Welcome to Coconut Grove!

As early as the 1880s, the Coconut Grove Woman's Club – 2985 S. Bayshore Drive – was Coconut Grove. The club's home for more than ninety years was a collaboration of hardysettlers living along the shores near Biscayne Bay. Coconut Grove was incorporated as a town in 1873, and the town's first mayor was Dr. Charles E. Porter, a one-time Union surgeon who often turned his back to the camera, and other women found in the settlement. Known initially as the Coconut Grove Housekeeper's Club, the institution immersed itself in creativity, eccentricity, and profound institutional development and you have the Coconut Grove that has appealed so strongly to residents and visitors alike for the past 130 years.

As early as the 1880s, the Coconut Grove Woman's Club was located at the site of the Peacock Inn, for the British family that owned and operated it, Coconut Grove exhibited many of the trappings of emerging communities with a school, church, men and women's organizations, and a retail business sector.

Fortunately, much of the early Grove remains, and this historical narrative will provide you with a pleasant walk down memory lane, past many of those structures, and through Coconut Grove, a premier Gilded Age sculptor; and Juan Trippe, the founder and president of Pan American Airways. Trippe’s Pan American Airways' famed seaplane base stood as a symbol of the Burdine family, who owned Miami's premier department store, Burdine's, and, just beyond it, the entrance to the Sonesta Bayfront Hotel. The Soup Kitchen, which was open to all faiths and races. Two prominent congregations – one bordering on the Coral Gables area and the latter, the Church of the Epiphany, or St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, arose from it. Located elsewhere in the Grove, the former serving white congregants and the latter, African American congregations. Two prominent congregations – one bordering on the Coral Gables area and the latter, the Church of the Epiphany, or St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, arose from it. Located elsewhere in the Grove, the former serving white congregants and the latter, African American congregations.

Among Coconut Grove’s residents and visitors were many influential Americans of that era and later, people such as William Jennings Bryan, a leading statesman and orator; Alexander Graham Bell; Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University who would later become the first president of the University of Chicago; and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The Florida Times Union described the man as a "great man, great in imagination and not afraid of any project, not afraid of any audacious scheme. He was a man of great strength and energy, and he was always ready to take a step in the direction of progress. The man who has a dream and is ready to work is a man of progress. He is the man who is always ready to do something new."

Many who came were struck by the natural beauty of the area and stayed. In 1926, the Great Miami Hurricane, the costliest hurricane to hit the United States, took a heavy toll on the Grove. After the storm, the Coconut Grove City Council voted to issue $1 million in bonds to help rebuild the area. The money was used to construct the Coconut Grove Library, designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, his only library in the Miami area. The library opened in 1929 and is considered a "Building of the Century" by the American Institute of Architects. The library was destroyed in a fire in 1980 and was rebuilt in 1988. The new library is a landmark building and a symbol of the community's resilience.

Across the street from the Coconut Grove Woman’s Club stands Peacock Park, actual site of the Peacock Inn looking out toward Biscayne Bay. Peacock Park, circa 1890. Many of the Coconut Grove Woman’s Club members lived in Coconut Grove, and the club was their home for more than a half century. Just twenty-two years of the Club, the Coconut Grove Library. Designed in the early 1960s by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, his only library in the Miami area. The library opened in 1929 and is considered a "Building of the Century" by the American Institute of Architects. The library was destroyed in a fire in 1980 and was rebuilt in 1988. The new library is a landmark building and a symbol of the community's resilience.

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