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BY SUSAN SHUMAKER

ISRAEL LAFAYETTE "PARSON" JONES, SIR LANCELOT JONES,
AND BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK

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PART I: PARSON JONES

This is the story of one of the most remarkable men I ever met—a negro laborer, without education or help, who by sheer force of character achieved home, family, friends, fortune, and leadership.

—Vincent Gilpin¹

Historic Context

In the 19th century post-Reconstruction South, black Americans struggled with racism in an environment grappling with the consequences of slavery and emancipation. Denied the right to vote, patronize white business establishments, attend white schools, or hold religious services without the presence of a white minister, the black population in what would become Dade County, Florida, was no exception. Few blacks in the area—mostly runaway slaves and Bahamian immigrants—had the means or wherewithal to establish a homestead or business. Worse still was the constant fear of violence. Between 1890 and 1930, Florida had more lynchings per capita than any other southern state. A whites only primary and a poll tax were in place for decades and not one school in the Sunshine State would be integrated until the 1960s (Finney 7–9).

Into this climate came Israel Lafayette Jones, a stevedor and former plantation worker from North Carolina. Known as “Parson” Jones, Israel traveled to southern Florida in the late 1800s. Expanding upon his skills as a boat handler and agriculturalist, Jones purchased land and successfully launched and operated a pineapple- and lime-growing business. He accumulated significant land holdings, selling some of his acreage at a substantial profit, and contributed greatly to the development of Miami’s black community.

Israel Lafayette Jones

It is 70 years since I first saw Coconut Grove, precursor of Miami on Biscayne Bay, thanks to my parents’ love of both winter warmth and lonely places. All travelers are in part explorers, and my boyhood experienced an unusual number of those isolated outskirts of human life where one often finds remarkable people. Few places were more isolated than the Bay, or men more remarkable than Israel Lafayette Jones, pioneer, planter, and preacher, often called “Pahson Jones.” He came from North Carolina, tall, broad and powerful. How he ever conceived the journey into that far unknown country I do not know, especially as there was not a single negro on Biscayne Bay;² he may have heard

¹ Vince Gilpin was Parson Jones’s friend for much of his life on Biscayne Bay.

² This statement is questionable; my research indicates that Bahamians started coming to the area right after the end of the Civil War (many of them former slaves who had left the U.S. from Key Biscayne, the southern-

that there was land open to homestead entry, and guessed that he would not meet such deep-rooted racial prejudice. In any case, both were true. —Vincent Gilpin (1)

Israel Lafayette Jones was born in 1858 in Raleigh, North Carolina. His father, Arter Jones, was a farm laborer; nothing is known of his biological mother, who died sometime during Israel's youth. Although it's difficult to determine whether or not Jones or his parents were born into slavery, it is highly likely that they were: In 1830, only 1% of the North Carolina black population were freemen and, by 1860, there were less than 40,000 freed blacks state-wide (Finney 9).

At the age of 22, Jones was following in his father's footsteps, working as a farm laborer. Sometime in the 1880s, he moved to Wilmington, NC, a major seaport, and took work as a stevedore, loading and unloading ships. While in Wilmington, Jones learned the skills needed to handle small boats (Gilpin 1; Munroe 242).

In 1892, Israel Jones took the skills he'd learned in Wilmington with him to Florida, in search of work. He worked for a season growing oranges in Orlando, but—after the harvest was destroyed by a frost—moved west to Tampa and then further south.

My father . . . came down to Florida because he was “adventurous.” First he stopped near Orlando. He put out an orange grove but a freeze killed it. Then he went to Tampa. He couldn't find anything there so he went to Key West and shipped into Coconut Grove. —Lancelot Jones (Mensch 5)

Israel's first job was as a handyman at the Peacock Inn (Munroe 242).

