

FLORIDA HEALTH NOTES



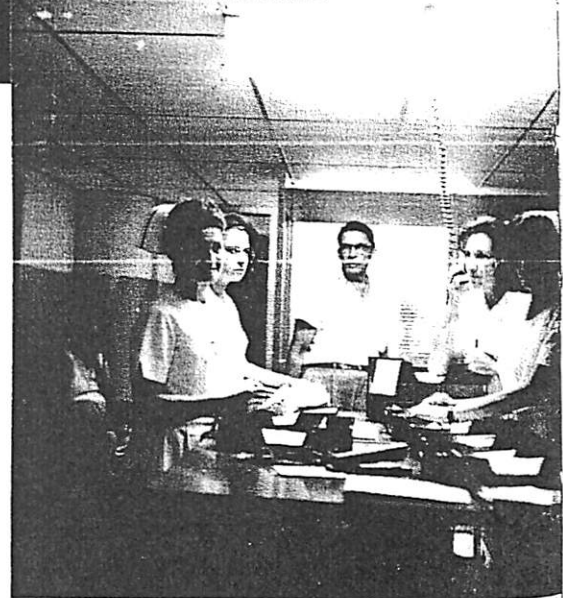
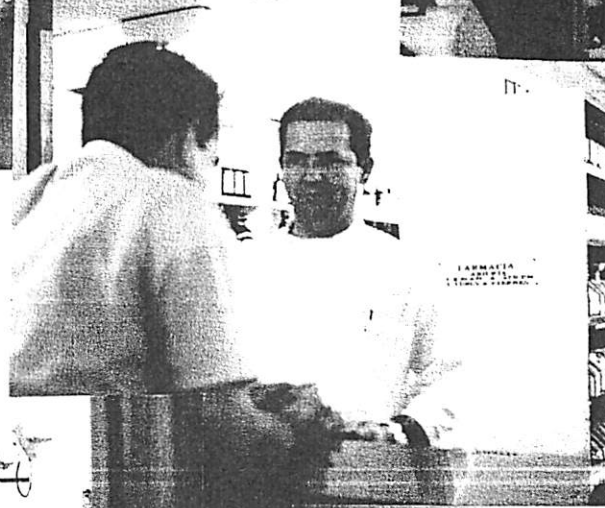
VOLUME 59—NO. 10

OCTOBER 1967

A Memorial

*Public Health
...Dade County*

FLORIDA STATE LIBRARY



The Dade County Department of Public Health has had full responsibility for the organizing, directing and coordinating of the Cuban Refugee Health Center which sees some 530 persons each day.

A Memorial to T. E. Cato

PUBLIC HEALTH in DADE COUNTY

Dade County, Florida—where glittering hotels nudge each other for miles along the sunny beaches and where the Gulf Stream caresses the shore with a year 'round tenderness.

Dade County, Florida—where illiterate bands of migrants stoop in the hot sun to pick vegetables and Miccosukees spear gar from primitive canoes.

Dade County, Florida—where refugees from another country, with another tongue and culture, swarm by the thousands, confused and dispossessed, struggling to find new homes to replace those wrested from them by a tyrant.

* * * * *

This is the geographically-fragmented and ethnically-kaleidoscopic area in which Turner Elam Cato, M.D., M.P.H., strove for 27 years to lead and guide the forces of public health, not only to meet the needs of the present but to anticipate those of the future.

Dr. Cato, director of the Dade County Department of Public Health since 1942, died July 8, 1967, and left behind him an efficient, effective and far-reaching public health complex seldom seen in the nation.

Vexation in Paradise

The attractions of Miami, Miami Beach and their municipal neighbors need no description. They are well-known phenomena of American and international fame. But this is modern history.

(Cover photo) The Miami city skyline is representative of metropolitan Dade County which Dr. T. E. Cato served as director of the Dade County Department of Public Health.

Within the lifetime of people still able to remember, South Florida was, according to a member of Congress, "an uninhabitable morass of jungle and heat, snakes and mosquitoes, alligators and savage Indians."

The Seminole wars had ended but the other hazards remained. In the late 19th Century the only access was by sea. Key West was the only city in South Florida and that was isolated on an island a couple of hundred miles to the south. Miami, from *mayami* (very big), was a trading post and mail drop with about a dozen people. A few people had made unsuccessful ventures into fruit and vegetable growing in the narrow strip of land between the coast of the Everglades, but there was one man who was to come and help change the destiny of South Florida.

Henry M. Flagler, developer of North and Central Florida and railroad builder, was jolted in St. Augustine when the "great freeze" of 1894 wiped out the citrus industry. Mrs. Julia Tuttle, owner of most of the land that is now downtown Miami, sent him a bouquet of orange blossoms and he started building his railroad on to Miami. Later with colleagues John S. Collins, Carl F. Fisher, Glenn Curtis and others, he poured money in staggering sums into the development of the area. A chain reaction boom developed, and in 1926 outlying inaccessible swampland was selling for \$25,000 an acre. The bubble burst; the land went begging at \$5 an acre; but today this same land has been filled and there are stores, homes, schools and churches where a few decades ago there were mangrove swamps.

