUMBER: 1931-1940

When Glenn H. Curtiss died in a Buffalo, New York, hospital July 23, 1930, his dream for Opa-locka died with him. His plan of a holding action, keeping Opa-locka carefully preserved and cared for until economic conditions might permit the resumption of building Mr. Muller's proposed city, with its Egyptian section, Chinese section, and - dearest to Mr. Muller's heart - an English village, was not to become a reality. Opa-locka was to remain relatively unchanged during the decade of the 1930's, growing a bit shabby, perhaps but retaining its beauty, indeed increasing in loveliness as the trees lovingly planted along every street grow to maturity.

At the time of his death it is doubtful that even Mr. Curtiss was entirely aware of his financial state. He had often remarked that he had made more money in Florida real estate than he had lost in it. But the effect of the 1929 market crash on his other investments would have required the work of many months by careful accountants to assess. Needless to say, he did not leave his family impoverished. But Lena Neff



Curtiss, despite the fortune remaining to her at her husband's death, never felt entirely secure. She certainly did not carry on her husband's plan for Opa-locka. I have heard it said (usually by people who had never met her) that Lena Curtiss hated Opa-locka. That she never shared her husband's passion for the dream-city he envisioned is easily apparent; that she may have regretted the millions poured into the building of Opa-locka, only a fraction of which she was to recover, is understandable. To say that she hated the city is, in my view, to claim knowledge of her innermost thoughts that she did not, to my knowledge reveal to anyone.

H. Sayre Wheeler, a Curtiss friend from the early days in Hammondsport, New York, became Mrs. Curtiss's principal financial advisor and, not long thereafter, her husband. It was he, and not Lena Curtiss Wheeler, who made the policies of the Opa-locka Company. These policies were to spend as little as possible. It seems incredible, perhaps, but in January of 1937, when my family visited south Florida and spent a few days in Opa-locka, Mr. Wheeler offered to sell to him the Opa-locka Administration building (now the City Hall) and the block on which it stood, for \$10,000. When my father mentioned that he did not have that much capital, Mr. Wheeler offered very generous terms. My father had to admit that he could not provide even a token down payment, so a great bargain was lost.

It had always been expected that the Administration building would eventually be given to the city. This no doubt would have been the case, had Mr. Curtiss lived. I have heard some bitter complaints about the price the Opa-locka Company charged when at last it sold the building to the city. Few seem to know, or take into account, that when that transaction took place Mrs. Wheeler had sold all her stock in the company. It ought to be added that, chief among the purchasers, were at least a few former Opa-locka politicians.

During the few days we spent in Opa-locka in early 1937 I saw finally the city of which my family had always spoken. I had, of course, no memory of it, having left it when I was not yet three years old. Mr. Wheeler gave my father permission to park our trailer on the grounds of city hall, which was still called the Administration Building. I recall waking one night and getting up to walk around that beautiful structure, made more beautiful by moonlight. It still was as Mr. Muller had envisioned it; even the colors were the same, albeit somewhat faded, but even this only added to its charm. Mr. Muller had chosen the colors for the building with great care. The main body of the building was not pink, but what my father said could only be called a "rose-toned ivory." Two of the many domes were painted in a different color, one I think a pale amethyst, the other a shade of turquoise. The characteristically Arabian horizontal panels in the stucco were painted in pastel shades of the primary colors. In one sense, at least, poverty was good for the city. As soon as the city fathers could afford to do so, they began to keep the building always freshly painted, and always in colors that would have made Bernhard Muller shudder in horror. The present shocking pink is the closest the city has come to the original, and is off the mark by a great deal.

Mr. Curtiss's last act on behalf of his city was to give the United States Navy the small airfield of his Florida Aviation Camp, with the request that a naval reserve base be established to provide further employment. In January of 1931 the base was commissioned. Chief Petty Officer R.L. Harris was in charge of the first naval personnel sent to set up the base, and rented "The House of the Three Arches," the Baird home, at that time vacant during one of Col. Baird's absences from Opa-locka. In 1938 the small naval installation was enlarged, annexing the old golf course and the old hammock, including the sixty-acre portion of it set aside by Mr. Curtiss for a park. Bulldozers levelled the ancient oaks, destroying what had been one of the loveliest natural areas in the county.

If the little city lacked great prosperity, it had great beauty and peace. Talking to those of my own age who grew up in Opa-locka during that decade I find myself envying the privilege given them but denied me. But for me, as for Opa-locka, it is futile to speculate on what might have been. We can never know the joys - or the perils - of the road not taken.

#### THE AWAKENING

To those even vaguely familiar with the Opa-locka of today it is unnecessary to call attention to the difference between the city of which Mr. Curtiss and Mr. Muller dreamed, and the city which now is. The

reasons for that difference are many and complex. Mortals, be it fault or virtue, dislike complexities, finding themselves more at ease with simple statements of cause and effect. Unfortunately, not everyone agrees on the reasons for the course of Opa-locka's eventual development. A favorite simplistic explanation is the death of Mr. Curtiss. "Had he lived," I have heard it said by many, "things would have been different." Another frequently acknowledged cause is the depression; yet another, the coming of World War II. The more sophisticated thinkers at times see all three of these events as combining to alter the course of Opa-locka's history.

Certainly all these factors played their part in the shaping of Opa-locka, particularly in the 1930's and 1940's. But the Opa-locka of 1976 is not the result of these events alone. A later - and far more complex - influence was to effect the city, and that was the phenomenal growth of Dade County. This has left Opa-locka - still a relatively small city - surrounded by and caught up in the urban sprawl of Greater Miami. The attempts of some of its citizens and civic officials to maintain the city's identity are always influenced by the reality that all the urban problems of the surrounding area spill over into the municipality's boundaries. Its own internal growth has complicated the problem, as a glance at the official U.S. Census figures will show: the first special census taken in late summer of 1926 showed a population of 251; in 1930, 339; 1940, 497; 1950, 5,191; 1960, 9,810; 1970, 11,902. Growth in the years since the last census has been considerable, though unofficial estimates as to the figure vary greatly. In any case it is obvious that more than half the citizens cannot have lived here for a period of more than half the city's history, while many have lived here a much shorter time and a considerable number must be classed as transient. This does not induce the cohesion or sense of civic partnership which is essential to a city's life. The minority - however large and however well-intended - are not widely supported in their efforts to preserve the best of the past and plan for the best in the future.

Civic organizations and churches have done much to enrich community life in Opa-locka. One feels that Glenn H. Curtiss would find much that would please him in today's Opa-locka, but he would find much that would dismay him as well. In 1959, Bernhardt E. Muller, then eighty years old, was invited to Opa-locka to participate in a Pioneer Day celebration. He had not seen the city for which he had so carefully designed the major buildings in thirty years. What he saw hurt him deeply. Being a courteous and kindly man, he spoke to a luncheon assemblage about the importance of beauty in the life of man, and how it was worth the small extra cost it might require. He warned against allowing a city to become "a meaningless jumble of unrelated buildings, painted in hideous colors." More of his hearers, I fear, took offense at his remarks than paid heed to them. My family and I had not seen Mr. Muller in many years, and he was one of the last links to our beloved friend Glenn Curtiss. Our pleasure at seeing him again was lessened by our awareness of the pain he had suffered from the visit.

Since 1959 a number of city projects have been undertaken to improve the community - installation of a sewage system, and erection of a small but fine public library among them. These and other such endeavors must be hailed with gratitude; they are a foundation upon which an improved community may be built. The process, however, must be continuous, as life itself. Many more must join the few who have constantly worked for Opa-locka's improvement. It must be remembered that dreams do, if rarely, sometimes become a reality. It happened once in Opa-locka; it is not impossible that it might happen again.

#### POSTLOGUE

Any account of man and his activities is not only complex but unending. Opa-locka goes on; only my account of it is ended, gathered as it has been from scant records, my memories, and the memories of others. Inexorably. I am left with the question: what is the value of this labor? I do not refer only to my efforts in unfolding this strange story of *A Dream of Araby*, but also to the labors of those whom I have loved and honored who worked in behalf of that dream: Mr. Curtiss, Mr. Muller, my parents - indeed all who played a role, major or minor, in this minor act of the vast human drama. Of what use was their work - of what use this book?

Of all the multitudes of galaxies, known and unknown, ours is but one, and within its relative vastness

and the lesser vastness of our universe, the Earth itself is reduced to a very tiny ball, on which man and his activities seem of infinitesimal significance. Out of the total history of this small creature I have chosen to devote my limited energies to this account of the building of one small city, whose boast of reaching its half-century mark must seem puny in the face of eternity, of infinity. I am forced to ask the question: was it mere ego, seeking expression in unfolding the story of those I love which spurred me to this work? I think not; I certainly hope not. It surely cannot have been so, since the task has but made me more aware of how, in the vastness of time and space, man's work - my own work - does not count for much. Opa-locka has reached the half century mark; so has my life. The city can expect to survive rather longer than I can hope to do. Why then, again I ask myself, this book?

The answer (if a valid one exists) seems to come to me in something my father often said to me: Truth can only be arrived at by way of truth. The capitulation here is of great importance. Each small truth we grasp is a piece of the jigsaw puzzle from which we must - or must hope to - find Truth whole. I have endeavored to discover (in both senses of this word - that is to find and to reveal) something of the truth of the Opa-locka story, knowing that the number of those who may read it will not be great. I hope, though, that those who read these pages find from them some feeling of affection and regard for the city, some sense of community. Opa-locka is, after all (as every city must be), more than a mere dwelling place; it is the remnant of a grand and beautiful dream.

Memory is but a manifestation of that quality in man which alone separates him from other beasts. I choose to call that quality the divine spark, though I know that at its brightest it casts but a small light, and at times dwindles to the point of invisibility. To nurture that divine spark, memory must serve us in the manner outlined by John Greenleaf Whittier in the poem from which come these lines:

O, sometimes gleams upon our sight  
Through present wrong, th' eternal right;  
And step by step, since time began,  
We see the steady gain of Man.

For all of good the past hath had  
Remains to make our own time glad,  
Our common, daily life divine,  
And every land a Palestine.

The closing lines of a book is a poor place in which to find the author's purpose. If purpose there is in what can claim for itself no more merit than that it was wrought with love and with tears both shed and unshed and perhaps some laughter, then this it must be: in the microcosm of this story may be found some clues to the macrocosm of our ultimate story. To be moved by so grand a purpose, far from inflating the ego leaves one feeling very small indeed.



The house above was built in 1921 as quarters for the Curtiss-Bright Ranch foreman and his family. Early in 1926 the slat house, visible to the right of the structure, was erected for propagation of plants and trees for the streets and gardens of Opa-locka. The exact location is a matter of dispute, though it would seem to have stood just outside Cook's Hammock (just visible far right), probably to the west of the hammock at the point where LeJuene Road ended. Both house and slat-house were demolished in the hurricane of September 1926. Below, the four houses built as temporary quarters for foreman and other Opa-locka company employees as temporary structures. They still stand on Sharar Avenue, just west of Twenty-Seventh Avenue, and are thus the oldest existing buildings in Opa-locka.



and the lower portion of our universe, the Earth itself is reduced to a very tiny ball, on which man and his



Above, workmen with mules clearing the right-of-way for the Seaboard Railroad, at a point just east of Twenty Seventh Avenue. The four "temporary" frame houses on Sharar Avenue can be seen in the center background. North of this area, Mr. Curtiss hoped one day to build a permanent Pan-American fair, with displays of products from all the Americas. Below, the right-of-way where Opa-locka Boulevard was soon to cross the not-yet laid tracks. Ali Baba Avenue would run parallel to the tracks and to the left.





Bernhardt E. Muller (1878-1964), architect of the principal buildings of Opa-locka, photographed in 1926. Lua Andrews Curtiss suggested Mr. Muller to her son Glenn as the architect for his dream city, for which Mr. Curtiss had desired an unique architectural theme. Mr Muller first suggested a medieval English town in his own favorite "Robin Hood" style. A chance remark made by Irene Bush to Mr. Curtiss inspired him to decide on an Arabian Nights fantasy. Mr. Muller, after his initial disappointment, became enthusiastic about the idea, and executed it with consummate artistry.



The first private residence erected in Opa-locka was that shown above, designed by Frank S. Bush and built for him on Peri Street a little west of Grapeland Boulevard. Mr. Bush moved into the house when only four rooms had been completed. His wife Irene can be seen bending over her son (the author of *A Dream of Araby*), then about three and a half months of age. His daughter Janet (now Mrs. Wendall T. Hall of Boynton Beach, Florida, and Cape Vincent, New York) can be seen playing in the center of what was to be the living room of the house. Below is the house in May 1926, completed according to its builder's plans. Mr. Muller, who saw the house first as it there appears, disapproved of the entire design; the roof lines, the arches, and the rough texture of the stucco were but a few of the points to which he objected.





Above, left, Irene Bush in a flapper pose on the balcony of Pine Shadows, the name she bestowed on her home because, in her words, "It was always filled with the charming play of light and shadow cast by the pines." Above, right, Irene Bush with Margaret Russel, dressed in Seminole attire at Pine Shadows. Below right, Janet Bush, then aged eight, and her mother, posed at the rear of the house, shortly before the addition of the southwest wing, part of Mr. Muller's subtle re-designing of Pine Shadows.







Pine Shadows under repair after the 1926 hurricane. Frank Bush and Carl Jensen can be seen above inspecting the progress of the work, while Janet Bush watches from the kitchen porch. Below, Frank and Irene Bush, photographed on the same day. The alterations of Mr. Muller, tactfully suggested by his assistant Carl Hensen, then living with the Bush family, can clearly be seen.

Below, Carl Jensen and Irene Bush, returning to Pine Shadows after their morning ride. The arches which so offended Mr. Muller have been completely rebuilt, with a more graceful curve, and the parapet altered to please Mr. Muller. All the changes were made without disclosing to Frank Bush that his friend Mr. Muller (whom he called "Uncle Ben") had disliked Mr. Bush's original design. The house is still standing at 1340 Peri Street. Purchased by William T. Strickland in 1935, it has been considerably altered and is now a multi-family dwelling.

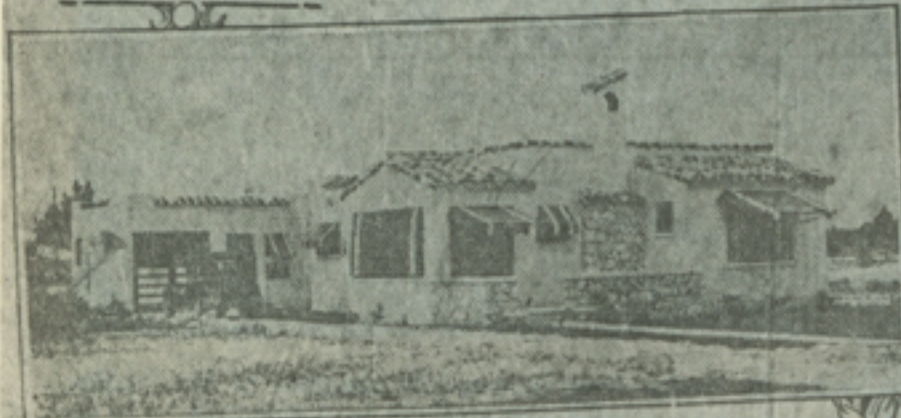




Above, the second privately-built house in Opa-locka, its design long incorrectly assigned to Mr. Muller. Some of the interior detail would suggest that he exercised his right to approval over any designs not his own by making suggestions to the unknown architect. Built for B. J. Fryatt (who had left Opa-locka by early 1927) it passed through several owners until it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Sam Williams in 1950. Jane Williams still owns the house, among the best-kept of Opa-locka's homes. Below, the third privately-built house in town, the residence designed for H. Sayre Wheeler by Mr. Muller, photographed shortly after its completion. It still stands on the corner of Dunad Avenue and Codadad Street, though considerably altered. Mr. Wheeler married Lena Neff Curtiss, widow of Opa-locka's founder, in the 1930's and moved to the Curtiss estate in Miami Springs.



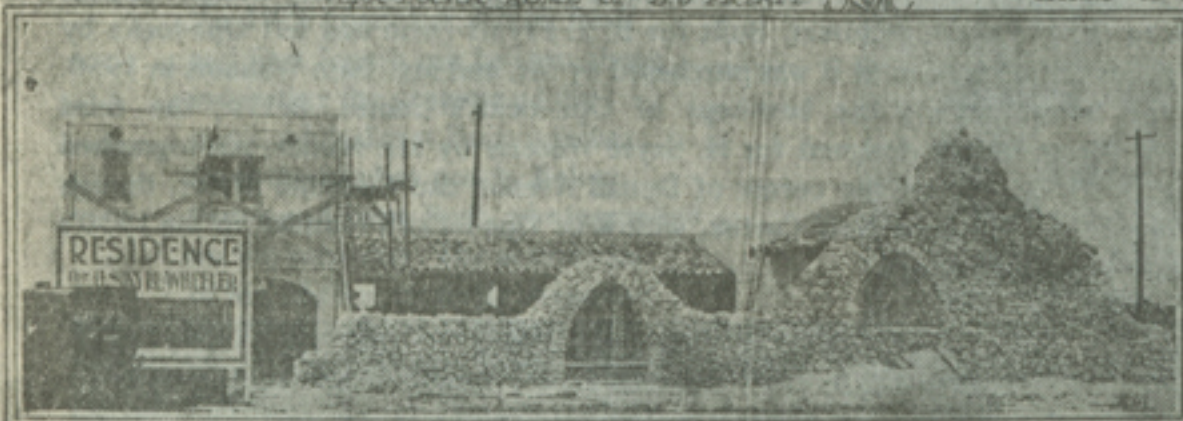
## SHARPLY DEFINED ARCHES AND DOORWAYS CHARACTERIZE HOUSES AT OPA-LOCKA



OPA-LOCKA HOME OF B. J. FREYATT



HOME OF FRANK S. BUSSE



RESIDENCE BEING ERECTED FOR H. SAYRE WHEELER

Sharp arches in doorways and windows, a distinctive scheme of coloring, and the utilization of coral rock in exterior construction is characteristic of many of the houses recently erected at Opa-Locka. Construction work, including the erection of an administration building, bank structure, apartment house and store buildings, has proceeded rapidly. Though but five months old, Opa-Locka has some 30 residences to its credit and more than 90 buildings. The architecture is becoming known as "the Opa-Locka style."

From The Miami  
Herald, Sunday  
June 26, 1926

Though the caption of the above clipping from the Miami Herald boasts some 30 residences and more than 90 buildings for Opa-locka at this date, only these three (and one of them was not yet finished) were considered by Mr. Curtiss worthy of public display. The phrase "five months old" is in accord with all other contemporary evidence that construction of Opa-locka was begun about the second week of February, 1926. Later published accounts have incorrectly assigned a variety of dates, ranging from ninety buildings referred to were either incomplete or fell into the "temporary" category: i.e.: not approved by Mr. Muller. Of these, only four company houses earlier illustrated survive now. Most of the remainder were destroyed during the 1926 hurricane, to the loss of their owners, but one suspects, to the gratification of Mr. Muller's artistic sense. At the time of the Arabian Nights Fantasy in celebration of the opening of the rail service, Mr. Muller complained sharply to Mr. Curtiss that the four company houses were still standing. To soften this blow, Mr. Curtiss had the four houses freshly painted, their windows decked with brightly-striped awnings, and their grounds beautifully planted with shrubs, trees, and flowers. Mr. Muller still found them a discordant note in the otherwise authentically Arabian scene.



Two more examples of Mr. Muller's versatility in adapting the Arabian style to the domestic needs of the mid 1920's: above, the Harry Hurt residence, still standing on Dunad avenue, though without its dome, the Arabian frieze on the projecting wing, and its bright awnings. Below, the house designed for G. Carl Adams, President of the Opa-locka Company and half-brother of Mr. Curtiss. Carl and Dorothy Adams were very content with their home in Country Club Estates (now Miami Springs) and built this house only at the insistence of Mr. Curtiss, who felt it behooved the Company and half-brother of Mr. Curtiss. Carl and Dorothy Adams were very content with their home in Country Club the property of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Quick. The imported roof-tiles have vanished, but it still boasts its dome - one of the few remaining in town.