He got a job at a modest hostelry just opened at Coconut Grove by Charles Peacock, an adventurous settler not long from London. Charles had great faith in the future of the Bay, but what he would have said had he been able to picture his little cottage hotel as the beginning of a chain leading to Miami Beach outreaches my imagination. —Vincent Gilpin (1)

The community living in Coconut Grove and the surrounding area was small; only about two-dozen homes were scattered on the Bay in 1890. It wasn't long before Jones met “the Commodore”: Ralph Munroe—a boat designer and the head of Biscayne Bay Yacht Club. At the time Munroe was serving as an agent for Waters S. Davis, II, recently relocated from Galveston. Davis had inherited extensive landholdings on Cape Florida—500 acres on the eastern end of Key Biscayne—and was looking for someone to ready the place for human habitation. Jones asked Munroe for the job. “What do you know about handling small boats?” the Commodore is said to have asked. “I sailed them around Wilmington,” replied Jones. The next morning, Munroe tested Jones in a small sailboat known as a “smack.” Impressed with Jones's boat handling skills, ambition, and jovial personality, Munroe gave him the job (Gilpin 1; Nordt 1–2; Mensch 5; McIver 41).

most point on the Underground Railroad), and there are at least two black men pictured in a photo of the Peacock Inn taken by Munroe in 1886 (Parks 101).

. . . [The] job was a fine advance from jack-of-all-trades at Peacock's. So he went to the Cape, and he did not go alone. A few winter visitors had justified the Inn, which needed a housemaid,³ and Peacock found in Key West an ambitious Bahama girl, Moselle; she was the second member of her race to come to Coconut Grove. There was some good-natured teasing—"Here Jones, this is what you've been looking for!"—which might have been discouraging, but the two really suited each other, with strength, courage, and ambition in common, and it was not long before they came to an understanding. Many years later I asked Moselle how she knew he was the right man. She chuckled. "Well, one day he look at me, an' I look at him, an' sump'n went 'umph!' in heah" (with one hand on chest, dramatically) "an' *den I knowed!*"⁴ —Vincent Gilpin (3)

Israel Jones's wife, Moselle Albury, was born in December 1861 in Harbor Island, Bahamas. Moselle's family had immigrated to Key West in 1875, eventually traveling north to the Florida mainland and to the Peacock Inn. Built in 1882, the inn had become a magnet for newly immigrated black Bahamians who had come to South Florida seeking employment. Following a brief courtship, Israel and Moselle married in 1895 (Gifford 47; Nordt 2; Finney 11).

Under Commodore Munroe's direction, Israel took charge of clearing the Cape Florida land and erecting a two-story bungalow for the Davis family, beginning in 1893. After their marriage, he and Moselle lived in a cottage on the Davis property where Jones served as caretaker and lighthouse keeper (Munroe 241–242).

It began in a cabin, on the Davis place, on the Cape. Jones performed prodigies with those mighty arms which bulged with power beneath the dark satin of his skin, clearing the Jungle, laying out the grounds, planting coconuts and other trees and bushes. No one had ever lived on the keys except the light-keepers, and it was a savage place, alive with rattlesnakes; he killed hundreds, one of them ten feet long—a real granddaddy. Other pests such as wild-cats soon scattered, and the property grew into the semblance of a gentleman's home. —Vincent Gilpin (4)

Jones's reputation grew and he soon became caretaker of several other properties on Key Biscayne, as well, including those belonging to noted horticulturalist Dr. John Clayton Gifford and Commodore Munroe himself. In 1893 he worked as foreman on Frank T. Budge's pineapple farm on Totten Key, further out in Biscayne Bay. Along the way, Jones gained prodigious skills in the cultivation of pineapples—known in the keys as "pines"—and limes, known as "sour" (Gifford 47; Gifford collection).

While Israel labored on the grounds, Moselle worked in the Davis house and became close with the family. Israel and Moselle's two sons were born during this period, King Arthur Lafayette Jones, in March 1897, and Sir Lancelot⁵ Garfield Jones, in October of 1898. It is believed that the two boys were the first black Americans to be born on Key Biscayne (Finney 11).

3 Lancelot says his mother was hired by Peacock as the head cook for the inn, and that her courtship with his father did not begin until after the latter had started working as caretaker on Key Biscayne (Nordt 2).