The real estate crash of 1926 was followed by the depression of 1929, and this thwarted further expansion. The hurricane of 1935, in which trainloads of Civil Conservation Corps workers were

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washed into the sea and undiked Lake Okeechobee spread across the land, took a terrible toll. Glades and salt marsh mosquitoes were nuisances when the wind blew from the swamps. Hastily planned sewers poured human waste in appalling volume into beautiful Biscayne Bay.

Early Public Health Efforts

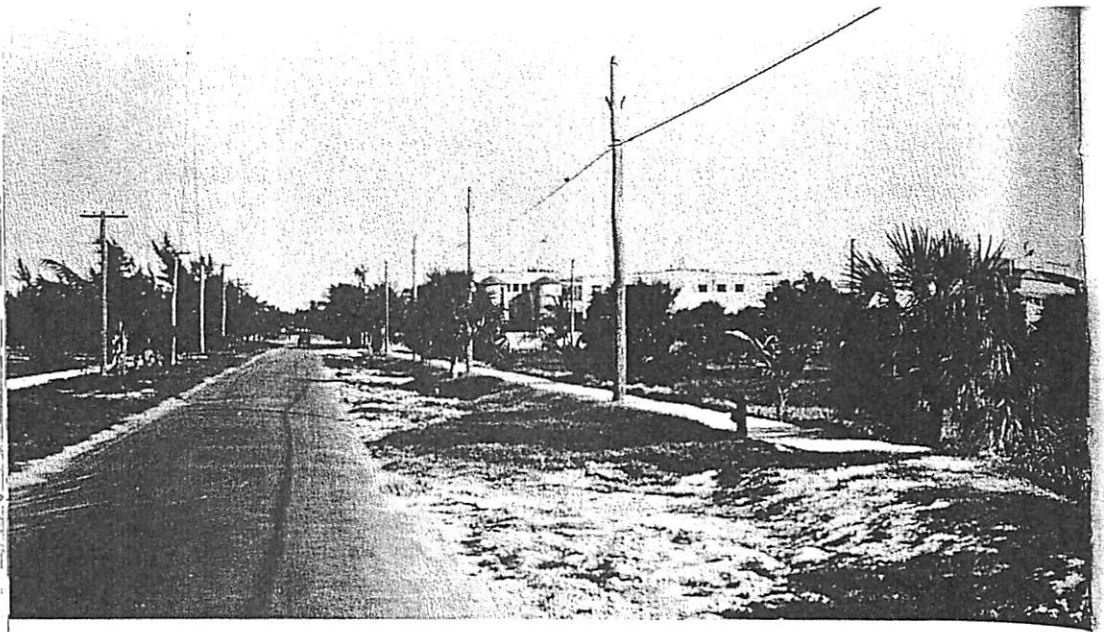
In 1904, when controls were available for yellow fever and malaria, South Florida was affected by the fact that the United States was starting to build the Panama Canal. Flagler was building his "impossible" railroad across the miles of shallow water to Key West. Dr. J. Y. Porter, Florida's first health officer, and his small staff were beating back public health hazards with brute force tactics.

They were having success, too, for in 1907, Dr. Porter reported that there was "not a single case" of contagious disease among the thousands of workers who were employed by Flagler, and that the "isolation hospital," established for their care, was standing empty with its armed guard idling in the doorway. Dr. Porter went on to praise the Flagler forces for taking complete responsibility for the care of their own incapacitated, saying that it saved the state and county the expense of caring for those who would have otherwise become indigent. He was strong in his praise of the sanitary engineering done by the railroad in its work camps, adding that as a result there were no cases of typhoid fever.

In 1909, Dr. Porter reported an outbreak of 15 cases of typhoid in the South Florida area but the incipient epidemic died out when instructions were given to scald all milk and boil drinking water from private wells. The year was called "a very successful one for public health."

Beginning in the Midst of Crisis

Despite the depression of the 1930s, the vision of a warm, Florida beach in mid-winter was being held up to millions of Americans. As investors and visitors they came. Efforts to keep hotel construction ahead of the demand were described as frantic. People



In 1922 Miami Beach's Collins Avenue was a narrow street set with palm trees. Although the climate and sunshine were already present, the hotels and apartment houses were yet to come. Compare this view with the one of Collins Avenue today on page 360.

with no experience were pressed into service as kitchen help. Flimsy, gaudily-painted shacks were thrown up to house carnival-type businesses grasping for the tourist dollar. Pollution increased. Giant rats abandoned ships in the harbor and found homes in the rubbish heaps and shabby buildings. As a principal port-of-entry, the area was in danger of being infected by persons coming from South and Central America, Africa or Asia where pestilential disease existed.

But in addition to the tourist, huckster and shill, there were citizens willing and anxious to see that things were done right, public health protected and modern agencies and facilities constructed for the purpose.

The stage for the formation of the Dade County Department of Public Health was set in 1931 when the Florida Legislature passed Florida Statute 154 which established the full-time local health units "for the control and eradication of preventable diseases

and inculcate modern scientific methods of hygiene, sanitation, and the prevention of communicable diseases."

In 1939, the Dade County Board of Commissioners said that it could not find its way clear to establish a county health unit and the \$15,000 allotted for that purpose was stricken from the budget.

