



# FLORIDA ARCANE

*The Society for The Preservation of Lost Things and Missing Time.*

# Florida Arcane







## I. *Dr. Eugene Birchwood Archives*

The Society for the Preservation of Lost Things and Missing Time is pleased to announce an auspicious loan to our Florida Arcane exhibit. This recently acquired archive of 2 x 2 inch 35mm Super Slides belonged to Dr. Eugene Birchwood of Chicago, IL documenting --among other things-- his decades-long involvement with the Godsped Airstream trailer community. Little is yet known about the wandering group of Airstream enthusiasts. However, of interest to the Society is Dr. Eugene Birchwood's documentation of his travels as they had a direct relationship with his scholarly work. According to a diary found with the slides, the good Doctor's travels were vital to his research seeking ley lines, power points, and other mystic convergences of energy around the planet. While in Florida, Dr. Birchwood conducted his now infamous work along shorelines, canals, lakes, and other waterways.

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Adding to the puzzle of his work are Dr. Birchwood's personal archives: a veritable repository of scholarly texts, strange objects, scribbled computations and endless notes. His correspondences with literary, artistic and philosophical luminaries were numerous. They reveal as much about his personal motives as they do the trajectory of his future work.



Dr. Eugene Birchwood listens for ley lines at Wabasso, FL (left) and Suwannee Beach, FL (right). The Birchwood Magnet-Ear, a self-constructed apparatus for detecting ley lines, is in the Florida Arcane collection.



Always looking for the “lines connecting us to the ether, to the stars, to the ground and to each other,” Dr. Birchwood’s slides are testament to his profound curiosity and restless ethos.





The Godsped Airstream Trailer Community visits Chichen Itza, Mexico, April 1962. In July, a locust swarm threatens New Delhi. In October, the Cuban Missile Crisis begins and the Second Vatican Council convenes. Dr. Birchwood continues his work.



*“The Silver Cormorant,”* Dr. Birchwood’s cherished trailer, camps out in Central Florida circa 1963.



Dr. Birchwood's correspondences were donated to the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin. He continued typing his letters and papers on this portable Hermes 2000 even after the advent of laptops and e-mail.



Dr. Birchwood's relationship to the Godsped Trailer Community was deeply personal and intense. In the late 1950s, the group traveled the Americas and Europe, coalescing around shared ideals about social responsibility, a free life, metaphysical curiosity, and a mutual intellectual rigor.



## II. *Space Coast Polymath*

Born near Panama City about 1910, Jacqueline Cochran was a reporter and owned a cosmetics firm. She was also a test pilot: the first woman to break the sound barrier and fly a bomber across the Atlantic, and the first civilian woman to win a Distinguished Service Medal. Later, for her work training Venezuelan postal flyers, she received a medal from the Venezuelan Government. They erected a sizable statue in her honor at the coastal town of Coro. In 1977 she was elected to the Aviation Hall of Fame. She held more speed, altitude and distance records than any other pilot. She was a Florida Women's Hall of Fame inductee in 1992. Her obsessive love for all things aeronautical extended to many ideas: making space travel more economically viable by privatizing outer space; the aerodynamics of water fowl, and the possibility of life beyond Earth.

Polymath Jacqueline Cochran amassed a collection of photographs, navigation charts and instruments, optical devices, books, drawings and the like. She dedicated her years to flying machines, business, and the rigors of professional advancement. By the time of her death in 2008, she suffered from delusions and paranoia attributed to her many hours flying at supersonic speeds and regular exposure to high altitude hypoxia. Her surviving family knew of her contributions to Florida history and sought a permanent home for her collection to honor her legacy. They contacted the Society for the Preservation of Lost Things and Missing Time and we aided them in locating the storied collection. She had left a map indicating the burial site of her precious optics, snapshots, books and instruments. They were entombed in a gold-covered box beneath a shack her father built behind the family's Cape Canaveral, Florida, home, when he returned home from World War II.



Jacqueline Cochran.



Jacqueline Cochran's optics were assembled as gifts received throughout her life. She acquired the first one from her grandmother, American biologist Rosa Smith Eigenmann (1858-1947), and the last in 2003 from her friend, biologist Martha Chase.





A model of the shack behind the family home and the chamber beneath, where Ms. Cochran's treasures were buried.



First and foremost an aviatrix, Jacqueline Cochran's collection of objects is full of aviation memorabilia. During her later years, she loved to fly from her home in Florida to Pine Cay, Caicos. An early instrument approach chart for Pine Cay Airfield is shown here.



Looking much like abstract drawing, this hand-made chart details flights conducted between Japan and China. Ms. Cochran, in sync with the aesthetic preferences of The Society for the Preservation of Lost Things and Missing Time, favored items produced by individuals rather than mass industry.