# The Seaboard will enter Miami through the Golden Gate of OPA-LOCKA *The City Progressive*

### Features in the Development of Opa-Locka

The SEABOARD AIR LINE Passenger Train is an added factor in the upbuilding of OPA-LOCKA, but the real northern gate of Greater Miami. Freight terminals of the SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILWAY will be especially provided for at various points in OPA-LOCKA.

A Children's Home is being erected at the Archer Causeway. This section has six temples.

There is an electric golf course proposed at OPA-LOCKA, one block of which will be built this summer under the direction of W. B. FLYNN, one of the foremost golf architects in the country. The new block at OPA-LOCKA will afford the optimum course it is possible for Mr. Flynn, backed by adequate capital, to design.

Five Water-cure plants including supply lines, will be used, for the present at least, as a substitute to supply the domestic, commercial and industrial requirements of OPA-LOCKA.

One of the finest architectural buildings ever to be erected in South Florida, in water connection at OPA-LOCKA. This building will give the architectural touch to the Archer Flight Line.

A Swimming Pool will soon be ready for use for all residents of OPA-LOCKA and for all who wish to visit the growing section.

Swimming Baths Party will be established immediately at OPA-LOCKA and ample facilities will be provided for those who desire to visit public houses.



OPA-LOCKA is the gateway to the entire Miami Zone and South Florida. It will be the Seaboard Railway's first stop upon entering Miami from the north.

Here the traveler will be greeted by the great buildings designed by Bernhard Muller, here the domes and minarets of the Arabian Nights Zone buildings will be clearly viewed, here at OPA-LOCKA will be gained the first impression of Miami, an impression that will be heightened by the remaining eight-mile ride to the Seaboard's station on Flagler Street.

OPA-LOCKA property—residential, commercial or industrial—is all within a very few blocks of the Seaboard Air Line Railway's OPA-LOCKA Station. Property price increases should be rapid—phenomenal, as OPA-LOCKA grows.

Great main line railway stations are sure builders of property values. Just fancy buying desirable property near the Miami railway station for \$1,000 and up per lot. It can't be done today, nor has it been done within the last twenty years, at least.

Follow the Seaboard Air Line Railway to OPA-LOCKA, the gateway and center of northern Dade County, and back your vision with your dollars!

**How To Get to Opa-Locka:**  
Enter out the Dixie Highway and turn left on University Boulevard and there turn right (south) on Le Arroyo Road to OPA-LOCKA.

# OPA-LOCKA *The City Progressive*

**OPA-LOCKA COMPANY INC.**  
Sales office at OPA-LOCKA is open every day for visitors to property  
132 East Flagler Street      181 East Flagler Street

Cooperating Brokers

WALTER D. WELLS  
101 N. Flagler St.  
Phone 2021

LEE WATSON CAMP  
101 N. Flagler St.  
Phone 2021

A. J. THORNTON  
101 N. Flagler St.  
Phone 2021

W. B. FLYNN  
101 N. Flagler St.  
Phone 2021

NEW SPAIN  
101 N. Flagler St.  
Phone 2021

**Opa-Locka Company, Inc.**  
**OFFICERS**

- A. CARL ADAMS, President
- L. WATSON, Vice President
- A. CARL ADAMS, Secretary
- W. B. FLYNN, Treasurer

WALTER D. WELLS  
Chairman of the Board

**SEABOARD AIR LINE**  
101 N. Flagler Street, Miami, Florida

Passenger:

I am interested in OPA-LOCKA, please send me information and a copy of the OPA-LOCKA, and I will pay for mailing same.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

Opa-locka Company advertisement from the Miami Daily News March 7, 1926.



Left, Carl Jensen, young architect associated with Bernhardt E. Muller's New York firm. He was sent to Opa-locka as architect-in-residence, and lived at Pine Shadows, the Bush home on Peri Street, from early 1926 until late 1927. Behind him, in romper-suit and leaning against his father's car, is the author. Below, an orchid-hunting expedition in the Everglades: l. to r., H.L. Tubbs, engineer in charge of the construction of the Opa-locka golf course, Irene Bush, her daughter Janet, Margaret Russell, and Frank S. Bush.

JUDITH BUSH



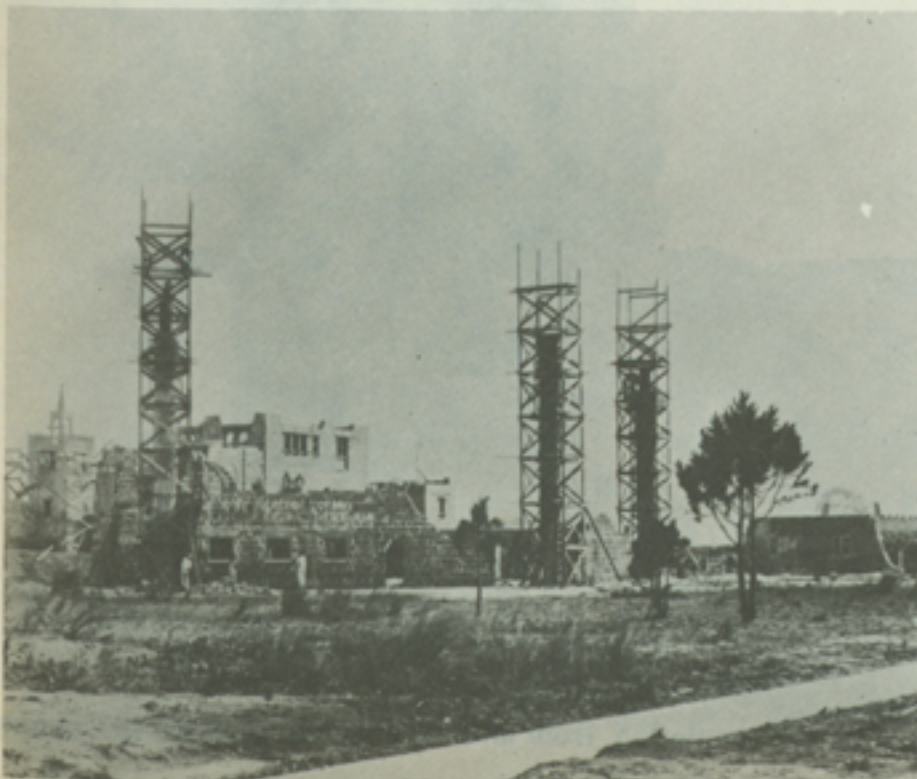
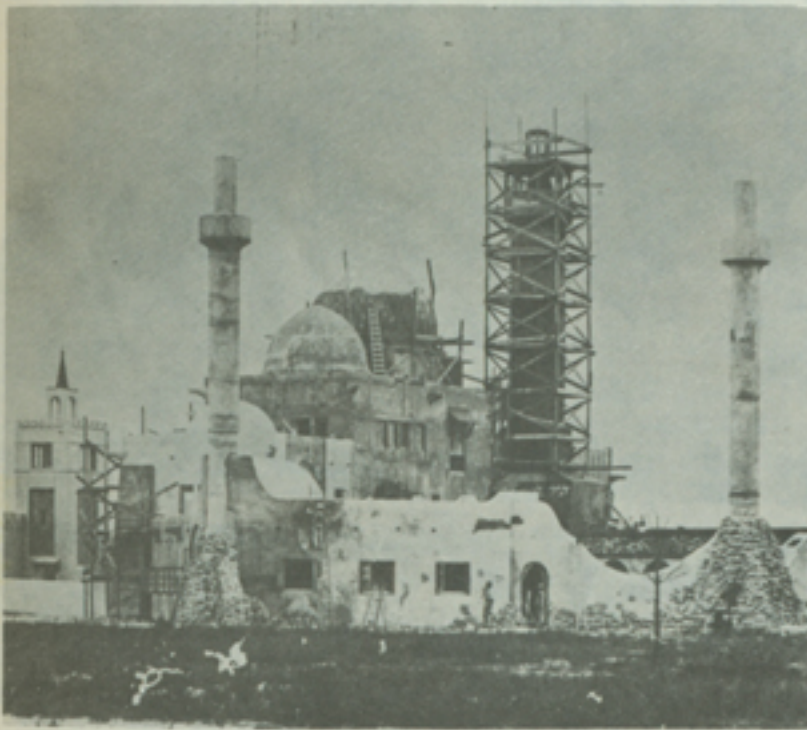
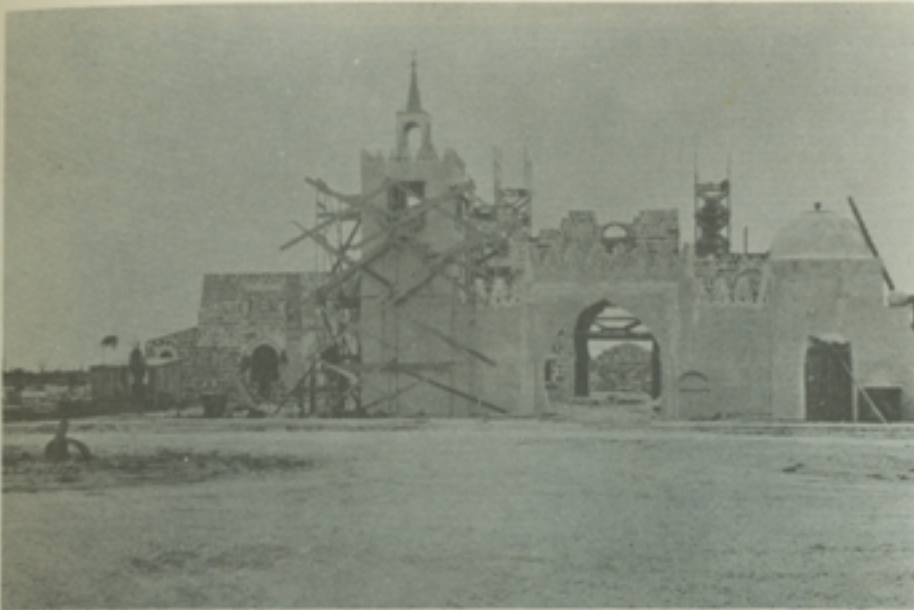
Margaret Russell, wife of Charles Russell, engineer for the Opa-locka Company, later councilman, assistant chief-of-police, and volunteer fireman. Mrs. Russell is seated on the steps of the side door of the company house on the corner of Sharar Avenue and Kalandar Street, one of the four frame houses which so vexed Mr. Muller.





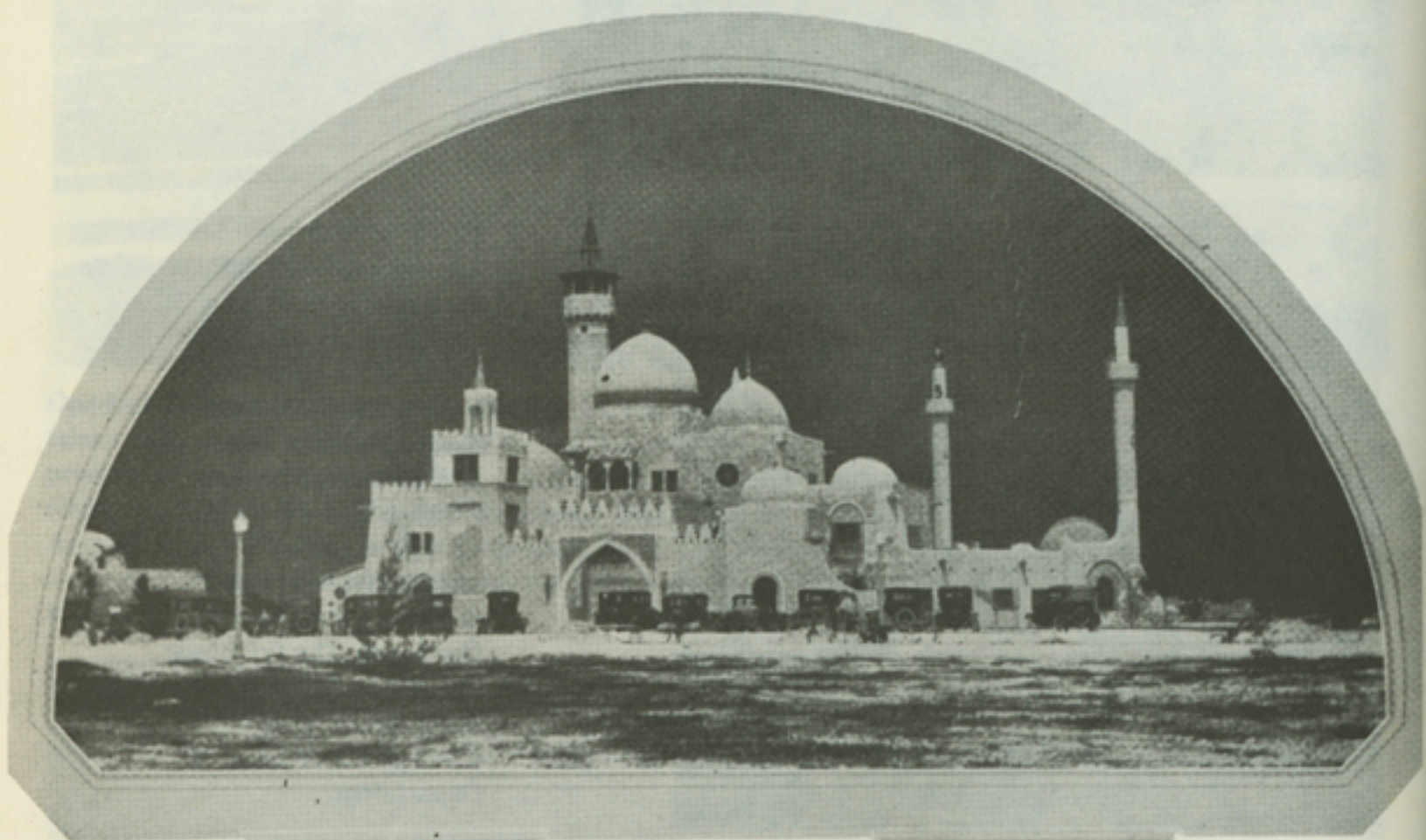
Opa-locka's main throughfare was named for the Princess Scheherazade, teller of the one thousand and one tales of the Arabian Nights. An official of the publicity department, convinced that no one could spell or pronounce the name persuaded Mr. Curtiss (against his better judgement) to simplify the name to Sherazad (thus it is spelled on the first registered plat). Above, looking eastward from the site of the Civic Administration Building toward Grapeland Boulevard (Twenty-Seventh Avenue). Below, looking westward along Sharazad toward the incompleted Administration building. Both photographs were taken in early May of 1926.





Three views of the Administration Building under construction, May 1926. In the picture above, at far right, can be seen the fire station, already finished. Here, at 8:00 o'clock in the evening, May 14, 1926, 28 registered voters and freeholders, voted to charter the Town of Opa-locka. The fire house still stands, without its dome, and is presently home of the city Water Department.





Three views of the Administration Building after its completion, from an article which appeared in *Country Life*, November 1928.



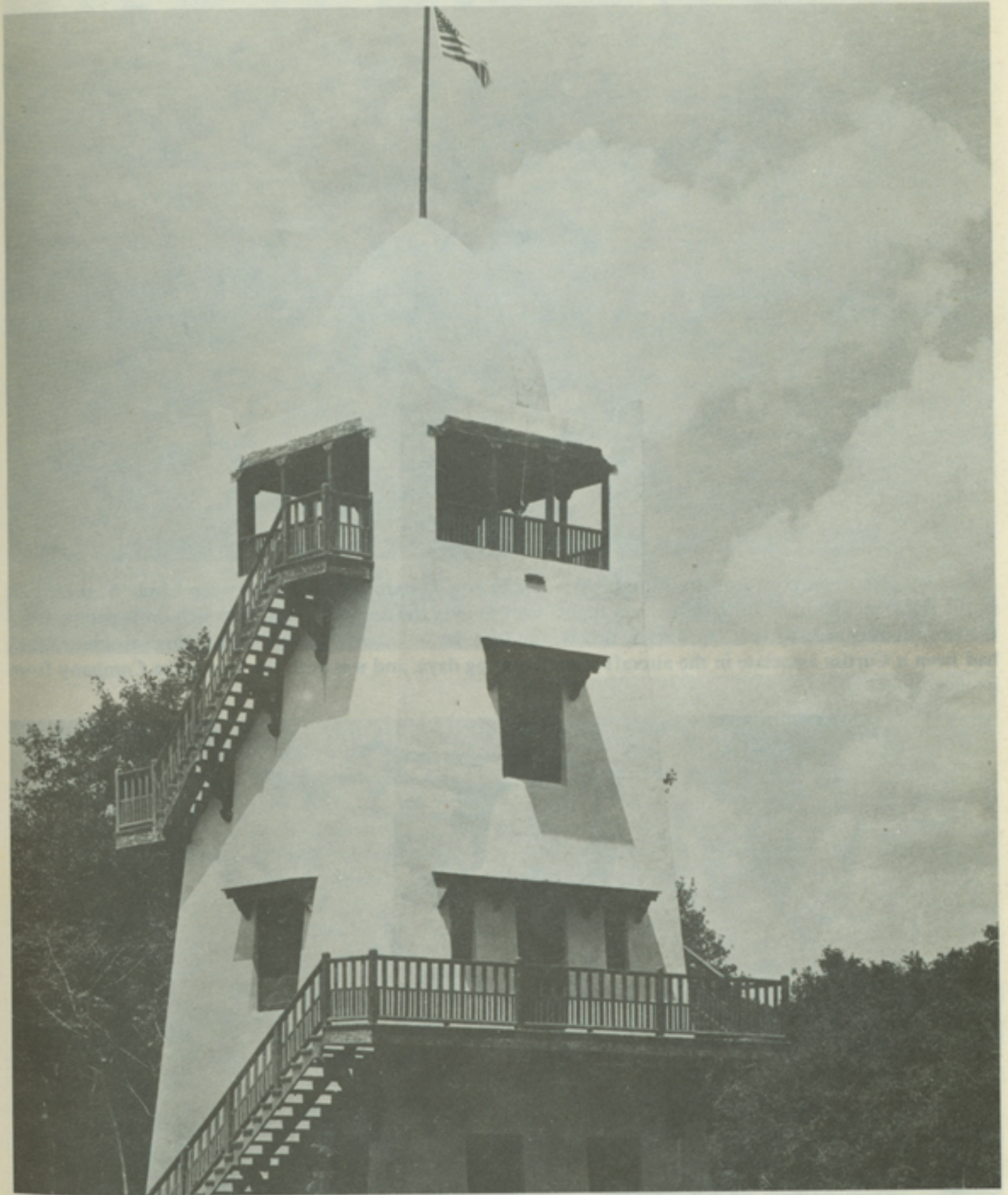
The apartment house on Sesame Street designed by Bernhardt Muller for Frank S. Bush and completed in early 1927, above as it appeared when first completed, and below as it appears today. One of the three buildings in which Mr. Muller took the greatest pride (the other two being the Administration Building and the Railroad Station), it is in good condition, but has lost most of its Arabian detail. The imported roof tiles are gone, as are the minarets and dome, and the four porches have been enclosed.





OPA-LOCKA  
PARK

The road through Cook's Hammock, designated Opa-locka Park by Mr. Curtiss, as it appeared in the summer of 1926. The figure standing at the curve in the road is the late Frank S. Bush. Photograph by the late Glenn H. Curtiss.



