

BLACK CROSSROADS
THE AFRICAN DIASPORA IN MIAMI

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Photograph Captions

Front Cover (Clockwise from Top):

Black Laborers for John Sewell on South Miami Avenue, 1890s.
Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 1962-024-77

African-American Dance on Grand Avenue in Coconut Grove, September 25, 1954.
Historical Museum of Southern Florida, CM-2-00839-3

Haitian Protest in Front of Downtown Courthouse, October 13, 1993.
Historical Museum of Southern Florida, MH-470-71-22A

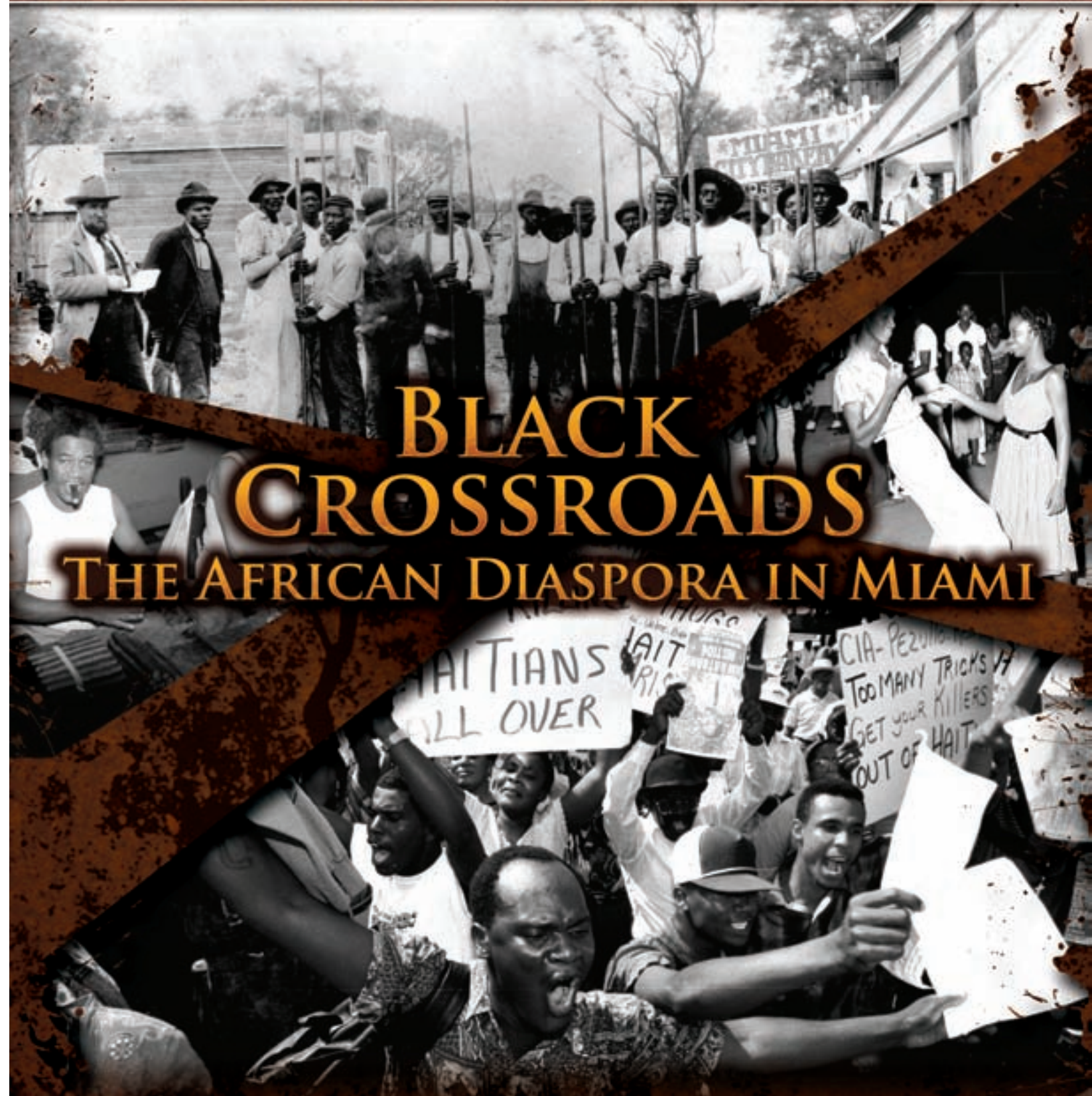
Cigar Makers at El Credito Cigar Company, August 1988.
Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 1989-069-6