A second example of hand-made charts used for long range aeronautical navigation



### III. *A Shared Arboreal Cosmvision*

Not long after the discovery of Florida, the Spanish continued toward Western North America and Central America, eventually exploring Pacific South America. In 1532, Francisco Pizarro and his army of conquistadors ambushed and captured the Emperor Atahualpa of the Inca Empire. In the following years Spain extended its rule over the empire of the Inca civilization.

It was during this early campaign to subdue the mighty Inca that this tree, woven with delicate and beautiful textiles by the skilled Chancay central-coast people during the Late Intermediate Period (900-1492 AD), was acquired as a spoil of war and conquest. The tree was almost trashed in favor of gold and silver. Luckily, it was saved and lovingly kept in near-pristine condition by native Tequesta slaves brought from North America to aid the Spanish in their conquest.

The Tequesta instantly recognized the tree to be representative of a cosmology not unlike their own: a mythical space where the underworld, the earth and the heavens connect. Its roots, in contact with the ground, create a nexus with the past. Its trunk, anchored in the present, is linked with life through its branches, which uplift fruits to the world of the gods.

The tree eventually made its way from Peru back to Florida. Unbeknownst to the Spanish, its use as a cosmological Rosetta Stone of sorts quickly became infamous. Enslaved native Indians used it as a bridge to communication with each other, and in turn it aided in developing a secret solidarity between the Tequesta, the Inca-Chancay, and other indigenous peoples of the Americas with their eventual resistance against the Spanish stronghold.

The Society for the Preservation of Lost Things and Missing Time considers this acquisition lucky and rare. Only two other woven cosmvision trees are known to be in existence. One is at the MALBA (Museo de Arte Latina Buenos Aires) and the other is held in a private collection in Madrid, Spain.



The Tree is made of textiles wound around maize husks and sticks. It is in remarkably pristine shape considering its delicacy and age, estimated between 600 and 1200 years.



“The Keepers of the Tree,” an assembly of Native Americans from various tribes in Florida. They safeguarded The Tree until they found a trustworthy home for it in the repository of The Society for the Preservation of Lost Things and Missing Time.









Anomalous Object #1, found at the Miami Circle archeological site in 1998, is a method for communicating with dead pets, according to instructions found in an envelope beneath it.



Anomalous Object #2, found at the Miami Circle archeological site in 1998, just above the topsoil, but under a pile of consumer trash.



Anomalous Matter #1, found at the Miami Circle archeological site in 1998, just under the topsoil but above the ancient remains.



Anomalous Matter #2, found at the Miami Circle archeological site in 1998, just under the topsoil but above the ancient remains.



## V. *Missing Time, Missing People.*

A memory of a dream of a place as recalled in a story from somewhere that somehow kept being retold until the story was no longer the dream and the dream was no longer a memory and the memory was only a set of photographs handed down from one generation to the next:

The Heroines of Suffrage,  
Women of The VFW,  
and PTA moms of the 80's.





Miami PTA mom, circa 1981.



Heroines of Suffrage



Miami PTA mom, circa 1983.



Heroines of Suffrage



Woman of the VFW



Heroine of Suffrage









During a heavy thunderstorm on the night of February 29th, 1988, while traveling from Hialeah to Naples, this car veered off Alligator Alley and into a canal 3 miles east of Big Cypress National Preserve. None of its occupants survived.



On the evening of September 22, 2009, 5 friends in Tallahassee, FL, gathered to perform a seance. It is not known whom--or what--they were attempting to contact.



Danny Harold Rolling, the Gainesville Ripper, was convicted for the rape and murder of 4 college students in 1990 and executed in 1994. Before he was found by police, he hid in a field in Ocala, FL. When police discovered him, he was reading from this book, William Shakespeare's "*Tragedies*".



Captain Tony's Saloon in Key West, FL is a well-known haunted pub. Captain Anthony "Tony" Tarracino died November 3, 2008. This photo was taken by TSFPLTMT curator Solomon Graves while visiting Key West in 2009, researching Florida's paranormal history.



“Or even the state of Florida, where they are prepared to execute children. Umm, well, you hope that at least that there is something there to be claimed.”~ Edwidge Danticat



Dr. Karl Von Cosel lived with the dead body of Maria Elena de Hoyo for 7 years until 1940, when her sister discovered his secret. She had him arrested, then buried de Hoyo in an unmarked plot at the Key West Cemetery. Her grave is said to be on the right of the image.