4 Emphases and colloquial misspellings in original.

5 Sometimes spelled "Launcelot."

[When] their two sons were born, Moselle appealed to Miss Mary Davis for suggestions of great men to name them for. Miss Davis could think of no more admirable heroes than King Arthur and Sir Lancelot. —Vincent Gilpin (Munroe 242)

So they were christened and so they were faithfully called, by both name and title. I can still hear Moselle's high-pitched summons from the house door, "Oh you, King Arthur, come to dinnah!" And her pride robbed it of all absurdity. —Vincent Gilpin (4)

In 1959, Lancelot—who long before had dropped the "Sir"—attributed the naming of himself and his brother to Israel:

My father had read Knights of the Round Table and was fascinated by the story. Perhaps he thought that by giving us great names we would become great men, —Lancelot ("Wealth" 1F)

During a 1990 interview, Lancelot responded to questions about where, exactly, he was born:

You know it's a strange, very strange and unusual thing. My father was a procrastinator to measure, but [my mother] was more of a procrastinator. . . . All they had was a sailboat and she had . . . kind of creeping pains, little pains, but . . . the doctor said, "No, it's not time yet; you have a few more days." That night the pains grew worse, stronger and stronger. . . . By daylight he put her and the midwife (her sister) on the boat and said, "Now, we got to go over to Dr. Jackson"⁶ . . .

He got the boat all ready and they started over. It was almost calm. So when they got to about a mile off away from the point . . . I arrived, there on the boat. . . . By the time they got over to put me in the hands of Dr. Jackson, everything was alright. He didn't have much to do. He just spanked me and so forth and there it was. —Lancelot Jones (Nordt 2)

Sir Lancelot Jones was born in a 22-foot smack in the middle of Biscayne Bay, the same shallow waters upon which he would spend his entire life (Nordt 3).

Homesteading on Porgy Key

In 1897, after years as caretaker and foreman of various properties, Israel Jones decided to work some land for himself. The Davis house was complete and, knowing the area well and with cash in hand, he began looking for a suitable property. Most of the bayfront and ocean front land was taken. But at the foot of the Bay, on Caesar Creek, the tidal outlet to the Hawk Channel between Elliott's Key and Key Largo, a group of smaller islands—Porgy,⁷ Totten, Old Rhodes, Angelfish, and others—had not attracted much settlement. This was partly because they lacked sea frontage—and the associated trade winds that mitigate gnats and mosquitoes—and partly because of their dense mangrove borders, hiding the hammock land beyond (Gilpin 5).

6 Henry Jackson, a prominent physician in the area after whom Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital was named. (Finney 11).

7 Sometimes spelled "Porgee" in older documents.

Elliott Key was beautifully cultivated in pineapples and [my father] had a month off, June, each year for vacation. So, he sailed down to meet these people and everybody was so joyful about their pineapple business. . . . So, he says, "Jeez whiz, I have a couple of dollars; I wanna do something besides being a caretaker." So he inquired of these people did they know of anyone here who would be interested in selling so he could get started in the pineapple culture himself. And they said, "Yes, there's an old sea captain by the name of Fletcher Albury from the Bahamas who doesn't want to dirty his hands by being a tiller of the soil." —Lancelot Jones (Nordt 3).

Israel Jones purchased 63-acre Porgy Key from Fletcher Albury for \$300,⁸ roughly \$5 per acre, in the summer of 1897. Porgy Key had long been associated with black Americans, for it was in the waters of Caesar Creek that the infamous Black Caesar—the only black American pirate—would lay in wait for slave ships and Spanish galleons (Finney 11; Black Caesar).

Jones fixed on Porgee Key, fronted by sheltered water just out of the strong tides of the Creek, behind Caesar's Rock, where the legendary pirate had his moorings. Black Caesar had made his harbor here for quite different reasons. The winding passageways between all these little islands were kept open by the scouring tides of northerly gales, and they offered a maze of hiding places for the small sloops and schooners of his trade, into which he could retire on a few minutes' warning. There he could both escape his pursuer and wait to pounce on any vessel leaving the Bay by the Creek—the usual route to Key West. —Vincent Gilpin (5)

Born in 1767, Black Caesar sailed in the 1790s. He named his three-masted ship the Ebony Eagle and, instead of a woman's figure as the bowsprit, the vessel boasted a large black eagle with hooked beak and outstretched talons. He was purported to be 6'6" tall and fiercely opposed to slavery. For 28 years, Black Caesar boarded ships transporting slaves from Africa to America, setting them free on uninhabited islands from Barbados to Bimini (Black Caesar).