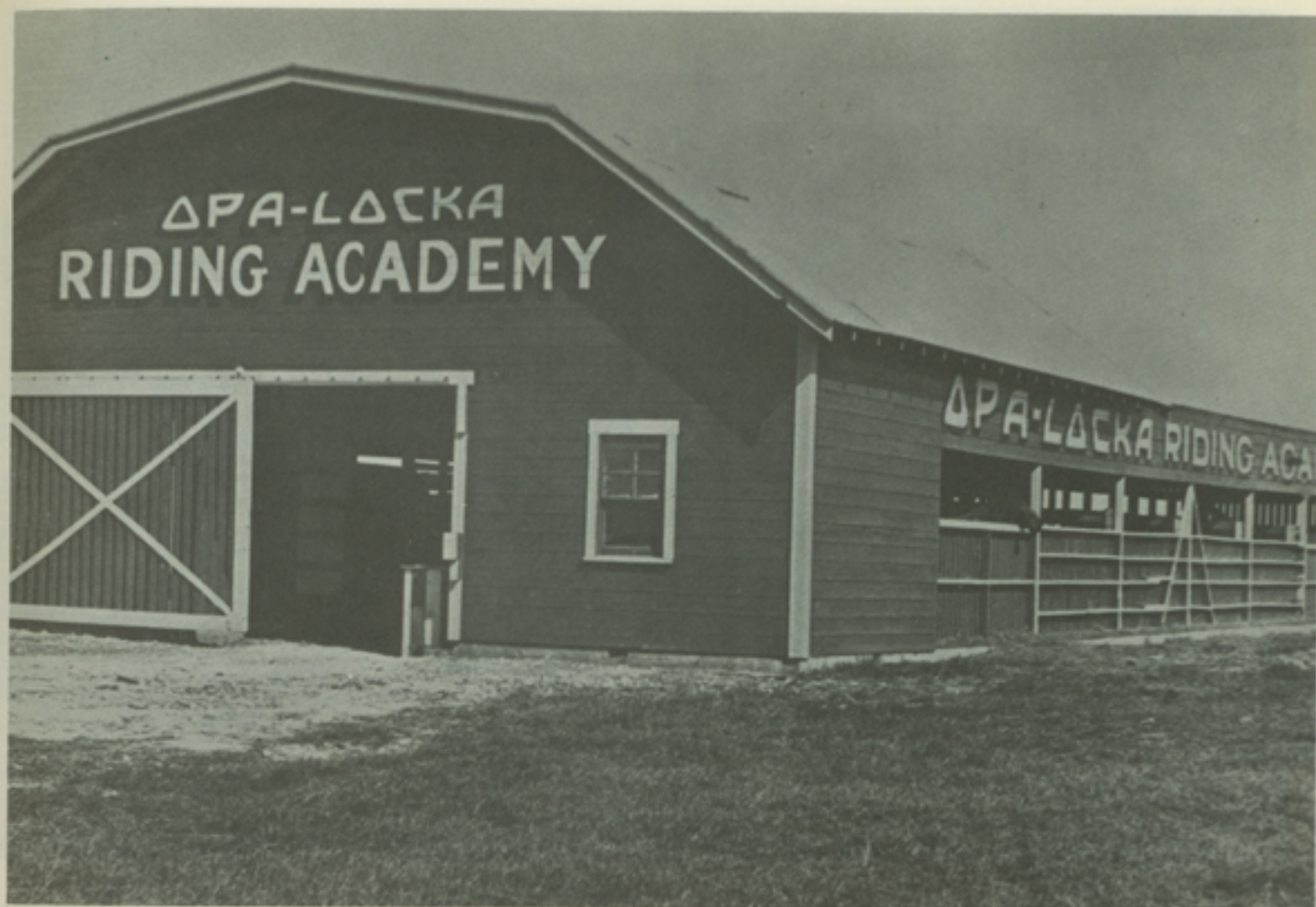
Observation Tower, designed by Mr. Muller, which stood north of Cook's Hammock (Opa-locka Park) and west of the Florida Aviation Camp's landing field. From it one could command a view northward and westward across the golf course and eastward across the city. It is my recollection that it was still standing when we first revisited the city of Opa-locka in January of 1937. On our return in 1940 it was gone, probably demolished, along with the park and golf course, to make way for expansion of the Naval base.



A Sunday afternoon crowd at the Florida Aviation Camp. The Observation Tower can barely be discerned in the right background. Air exhibits and flights were among the many attractions which drew people from the surrounding area to visit Opa-locka. Below, the first Town Council of Opa-locka. Hugh Robinson, Sr., had been a Curtiss associate in the aircraft-manufacturing days, and was with the Opa-locka Company from its inception.

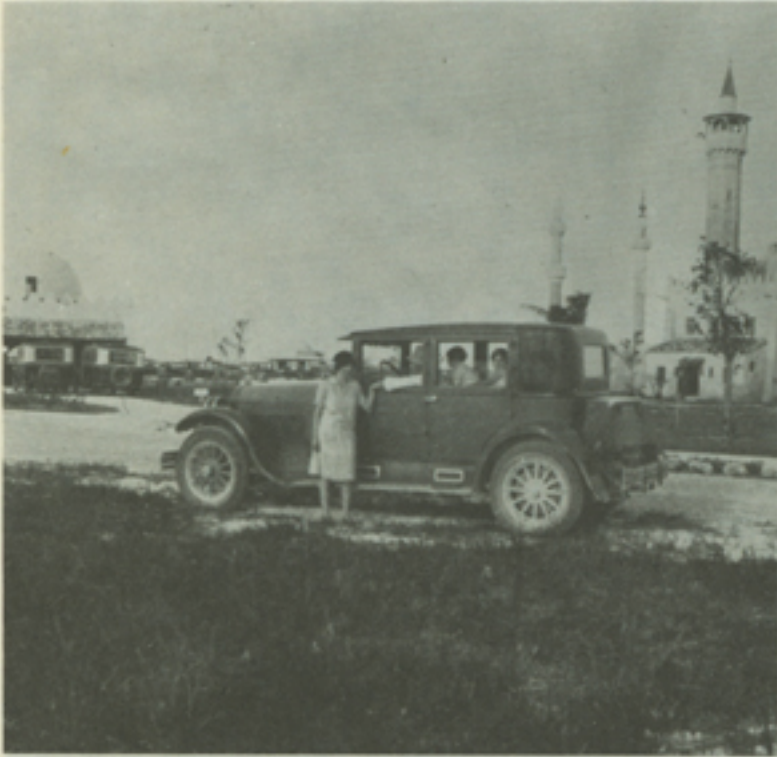


FIRST TOWN COUNCIL OF OPA-LOCKA IS SHOWN ABOVE. Reading from left to right in foreground are Carl Long, Council President Charles S. Russell and Town Marshall H. Bruce Young, Mayor John C. Secord is at head of table (right). In background, left to right, are H. Sayre Wheeler, Hugh Robinson, Sr., Harry Hurt and Town Clerk R.A. Samson. Town was incorporated May 14, 1926.



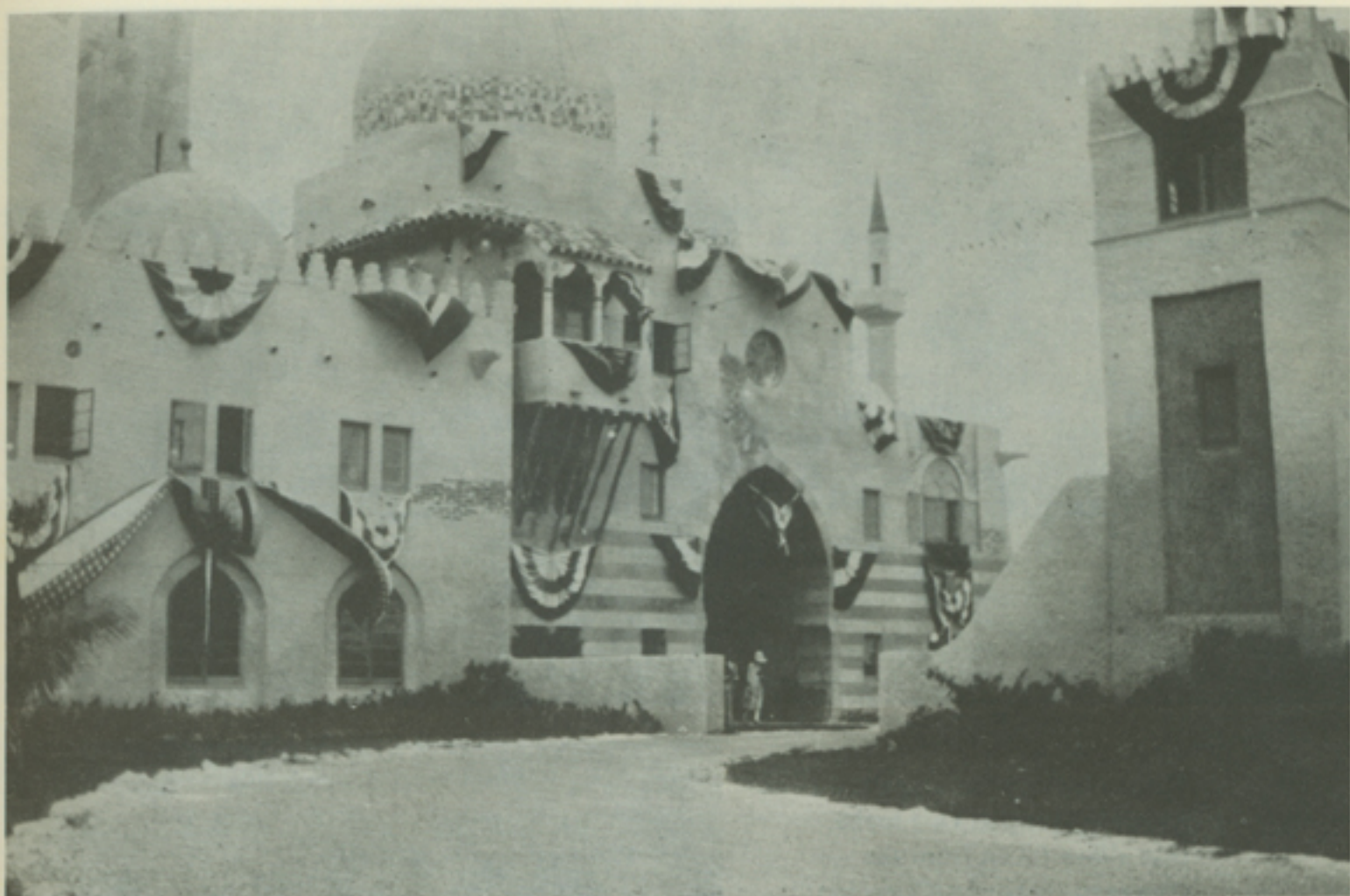
Above, the Opa-locka Riding Academy. Its bridal paths virtually encircled the town, running through Cook's Hammock. Right, Carl Jensen, Mr. Muller's assistant, and Irene Bush, riding the thoroughbreds, gift of James H. Bright to Glenn and Lena Curtiss. The horses were kept at the stable of the Opa-locka Riding Academy and, since neither Mr. Curtiss nor his wife rode, were used almost daily by Mr. Jensen and Irene Bush.



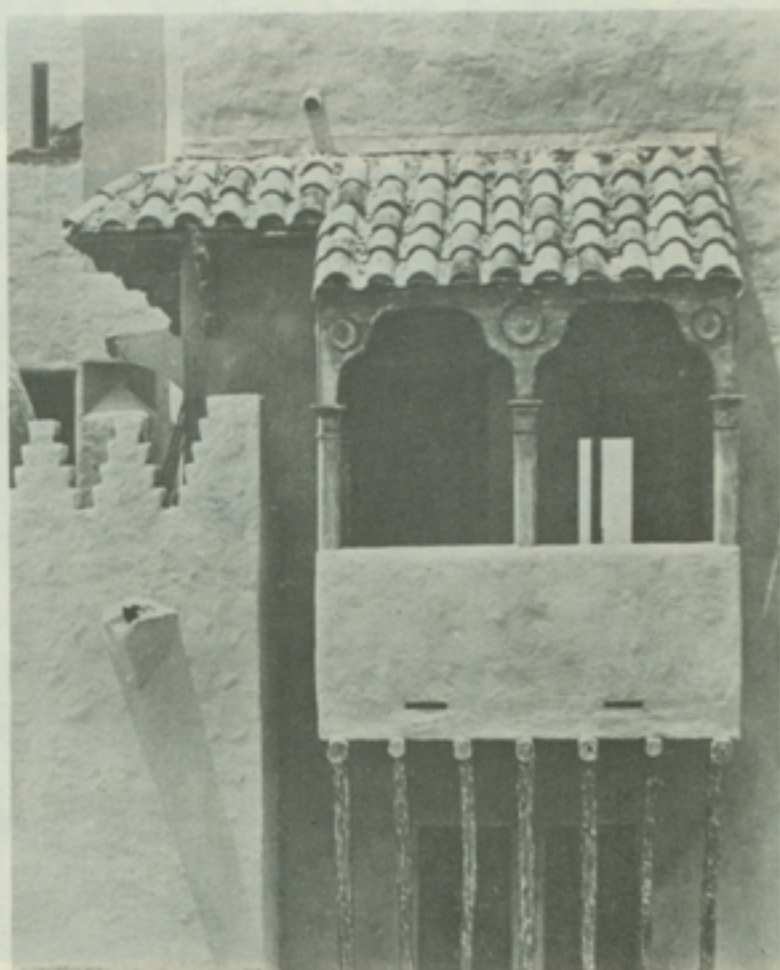


Irene Bush beside the family car, in which are seated her husband, Frank S. Bush, and their children. In the left background, the fire station, in front of which are parked two of the Opa-locka Company's luxuriously equipped buses, used to bring visitors on free trips to Opa-locka from Miami and from other communities as far away as Pompano. Below, one of the Opa-locka Company buses parked before the entrance gates of the Administration Building.





Above, the Administration Building, decked with banners for the celebration of Independence Day, July 4, 1926. Right, view of the balcony and parapets of the building.

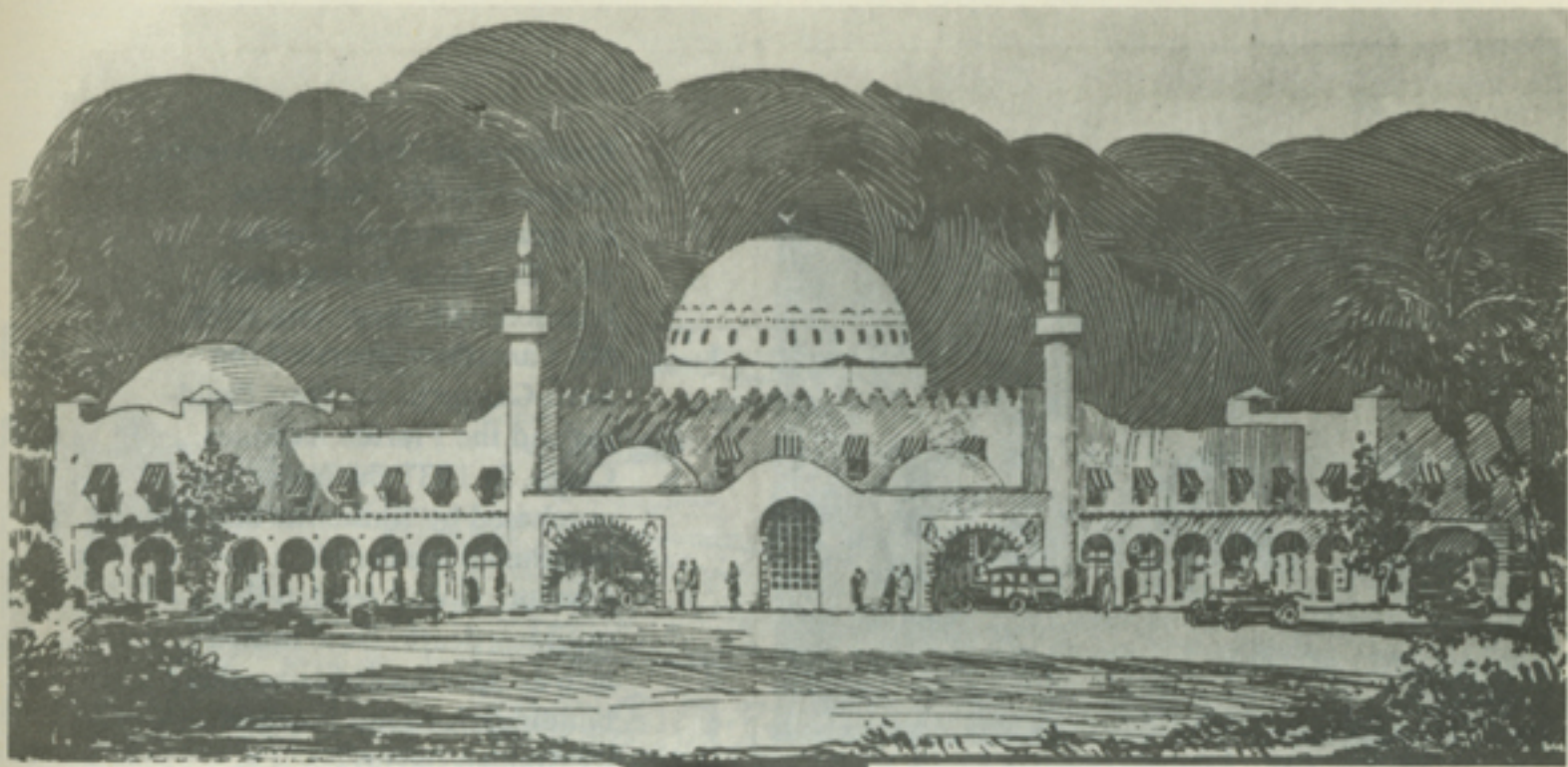




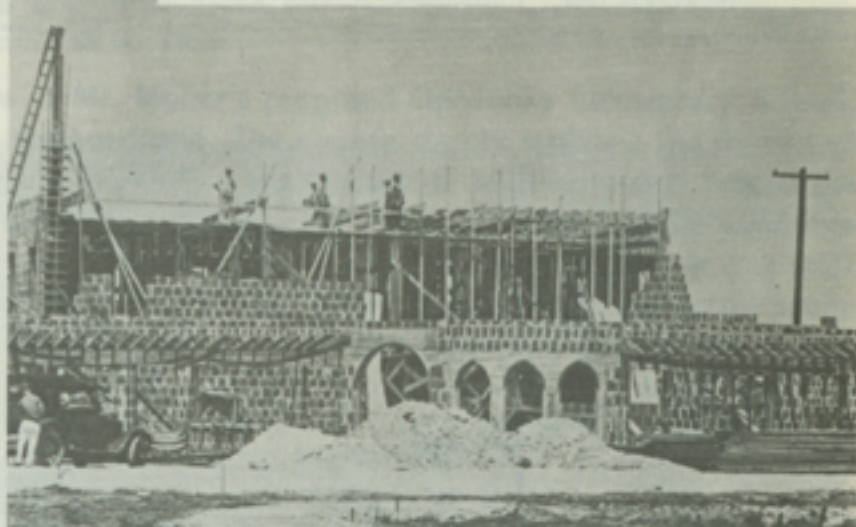


Three views of the Florida Aviation Camp at Opa-locka, that above taken from the Observation Tower. Operated for Mr. Curtiss by Douglas Carruthers and John T. Rogerson, both World War I aces, it provided pleasure flights or pilot instruction, as well as daring aerial exhibitions.



