

Miami Pioneers / Natives of Dade

celebrating and preserving the local history of Miami-Dade County, Florida

monthly meetings with historical programs • www.MPNOD.org • September, 2017

Next Meeting
Sunday, September 10
at 2:30pm

Central Christian Church
222 Menores Ave, Coral Gables 33134

Enter the door at the south side of the building on Mendoza Ave. Parking in west lot is also available if you enter from Menores Ave. Street parking is also free on Sunday.

Please bring \$1 donation to cover the cost of the room. We very much appreciate those who can provide refreshments such as cookies, crackers, brownies, etc.

Correspondence

Send to MP/NOD at:
14900 SW 71 Ave
Miami, FL 33158

MP/NOD Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/MPNOD/>

Dues

Please bring your annual \$20 dues to the meeting, or mail your check made to MP/NOD to our Treasurer: Marlene B. Carlin, 14900 SW 71 Ave, Miami, FL 33158. If your envelope is marked, your dues are past. Please help by sending in your payment as soon as possible.

2016-18 Officers

our president is Jim Hartnett
305-667-5733
hartnettj@bellsouth.net

past president, Caesar Philips
treasurer, Marlene B. Carlin
corresponding secretary, Mary Pyle
recording secretary, Cele Diaz
sergeant at arms, Gerda Marchese
parliamentarian, Linda Hertz

September 10th Sunday Meeting

The next meeting of the Miami Pioneers and Natives of Dade will take place at the usual location at 2:30pm.

History of the Biltmore Hotel

by Ellen Ugucioni

Our Guest Speaker for the September meeting is Ellen Ugucioni, a director of historic preservation services, working with the City of Sunny Isles Beach. She coordinates with local governments concerning their objectives about historic preservation in their communities and the ways to fulfill them. She offers design services for acceptable rehabilitation for historic buildings, as well as research and opinions on the likelihood of a resource to qualify for historic designation.

Ellen has been lecturing at University of Miami's School of Architecture since 1995 on ways to identify and re-purpose what are perceived as obsolescent buildings. She served as Historic Preservation Officer in the City of Miami from 2006 to 2010, and serves as a trustee for the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation.

Ellen is the author, along with Sam Laroue, of "The Biltmore Hotel: An Enduring Legacy," published in 2002, highlighting the fascinating history of this beautiful and historic hotel, and surrounding areas including the country club.

Ellen's commitment to historic preservation and her love of historic homes was a great benefit to residents preserving homes in Coral Gables.



Our New Year Begins

Your MP/NOD board of directors has been busy arranging upcoming speakers for interesting and informative historical presentations.

Here's a list of upcoming speakers for the coming months. You can also mark your calendars for the first meeting of 2018 on Sunday, January 7. A field trip is scheduled for Sunday, February 6.

October 1 Senator Dick Renick

served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1966 to 1977 and the Florida State Senate from 1975 to 1982. His brother was Ralph Renick, a television journalist.

November 5 Historian Seth Bramson

returns with another enlightening program on local history.

December 3 Justice Gerald Kogan

former Justice of the Florida Supreme Court from 1987-1998. He served as Chief Justice from 1996-1998. He graduated from the University of Miami School of Law in 1954.

Cyrus Teed and the Hollow Sphere Cult

One of more unusual pioneer groups to settle in South Florida is memorialized at the Koreshan State Historic Site, near Corkscrew Swamp.

Cyrus Reed Teed was an eclectic physician whose experiments in alchemy often involved dangerously high levels of electricity. In one such experiment in 1869, Teed was electrocuted so badly that he blacked out. It was during this period of unconsciousness that Teed insists a “divine illumination” occurred.



*In the name of humanity,
Koresh,
(Cyrus Reed Teed)*

In this alleged mystical experience, Teed believed that God, in the form of a beautiful woman, divulged all the secrets of the universe and urged him to use his scientific knowledge to interpret the Bible. Though many believed that Teed’s experience was more a result of brain damage than divine intervention, Teed changed his life to fit his new calling.

In the years that followed, Teed changed his name to **Koresh**, the Hebrew name for Cyrus, and began building the fundamental theories for his new religion, Koreshan Universology, or Koreshanity. Of Teed’s pseudo-scientific theories,

there was one that became the core tenet of Koreshanity: Cellular Cosmogony, the belief that the universe exists inside a giant, hollow sphere.

Similar to other Hollow Earth theories, Cellular Cosmogony posited that humans lived inside—rather than on the surface of—the Earth, and were held there by centrifugal force, not gravity. Moreover, Teed believed that the universe also existed inside this sphere, and that the Sun was an electromagnetic battery-operated helix.

For the next few decades, Teed formed small Koreshan Unity groups around New York, Chicago and San Francisco. Even still, Teed fantasized about forming the “New Jerusalem,” a Utopian city built on 400-foot wide streets and consisting of 10 million citizens. Eventually, Teed decided to build his utopia in the small town of Estero, Florida, and he and his followers moved south in 1894.

Unfortunately, the “golden age” of Koreshanity was between 1903-1908, at a maximum membership of only 250 people. During this time, however, the Koreshans built extensively, erecting a bakery, printing press, and their own “World College of Life.” Additionally, the Koreshans created their own political party and built their own power plant, providing electricity to surrounding towns years before the technology was available to the region.

Teed died in 1908 after being pistol-whipped during an altercation with locals. His death was blamed on this altercation, however, there has never been any credible proof that this was the cause of his death. His death certificate states that he died of a circulatory ailment. After his death, the Koreshans left his body in a bath tub in hopes that his spirit would be resurrected. Though reincarnation was a central belief in Koreshanity, Teed’s spirit never rose, and local health officials eventually demanded a proper burial.

The membership quickly declined, led by roughly three dozen members for the next thirty years. The last surviving member of the Koreshan Unity was Hedwig Michel, who fled Nazi Germany and came to Estero in 1940. Michel spawned a brief Koreshan revival for the next two years, opening up a Western Union and a gas station; however, with only four members left by 1960, she ceded the three hundred acres of land to the State of Florida in 1961.

Today, the area is a historic site and state park. Many of the buildings are still preserved, including the “Planetary Court,” where Michel lived until her death in 1981. Visitors can see her grave, the only Koreshan grave on site, as well as browse the extensive landscaping on the grounds. A Monkey Puzzle tree, which drops football-sized seeds, and a number of Sausage trees are among some of the exotic plants that the Koreshans imported to Florida.

- reprinted from *Atlas Obscura*



Bring A Friend

Please remember to tell your friends about our Miami Pioneers and Natives of Dade historical society. As always, bring a friend as your guest to share the delightful programs, the camaraderie and the social time with refreshments.

Snail Mail or Email?

The cost of printing, stuffing and mailing our monthly newsletter—a significant expense—continues to rise.

We’re now mailing the printed newsletter only to those members that have not given us their email address.

If you’d prefer to receive your monthly MPNOD newsletter via email, and save your club the increasing cost of printing and postage, please let us know your email address.

September Birthdays

- 1 Kay Kuge
- 1 Marilyn Wycoff
- 3 Doris Boiesen
- 4 Mary Ellis
- 7 James Hartnett
- 7 William Noble
- 8 Mildred McGlamery
- 13 Jane Wilson
- 15 Suzette Pope
- 15 Patricia Ware
- 16 Patricia Powers
- 17 Marie Amerise
- 18 Jean Felton
- 19 E R Brownell
- 19 Carl Wright II
- 25 Peter Forrest
- 26 Tom Wood
- 27 J. Metz Jr
- 29 Ceal Diaz
- 29 June Smith