From the beginning, Israel Jones worked long hours improving his property and economic prospects. By 1902, Jones had moved his family to the island. While Moselle cared for the boys and set up housekeeping in the two-bedroom house already on the property, Israel and his younger brother Samuel undertook the monumental task of clearing the ground (Nordt 4).

Behind the tangled belt of mangrove lay the scrubby, dense key hammock, or deciduous forest—a complex interwoven jungle of bushes and vines doing its best to swamp the trees. These were not lofty, but made up for that in weight and toughness; ancient mahogany, gumbo limbo, strangling fig (called rubber tree), iron wood, whitewood, occasional palmetto, and scores of minor small stuff, including many viciously thorny vines.

The axe and the grubbing-hoe and the everlasting bonfire were the order of life for many a weary month, until the heart of Porgee key lay bare to the sun. —Vincent Gilpin (6–7).

After clearing the land, Israel began work on a dock. From there, he would set out on fishing

8 Lancelot says the amount paid for Porgy Key was just \$250; the Warranty Deed, filed in 1929, reads \$300.

expeditions, supplementing minimal supplies from the mainland (Nordt 4).

Given hominy grits, a little salt pork, flour, molasses and salt, they were independent of markets, for the water at their door teemed with the most delicious foods. Crawfish (spiny lobsters) were everywhere among the roots of the mangroves and the hollows of the rocks; gorgeously housed conchs were scattered on the shoals . . . while Spanish mackerel hungered for the simplest lure; pompano, the gourmet's delight, swarmed in the shoals; mutton-fish and red snapper abounded in deeper water. In short, the sea was an inexhaustible storehouse of delicacies. There was no question of "making" a living; all one had to do was pick it up. —Vincent Gilpin (6)

Pines and Sours

Underneath the brush, Jones discovered a surface of coral limestone, "the skeleton of an ancient reef." For most mainland farmers, this might have been considered a disaster, but for Jones—who knew that pineapples, limes, and tomatoes would thrive in those conditions—it was very good news (Gilpin 7).

This was the soil from which the key planters reaped good crops of pineapples; they were planted by *feeling*, with a long stick, for little pockets of leaf-mould, and dropping a slip there. Tomatoes and other vegetables could be similarly treated. Furthermore, many fruit trees grew well. Also, there were occasional hollows with deeper soil in which bananas flourished—they called them banana holes. So Jones saw chances for many profitable crops.

Chief among these were the citrus fruits, especially limes and grapefruit, both of which enjoy sending their roots into the friable limestone. He had also learned that hollows for trees could be *made*, by a stick of dynamite, followed by a bushel or two of good soil from the swampy mainland to give them a start. Slow and laborious? Oh, yes! But he was patient and strong; he was the stuff of pioneers. —Vincent Gilpin (7–8)

Jones planted pineapple slips and key lime trees—the trees for the future and the pines to bring production and profit sooner. Within two years the pineapples had grown enough so that the family was already seeing proceeds. As extra income and to stock their table, the family grew vegetables, chiefly tomatoes, which they sold from their dock (Gilpin 8).⁹

In his history of horticulture in southern Florida, Dr. John Gifford, whose limes were also tended by Israel, gives the Parson credit for the most successful method of lime growing in the area.

The party who has charge of my lime grove is a colored man of more than ordinary intelligence. I have learned to listen to his statements. He lives practically alone among his trees. He is seldom bothered by the opinions of other men. His conclusions are his own. They are the product of the thorns and rocks with which he toils. "Limes," he says, "and I guess other things, too, must be planted

⁹ According to Keith Barnes (Lance's caretaker), Lance told him that the family also harvested buttonwood and black mangrove trees, on Elliott and Old Rhodes, to make charcoal, a commodity much in demand on the mainland.

close together so the ground is soon covered. The lime is a half-wild crop anyway and the less you prune or meddle with it the better." —John Clayton Gifford (45)

Jones may have learned some of his very successful methods for growing pines and sours from his Bahamian wife, Moselle. In his notes, stored at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Gifford writes that pines and sours are probably native to the West Indies, with pineapples growing practically wild in Dominica. Good pines and limes, he continues, need a limestone soil, a method pioneered in the area by the Jones family (Gifford papers; Lanzendorf).