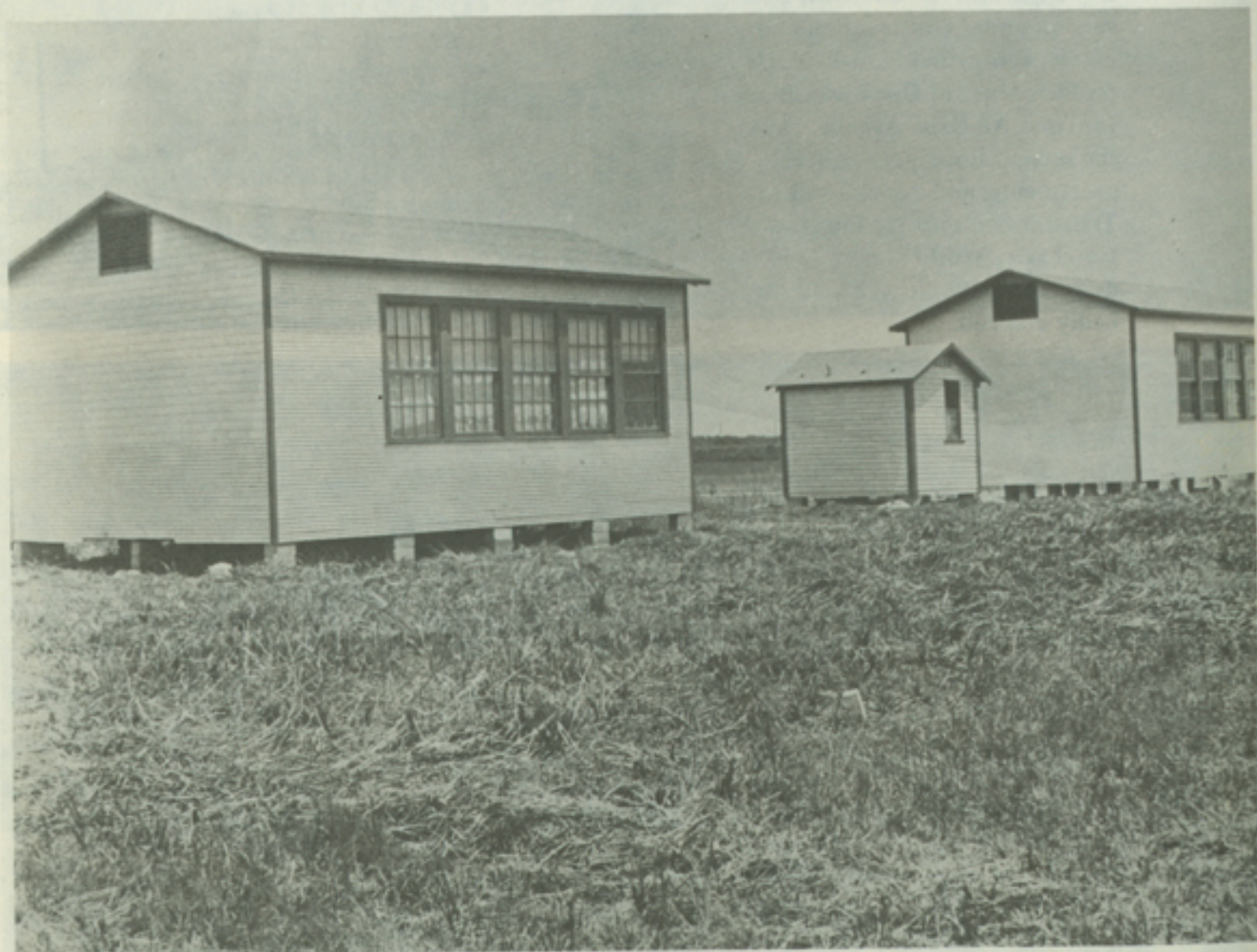


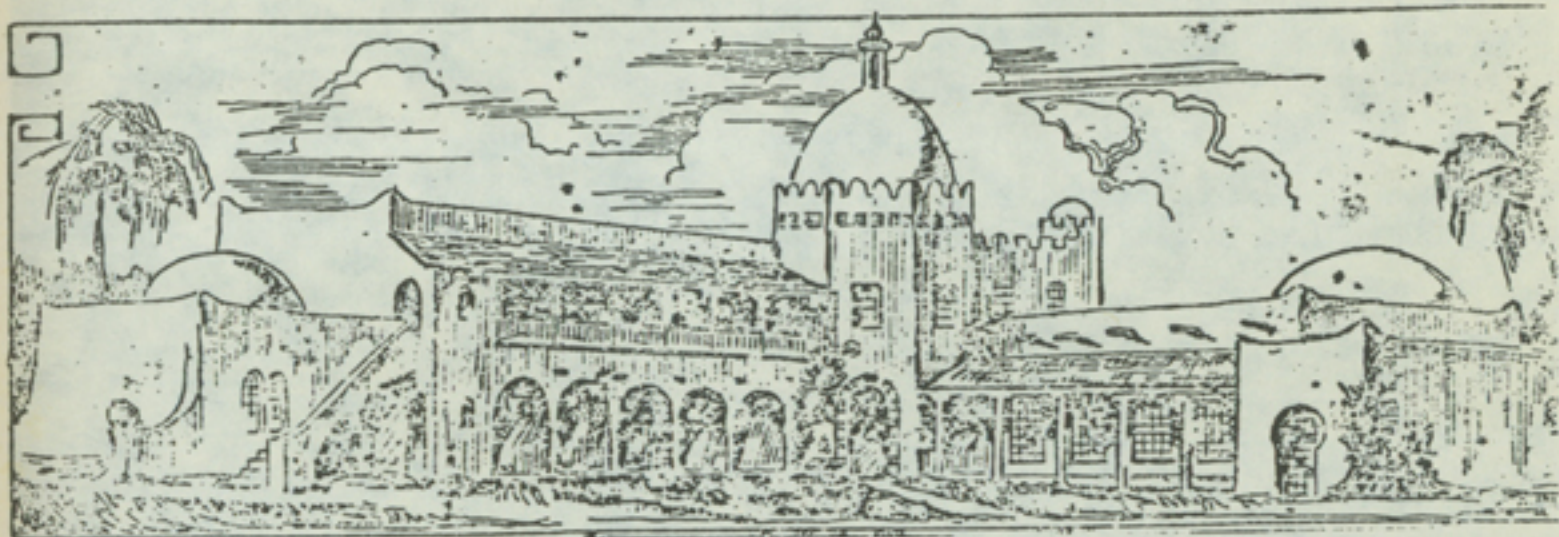
Above, Mr. Muller's first conception of the Hurt Building. Right, the scaled down version under construction and, below, completed. It still stands on the corner of Opa-locka Boulevard and Ali-Baba Avenue. On the second floor were offices, apartments, and a social hall. Transformed into the Opa-locka Hotel after World War II, the dome of the building is now badly cracked.





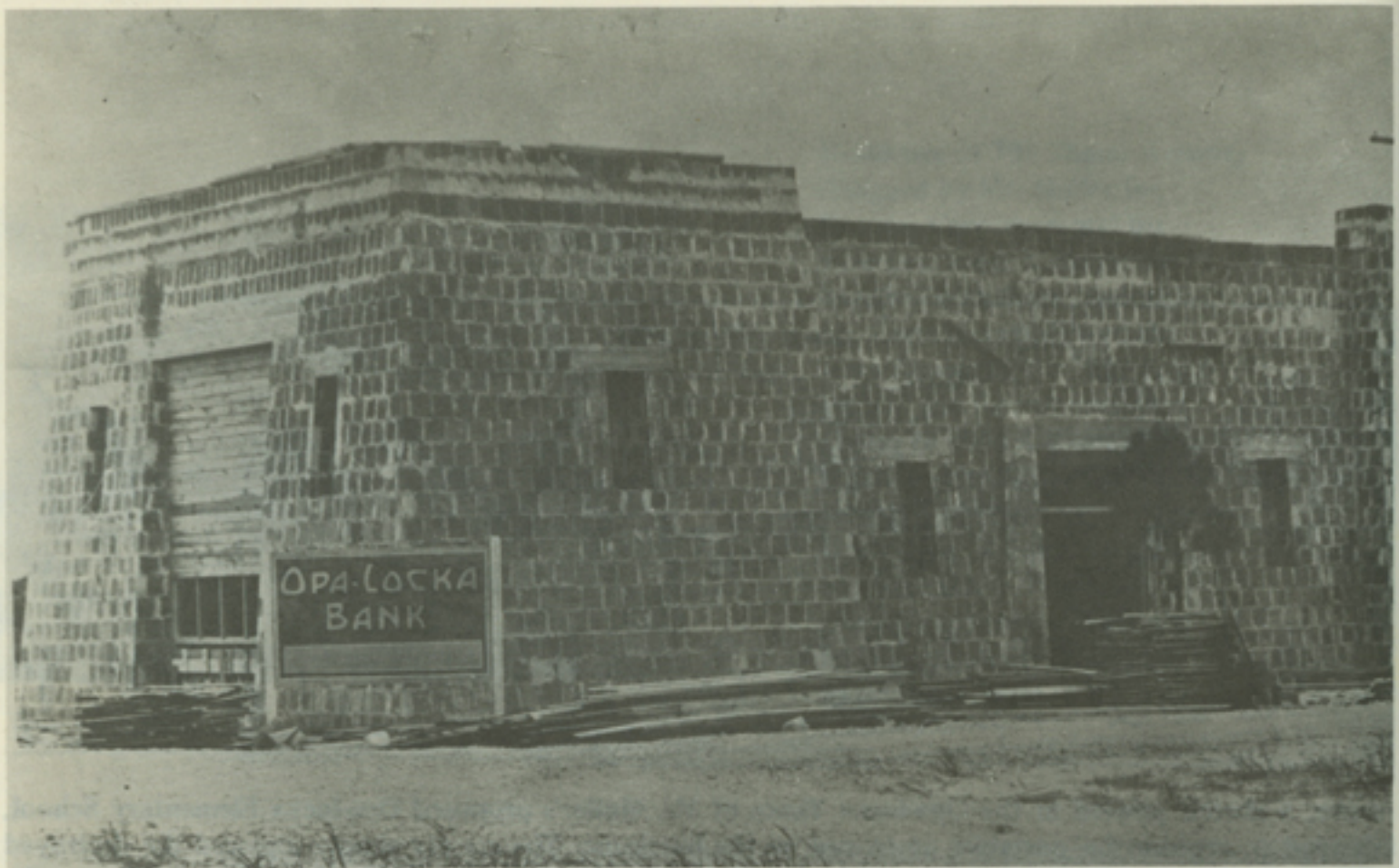
Residence at 706 Sharar Avenue, designed by Mr. Muller for Douglas Carruthers and his wife Eva. John T. Rogerson boarded with them, and with Mr. Carruthers operated the Aero Garage in the Hurt Building and the Florida Aviation Camp. In 1931 the house was purchased by Katherine Mackintosh, longtime librarian of Opa-locka, who resided there until her death. Now turned into an apartment house, the building maintains much of its Arabian flavor.



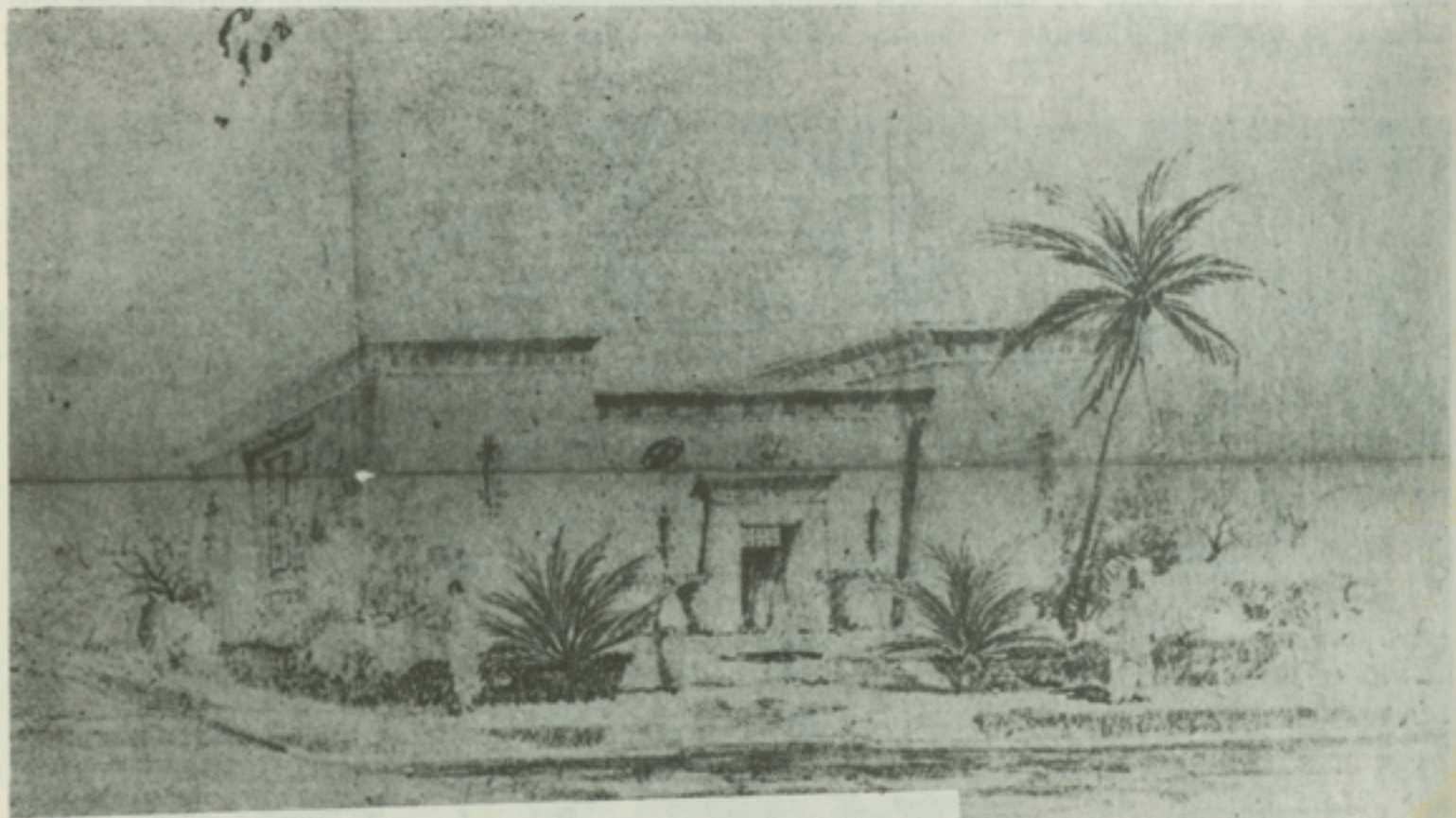


Above, a sketch printed in the Opa-locka Times of Mr. Muller's proposed Opa-locka Elementary School, intended to replace the portables destroyed by the hurricane. The county simply replaced the destroyed buildings with two more portables, and Mr. Muller apparently went no further with his plans. Below, the children of Opa-locka's first elementary school, posed on the steps of the Archery Clubhouse in November 1926. Mrs. Kathryn Bennet stands at left, and Miss Mary A. Borosky at right. Joining them on the staff about this time were Mrs. Howard Hill, principal, wife of the noted archer who was made instructor at the Archery Club, and, somewhat later, Miss Genevieve Welch, who remained a teacher there for some years. Despite considerable efforts, only two of the children can be identified: Judith Bush (later Mrs. James Huston Hines, Jr., who died in 1948) is kneeling, far right, next to Miss Borosky. Judith's elder sister, Janet Bush (now Mrs. Wendall T. Hall) kneels behind her in the second row. William S. Griffiths now City Manager of Opa-locka is unable to identify himself or any others in the picture, though he recalls it being taken.



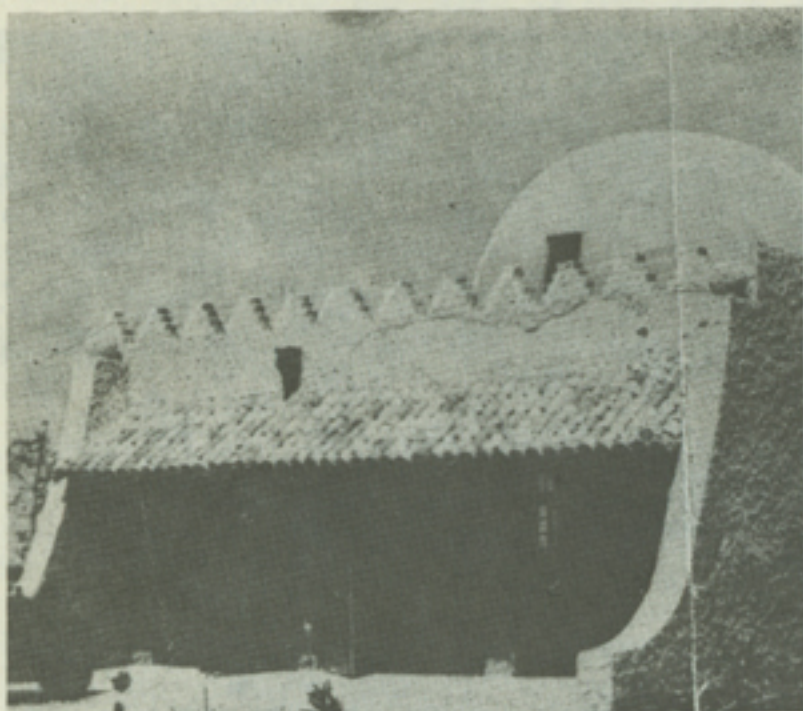


"The Bank that Never Was." Above, the Opa-locka Bank under construction in 1926. It never opened as a bank, and in time became, and for many years remained, the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church of Opa-locka. Still standing on Bahman Avenue opposite the Christian Science Church, it was never completed in the form displayed in the drawing, below, by its architect, the late Bernhardt E. Muller, A. I. A.





Frank Shepard Bush (1894-1973), standing near the Administration Building in midsummer 1926. The Bush Electric Company installed the wiring in all of the Opa-locka Company's buildings, and Mr. Bush built the first private residence in Opa-locka, completed before the town was chartered. A distant cousin but a close friend of the town's founder, the late Glenn H. Curtiss, he invested his all in the building of Opa-locka - and lost it. He cherished until the end of his life the memory of Mr. Curtiss and his dreams of Opa-locka as it never quite became.



Right, news item from the Opa-locka Times, November 17, 1926, concerning building in the town. Note in the center of the last paragraph: "Building permit No. 1, the record shows, was issued to Frank S. Bush for the construction of an electrical shop on March 3." The shop, which stood on the west side of Grapeland Boulevard (Twenty Seventh Avenue), has long since vanished. When, after World War II, Mr. Bush again operated for some years as a contractor, his shop was located in a building built by Milton H. Davis, not far from the earlier building.

Birthplace of the Town of Opa-locka on May 14, 1926: Opa-locka's fire-house and police station, from a promotional pamphlet of the Opa-locka Company.

## TOTAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED NEARS MILLION

AVERAGE RESIDENCE VALUATION \$5,500 WITH SEVEN PERMITS ISSUED THIS MONTH REPORT SHOWS.

A total of 87 building permits covering a construction valuation of \$972,875 have been issued by the building inspector's office at Opa-locka since the inception of the town the early part of this year, according to a report made public yesterday by C. E. Long, superintendent of public works. Seven permits, the report states, were issued during the first half of November, totaling \$69,200.

The report constitutes an accurate index of the building activities in the new town which have been constant from the beginning of construction of the first building. Analysis of the amounts of the permits show that the building construction has been substantial without unnecessary frills, the average residence permit being for an amount close to \$5,500.

The largest permit in the amount of \$150,000 was issued to the Opa-locka Company for the construction of its administration building. The smallest was for additions to a garage to the amount of \$75. Building permit No. 1, the record shows, was issued to Frank S. Bush for the construction of an electrical shop on March 3. The last within the period of the report was issued to Mrs. Mamie Griffiths for the construction of a \$6,500 residence on Sharar avenue in the Arabian section.



To remind the world that Opa-locka was still building, Mr. Curtiss planned an "Opa-locka Progress Parade," complete with floats of Arabian design and led by the Opa-locka Hunt Club. Bravely marching down Flagler Street, Miami, early in December of 1926 (above) is the hunt club, led by Irene Bush, left foreground, followed by her husband, Frank S. Bush, who disliked riding and horses as much as his wife loved both. "All sailors make poor riders," he used to say, but in loyalty to Mr. Curtiss he donned full hunting kit and rode in the parade, albeit a little uncomfortably. Mr. Curtiss had founded the Hunt Club in honor of Irene Bush, knowing her to be an expert equestrienne and assuming that, being of British origin, she was devoted to the chase. She in fact abhorred all blood sports, and fox-hunting especially, and the occasion of the Progress Parade marked her sole appearance with the Hunt Club, which met on weekends alternately at Opa-locka and Coral Gables. Mr. Curtiss and Mr. George Merrick, founder of Coral Gables, imported foxes to south Florida and had them turned loose in the wilds. They proved elusive creatures, and the Hunt more often ran to earth wildcats than foxes, whose descendants are still to be found in the remaining wilderness areas of Dade County. Few now recall that they were not original natives of this region; fewer still know who brought their forebears here and for what purpose.