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Historical Museum of Southern Florida
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Historical Museum of Southern Florida



On Display March 5, 2009 through January 24, 2010



**HISTORICAL MUSEUM
OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA**

Your Story, Your Community... Your Museum
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ABOUT THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

Founded in 1940, the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (HMSF) is one of the largest private, regional history museums in the country, recognized for excellence in programming and management by the Florida Department of State and national museum services organizations.

As reflected in its mission to educate and involve people in the history of South Florida and the Caribbean, HMSF reaches out to a vast and culturally diverse audience through its exhibitions, educational programs, special events and publications.

Home to more than 30,000 three-dimensional artifacts and over 1 million photographs, much of the collection illustrates the main themes permeating South Florida history: environmental influences, immigration and migration, maritime, aviation, tourism, development and Miami as the "Gateway of the Americas." HMSF is also the depository for all archaeological materials from the county, including the findings from the Miami Circle, and material from the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy of Florida.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

On March 5, 2009, the Historical Museum of Southern Florida will unveil an 11-month, 2,000 sq. ft. exhibition titled *Black Crossroads: The African Diaspora in Miami*. This exhibition will explore the profound impact blacks from the American South, the Caribbean, Latin America and Africa have had in shaping the founding and shaping the City of Miami from 1896 to the present day.

Drawn to the region by factors ranging from proximity and economic demand to climate and political exile, African-Americans and Afro-Caribbean groups have been working and settling in Miami since before the city's incorporation in 1896. In the mid-1800s, Bahamian seamen could be found working as salvagers and wreckers on Florida's southernmost shores. By the 1880s, a significant number of Bahamians had begun settling in Miami, where they were actively employed as laborers by the prominent white families and farmers in the area. African-Americans from southern states such as Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina and parts of Florida soon joined them, many as employees of Florida railroad developer Henry Flagler's real estate and railroad construction crews. This movement of African-Americans south of the South and north of the Caribbean reflects a migration pattern in the Post-Reconstruction United States that is unique to Florida and that has received little recognition save from a few scholars of South Florida history. So significant was the number of blacks residing in Miami by 1896 that 162 of them were used to make up the 362 votes needed for the city's incorporation.

During the first half of the twentieth century, continued African-American and Afro-Caribbean migrations to Miami fueled the building and construction of major hotels, offices and residences, and provided the corps for Miami's expanding service industry by laboring as domestics, maids, cooks, laundresses, and hotel workers. In the process, they established distinct communities such as Coconut Grove whose building structures reflected their Caribbean heritage and renowned cultural and economic centers such as Overtown and Liberty City which drew black celebrities, athletes and scholars nationwide. In the face of Miami's segregationist racial climate, its black communities also developed key institutions to serve their educational, medical and social needs and invested in organizations such as the United Negro Improvement Association to respond to the racial violence directed at their communities. In the latter half of the twentieth century, new black settlers from Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad and Africa, among others, have arrived in Miami, making the city a true composite of the African Diaspora.

Components of the exhibition will explore the African Diaspora's impact on Miami through the following key areas: settlement patterns, labor and development, civil rights and select community/institutional histories. On display will be artifacts, photographs and family documents from the Historical Museum of Southern Florida's collection, as well as from the Black Archives and Research Foundation of South Florida, the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, the Bethel House African-Bahamian Museum, the Miami-Dade Main Library, the Florida State Archives and Vizcaya Museum and Gardens.