But in 1940, the Dade County health unit was formed through the efforts of County Commissioner Charles H. Crandon, members of the Dade County Medical Association, and other civic leaders with Dr. Cato as the health commissioner. At the time the cities of Miami, Miami Beach, Coral Gables, plus 10 school districts, were giving some health services to residents of the area. A survey of public health and sanitation in the county was made in October 1941 under the direction of the U.S. Public Health Service and the State Board of Health. It found that "health control and sanitation in the Miami area . . . inadequate and not fitted to the present needs." In the County Court House were two health departments, one dealing solely with health matters applying to Miami and the other concerned with the county program excluding Miami. The City of Miami Beach maintained several nurses and a sanitary inspector working under a part-time county health officer. Coral Gables had a full-time sanitary inspector and a nurse operating independent of the county health unit.

When Dr. Cato arrived in Miami in 1940, the county had set aside \$7500 for the health unit. This amount was matched by state and federal appropriations to be expended through the State Board of Health. According to plans for the new unit, the duties were to be divided into (1) the collection, classification, compilation and analysis of vital statistics; (2) education work in health and hygiene; (3) management and control of communicable diseases; (4) laboratory work; and (5) sanitation.

One thing that the survey of 1941 recommended was a single health authority for Dade County founded on state law to provide stability. It also recommended that within two years the health authority should be expanded to the size commensurate with a population of 500,000 persons and that it should be provided with plans for further expansion to meet increasing needs.

Dr. Cato was well qualified for the position of County Health Officer. He entered public health work on graduation from the University of Tennessee Medical School in 1928. He served one year as health officer in Lamar County, Alabama; another year in a like position in Gilmer County, West Virginia, and from 1931 to 1937, in a similar post in Hancock County of the same state.

In 1937, Dr. Cato became health officer of West Virginia's largest county, Kanawha, where he was credited with the county's model sanitary regulations for food handlers and dairies under county supervision, and the establishment of modern venereal disease and tuberculosis clinics. He became a leader in immunization work for infants and mothers and the number of diphtheria and typhoid cases dropped after his policies were put into effect.

Dade County Commissioner Crandon; A. W. Newitt, M.D., Director of the Bureau of Local Health Services of the State Board of Health; A. B. Curry, city manager of Miami; and two officers from the U. S. Public Health Service, Wilson T. Sowder and A. I. Kernish, appeared before various city and county governmental bodies to present the plans for a countywide health unit. (Dr. Sowder became the State Health Officer for Florida in 1945 and still holds that position; Dr. Kernish is a practicing physician in Coral Gables.)

The municipalities and school board agreed to participate and put up \$148,000 requested which were augmented by state and federal money. Plans were made to spend the money wisely and according to Dr. Newitt with "no frills and no fancy quarters but simply the kind of a health department that can dig in and do the work and do a good job."

The duplication and overlapping, which is always observed where separate health departments exist in an area the size of Dade County, came to an end on November 10, 1942, with consolidation of all the city health departments and the county health unit into the Dade County Department of Public Health. A retired U.S. Public Health Service officer, T. H. D. Griffiths, was named the director and Dr. Cato was made assistant director. In



Dade County has a wide range of social groups—ranging from the inhabitants of glamorous Miami Beach (opposite page) to the Miccosukees who dwell in thatched-roof chickees along the Tamiami Trail.

Although the Dade County Department of Public Health frequently has had financial difficulty, it still is one of the best county health units in the nation. The expansion of the health unit could not have been possible without the cooperation of numerous organizations, schools, hospitals, voluntary health agencies, governmental offices and individuals. From the days of 1944, when the health department cooperated with the Army and Navy by inspecting prenatal clinics at military installations, to the present, with public health field experiences being provided nursing students from Barry College, University of Miami School of Nursing, Miami-Dade Junior College, Jackson Memorial Hospital and other institutions, the cooperation has always been on the highest level.

Over the years the county health unit has cooperated:

- with the Florida State Board of Health, U.S. Public Health Service, U. S. Children's Bureau and other state and governmental agencies in a wide number of surveys, programs and projects;
- with the University of Miami School of Medicine, Jackson Memorial Hospital, Dade County Medical Association and other

a few months, Dr. Griffiths resigned and Dr. Cato became county health officer, a position he held until his death.

The consolidation was the first step toward the metropolitan government which came into being in Dade County 15 years later. This form of government was described as "the first attempt in the country to establish a new type of overall political unit covering a complete metropolitan area."

The War Period

The proponents of consolidation were assisted by the facts that World War Two had begun; a number of military installations with an estimated military population of 10,000 had moved into Dade County, which had 312,000 persons; and there was a rising need for supervision and control of environmental health. Nearly every hotel in Miami Beach became a training school for Armed Forces officers. The venereal disease rate in Florida was the worst in the nation; 2.6 per cent of white men and 28.70 per cent of Negro men examined for military service from Dade County had syphilis.

The bars, restaurants and food stores frequented by servicemen were checked by sanitarians but the rapid turnover of restaurant employees necessitated the employment of untrained and inexperienced workers. There was difficulty in procuring metal garbage cans and equipment. Food and drink establishments were found to be reusing paper plates; a deliveryman was found carrying unwrapped bread on a dirty and sweaty arm. Enforcement of stringent sanitary laws improved the condition in Dade County restaurants.