In 1898, just one year after buying Porgy Key, Jones purchased the larger Old Rhodes Key.¹⁰ According to Lancelot, the land on Old Rhodes was never cultivated (Nordt 3).

1906 would bring the end of pineapple farming in the northern keys. That year, Biscayne Bay was devastated by a tropical storm so immense that it was known only as "the great hurricane." The storm's second wave produced a tidal surge that flooded the islands, destroying the pineapple crop and salting the ground against them for years to come.

Moselle's story of the storm was vivid. It appealed to all her dramatic instincts, and indeed it must have been a marvelous spectacle. The black sky, the torrential rain, the solid impact of wind at a hundred miles an hour, the demoniac voices of air and water, made an unequalled picture of awe and terror. —Vincent Gilpin (11)

Although Israel's citrus trees were well established and most survived the storm unharmed, the small house in which the family still lived was not as sturdy.

. . . [The] waterfall of rain drove through every cranny of the house, soon flooding the floor, and Moselle got her broom to sweep it out. Work as she might, however, it only rose the higher, and soon she saw that the sea had risen to the floors, and the waves were breaking on the house. "An' da was I wid de broom, a sweepin' out de sea— a sweepin' out de sea!" —Vincent Gilpin (11)

The storm destroyed the house, leaving only the foundation. After that, Israel put his brother Samuel to work building the family a new home—a two-story, seven-room structure, completed in 1912—and, along with other settlers in the Bay, switched the farm's production entirely to key limes and grapefruit (Nordt 4; Mensch 5).

Other settlers in the bay, especially those whose farms were devoted entirely to pines, were not as fortunate as the Jones family. On nearby Totten Key, owned by Frank T. Budge, the 212-acre pineapple plantation in which Israel had worked as foreman was largely destroyed. Budge had had enough and decided to sell, devoting the rest of his days to his growing hardware business on the mainland. By 1911, Israel had saved enough cash to purchase the entire key from Budge, including the plantation, at a cost of \$1/acre. The purchase turned out to be an excellent investment: In 1925, just 14 years later, he sold the 212-acre plantation property on the key for \$250,000 (Nordt 3; "250,000").

10 Porgy Key is legally part of Old Rhodes Key (Finney 12).

In these years we made many short cruises among the keys . . . After the unsettlement of the 1906 gale we often found abandoned plantations and profited by the neglected fruit. One such was on Totten's Key, below Porgee, where grape-fruit were plenty, and we scouted around for the finest, settling on one tree, where we ate to repletion

Well, the next time we called on Pahson Jones for fruit, we were surprised when he took us to Totten's, to this same grove; it developed that he had taken over that plantation—and so we had stolen his grapefruit! As he looked for fruit to sell us, we suggested our favorite tree, and the quizzical, half-laughing eye he turned on us showed that our knowledge of the tree was suspicious. But he only smiled and said, “Now Captain, is you bound UP or DOWN?” —Vincent Gilpin (13)

After purchasing Totten, Jones immediately put the land into production, planting more limes.

[Since] the seismic wave of 1906 wiped out most of the pineapple production, [we] turned Totten Key over to limes. [We] kept about fifty acres under cultivation. —Lancelot Jones (Christmann)

The Jones family built and ran a considerable lime-growing operation. They laid hand-hewn 2x4 rail tracks the length of the island and installed what Lancelot later called a “tram”—a horse-powered mini-railroad used for transporting produce. Over this makeshift railroad, they hauled limes from the grove to the packinghouse each summer, swapping out the contents of the cars for tomatoes and other vegetables come winter. In addition to working the groves themselves, the family employed seasonal pickers and packers, housing them in humble but well-made quarters. The remains of these structures still stood on Totten well into the 1970s, for those who ventured into the dense hammock overgrowth to discover (Wilker 4A; Christmann).

