



Village of Palmetto Bay
Department of Planning and Zoning
Historic Preservation Program

beauty, Deering chose to assemble 360 acres on which he built his Moorish style mansion on the ridge overlooking Biscayne Bay. He retained the lush, subtropical hammock (former Indian Hunting Grounds) while planting rows of Royal Palms near the water. Charles Deering lived amid his great art collection and splendid natural surroundings until his death in 1927. The family continued to winter at the estate until it was bought by the State and County in 1985 for \$24 million for a park site. Today, the Richmond Inn at the Estate, the last surviving structure of the historic town of Cutler, remains one of Miami's best examples of early Florida frame-vernacular architecture and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Estate grounds are environmentally protected lands and a historical preserve.

Incorporation of Palmetto Bay. On November 6, 1995, the Alliance of Palmetto South Homeowners Association petitioned Miami-Dade County to incorporate Palmetto Bay. In 1996, after the Boundaries Commission recommended denial of incorporation, the County's Planning Advisory Board voted for approval. The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) deferred the petition at its September 1996 meeting. Area residents and volunteer attorneys filed a lawsuit in March 1998 compelling the County to allow citizens within the proposed municipal boundaries the right to vote on incorporation. It was not until April 1999 that the incorporation issue was heard by the BCC. On May 20, 2000, the BCC approved creation of the Palmetto Bay Municipal Advisory Committee to review issues and concerns relating to incorporation.

On February 5, 2002, Village voters overwhelmingly voted in favor of incorporation. Voters approved the municipal charter and the name on September 10, 2002. The Village of Palmetto Bay became Miami-Dade's 33rd municipality!



Coral Reef Park, The Village of Palmetto Bay, 2007

Eugene P. Flinn, Jr.
Mayor

Brian W. Pariser
Vice Mayor

Ed Feller, M.D.
Councilmember, District 1

Howard Tendrich
Councilmember, District 2

Shelley Stanczyk
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Victor Vincent
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Curator, Historical Museum of Southern Florida

For more information, contact 305.259.1260
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Our
Historic Past

Palmetto Bay,
Florida





The Village of Palmetto Bay is located in an area of South Dade which has included many cultures inhabiting the land for over 10,000 years. *Paleo-Indians, Tequestas, Seminoles, Afro-Bahamians, and Anglo-Americans* have at different times lived here; each new group literally following in the footsteps of the preceding one. The evidence left behind recounts the evolution of human housing along the Miami Rock Ridge, from stone cave dwellings to Mediterranean Revival style mansions..

A migration of Florida's first settlers brought them to high ground along the shores of Biscayne Bay. In what is today the Deering Estate property, early inhabitants established a camp 10,000 years ago. In 1985, at the Old Cutler Fossil Site, archaeologists found human skeletal and charred animals remains from that early time. The site further contained fossilized remains from now extinct animals including mammoths, sloths, dire wolves, and saber tooth tigers. The Old Cutler Fossil Site represents one of the most important archaeological excavations in the eastern United States. Prior to its discovery within Deering, most thought

human habitation in Florida dated back only 4,000 years. The sensitive artifacts were carefully excavated from the fossil site and are part of the archived collections at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida and the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

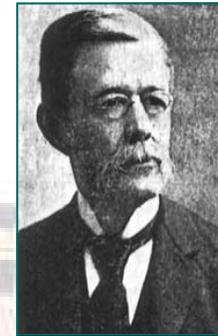
Tequesta Indians appeared 4,000 years ago, roaming the region as hunters and fisherman. Their quest for game took them to the same high hammock lands (the Indian Hunting Grounds) that attracted earlier peoples. The Tequestas received their name by Ponce de Leon during his maiden voyage to the area in 1513 who estimated their numbers to be several hundred thousand strong. The arrival of the Spanish proved lethal to the Tequestas who had no immunity to European introduced diseases. By the end of the 1700's, the Tequestas had completely vanished from South Florida.

In 1763, Spain lost Florida to England as a result of the Seven Years' War. Florida again became a Spanish possession in 1784 through a treaty ending the American Revolutionary War. The United States acquired Florida from Spain for \$5 million in 1821. The Seminole Indian Wars erupted in Florida over the Indian removal policies of President Andrew Jackson in the 1830's. During the Second Seminole War in 1938, the federal government awarded a large parcel of land in South Dade to Dr. Henry Perrine.

Now known as Thalatta, the Village-owned property dates back to 1925



The land grant encompassed 36 square miles covering the area that today is a part of Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay and the Falls. Dr. Perrine chose what he considered to be the best parcel of land in South Dade, the historic ridge overlooking Biscayne Bay, for the site of his township. Dr. Henry Perrine wanted to create an agricultural colony to introduce subtropical plants and trees in which he had developed a deep interest in while visiting Cuba and Mexico. Congress granted the land with the proviso that Dr. Perrine place a settler on each section who would cultivate valuable tropical plants and vegetables.



Dr. Henry Perrine

It was while serving as U.S. Consul in Yucatan, Mexico where Dr. Perrine studied tropical plants to be used for cultivation in the U.S. Dr. Perrine did not live to see his experiment of tropical agriculture and development of the area unfold. While staying on Indian Key, he was killed during an Indian attack in 1840. His wife and three children managed to escape. It was not until 1875 that Dr. Perrine's son, Henry, returned to reclaim the family lands and again draw settlers to farm.

In 1883, Dr. William Cutler arrived and acquired 600 acres next to the Perrine land grant. The Town of Cutler, formerly located at the intersection of SW 168 Street and Old Cutler Road, grew quickly. Vegetable farms and fruit groves arose when drainage canals were created which assured the cultivation of crops. A few hardy farmers lived in other settlements in South Dade—Kendall, Larkins and Silver Palm. Henry Flagler brought his railroad to Miami and had plans to extend it through South Dade to Key West. The railroad route chosen by Flagler bypassed the Town of Cutler several miles to the west and dealt a mortal blow to its development. A decade later, Charles Deering bought much of the land in dormant Cutler to build his estate.

Charles Deering was Chairman of the International Harvester Company, which revolutionized grain-harvesting methods. He and his half-brother, James (who built Vizcaya) were spending winters in Miami. Just as earlier settlers had been attracted to the area for its natural



The Old Cutler Fossil Site served as a den for dire wolves



Perrine Elementary Students, c. 1900's



Richmond Inn at Deering, c. 1900's