Available records show that typhus infection was most frequently contracted in the business places or other congested areas which were heavily infested with rats, and rodent control efforts were confined to these areas of Dade County communities. Water supplies were regularly checked but in some cases the recommended changes could not be accomplished due to the shortage of plumbers and war conditions. Shallow wells with pitcher pumps were dangerously close to pit privies. Drainage wells, of which there were at least 281 in Dade County, contributed to the pollution of underground water. Out of 205 wells tested in 1943, 156 showed contamination.

Medical care for servicemen's wives and infants was financed by the Children's Bureau but authorization for the service had to come from the county health unit. Because the Army and Navy Medical Corps had a number of trained obstetricians in Dade County, the State Board of Health and Federal Government agreed that servicemen's cases had to be handled by Army and Navy physicians. When maternal and infant care was given to service families, the work of the health unit's nursing service doubled in one month.

The cost of operating the Dade County Department of Public Health during the war year of 1944 was \$238,000, of which \$170,900 came from local funds. The per capita cost was 54 cents, far below the recommended per capita cost of one dollar. Including special projects, the 1966 budget was nearly \$5 million, of which \$1.3 million was from local funds and the per capita cost was \$1.30.

The Post-War Period — Expansion

From 1945, Miami, Miami Beach and Dade County became synonymous with "a spot in the sunshine." Through the efforts of business and governmental agencies and the attraction of the sub-tropical climate, tourists flocked to the area to sample the pleasures of Florida. The strip from Miami northward to Palm Beach became known as Florida's Gold Coast; thousands of former servicemen, who had been delighted with the area during the war years, came back in the post-war period to settle, start businesses and raise their families.

Because these were people from other parts of the United States who had been used to urban health services and sanitation control, the Dade County Department of Public Health developed new programs to meet the demands. Because cities were being created out of mangrove swamps and palmetto-covered fields, they had no tradition on which to build.

The county health unit started with the basic public health programs of sanitation, maternal and child health, nursing, vital statistics and dental health, plus communicable disease, tuberculosis and venereal disease control. To this was added a large number of health services and programs over the next two decades. Divisions

TURNER ELAM CATO, M.D., M.P.H.

Dade County, the State of Florida and organized medicine lost a most valued friend when Dr. T. Elam Cato died in July, 1967.

A top-flight administrator of the Dade County Department of Public Health, he was truly a Master of Public Health. Under his leadership, the Department had become one of the finest in the United States. Though understaffed constantly, he overcame the myriad problems with foresight, wisdom and resourcefulness.

We shall all miss his soft voice and guiding hand. We shall never forget his leadership, his knowledge and his inborn humility. His memorial stands in Miami on N. W. 14th Street which he built and loved.

Jack Q. Cleveland

Jack Q. Cleveland, M.D., Chairman
Dade County Health Advisory Board
336 Alhambra Circle
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July 31, 1967

of sanitary engineering, health education, mental health and research were added; nutrition consultation services and social work services were started and clinics for retarded children, premature infants and child guidance were included. Within the past seven years programs in air pollution control, health mobilization, hospitals and nursing home inspection and licensure, adult health and aging programs, chronic diseases, comprehensive health services for children and youth, and maternity and infant care have been appended. Perhaps one of the biggest jobs given the Dade County Department of Public Health was the Cuban Refugee Health Program. More will be said later about this and some of the other more outstanding programs. A laboratory was planned in the original setup but this became a function of the State Board of Health's chain of regional laboratories.

An example of how the health unit has grown is shown by the way the staff has expanded to meet the needs of growing Dade



County. In 1945, the staff consisted of 92 persons, including three physicians, 33 nurses, 23 sanitarians and 20 clerks. The 1966 staff totaled over 600 persons, including approximately 45 physicians, 165 public health nurses, 57 sanitarians, 70 clerical personnel and five sanitary engineers, plus employees in special programs and other disciplines.

With the passing of Dr. T. E. Cato, public health lost one of its best administrators and many of us lost a staunch and valued friend.

I have known Elam for many years and have admired and respected his abilities as a leader in the public health field. His warm and friendly manner contributed to a pleasant association, both on the occasion of professional visits and during social functions.

His sincerity, untiring devotion to duty, and wise leadership has contributed to the success of the program in every position that he has so ably occupied, and particularly in his role as Director of the Dade County Department of Public Health.

No finer monument could be erected to this man than the realization that he devoted his life to the betterment of mankind.

I consider myself fortunate to have known him and to be numbered among his friends who are grieved of his passing.

Hugh B. Cottrell

Hugh B. Cottrell, M.D.
Medical Director
U.S. Public Health Service

organizations in such programs as the Premature Demonstration Center, Child Development Center, Diagnostic Hearing Clinic, Maternal and Infant Care Project and Anti-Convulsive Clinics;

- with Jackson Memorial and Mt. Sinai Hospitals in poison control centers;

- with the Dade County Tuberculosis Association in x-ray screening programs;

- with the Dade County Board of Public Instruction in the mental hygiene clinic;

- with the Dade County Civil Defense in implementing the civil defense program;

- with the University of Florida, Family Service Agency, Dade County Department of Welfare, Juvenile Court and Dade County Board of Public Instruction in the Child Guidance Clinics;

- with the Vocational, Technical and Adult Education Division of the Dade County Schools in the training of practical nurses, dental technicians and other paramedical personnel; and

- with many other organizations and agencies in educational and health service programs too numerous to mention.