You may also find some very good key limes in the thickly overgrown groves, as well as the rusted tractor used by [our family] after abandoning the tram in 1916. As with the other keys, there are lots of things to see, if you've the patience and the long pants and sleeves to go looking for them. —Lancelot Jones (Christmann)

In a phenomenal feat of industry, Parson and the boys dug a 300-foot long trench in the shallows leading to the north end of Totten Key. The trench was hand dug in the water to a depth of at least six feet and a width of at least ten feet, allowing for the safe passage of merchant boats to and from the island, where they would pick up the family's weekly shipment of limes (Lanzendorf).¹¹

The Lime King of Porgee

It was about this time that people began to call [Jones] the Lime King of Porgee. Those little key limes were just tiny round balls of concentrated flavor, far richer than the large Tahiti limes now common; the key product went to nearly all the bars in the country. —Vincent Gilpin (11–12)

¹¹ It is difficult to determine the original dimensions of the trench built by Jones. The dimensions today are approximately 6'dx10'wx300'l. The trench is clearly visible from satellite imagery of the bay.

According to Gifford's biographer, Elizabeth Rothra, the popular "gin rickey" drink had just been introduced in northern cocktail lounges, making limes a good investment. A barrel sold for about \$3.50 at the time and Jones, who maintained an average of one large shipment weekly, was said to have netted an annual income of \$30-40,000. With these profits, Israel was able to complete his new home, begun by his brother after the 1906 storm. Before long, the Jones farm had become one of the largest producers of pineapples and limes on the East Coast of Florida (Gifford 45-46; "250,000").

So ambition and labor brought prosperity. Shipments became large and regular. Jones's income was the subject of extravagant conjecture, and his mien that of assured success. He built a new house, of concrete, square and roomy; there was a separate kitchen with a "blow-way" between, a source of comfort and pride which was good to see. There were plenty of big closets and a fine show of gay dresses, immaculately clean and crisply laundered. It was a happy time for Moselle, who showed her visitors around with pride, finally clambering to a cupola above the trees from which there was a lovely view over the winding branches of the Creek to the vivid sapphire and emerald of the lower Bay. Seldom have dreams been so richly fulfilled, and seldom has success been accepted with more grace. A readier smile, a more confident good cheer, a more generous friendship, marked this climax of their career, but no false pride, no unworthy new ideals. —Vincent Gilpin (12)

The Pahson

The significance of Jones's purchases and determination to run his own business, and his overwhelming success at both, is remarkable for a time when lynchings, segregation, and economic and political discrimination severely curtailed black citizens' prospects for advancement. He was clearly an exceptional individual, with wit and an engaging personality that helped him cross the racial barrier. By the late 1890s, he'd developed a reputation for being a down-to-earth intellectual. He was called "the philosopher of Porgy Key" or "the Pahson," titles reflecting the high esteem in which he was held (Nordt 1; Finney 12).

For many area residents, Porgy Key and the Jones homestead became a frequent stopping place during outings on the Bay.

In 1906 . . . winter visitors were beginning to crowd Miami. Kingfish, then tuna and sailfish, lured the sporting fishermen, and the riches of the reef were more abundant at Caesar's Creek than at Cape Florida, so the Pahson's anchorage was seldom without a visiting yacht. He soon became known as a fish-guide, and this helped to bridge over the interval before the fruit trees came into bearing. The picturesque black giant with his beaming smile and cheery hail was a feature of the Creek almost more important than the fish; both he and Moselle counted hundreds of winter people among their friends who would not think of passing through without a visit. . . . Their greeting rang over the water as each boat appeared. They knew every sail on the Bay, of course, and the Pahson would station himself on the wharf to welcome the owner, meanwhile speculating on the guests he might bring this time. —Vincent Gilpin (9)

Commodore Munroe is said to have sailed south to Porgy several times each year for a few days

at a time, just to sit around and chat with the parson. Another common visitor was Kirk Munroe, resident of Coconut Grove and author of popular boys' books at the time. The Jones boys, Arthur and Lancelot, were avid readers of Kirk's books (Nordt 8; McIver).