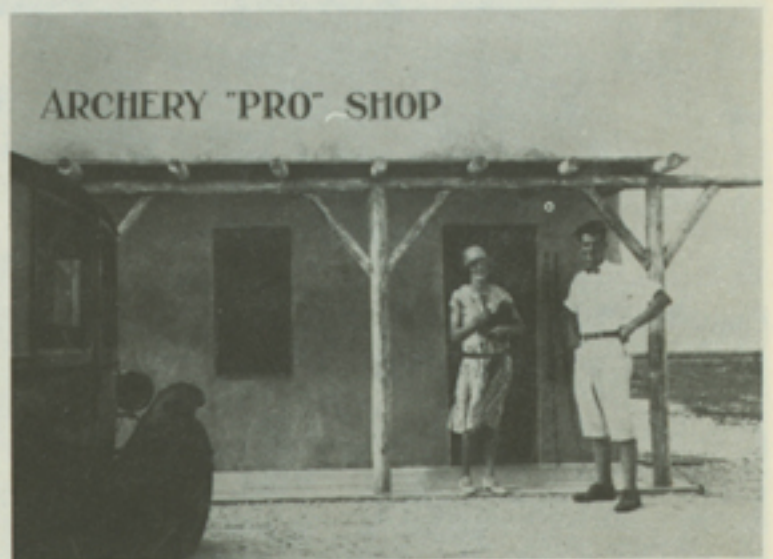


Included in the Opa-locka Progress parade were the then (and still) obligatory bathing beauties, shown above and below surrounding young Jackie Ott (whose picture is at right), son of Alexander Ott, whom Curtiss put in charge of the swimming shows at the Opa-locka Pool, west of the Archery Club. Jack Ott, now director of the Dade County Recreation Department swimming pools, remembers with affection the great days at Opa-locka pool, but recalls little of the town.





The Archery Club, nearing completion in November 1926, view of the south front. The building became in 1932 the Officers Club of the U.S. Naval base, and in 1941 was greatly altered and enlarged. It is now part of the North Dade Regional Park, west of Douglas Road. A short street leading into Douglas Road just north of the building is still called Golf Course Boulevard, much to the puzzlement of those unfamiliar with the history of the locality. Below, left, Howard Hill playing golf at the first tee, the north side of the Archery Club visible in the background. Below, right, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hill in front of the Archery Pro Shop, which stood on a slight rise north of Cook's Hammock. After the closing of the club, Hill went to Hollywood where for many years he was archery consultant to the film industry. He taught such stars as Errol Flynn to handle a bow and arrow, and made many short feature films on archery. He was justly called King of the Bow and Arrow.



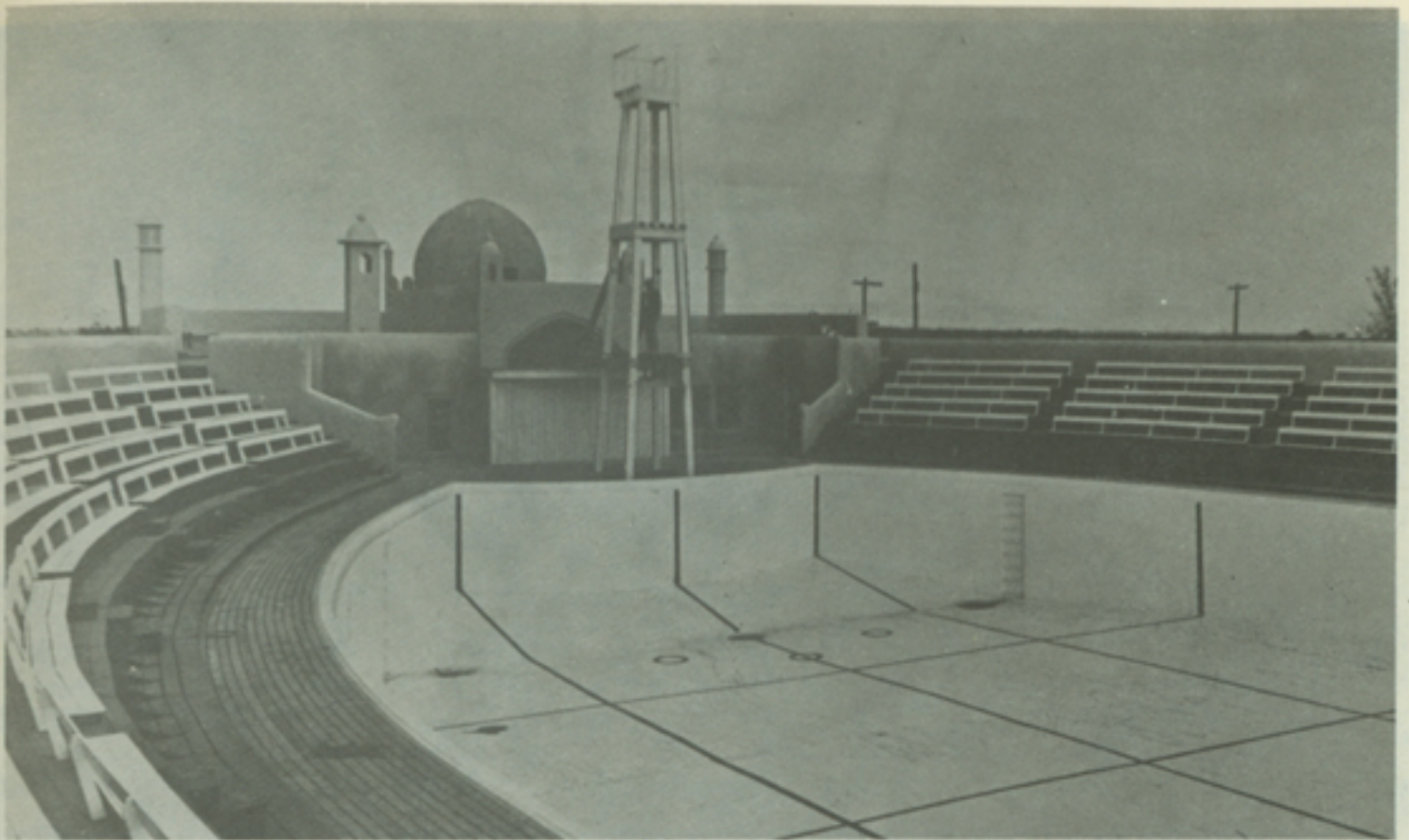


Left, Irene Bush on the archery course at Opa-locka. Howard Hill taught her to shoot, and made the lemonwood bow she is here shown using. Hill was noted for the excellence of his bows he made for many people, among them Glenn Curtiss and Frank Bush.

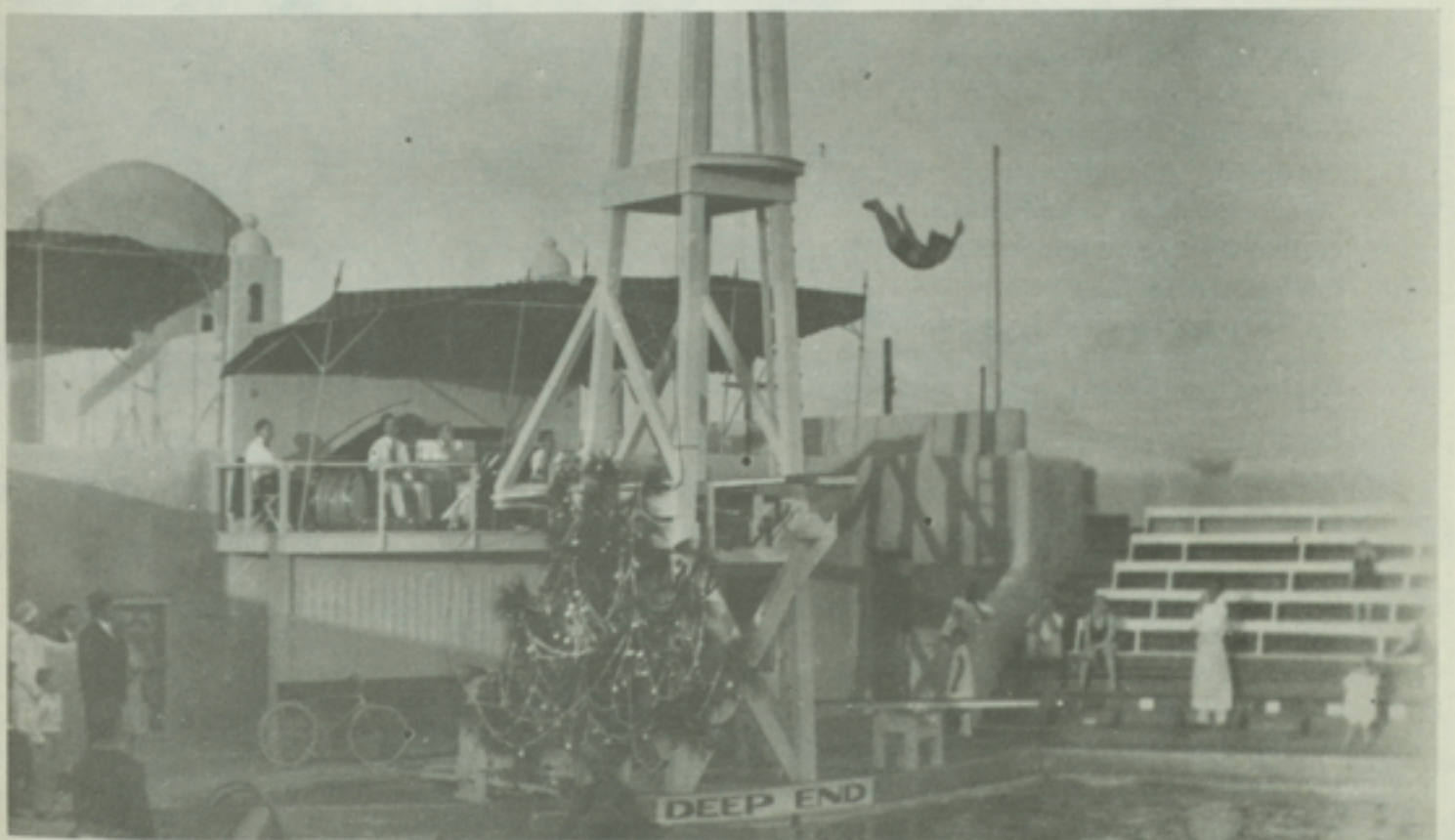
Carl Jensen drawing his bow for a shot on the Opa-locka course. "Robin Hood Golf," a game said to have been invented by Howard Hill and Mr. Curtiss, became a popular and fashionable sport.

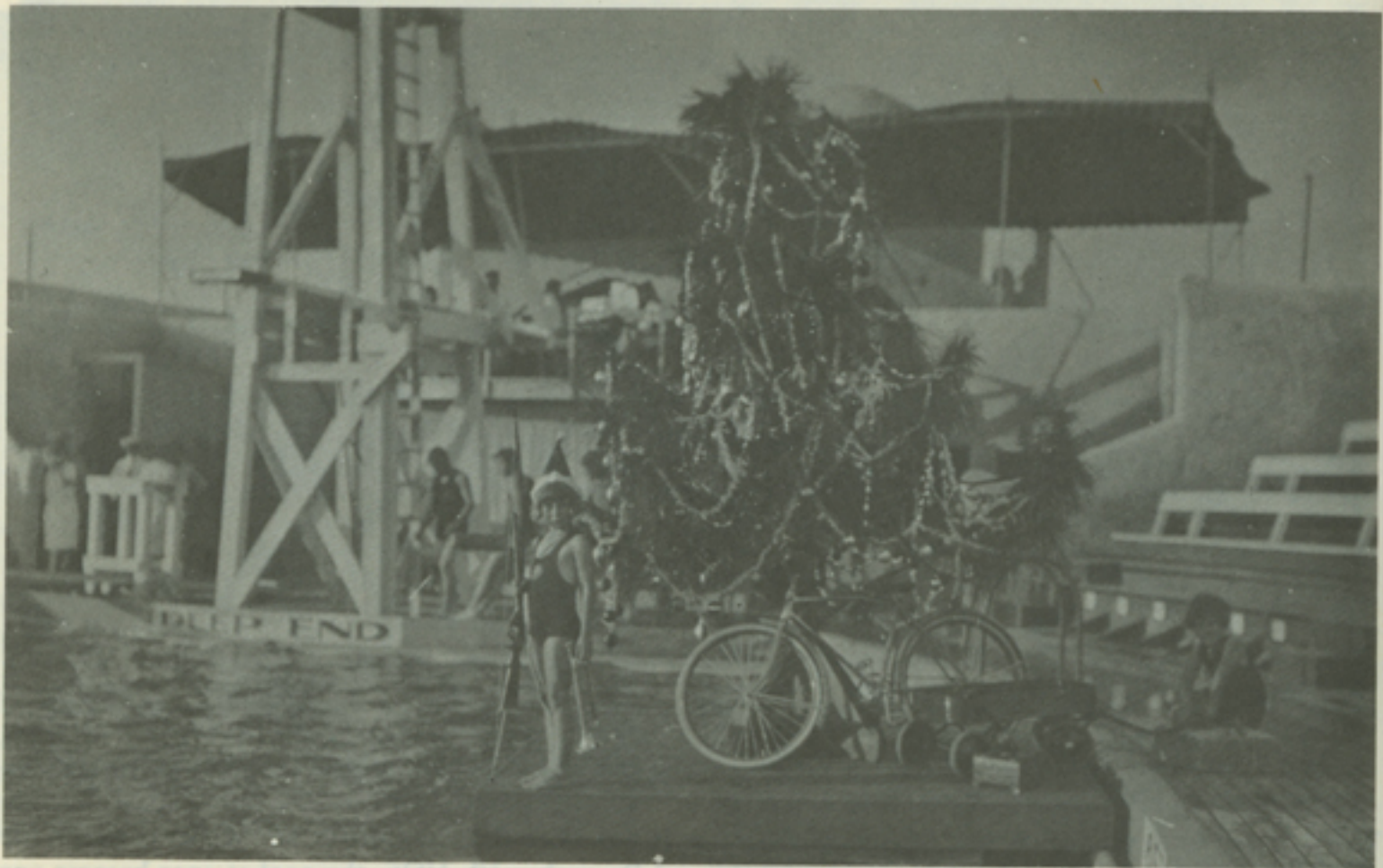


Barbara Kendall, of Country Club Estates, on the archery course at Opa-locka. Daughter of Col. Hugh Kendall, an early friend of Glenn Curtiss, she later married pilot John T. Rogerson, partner of Doug Carruthers. Mr. and Mrs. Rogerson still live in the house Curtiss built for Col. Kendall in Country Club Estates (now Miami Springs).



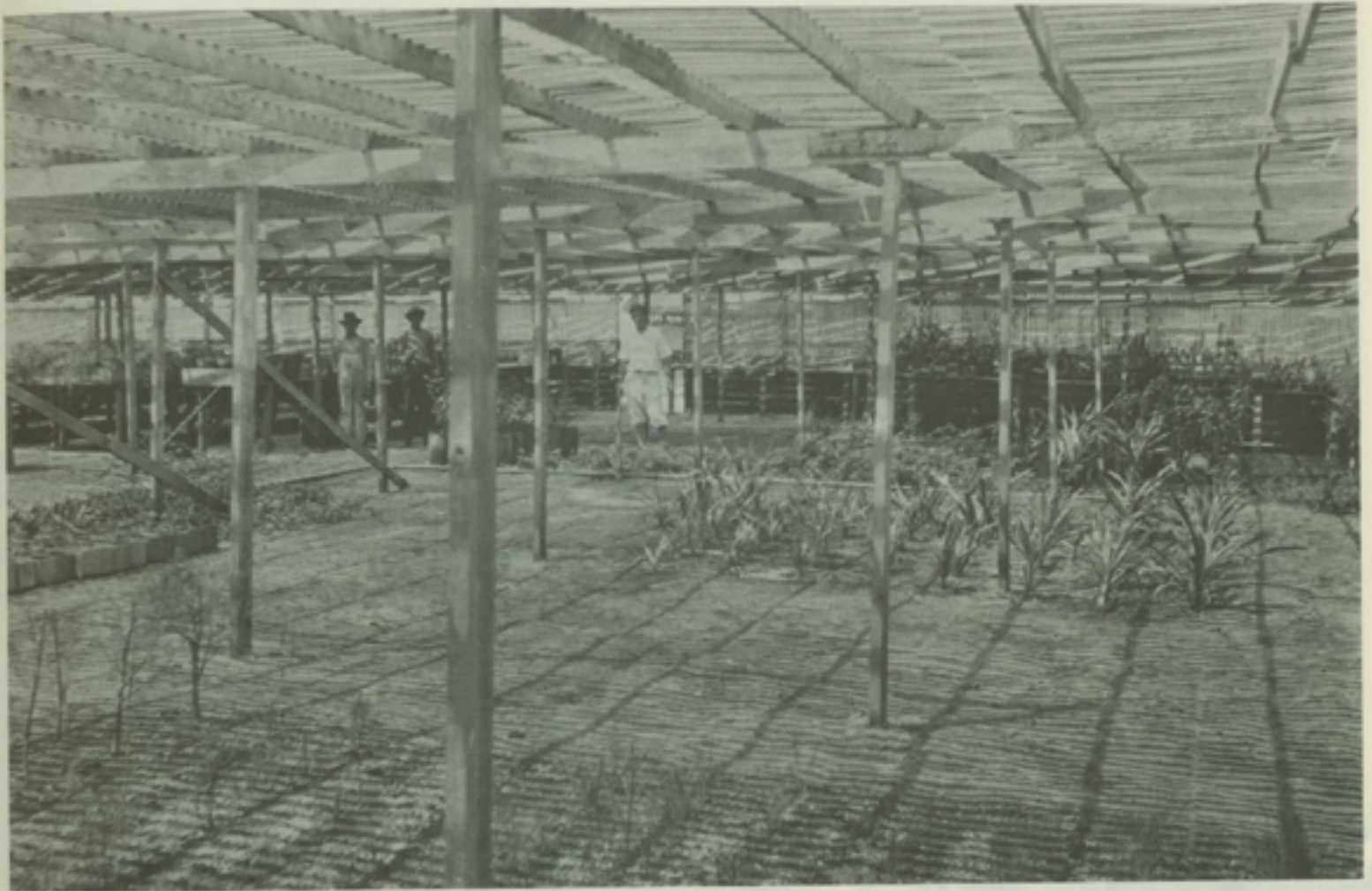
The Archery Club pool, just west of the clubhouse, as it was when first completed. Mr. Muller designed the domed pavillion, which housed dressing rooms. Opened December 19, 1926, the pool at once became one of the most popular of Opa-locka's attractions. Every Sunday aquatic displays under the direction of Alexander Ott were held. Mr. Curtiss ordered a Christmas party for the children of Opa-locka, commissioning Irene Bush to purchase a gift for every child in the town. The annual Christmas Party for the children of Opa-locka continued, though after the death of Mr. Curtiss it was less lavishly carried on by the citizens of the town. Below, Jackie Ott doing a half swan dive over the top of the Christmas tree, December 25, 1926.





Jackie Ott, above, standing on the tree-decked float at the Opa-locka pool, Christmas Day, 1926. Kneeling at poolside in the right of the picture is Judith Bush. A magnificent showman, Alexander Ott billed his son Jackie as "The World's Perfect Boy," and knocked a few years from his true age. Judith, whom he had taught to swim and dive, he featured as "Three-year old little Judy Bush", although she was five and a first-grader at Opa-locka Elementary School. Her sister Janet, then eight, Mr. Ott billed in a group of other children as "The Opa-locka Water Rats." In the photograph at right, Jackie Ott is performing his Houdini dive, with hands and legs tied.





Above, the interior, of the Opa-locka Nursery's slat house, where trees, shrubs, and flowers of all kinds were tested. Below, three Opa-locka ladies displaying the produce of the Community Gardens, where every resident of the town could have a vegetable plot.





Above, the great day in Opa-locka's early years: arrival of the first Orange Blossom Special on the Seaboard Railway at Opa-locka. The police force were attired in their new sky-blue uniforms. Assistant police chief Charles Russell is seen on horseback. Most of the citizens of the town were dressed in Arabian costume, and Opa-locka itself was transformed into an authentic Arabian village. The governor of Florida, John W. Martin, and the president of the Seaboard Railway, S. Davies Warfield, and many other dignitaries, were aboard the train, which was halted at Opa-locka Boulevard by a band of Arab horsemen. The Grand Vizier of the Empire of Opa-locka, G. Carl Adams, president of the Opa-locka Company greeted Mr. Warfield, "Master of the Great Iron Horse," with a proclamation. W.S. Griffiths, today Opa-locka's City Manager, remembers being charged with the duty of bringing the horses from the riding academy to the Administration Building on the great occasion. Thousands of visitors to Opa-locka filled the town to observe the Arabian Nights fantasy. That day, Saturday, January 6, 1928, must remain the highwater mark in Opa-locka's history. To those present it must have seemed that the fabulous dream of Araby had indeed become a reality.