Over the years since 1942 a number of problems were faced by Dr. Cato and his staff. Many of these problems continue today while others were met and conquered. One of these latter was poliomyelitis, which was eradicated through great immunization campaigns. In 1957, Salk vaccine injections were given to nearly 300,000 persons. However, polio persisted and in 1960 over 413,000 Dade County residents under 40 years of age were given one-dose Cox oral vaccine in one of the largest field trials ever organized.

Public health nurses carry on one of the biggest continuing programs which keeps expanding. Today a total of 96 clinic sessions is held weekly in the eight health centers. Over the years they have examined children in schools with the assistance of volunteers from the Parent-Teacher Association; supervised midwives when they were numerous; visited homes of accident patients to help prevent repetition of such accidents; given home nursing service to persons with chronic diseases or long-term illnesses; and instructed new mothers in the care of infants. The Visiting Nurse Association, founded in Dade County in 1945, continues today as a part of the public health program with the head of the health department's nursing division as director. The Association was certified in 1966 as a Home Health Agency under Medicare.

Continuing projects in clinics and public education emanates from the Venereal Disease Control Program. Public health nurses

Elam Cato



ment of the community
ewhere in the state and
health department was
isolation from other

local, state and federal agencies, but always functioned in the fullest spirit of cooperation. He developed unusually close ties with the medical school and always worked closely with the State Board of Health in the state-wide public health programs. Through these and many other activities he and his programs played an ever increasing and vital role in the total national effort in the field of health.

His personal life and public career represents a glowing example of one man's dedication and contribution to humanity of which Dade County, the State of Florida, and the entire nation can be proud. It is because of his outstanding accomplishments that the Florida State Board of Health pays him the unique tribute of dedicating to his memory this entire issue of its monthly publication of *Health Notes*.

Wilson T. Sowder, M.D.

Wilson T. Sowder, M.D., M.P.H.
Florida State Health Officer

sanitation procedures in food and drink establishments, food handlers schools have been in operation since 1944.

Hurricanes, which threaten Florida, along with other areas in the summer months, are feared less today because of advance warnings from the U.S. Weather Bureau. However, such storms when they occur, bring floods—with the possibility of typhoid from polluted drinking water—and interruption of electricity, with the failure of refrigerators and resulting food spoilage. Sanitarians condemn huge amounts of spoiled foods and check private wells; public health nurses conduct typhoid immunization clinics in cooperation with the American Red Cross.

Dr. T. Elam

Elam Cato was a wonderful human being, a gentleman, and an outstanding public health physician. He was well trained in public health, and had considerable experience elsewhere, before he became the Health Officer of the then recently consolidated countywide health department in Dade County. He made excellent use of his training and experience. These assets plus his intelligence, honesty, courage, forthrightness, and persistence all contributed to the development and maintenance of one of the finest local health departments in the nation. This health department reflected Dr. Cato's devotion to duty and his progressiveness. It kept up with the times. His programs not only included all of the traditional aspects of public health but developed practically all of the newer ones which have come to the fore during the past two decades. He wove the new and the traditional, including such unique programs as comprehensive health care for the Cuban refugees into a coordinated and highly effective pattern of countywide health services which commanded the



respect of every segment and his colleagues elsewhere in the nation. His health never maintained in isc

make home visits to patients and assist the special venereal disease investigators who enlist the help of physicians, private laboratories and hospitals in detecting syphilis, gonorrhea and other venereal diseases and sending people to the clinic for treatment.

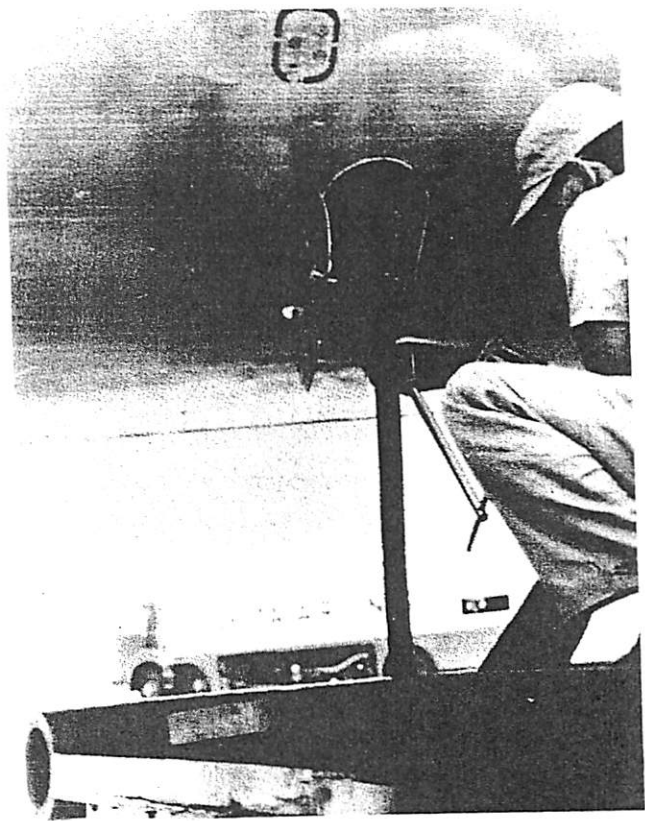
From the beginning the Dade County Department of Public Health's sanitarians have inspected food and drink establishments, dairies and milk distributors, slaughterhouses, swimming pools, septic tanks and labor camps. As the health unit was expanded, child day care centers, hospitals and nursing homes, convalescent homes, mobile home parks, schools and airport sanitation became additional programs for inspection. In an effort to secure better