Another frequent guest was Vincent Gilpin, who first met the family in 1906. After a "trumpet call" greeting across the water from Israel, the Gilpins would be welcomed ashore and met by Moselle and the others. After the obligatory engagement in gossip of the Bay and news of the past few weeks, the guests would wander over the Jones' property, burgeoning with fruit and vegetables.

We would walk out over the stony paths to find ripe limes and sweet grapefruit and full sapodillas, and perhaps a bunch of bananas—those sweet, tender little 'lady-fingers' that just melted in your mouth—and always [tomatoes]. Then the reckoning would be made, with a gift item in return for the jar of peppermints which Moselle loved, and most visitors brought. —Vincent Gilpin (9–10)

Israel Jones was a man of great faith and took an active role in the development of Florida's black community and institutions. Although he was never ordained, the Pahson was deemed qualified by his peers to preach, which he did many Sundays at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, on 9th Street and 3rd Avenue in Miami. As one of three founding preachers, Jones is said to have been instrumental in the development of the church, built by black Baptists in 1896. He also participated in the creation of a Negro industrial school in Jacksonville: the Florida Baptist Academy, founded in 1892. In 1918, the school was relocated to St. Augustine, and eventually merged with the Florida Baptist Institute to become the Florida Normal and Industrial Memorial Institute.¹² As his sons Arthur and Lancelot grew and were able to take on more responsibilities within the family business, Israel spent more time engaged in these community activities—preaching in Miami and serving as a trustee for the school (Gilpin 14; Finney 12).

These commitments aside, Parson Jones was not one to let his beliefs get in the way of commerce when visitors stopped by Porgy for some produce:

There were complications if the call were made on a Sunday, for the church forbade trading on the Sabbath. But there were ways! Sometimes the fruit was made as a gift, and we recorded mentally the need for a return when possible; or perhaps the children or the church could accept a dollar or two and so conclude the matter at once. Nor was this hypocrisy—the Pahson wanted to keep the law, and often did so at a loss. —Vincent Gilpin (10)

The Great Boom

In the 1920s, things began to change on Caesar Creek.

[The Joneses'] outlook [over the Bay] covered also the strange new doings on Adams Key, at the inner end of the Creek. It was to be a huge and gorgeous club. It was renamed Cocolobo, it had all its mangrove cut down, it was filled in with sand dredged up from the Bay. Marvels would never cease,

12 In 1963, the school was renamed Florida Memorial College and, in 1968, relocated to Miami (Finney 13).

and Porgee Key was no longer in the wilderness, but in the strange new life of the Bay—the life of million-dollar hotels, and mile-a-minute motor-boats. The new age of the Great Boom was dawning in glory. —Vincent Gilpin (12)

Entrepreneur Carl Fisher, the mastermind behind the creation and selling of Miami Beach, had purchased Adams Key in 1916, installing a caretaker on the property and using it as a base for his own fishing expeditions. Fisher, founder of the Prest-o-Lite company and builder of the Indianapolis Speedway, owned a winter home in Miami and, in 1913, had financed the construction of a bridge across the bay to the barrier reef. With sand dredged from the bottom of the bay, in no time Fisher had filled the mangrove swamps and created one of the preeminent resorts of the day: Miami Beach. He sold the first piece of property on Miami Beach in 1919, and wealthy businessmen soon built up the island with their own private estates and lavish new hotels (Leynes 20).

In 1921, Fisher constructed a private resort and casino on Adam's Key with partners Charles W. Kotcher and Jim Snowden, calling it the Cocolobo Cay Club.¹³ Fisher considered the resort an offshoot of his Miami Beach developments. He frequently brought clients to the club on fishing excursions to show them the wonders and beauty of Biscayne Bay and convince them to invest in Miami Beach real estate. Among his guests at Cocolobo were President Warren G. Harding, Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall, prizefighter Jack Dempsey, and entertainer Will Rogers. Business deals were made and broken there, some more legitimate than others; it is believed, for example, that the plotting behind the Teapot Dome scandal began at Cocolobo (Nordt 6, 10; Leynes 24; "Carl Fisher"; Lanzendorf).