The Grand Vizier leading the charge, sword in hand, from the Administration building to capture the Great Iron Horse. At right, Florida's Governor John W. Martin grins broadly at Seaboard president S. Davies Warfield, each holding the proclamation he has just received from the Grand Vizier. Ten years after this event, Mr. Warfield's niece and former ward, Bessie Wallis Warfield, sometimes Mrs. Spencer, then Mrs. Simpson, became a world celebrity when Edward VIII of England abdicated his throne to marry her. The myth has grown up along the line of the route of the Orange Blossom Special that she was with her uncle that day. She was not, but it is doubtful that the misinformation can now be erased from the various published accounts, all of which appeared after 1936.







Above, at far left, Governor Martin, with head bowed, stands with one of the ladies of the harem, and Mr. Warfield, hat in hand, tries to appear both dignified and amused. The others in the picture cannot be identified. Below, a charge of Arab horsemen along the south side of Sherazad Boulevard.

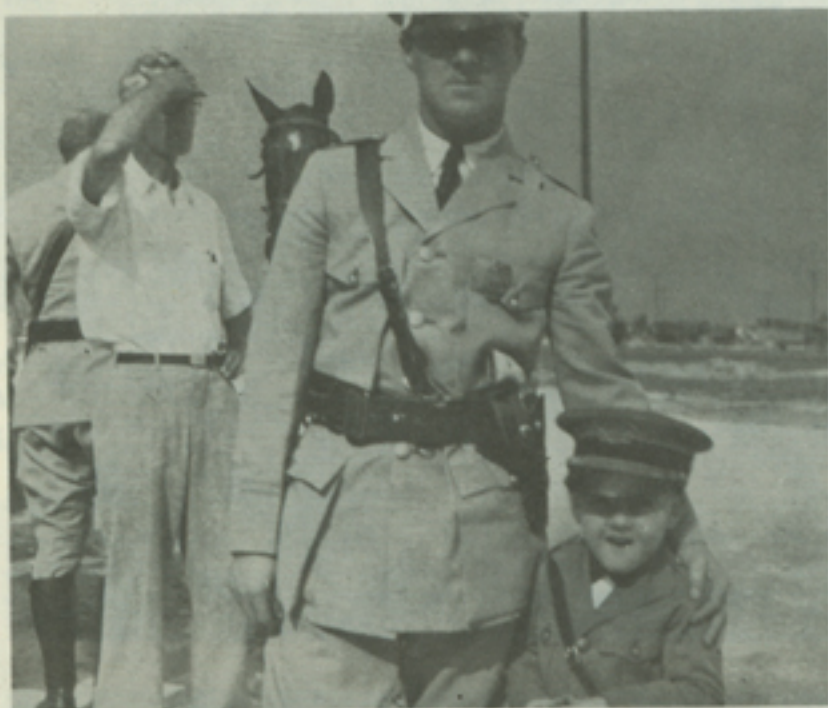




Three views of the Arabian Nights Fantasy - exotic dancing girls, musicians, and, in the picture in the center, the Hurt Building draped with banners.



Frank S. Bush as Ali Baba,  
in the courtyard of the  
Administration Building.



Opa-locka police chief Carl  
Long with his young son.

In the courtyard of the  
Administration Building;  
Carl Adams, Grand Vizier,  
in white turban at the foot  
of the staircase.



The Grand Vizier, posed  
at the front of the Administration  
building at right.



"Ladies of the Harem"  
at far left, Hazel Long, wife  
of Police Chief Long, standing  
next to Mrs. Carl Adams. The  
Junoesque lady in center is  
unidentified, but to the right  
of her are Mildred Wilkins and  
Mrs. Euchner.

"Gathered at the well for water  
and village gossip." Group at  
the fountain in the Administration  
Building courtyard.





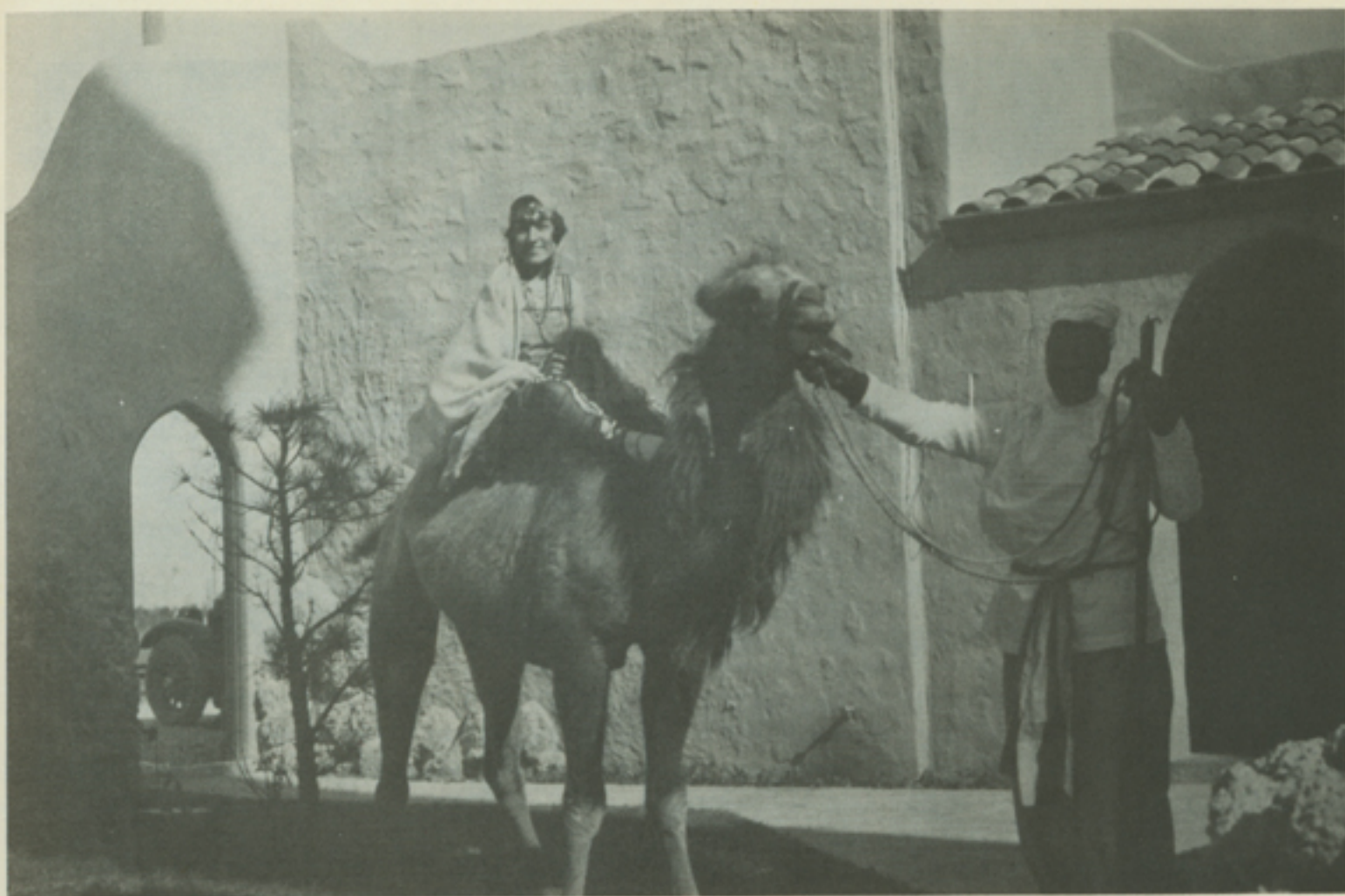
"The Jewish Merchant," standing at the entrance gate of the Administration Building. He roamed the streets of the Arabian village, giving candy to the children of visitors.



But for the two figures in modern dress, one might think this a picture of ancient Arabia.



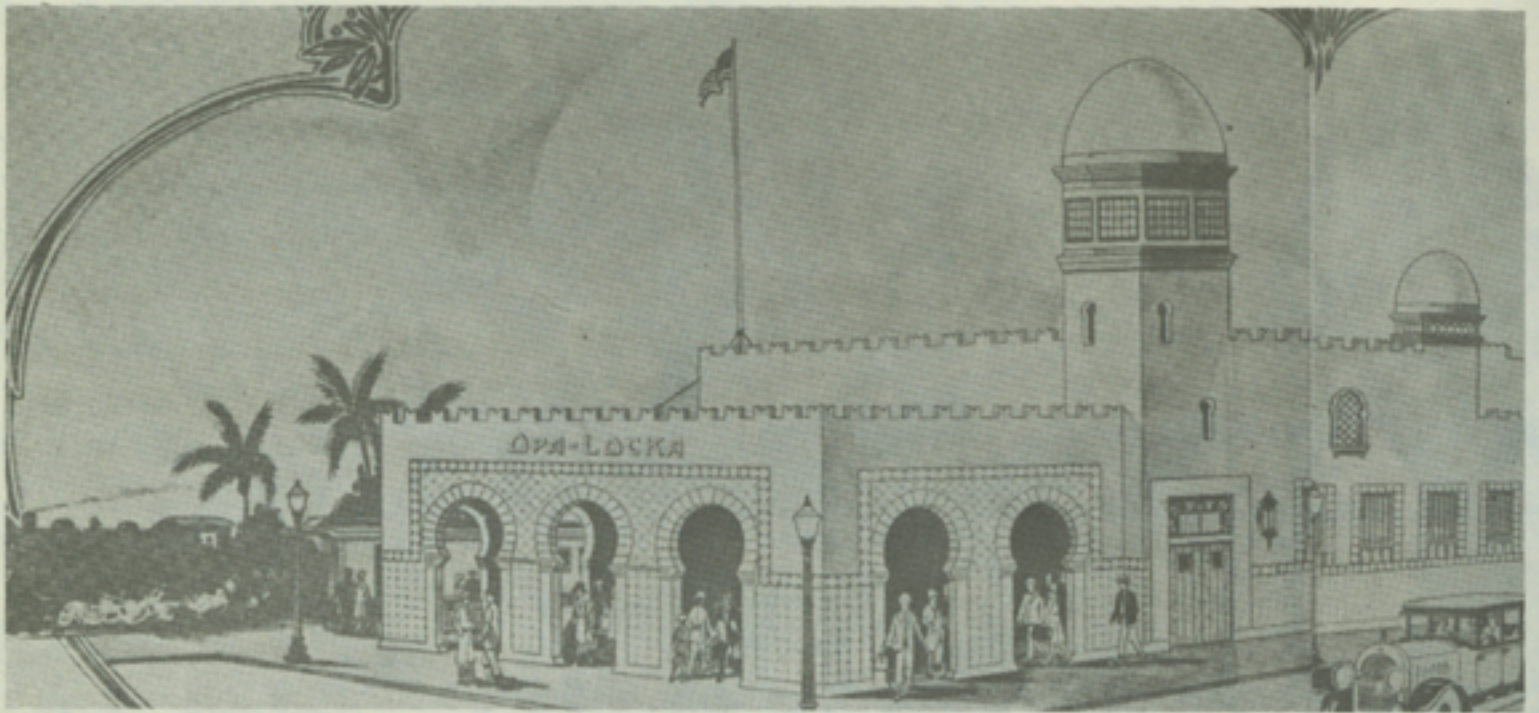
Again, a gathering at the fountain of the Administration building.



Three more views of the great Arabian pageant of January 1926. Lua Andrews Curtiss thought the one at bottom, right, not quite proper; it was a little daring for the times.

The railroad station can be seen in  
this view, taken late in 1927.  
W. R. Loring of Country Club  
Source: privately digitized by  
www.1914-1918.com





Not until some weeks after the welcoming of the railroad was work on the Seaboard station begun. Above, Bernhardt Muller's sketch of the proposed station. Below, the station under construction at left, and completed at right. It can be seen that here again the structure built was scaled down from the architect's original design.





The railroad station can be seen in these two views, taken late in 1927. Of R. Leaycraft of Country Club Estates, proudly displaying his quarry - a wildcat shot with bow and arrow in broad daylight. Wildcats were to remain for some time unwelcome visitors to the town.





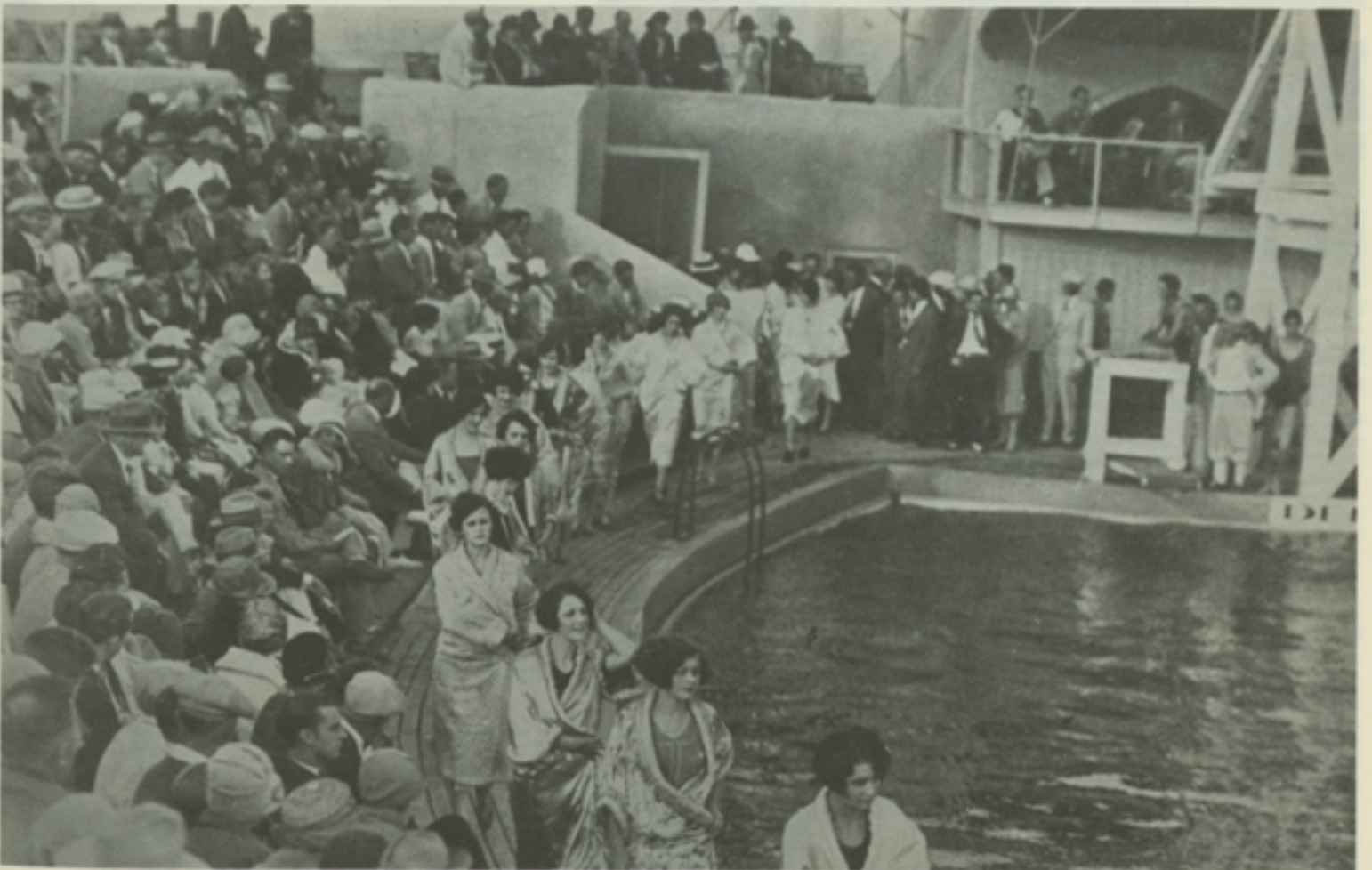
Early in 1927 Vivian Yeiser Laramore, whose second volume of poems, "Green Acres," had been published the preceding year, read from her work to members of the Thursday Club at Pine Shadows, the Bush residence on Peri Street. Mrs. Laramore was to be made Poet Laureate of Florida by Governor Doyle E. Carlton in 1931, and to publish seven more volumes of poetry before her death in 1975. Her husband, Robert Eugene Laramore, made and lost a fortune in the land boom in the 1920's. He died in 1936, and Vivian married in 1949 the late Paul C. Rader, of a pioneer Miami family. A great poet and a lifelong friend of the Bush family, her visit to the Thursday Club was commemorated by these photographs taken at the Administration building. In both pictures she is standing in the center, at right, before the entrance gate, and below in front of the fountain of the Administration Building.



# OPA-LOCKA

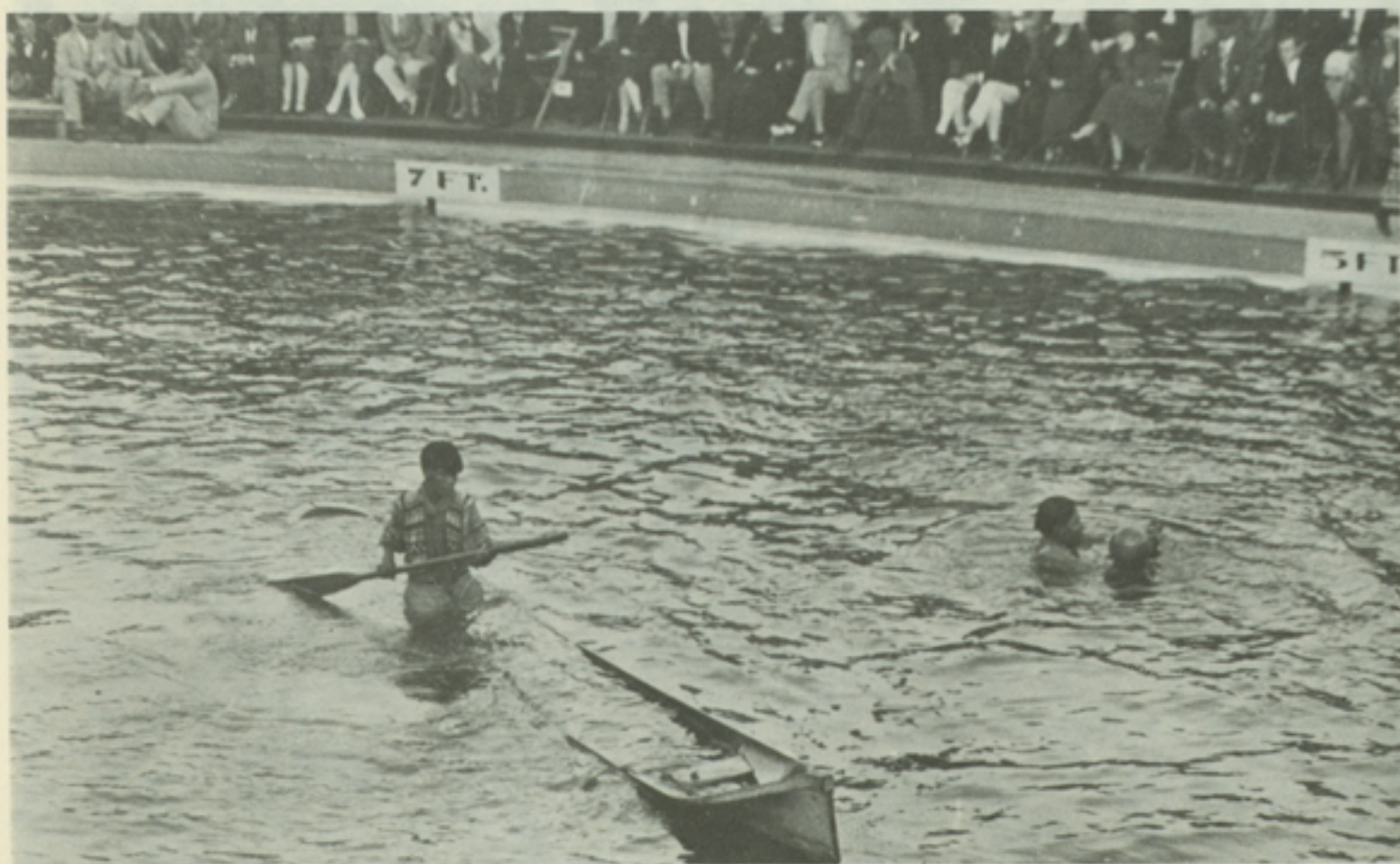


Two views of the Miss Miami Beauty Pageant at the Opa-locka Pool, March 6, 1927. The winner went on to vie for the title of Miss Florida, and the privilege of going to Atlantic City for the Miss America competition. Their names, unhappily, are not now remembered.