The Cuban Influx

The year 1959 saw the rise of the Castro government in Cuba and the beginning of the waves of refugees who were seeking asylum from the Communist regime. The United States opened its doors to any Cuban of goodwill who wanted to come to this country seeking democracy, freedom and peace. Because Dade County was the nearest point to the island, it received the impact of the migration. Over a quarter of a million Cubans have arrived since 1961. Many of the refugees settled in the Dade County area with the hope of soon returning to their homeland. Others have



The airport sanitation program of the Dade County Department of Public Health is a leader in its field. The sanitarian in charge of the program supervises such activities as the cleaning of planes (opposite page) and the servicing of aircraft toilet systems, in addition to food service and water supply.




been relocated in other cities, such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Tampa.

Dade County, Florida and the United States recognized their responsibilities and started action which led to the Cuban Refugee Relief Program and the health services. The Dade County Department of Public Health had full responsibility for organizing, directing and coordinating the medical services for the refugees.

At the clinics held in Freedom Tower (former home of the Miami News) the Cubans receive medical screening of all new arrivals, immunizations, chest x-rays, provisions for medical diagnosis and treatment for those who are indigent, referral to local community facilities for those services not available at the clinics, referrals to health department clinics (well-baby, maternity, venereal disease, etc.) and provisions for emergency dental services. Out of the 125,000 Cubans in the Dade County area, an average of

As head of Florida's largest county health department, Dr. T. E. Cato responded to the challenge of providing health services of high quality. His leadership was progressive. Of particular interest are the programs he established for mothers and children and for Cuban refugees. He early saw the need for a maternity and infant care project and family planning service for the Miami area, and enlisted community support as well for the children and youth project in order to give Dade County a well-rounded program of services to mother and children.



Arthur J. Lesser, M.D., Deputy Chief
Children's Bureau
U.S. Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare

530 persons is seen daily at the Cuban Refugee Center, which has a well-organized medical staff, nurses, x-ray laboratory, clerical personnel and pharmacy.

Over 875 Cubans still arrive weekly in the two-planes-a-day airlift from Cuba. These persons are examined at another clinic at the Miami International Airport where they are given chest x-rays and immunization. Those who are awaiting the arrival of relatives or are holding reservations to other cities stay at Freedom House which is operated by the Cuban Refugee Program. Here they receive food, clothing, rooms for sleeping and medical services, if needed.

Outstanding Dade County Programs

Dr. Cato's administration of the Dade County Department of Public Health was an outstanding example of the application of countywide public health services. Following are some of the im-

portant programs and projects which were developed in Dade County.

The Premature Demonstration Center provides not only for the care of premature infants and the training of nurses but conducts research into the saving of lives of such babies and carries on studies to help prevent premature births. Ten years ago the premature rate at the Center was 20 per cent of all births. Today, through programs of maternity care, better nutrition and family planning, the rate has been cut to 12 per cent and the death rate of premature babies has been cut from 17 to 12 per cent.

The Child Development Center was originally started as a clinic where a child suspected of being mentally retarded could be evaluated and diagnosed. In recent years, the emphasis has been changed to include the training of professional personnel and the giving of consultative services. Research has been carried on in genetics, cytology, phenylketonuria and other causes of mental retardation.

The Reservation Indian Health Care Program deals with some 180 Miccosukees who live along the Tamiami Trail and is financed entirely with federal funds. A multiphasic screening program in 1963 showed that the health of the Indians was far below that of other county residents. Now in cooperation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they are provided with physician office visits; dental services; fees for laboratory, prosthetics, drugs and physician's services; and hospitalization.

Migrant health had always been a concern of Dr. Cato and his staff. From the beginning, the improvement of migrant labor camps was an uphill battle. While some camp operators were most cooperative, the conditions of other camps were so bad that investigators were horrified and camp owners were told to correct sanitary conditions or be taken to court. Stricter regulations were instituted and all migrant camps now are required to meet these standards in order to obtain licenses to house workers. A number of clinics are held in migrant camps and provide much needed medical and dental care for hundreds of migrants who had no other access to these resources.

The Maternal and Infant Care Project carries some 5000 mothers and children under one year of age on its records. An average of 2800 maternal and 1200 pediatric visits are made to homes of patients by the public health nurses during a week, and 25 clinics are conducted in seven health centers. All maternity patients are given comprehensive medical care; those who have high risk pregnancies (in which there are complications) are given hospitalization and total care. Nearly 90 per cent of the post-partum patients return for family planning and examinations. The women are encouraged to space their children and limit the number to those they can care for.

Research was one part of the Dade County Department of Public Health in which Dr. Cato took a big interest. The research section, organized in 1957, was one of the first of its kind in the Southeastern United States, and its progress was followed by the nation's public health officials. Working with the State Board of



Children play in the diagnostic playroom of the Child Development Center, one of the cooperative programs carried on by the Dade County Department of Public Health, University of Miami School of Medicine, Jackson Memorial Hospital and other organizations and institutions.