In the mid 1980s, while surveying for a new runway at Miami International Airport, surveyor Carie B. Litton became enamored with *Sylvilagus Floridanus*, the common Eastern Cottontail rabbits that populated the field's hundreds of acres. After taking one home to keep as a pet, he soon became their ardent defender and began a campaign to preserve their natural habitat. Mr. Litton's employment was terminated by the Miami Port Authority for actively protesting the construction during work hours. During this period of unemployment, he organized humble protests with the local chapter of PETA and spared no effort in furthering the cause of saving *Sylvilagus Floridanus's* native domain.

The Society for the Preservation of Lost Things and Missing time is delighted to have in our possession artifacts from Mr. Litton's tumultuous years as crusader for *Sylvilagus Floridanus*.





Carie R. Litton , shown here with his beloved *Sylvilagus Floridanus*, sometime during the early 1990s.



Known habitats of *Sylvilagus floridanus* at Miami International Airports, 1997.



Mr. Litton became so fascinated by *Syllivagus floridanus* that he constructed several life-sized animatronic reproductions. This one was discovered amongst the collection of Mr. Van A. Oikon, a longtime creator of animatronic displays who resided in South Florida until his death in 1998.



Carie R. Litton, Surveyor.  
(photograph circa 2008)



### **III.**      *Failed City in the Swamp*

Mr. J.E. Lummus endeavored to capitalize on a radical late 20<sup>th</sup>-century idea of building a world-class city of industry and culture in the middle of a swamp. He was influenced by such cities as Manaus and Brasilia in Brazil. He was inspired by Julia Tuttle's infectious optimism for Miami, yet driven by jealousy over her achievements. Mr. Lummus, seeking to construct "a portal to the future amongst gators and muck", borrowed 3 million dollars from Henry Flagler and William Brickell, both of whom invested heavily in Florida's citrus industry and were known for their competitive business acumen.

Mr. Lummus's funds ran dry after the winter of 1895 claimed the state's entire citrus crop. Begun deep in the southern Okefenokee, this city's construction lost momentum quickly. To this day it remains located deep in the overgrown swamp. The unnamed project was originally envisioned as a paradigm to Futurist architectural utopias, with long and linear concrete expanses between industrial complexes, connected by highway-like walkways built above the roily swamp below. To those in the know it has come to symbolize the unfinished--some say failed--project that is Modernism, with its undying belief in progress and rational aesthetics.



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“... Suddenly one comes out into the open of a quiet cover, where low dark forest walls are reflected in still water, and illimitable swamp is seen past a headland. It is as if one had passed through a dim chamber into a bright and splendid hall.”

~William Lyman Phillips, 1935.



“The idea of an inexpressive, catatonic architecture, outcome of the expansive forms of logic of the system and its class antagonists...” ~Andrea Branzi, 1909.





“... the only modern architecture of interest to us: a liberating architecture, corresponding to mass democracy, devoid of demos and devoid of cratos (people and power), and both centreless and imageless.” ~ Umberto Boccioni, 1911.



“...and rather than assume intrinsic change to be the prerogative of every generation, it might be more useful to recognize that certain changes are so enormous as to impose a directive which cannot be resolved in any individual life span.” ~ Colin Rowe.



## **IX.**      *Altered Objects and The Archive*

This cache of altered objects was amassed by TSFPLTMT chief curator, head archivist and executive director, Solomon Graves. It represents a wide array of ephemera, folios, maps, prints, photos, and otherwise Florida-related documents altered by hand, or by chance, over the years.

With these interventions, we are reminded that our relationship with our memory of the past is not an entombment, but rather a fluid dynamic that permits continual reconsideration.

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“ There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Without memory there is no history. Without history there is nothing. Effective democratization can always be measured by participation in and access to the archive, its constitution and its interpretation.”

~ Solomon Graves



Scrawled onto this two-dollar bill is the unwritten rule of law in the Florida Keys during the end of the 19th Century. It reigned until the 1960s among the hermits and derelicts who lived in that still-wild country.



This original engraving was hand-colored by Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, in 1778. Buffon spent the summer of 1776 in St. Augustine tracking the Florida Panther in order to draw it for his 36-volume *Histoire naturelle, général et particulière*, the work for which he is best remembered.



*Porifera Lacunae*. All animals have unspecialized cells that can transform into specialized cells. Sponges are unique in having some specialized cells that can transform into other types. Shown here, a blurred line between chance and design.



“ Poets - witnesses - found language as what remains, as what actually survives the possibility, or impossibility, of speaking.” ~ G. Agamben











Solomon Graves: Chief Curator, Head Archivist, Executive Director

The **S**ociety **F**or the **P**reservation of **L**ost **T**hings and **M**issing **T**ime

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