A swan dive from the thirty-foot platform at the Opa-locka Pool, left; below, Seminole Indians battling an alligator (from the appearance of the dug-out canoe one might guess the alligator was winning, but the newspaper reported the Seminoles won). Such displays attracted large crowds to Opa-locka in the 1926-1928 period. Seated in the front row of spectators in the photograph below, a little left of center, is Frank S. Bush, wearing white trousers, dark jacket, and his favorite Stetson. To the right of him, her face half hidden by a large white hat, hands folded in her lap and legs properly crossed at the ankles, is his wife Irene.



# OPA-LOCKA



Jackie Ott

# POOL

## MUSIC & 10 BIG ACTS

Water Sports - Comedy  
Vaudeville

Alexander Ott, Manager



## GREATEST

And Most Sensational

# THRILL

Ever Shown in Miami

Monster  
Man-Eating

## SHARK

Will Be Captured  
by Bare-Handed Diver  
From the Pool Waters

## ALLAN KNOWLES

Key West Diving Expert  
IN HIS SECOND THRILLER

It Is Breath-Taking—Don't Miss a Move  
See Knowles in Complete Diver's Outfit

## THE DIVING RINGERS

World's Highest Divers—Diving 125 Feet

Judy Bush, 3-Year-Old Swimmer; "Stubby"  
Kruger, Comedy King; "Those" Opa-Locka  
Water Rats; Jackie Ott and Ann Booker, Diving  
Vaudeville Specialties—Music.

### HOW TO GET THERE

Drive out N. W.  
7th Ave. and Opa-  
Locka road direct  
to Pool or take  
White Way Tour  
Busses from Opa-  
Locka office, 132  
E. Flagler St.

FIRST  
ACT  
GOES ON  
at  
8:20 P. M.

Admission  
Will Be  
50c  
Today No  
Complimentary  
Tickets  
Honored  
Today

Jackie Ott and his Show at

An advertisement and a news item from the Miami newspapers record some of the spectaculars held at the Opa-locka Pool in 1927.

## BIG PROGRAM IS ARRANGED FOR SUNDAY

Presenting an unprecedented number of aquatic stars, the Opa Locka pool will stage "Kiwanis Club Day," Sunday. Among the stars to be presented will be Jackie Ott, 7-year-old aquatic wonder, performing the feat of eating a banana and drinking milk while submerged in a glass tank.

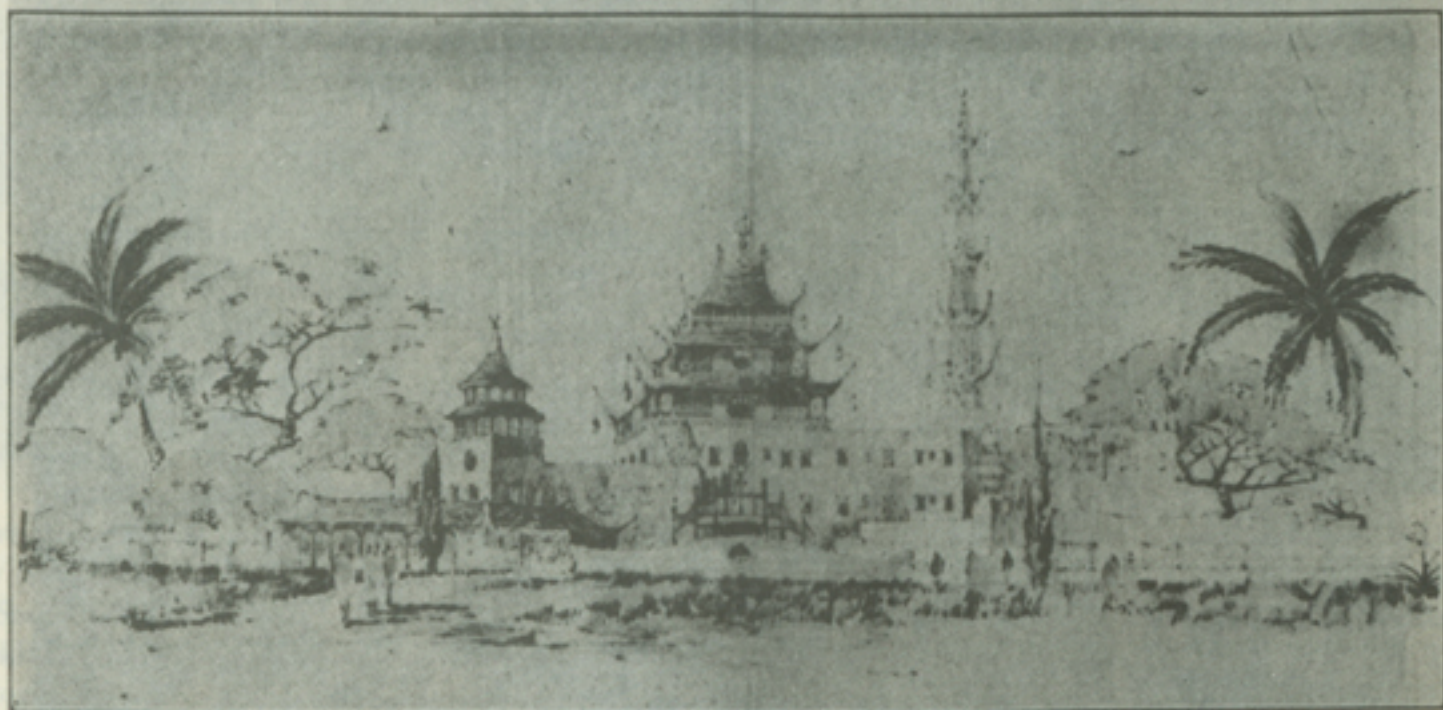
"Dare Devil" Burke, whose feats of diving have aroused considerable interest on the part of visitors to the pool, will dive into a mass of flames as a part of his program Sunday. Rube Darcy, master clown, has been engaged by Alexander Ott, director of pool activities, to amuse children guests.

One of the principal features of the Sunday program will be Doris Grey, formerly of Keith's vaudeville, in fancy dives. The background of Miss Grey's performance is furnished by the model girls' club, a bevy of model beauties, who will stage a Spanish shawl parade and exhibit the latest modes on bathing apparel.

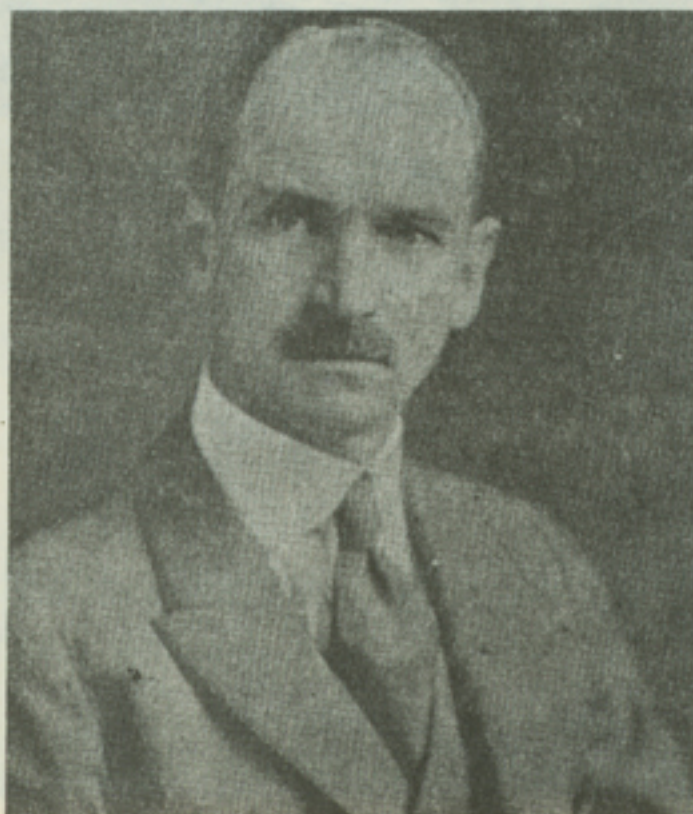
Alexander Ott will himself give exhibitions of aquatic skill, swimming beneath the water for the length of the pool and also demonstrating that it is possible to walk beneath the water. An added attraction will be a group of negro singers and dancers.



*Chinese Motif Invades Florida*



Above, a drawing of the Hotel Aladdin, designed by Mr. Muller but never built. Below, the last photograph of Glenn H. Curtiss, whose death in 1930 at the age of fifty-two ended the Dream of Araby.





Photograph of the Opa-locka Administration Building taken by Miami photographer the late G.W. Romer in 1930, the year of Mr. Curtiss's death.



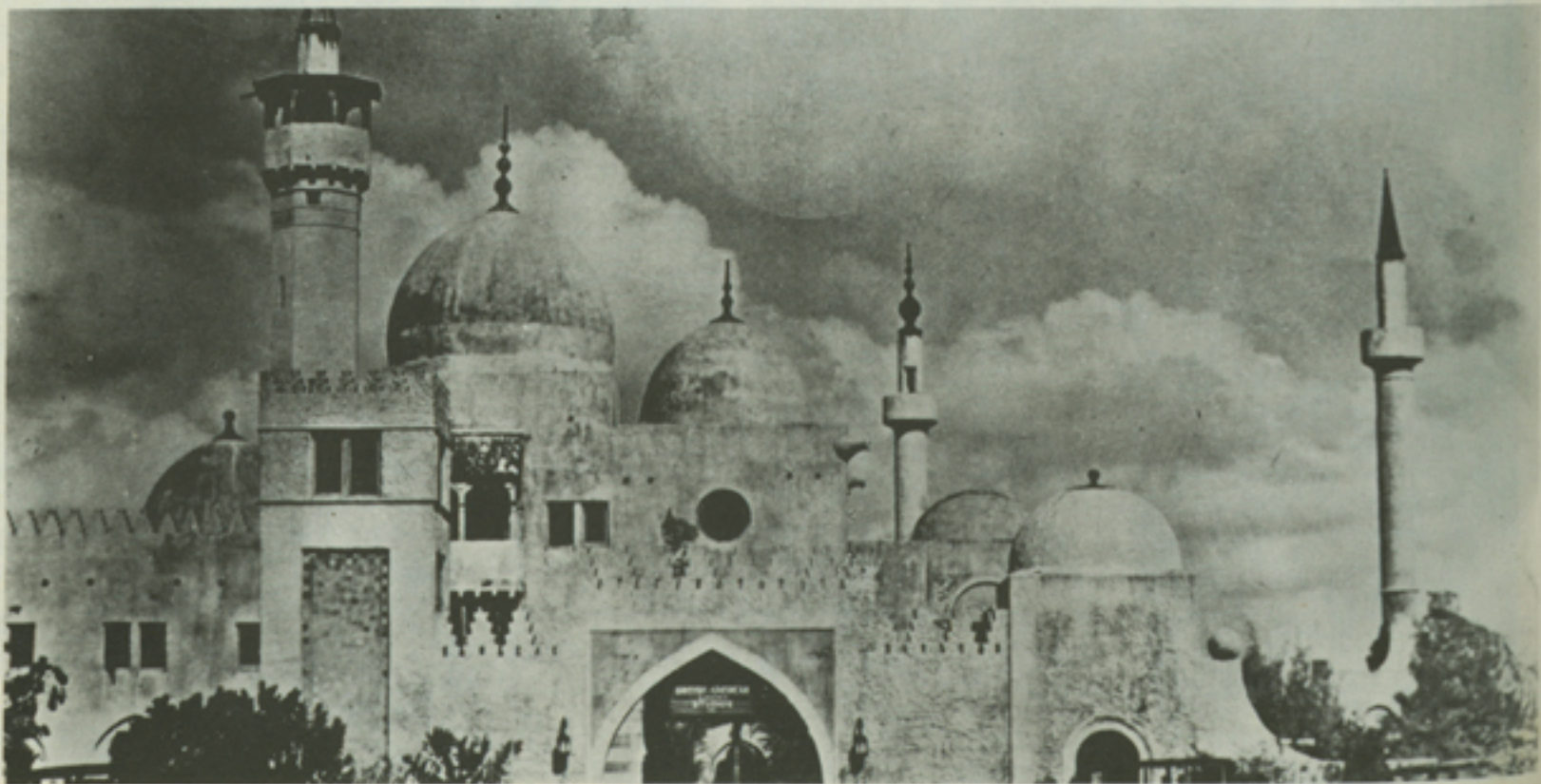
Above, the first U.S. Naval Reserve Aviation Base, photographed about 1932. Mr. Curtiss gave to the U.S. Navy his Florida Aviation Camp for the establishment of this base, which eventually expanded, taking over the Second Miami Municipal Golf Course, the Archery Club, and the Opa-locka Park. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt bestowed the Distinguished Flying Cross upon Mr. Curtiss posthumously. The photograph below was taken at the Opa-locka base where Lua Andrews Curtiss received her son's DFC. From left to right, G. Carl Adams, his mother Lua Curtiss, Glenn H. Curtiss, Jr., Rutha Curtiss, and General Furlois, who presented the medal to Mrs. Curtiss.



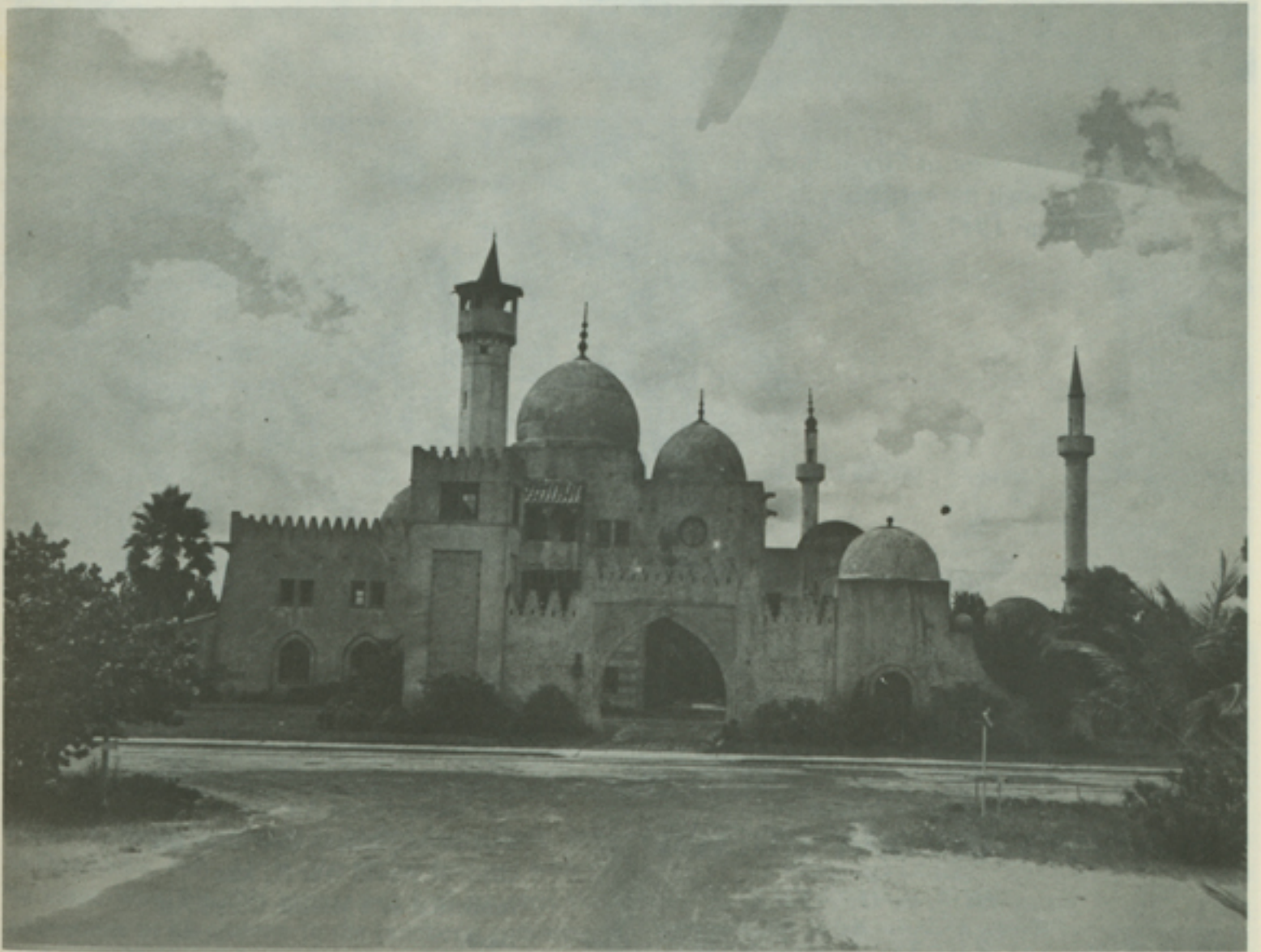




Above, the U.S. Navy dirigible "Macon" at Opa-locka, May 1934. Boasting one of the few dirigible mooring-masts in the nation, Opa-locka's Naval Reserve station was visited by all the Navy's lighter-than-air craft, and by the ill-fated German passenger-carrying "Hindenburg," which moored there in 1932. Below, a view of the Administration Building during the 1930's. The sign suspended from the balcony within the arch reads: "British-American Cinema Studios, Ltd." No record or memory of that company could be found. Mr. Curtiss had many friends and business contacts in England and in the cinema industry. He had persuaded the great D.W. Griffith to come to Hialeah to make films in the early 1920's, and had hoped to attract the film makers to Opa-locka as well. He began construction of a large movie studio west of Twenty-Seventh Avenue, the roofless walls of which still were standing in my memory. Some old-timers insist that it was finished and used for film-making, but lost its roof in the 1926 hurricane. My father's recollection was that it had not, in fact, been completed. It stood in what is now one of Opa-locka's industrial parks, filled with warehouses and small factories. It may have been demolished, or reconstructed as one of these.



Left, Opa-locka City Hall,  
photographed from the north-  
west, before the removal of  
the domes from the central  
block and wings. The date  
of the picture is uncertain,  
but must be prior to 1943.



The Opa-locka Administration Building, photographed by G.W. Romer about 1939. At that time it had survived unaltered since its completion to Mr. Muller's designs and under his supervision, save for a small cupola, or demi-tour, which formerly topped the tower at the left of the entrance gate. Unpainted since the death of Mr. Curtiss in 1930, it still retained its beauty, augmented rather than frayed by time and the elements. The large hall, windows of which can be seen on ground floor, left, still contained the murals painted in 1926, depicting tales from the Arabian Nights. The building, like the city itself, had a haunting beauty which the prosperity of World War II was to efface.



Left, Opa-locka City Hall, photographed from the north-west, before the removal of the domes from the central block and wings. The date of the picture is uncertain, but must be prior to 1943.

Right, view of City Hall taken through the entrance gates, about 1947.



Left, the Chamber of Commerce's welcome to Opa-locka, erected at the city limits during the Korean War. During that conflict, the Miami Naval Air Station at Opa-locka, deactivated after the close of World War II, was reopened as a Marine Corps Air Base.



Frank S. Bush, Bernhardt E. Miller, Irene Bush, and Frank S. FitzGerald-Bush, at the Pioneer Day luncheon in Opa-locka, July, 1959. Mr. Muller had not seen the town he had so lovingly designed in thirty years when he came here for this event, nor had he seen the Bushes in more than twenty-five years. In a touching addendum to his address to the luncheon gathering, Mr. Muller, paid a beautiful - if no longer then precisely fitting - tribute to Irene Bush as "the beautiful young lady who was such an inspiration to me in the designing of the Arabian fantasy of Opa-locka, and to her baby son, who visited my wife and me with his mother in New Jersey when I was at work on the plans for the principal buildings." Mr. Muller died in 1962, and in 1966 his collection of drawings, blueprints, photographs, and correspondence was offered for sale in Miami. When I attempted to purchase them, the agent acting for the seller informed me that the materials had been sold to the University of Miami Library. Members of the staff of that library informed me that they had no record of the Muller collection, an invaluable source-material on the building of Opa-locka.