Health, University of Miami School of Medicine, National Institutes of Health and other governmental agencies, the Dade County Department of Welfare and other county health groups, the research section has carried on a number of outstanding studies. A few of these are: epidemiologic study of nursing home residents; investigation of syphilis deaths in Dade County; epidemiologic investigation of accidents involving sliding glass doors; determination of prenatal hemoglobin levels as related to age, trimester and parity; and the evaluation of neurological and sensory disease problems in Dade County.

Rodent Control has been important in the Dade County Department of Public Health since its inception. Typhus was a problem for a number of years. Attempts were made to eradicate rats with red squill "torpedoes" scattered in such places as business districts, parks and the banks of the Miami River and canals. But the rats weren't killed and typhus persisted. After World War Two, DDT was available and the health unit used it lavishly wherever rats ran. The fleas were killed but the rats are still around. Warfarin is used for general purposes but where the sanitarians have complete control (no people or pets) an extremely effective rat poison, 1018, is used. Instructions on rat-proofing buildings are given out and areas are cleared of trash to eliminate rodent harborage.

The Airport Sanitation program carried on by the Dade County Department of Public Health at the Miami International Airport is a leader in its field. The airport complex handles a total of seven million passengers a year. The sanitarian in charge of this program oversees such facilities as in-flight catering kitchens, food service establishments and sanitary facilities in the airport buildings, and sanitary sewage disposal of wastes from aircraft.

The Health Assessment Program is a pilot project carried on under contract with the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the State Board of Health at the Miami Beach Health Center. Permanent residents of Dade County who are over 65 years



and medically indigent are given a limited physical examination which includes chest x-ray, blood sugar, hemoglobin, electrocardiogram and cytology. Their height and weight are also measured. Out of 919 persons seen between December 1966 and July 1967, 165 persons were new diabetics and 54 with glaucoma were referred to physicians. Eighty-four persons were referred to hospitals and 245 persons sent to physicians for further study and treatment.

The Community Studies in Pesticides were started because of the national concern regarding pesticides and the 13 deaths in Dade County in 1963 which were attributed to pesticides. The county was chosen because of the climate, the agriculture carried on in the western portion of the county and the amount of pesticides used. Since the program began, over 80 poisonings due to organophosphate pesticides have been investigated, and 114 persons are receiving monthly blood and urine tests for general health documentation under an occupational health program.

Pollution Control has been an important program in this resort city. In 1947 Philip Wylie published a magazine article, "Florida—Polluted Paradise," in which he said that Biscayne Bay was "the

color of mildew," that "ebb tide carries some of its polluted water out in front of Miami Beach twice daily," and that a number of sewers belched forth sewage into the azure pride of the twin cities. Other writers have jumped on the same bandwagon, including authors of a book with the same title.

A survey conducted by the State Board of Health in 1949 bore out Wylie's charges. Conditions were such that unless steps were taken there would be further threats to public health which would have an adverse effect upon the economic, aesthetic, recreational and commercial interests of the metropolitan area.

The Dade County Department of Public Health and Miami took firm action to clean up Biscayne Bay. Interceptor lines, totaling 16 miles in length, were built along the shore and the Miami River, picking up sewage that was being emptied into the blue waters. These lines were connected to a force main which was run under

Thousands of acres of South Dade County are devoted to agriculture (opposite page). The health and living conditions of migrants (such as the one at right) who work in the fields are major concerns of the State Board of Health and the Dade County Department of Public Health.



the bay to a treatment plant on Virginia Key. When this plant went into operation, it could handle 47 million gallons of sewage a day. Expansion can bring the capacity up to 153 million gallons, sufficient to handle a population of 460,000 persons.

Today there are more than 90 sewage treatment plants serving more than 47 per cent of the population. The remainder are served by septic tanks but there is a continual campaign to bring sewerage systems to more of the people. The existing plants serve motels, subdevelopments, industrial plants, institutions and municipalities. Biscayne Bay in 1967 is again a recreational playground.

Miami's air is about 50 per cent cleaner than that of most other American cities of comparable size. Two main reasons for this are the absence of heavy industry with accompanying smoke and dust, and prevailing easterly winds which bring pure freshly-washed air from the moderating Gulf Stream and the Atlantic Ocean. However, the Air Pollution Control Division of the Dade County Department of Public Health has laid the foundation for air quality management programs to combat such problems as burning of automobiles and commercial barbecues.

The Dade County Health Advisory Board

The Health Advisory Board was formed at the beginning of the consolidated health department to set policies for the Dade County Department of Public Health but it carried no administrative function. Charles H. Crandon, the County Commissioner who fought successfully for the health department, served as the Board's first chairman. Problems facing the Board at its first meeting were rat infestation, sanitation in restaurants, the large number of persons receiving treatment for venereal disease, and the shortage of nurses.

During the span of the next 25 years, the Board dealt with such problems as inadequate hospital space, garbage collections, fly and rodent control, sewage disposal, fluoridation, migrant camps and health certificates. Dr. Cato had various members of his staff give reports at the Board's meetings. One problem that con-

tinued for years was the bringing of services to the people, and health centers were planned for various sections of Dade County. Likewise the Board participated in the planning of the Dade-Miami Civic Center in which the public health central headquarters was one of the first buildings erected. Since 1958, other buildings were constructed which house the police academy, county jail, public safety, judicial department, medical centers, hospitals and local offices of state agencies.

