

GFWC Florida 2016 Women's History & Resource Center Report



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1. Royal Palm Interpretative Panels: “Saving Paradise” – Members of the **GFWC Woman’s Club of Coconut Grove** partnered with three staff members of the South Florida Collections & Management Center, Everglades National Park (ENP) and the Town Hall Museum Homestead archivist to develop key ideas and a timeline then research, selected related images, and wrote text for three display panels. This display told the story of how the clubwomen of Florida saved Royal Palm Hammock as a State Park in 1916 and maintained it thirty-one years until in 1947 GFWC FL deeded the park to the Everglades National Park (ENP). Based on 2016 figures these panels will be seen by 340,000 local, national and worldwide visitors.

2. Royal Palm Park Narrative: **GFWC Woman’s Club of Coconut Grove** – *Royal Palm Park Narrative* - The story of Florida Clubwomen’s role in the creation of Royal Palm State Park tells how, even though women were not yet able to vote, the Federation lobbied legislators to pass the bill to establish the first state park in Florida. The research and writing of the paper mirrored the women’s struggle. A fully documented paper was sent to the GFWC Florida Archives in Lakeland and a shortened version was presented as part of the program at the GFWC FL District 11 annual meeting at the Homestead Woman’s Club. The paper was sent, as well, to the **GFWC Women’s Resource Center in Washington D.C.**

3. Zine Workshop: The club hosted a Zine Workshop (Zine: a small, inexpensive, easily-distributed publication) at the Woman’s Club conducted by Exile Books founder, Amanda Keeley and head of University of Miami Richter Special Collection. The community was invited to take a look at the story behind The **Woman’s Club of Coconut Grove** and created a Zine based upon source material pulled from History Miami Museum Archives and Woman’s Club of Coconut Grove Archives. Copies of the 12 new Zines made at the Workshop were donated to University of Miami Special Collection and History Miami Archives for their growing local Zine collection. These publications engage members of the community, providing an accessible medium for people of all ages and backgrounds to amplify their voices. These works were presented at the Miami Zine Fair at the History Miami Cultural plaza on April 30th as part of “O, Miami” Poetry Festival.

4. Mariah Brown House Museum: This project partnered the **GFWC Woman’s Club of Coconut Grove** and the Collaborative Development Corp., in Coconut Grove West Village to restore the Mariah Brown House as a community curated museum and open its doors to young people, residents and visitors to experience South Florida pioneer life.

5. Archives: Throughout the year archival work was done on several projects as follows: **(a) Film: Woman’s Club of Coconut Grove** 125 Years History, developed from Historical Highlights Power Point 3-part presentation, using photos from *“Forgotten Frontiers: Florida Through the Lens of Ralph Middleton Munroe”*, by Arva Moore Parks. The presentation was shown at the club's February 2016 Membership meeting. The film is on the Club’s website; **(b) Research and updating to Club’s History “Lest We Forget”** which also contains the list of Presidents and Honorary Members all of

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which is published in the Yearbook. **(c) Objects collection:** receiving and processing contribution by sorting and organizing material to send to University of Miami Richter Special Collections. The Kent Collection donated, by Frederick Kent, contains research material of our late president and historian Minni Kent with photocopies from the Library of Congress of Ellen Munroe's 1889 Diary. Pages from Mary Barr Munroe's and Kirk Munroe's Day Books, newspaper articles, various memorabilia and photographs, also proof for the Harper's 1892 article about the Housekeeper's Club, were received and protected. Transcriptions were made of the following articles in one scrapbook: **(1) "If Walls Could Speak"** The Trapp family house; **(2) "Florida Authors"** by Mary Barr Munroe; **(3) "Seminole Women"** by Mary Barr Munroe; **(4) "Before the Flood"** by Kirk Munroe. Grant Livingston donated 11 of Kirk Munroe's novels for young people. These books remain in the bookcase in our Archives. **(5) Interviews:** Club members were interviewed in 2016, these interviews of long time members are an ongoing and important addition to historical documentation that tells the story of the Club's History. **Teaching Tools:** The University of Miami Richter Library Special Collection reported for 2016 that 13 boxes of the Woman's of Coconut Grove Club collection had been used by their library staff for teaching archival preservation and procedural access, including Club archivists and 18 boxes were used by independent researchers

6. Archives Room Restoration: The Village Improvement Association, the first Woman's Club in the State of Florida, organized in 1883, and the clubhouse, dedicated in 1914, housed the Library in Green Cove Springs until 1962, when the County Government began a Clay County Public Library under county mandate. The VIA has used the room which housed the Library as an Archives Room. In 2016, they restored the room by replacing shades with solar shades, had their early 20th century area rug repaired, painted and repaired the walls and ceiling, stained the vintage dark wood, and placed archival items throughout the room. Their mission was to keep the integrity and authenticity of the room as much as possible. They did opt for 21st century solar shades (with a style which complements our room) to reduce the heat and fading in their old building. 12 members donated money for purchase and installation of the shades, 2 members purchased the needed materials for painting and staining, and one member painted and stained. Two members placed the archival items throughout the room! Membership has voiced excitement for the results as they are now using their archives for more events in the clubhouse.

7. Fountain Restoration: More than 100 years ago, the **Ladies of the Village Improvement Association**, purchased a cast iron round fountain, it apparently arrived by steamboat on the St. Johns River off loaded at Green Cove Springs. The fountain was used for several purposes around town, one being a drinking trough for horses at the old Clay County Courthouse. It was moved to the VIA in the 1940's and was used as a planter for perennial flowers. **2. Fountain Restoration"...**More than 100 years ago, the Ladies of the VIA, purchased a cast iron round fountain, it apparently arrived by steamboat on the St. Johns River off loaded at Green Cove Springs. The fountain apparently was used for several purposes around town, one being a drinking trough for horses at the old Clay County Courthouse. It was moved to the VIA in the 1940's and was used as a planter for perennial flowers. In 2016, the Ladies of the VIA, worked with two community volunteers to have the fountain restored to vintage glory! The fountain was transported off the property to be sand blasted and the surface powder coated so that residents of Green Cove Springs can again enjoy the old fountain placed in the front yard of the VIA! Beautiful!