Lua Andrews Curtiss, mother of Opa-locka's founder, extracted a promise from Frank Bush that he would build a Christian Science church in Opa-locka. The first religious services, held before the town was chartered, were informal Christian Science services in Pine Shadows, the Bush home on Peri Street. Not until the 1950's was a formal organization begun, however. The first church edifice, shown at right, was built by Frank Bush, Joseph Schneider, and Albert Heath, with their own hands and funds, aided financially by the businessmen of the town.



First Church of Christ, Scientist, Opa-locka, soon after completion in February 1965. Angus McGregor, the architect, faithfully followed the rough plan and water-color sketch of Jason Tyler Bush (killed in an aircraft accident in 1959). One of the church board members objected to the steeple, but Mr. Bush, with the aid of architect McGregor, persevered and the steeple was built. Though the congregation has remained small, the church - and its steeple - survive, as evidenced in the picture below, taken by Jay Tyler Bush in 1976.





Above, Opa-locka's Police and Fire Departments in 1962 and, below, The First Opa-locka Volunteer Police Force in January of 1927, from The Opa-locka Times issue of Wednesday, January 26, 1927.



The Opa-locka Volunteer Police Department appeared in their new uniforms for the first time during the reception tendered President Warfield and party who arrived on the first section of the Orange Blossom

Special, on January 8.

Uniforms are of horizon blue. Sgm Browne belts and puttees are black.

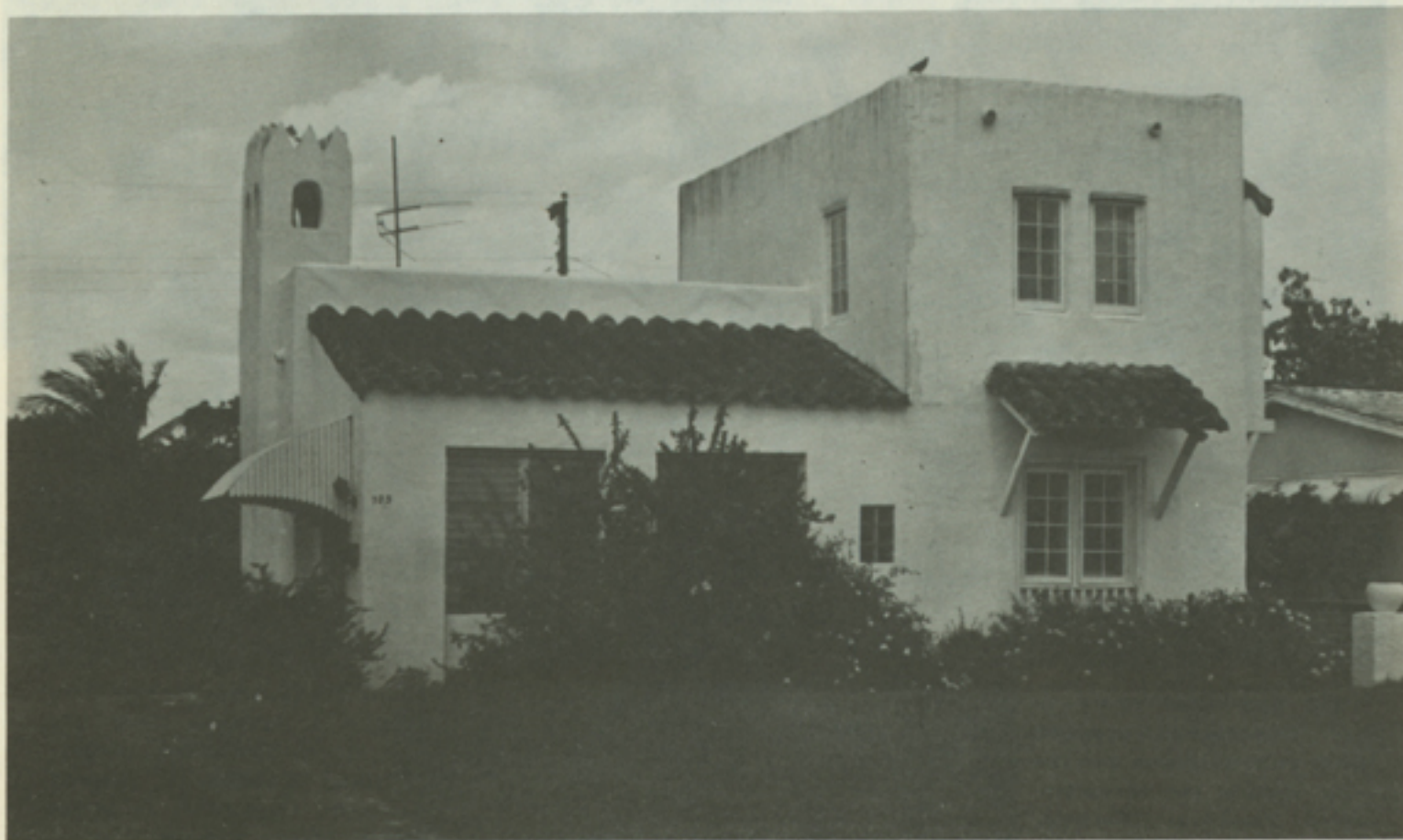
Members of the department, who received many compliments on their neat appearance, from

left to right are: Traffic Sergeant M. J. Johnson, Duty Sergeant A. E. Tompkins, Assistant Chief Charles S. Russell (mounted), Captain C. E. Long, Chief E. Bruce Youngs.



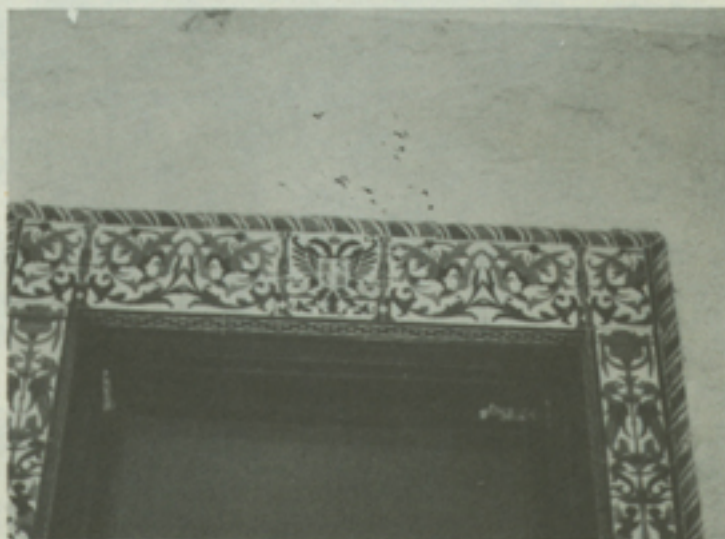
Left, house at 705 Sharar Avenue, designed by Mr. Muller for R.D. Logan and constructed in January of 1927. When information for the first city directory was being gathered in the summer of 1927, Mrs. Virginia B. McCormick lived here. In 1940 the house was purchased by Arthur Higgins, whose widow Alice still resides there.

Below, the Higgins house in 1976, one of the best preserved of the houses built by Mr. Muller. Mr. Higgins, long a member of the Opa-locka city council and sometime mayor of the city, first came to Opa-locka in early summer of 1927, residing in one unit of the two duplexes on Sesame Street, built by him in partnership with Mr. Taber. Mrs. Higgins remains active in civic affairs and was among the founders of the Opa-locka Woman's Club, as well as being present chairman of the Opa-locka Library Board.





The Opa-locka Seaboard Station in 1976, above and at right; below, detail of the handmade tiles set around the arches, doors and windows of the railroad station. Like some abandoned fortress in the Arabian desert, it dreams peacefully in the sun, glowing with color despite the work of vandals and their graffiti.







City Hall as it appears today: above, the approach from Opa-locka Boulevard and, below, view from the patio down the Boulevard.





Above, the minarets of Opa-locka's City Hall today and, left, the South Florida Archaeological Museum, housed in the southwest wing of the City Hall in quarters generously given by the city to the Miami-West India Archaeological Society, sponsors of the Museum.





The Archery Club swimming pool as it looks in 1976, shorn of its Arabian bathing pavillion, survives as a part of the North Dade Regional Park at Opa-locka.

"The Bank That Never Was," with its incongruously added gothic window, survives in 1976 as a part of Opa-locka's First Baptist Church.



The house Mr. Muller designed for G. Carl Adams, long the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Quick.





Above, the first privately built residence in Opa-locka as it appeared in 1976. Transformed into an apartment house, "Pine Shadows, where Frank and Irene Bush had dreamed of spending their lives, was lost in 1928 with the Bush's modest fortune. Bought in 1935 by Mr. William Strickland, it still belongs to a member of his family. Below, still retaining much of its Arabian flavor, a house on Peri Street just west of the former Bush home, designed by Mr. Muller and built as a speculation by Mr. Bush, by coincidence it was rented in 1953 by his son, the late Jason Tyler Bush. For many years an apartment at the rear of this house has been temporary home to a long succession of Morman missionaries from throughout the United States.





Left, the Opa-locka Elementary School in 1976. Built in 1937, it replaced the old portables long used by the community's school children.

The Opa-locka Public Library, of which the citizens of the city are justly proud. It is an example of the kind of activity which would have pleased the town's founder, Mr. Curtiss, and his mother, Lua Andrews Curtiss, who was founder of Hialeah's first public library.



The Opa-locka Post Office, 1976 - a long way (though not in distance) from the first post office, operated by Parthenia Samson in the Hurt Building for many years.





Opa-locka main thoroughfare, Sharazad Boulevard, in 1976. Above, looking westward toward City Hall and, below, looking eastward from the roof of City Hall.





Some of the churches and social organizations which have enriched community life in Opa-locka: top left, the new sanctuary of First Baptist Church, oldest continuous church organization in the city; top right, St. Kevin's Episcopal Church, successor to the first official religious group formed in the town in 1926, Holy Cross Mission, which did not survive; middle left, Catholic Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (formerly consecrated to St. Mel, nephew of Ireland's patron, St. Patrick); middle right, American Legion Post 144, formerly styled "The Arabian Knights Post;" bottom left, Fleet Reserve Association; bottom right, the Masonic Lodge, among whose charter members were Bill Griffiths, Frank Bush, Virgil Strickland, and bearers of many other old Opa-locka names. Mr. Curtiss believed such religious and social groups essential to the spirit of a town. He would have appreciated knowing they exist in Opa-locka, and also that to the south of his city stands one of the state's largest community colleges, Miami-Dade, while to the north of it is Biscayne College, a small but excellent Catholic liberal arts college.



Aerial view of Opa-locka in 1976, looking over the Opa-locka Airport (still one of the nation's busiest) which now occupies the site of the vanished golf course, riding academy, and park. It has been so long since these beautiful legacies of Mr. Curtiss to his beloved town were destroyed that many speak of them as never having existed, regarding them as plans which were never executed. They were, in fact, a reality, as was so much of what is now forgotten, or recalled as only a dream.



# Opa-locka

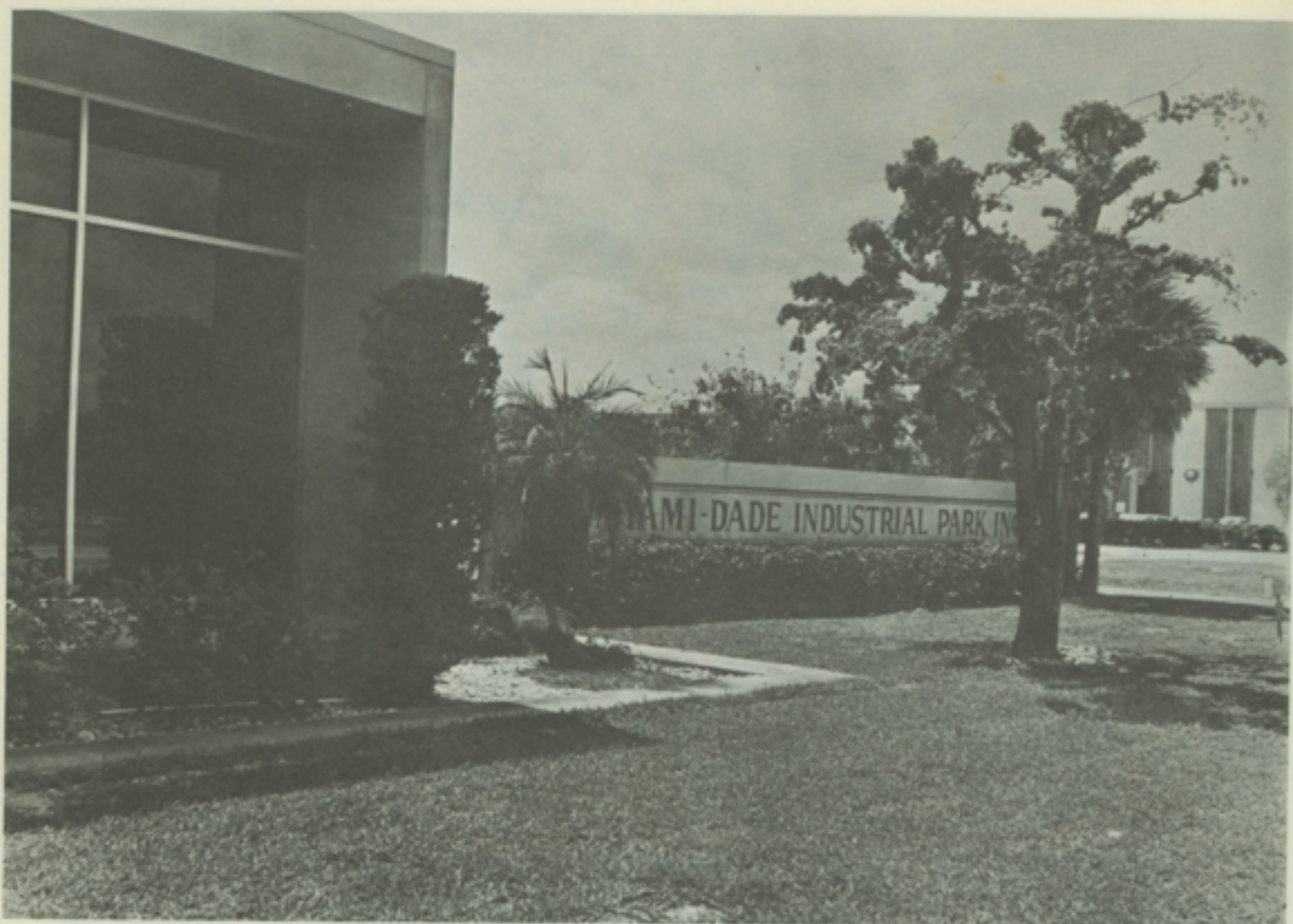
## The Bagdad of South Florida



Opatishawaukalocka had a real meaning for the Indians of Florida . . . . it designated a tower of strength in the wilderness . . . . its true meaning was hammock, a sturdy growth of trees. Take away the middle part . . . add a hyphen, and you have Opa-locka, a city whose name confers the same idea of strength and growth. Actually the hyphen in Opa-locka has come to mean "Progress" to those who know the city and its story.









The control tower at Opa-locka Airport, now one of the busiest in the nation, soars skyward from a spot where deer and wildcat roamed half a century ago. Like some futuristic minaret, it might well stand as a monument synthesizing the contributions of the late Glenn H. Curtiss to aviation and his dream of Opa-locka - A Dream of Araby.

MAGAZINE  
SECTION

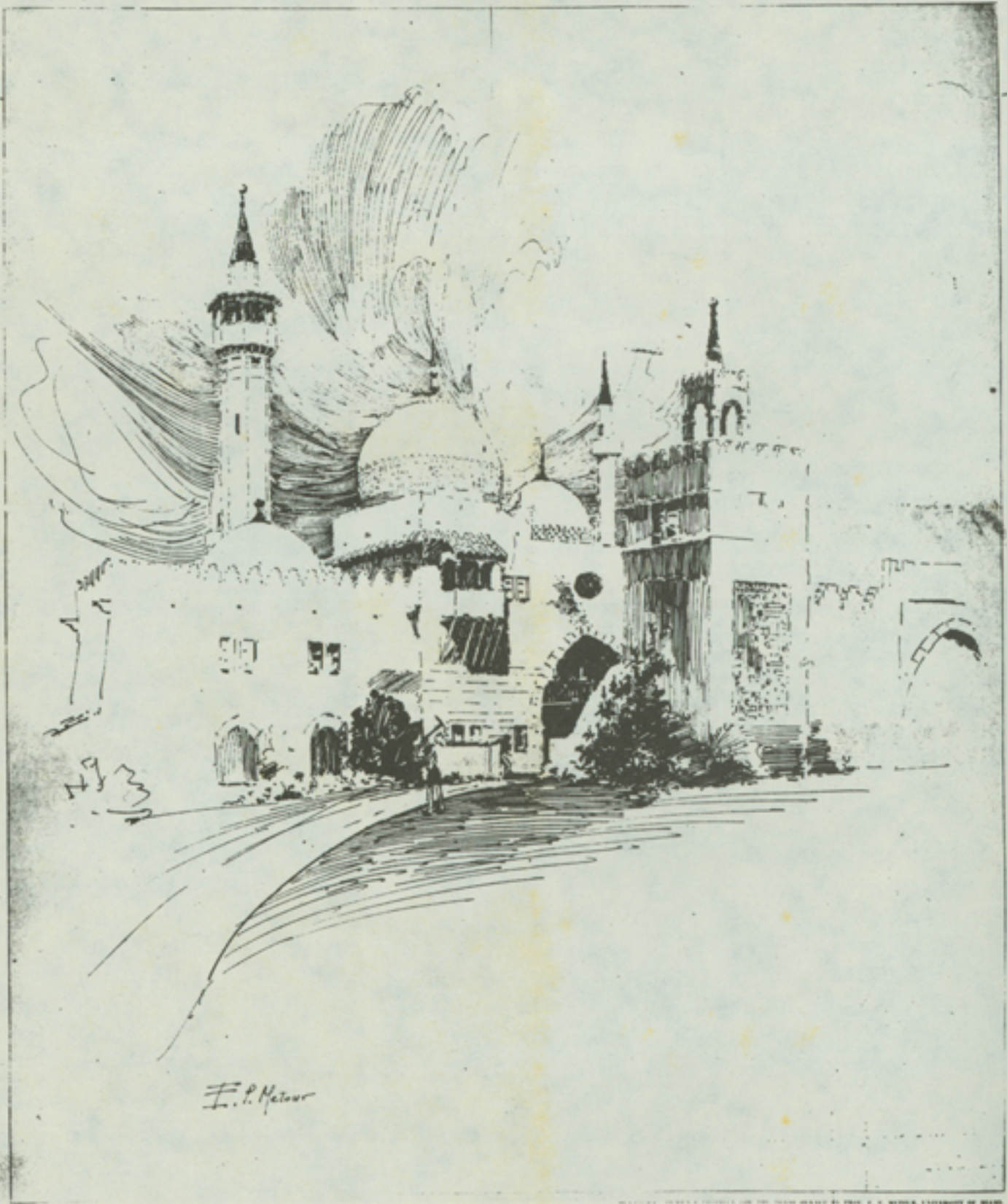
# The Miami Herald

MAGAZINE  
SECTION

ONLY SUNDAY MIAMI NEWSPAPER WITH ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI, FLA., SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 27, 1927.

## STORIED SHEIKS of ARABY Might Enjoy a SOJOURN Here



REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE MIAMI HERALD FROM A. S. MURPHY, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



At the outbreak of the Korean War, he transferred from a Marine Reserve unit to the United States Air Force where he served as Air Force historian until 1955.

After receiving his degrees, he taught school and then became librarian at the John F. Kennedy library in Hialeah, a position from which he retired in 1971.

Following the death of his father in 1973, he was requested by the Opa-locka Library Board to put together his father's memoirs in the form of a book on the history of Opa-locka. Frank is also a poet, whose published works include three volumes of verse, "Native Treasure", "Sonnets in Search of a Sequence", and "Remembered Spring".

In reading this book, you will live through a period of history with the feelings and dreams that could be given you only through this man's perceptive and compelling way with words. You will come to know this man, his ethos and warmth, his panache and charm, which are constant throughout this book as they are throughout his life style. You will welcome Frank FitzGerald-Bush as a friend, just as we have.

J. Williams  
A. Franco



GLENN H. CURTISS  
Founder of Opa-locka  
1878-1930