The Dade County Department of Public Health ran smoothly under the administration of Dr. Cato and the Health Advisory Board. There was noted in the minutes of a meeting in 1946 that there had been no interference from the Dade County Board of Commissioners because of the smooth operation. Besides Mr. Crandon, other men who served as chairmen were: County Commissioners Preston B. Bird, Jesse H. Yarborough and Ralph A. Fossey; Ira F. Williard; Dewey R. Dedrick; and Dr. Jack Q. Cleveland, who is current chairman and also president-elect of the Florida Medical Association.

Dr. Cato - Physician, Administrator, Civic Leader

What sort of man was T. E. Cato in the minds of those who followed his leadership, some of them for the full 27 years of his Dade County career?

Public Health on a Personal Basis

The story of Dade County Department of Public Health isn't one told in cold statistics of so many births, deaths, chest-x-rays, water samples taken, restaurants inspected, children vaccinated, sanitary surveys conducted. These figures are important in showing dangers to personal health, problems eliminated and new menaces developing. To Dr. Cato and his aides, the important part of their work was the day-to-day contact with individuals who make up the general public and how they eventually wound up in reports as statistics.

"Good health must be on a personal basis," Dr. Cato said one time. "Certainly it is a personal thing to the person involved. We try to make the individual feel his case is extremely important. It is to him. It is to us."

"He made you feel important," said one of his staff. "He was easy to talk to, and wanted to help you solve your problems. He was—well, available, that is if you could find him. He wasn't a desk man."

"He visited all the clinics and project locations regularly," said another. "He kept his finger on every detail of everything. He delegated responsibility but he knew everything that was going on."

"He used persuasion to try to get you to accept his point of view. But if that didn't work, he just told you—do it. He was one of the strongest personalities I've ever met," said another of his associates.

But as one of his closest colleagues summed it up, "He was the power. He called for results and he got them. If you deserved a compliment, you got it—and vice versa."

In his citation for the Meritorious Service Award of the Florida Public Health Association in 1962, it is stated that his standing among his medical colleagues in public health, professional education and private practice might well be assessed in the fact that at his insistence, along with that of others, a Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health was established at the University of Miami School of Medicine.

The selection of Miami as the site for the final field trial of Cox oral polio vaccine can be attributed in great part to the reputation and high standing of Dr. Cato and his agency. He was an active, respected and in some instances an office-holding-member of nine professional associations, including his local, state and national medical associations. The staff of the Cuban Emergency Medical Dispensary gave him a plaque in recognition of his efforts in their behalf.

One of the major contributions made by Dr. Cato to the future of public health administration in Dade County was his effort to decentralize the distribution of public health services—to bring services closer to the people. According to R. Ray Goode, budget



Not too many years ago the Miami River (foreground) and Biscayne Bay (background) were the dumping grounds for some 70 sewer outfalls. Sewerage systems today are connected to an enormous treatment plant on Virginia Key and the bay is again a recreational playground.

director in the office of the manager of the metropolitan government in Dade County, Dr. Cato's desire was to bring public health services into every school and region of the county. Since the 1940s he preached a sermon that was to become the basic philosophy of the "War on Poverty" in the mid-1960s: indigent individuals and families will not avail themselves of medical and health services if the services are inaccessible due to transportation difficulties. Poor people often cannot, and more often will not, seek preventive services without easy access and adequate public health education. Unless both items (accessibility and public health education) are present, the people most in need of preventive medical care will forego such care until an emergency arises requiring hospitalization. By then it is often too late, and death or crippling diseases and unproductive lives result.

By the time of Dr. Cato's death, public health clinics had been established all over Dade County and plans were nearly completed for one of his long-sought clinics in the Cutler Ridge area of South Dade. The Cutler Ridge project involved a goal long desired by Dr. Cato—the concept of multi-service centers on an area-wide basis. He realized the importance of having hospital emergency room and diagnostic facilities on the same site with the regular health clinic. Through his efforts, and those of other county officials, this project was approved as a joint Public Health-Department of Hospitals operation. A similar project is being planned for North Dade.

A Mission Well-done

It would be brash indeed for **Florida Health Notes** to point out didactically that other county health departments could well profit from the example set by the man and the organization we have had under review. The Dade County Department of Public Health is nationally recognized. It is known to have tackled and brought to bay over the years many routine, and many unique problems. It is known to have gained and held public esteem to the point that its annual reports do not reflect any significant struggle for fiscal sustenance.

It is known to have followed consistently the policy of taking needed services to the people, time and location-wise, rather than calling the people to a central, and often inconvenient place. It is known to have looked upon its mission as being a part of a whole, and to have led in the movement to bring together in action and effectiveness many agencies, disciplines and interests for the benefit of the overall program.

Dade County is most fortunate, and Florida is grateful in having had the leadership, strength and foresightedness shown by this public health organization. In years to come Dade County, Florida, will surely continue to lead, to pioneer and to accomplish great things in public health.

Illustrations: Cover and pages 360 and 377 courtesy of Miami-Metro News Bureau; pages 354, 372 and 373, Florida News Bureau.