Fisher was a heavy drinker and, during Prohibition, the club became a sort of private "speakeasy" and center for rum running. Caesar Creek, as Lancelot later recalled, was a "through-way" for shipments of rum coming from Bimini and Andros ("Carl Fisher"; Lanzendorf).

. . . The rumrunners would go in [to] the whiskey warehouse tied up in Bimini Harbor, and [then] go down to Andros and come across. . . . Many times I'd sit on my porch and just hear rumbling in the water. They'd have their horse that goes down about two feet under water and you couldn't even hear a putt putt noise. If you heard anything, it was just the movement of the wake of the water being pushed by the boat. —Lancelot Jones (Nordt 10)

In this new era, Parson Jones became more focused on preaching and other community activities. He handed over ownership of his remaining property on Totten Key to his sons, Arthur and Lancelot, in 1929. Soon after, Moselle died.

The time came when [Moselle's] health failed, and she slowly lost her comfortable stoutness, though never her jolly good cheer. At last we heard that she was gone. We called at the house, and found it no more a home. The Pahson was in Miami and the boys away on business, while a caretaker snoozed on the wharf. The old days were gone for Porgee Key. —Vincent Gilpin (14)

13 Named for the *Coccolobbo diversifolia*, or Pigeon Plum, native to the area.

After a brief remarriage, Israel also died, in 1932. He was seventy-three. His funeral was held at Mt. Zion Baptist church and was attended by large numbers of black and white mourners. The gathering was given generous coverage in the Miami Herald, highlighting Rev. J. R. Evans's sermon and a eulogy given by D. A. Dorsey, considered to be Miami's first black millionaire. Both men spoke of Israel Jones's impressive achievements in the face of adversity (Freda 2; Gifford 47; Gilpin 14).

So passed one of the finest examples I have known of innate character guiding great strength, boundless energy, and fixed determination to material success, spiritual leadership, and widespread admiration. Born in 1859, presumably to slavery, educated by life rather than school, ready—nay, eager—for unremitting toil, he used the resulting wealth largely for the advancement of his people, spiritual and mental.

So passed, too, one of the outstanding features of a Florida cruise in the first third of the century—a call at the Pahson's. One thing is sure, that anyone who knew the region then and thinks of Caesar's Creek will have a vision of his large and gleaming smile! —Vincent Gilpin (15)

PART II: LANCELOT JONES

King Arthur and Sir Lancelot

As children, King Arthur and Sir Lancelot Jones spent their days bonefishing or working in the groves.

Well, [it was] through osmosis that I learned to catch bonefish. As a kid, that was one of our ways of entertaining ourselves. Dad would give us an assignment and say, "You boys: Do this job and [then] you can go fishing." And we'd do our chores, get some hermit crabs—we fished with them, then; we didn't fish with shrimp—and we'd go fishing. . . . So I learned some of the attitude and disposition and temperament of bonefish just like I said: through osmosis. —Lancelot Jones (Nordt 6)

The brothers received a formal education on the island from a tutor whom Israel and Moselle had brought from St. Augustine to live with the family. Eventually, the boys were sent to Jacksonville to attend classes at the Florida Baptist Academy, the school their father had helped establish. There, Arthur was trained as a carpenter and Lancelot as a mason ("Pioneer Fishing Guide" 11A; Barnes).

After the death of their father, Sir Lancelot and King Arthur continued to run the family's key lime business. Each week from the middle of June until the middle of October, they loaded 250 bushels of limes onto their 32-foot, 12-beam boat, the Lone Star, and brought them into Miami. They gave agent John Graham a twenty-five percent share in the profits to quote, pack, and ship the fruit. With 65 acres in production, the Jones brothers were arguably the largest individual key lime growers in the state (Nordt 6).

A series of immense hurricanes—beginning with the hurricane of 1926, followed by the hurricane of 1935—delivered crushing blows to the farming industry throughout the Florida

Keys. The Jones lime groves were no exception and the brothers' inability to recover from the damages, coupled with the emergence of cheap lime production in Mexico, led to their decision in 1938 to leave the lime-growing business (Wilkinson; Mensch 14).

Ya see Mexico caused us to drop [the lime business]—the introduction of key limes into Mexico. . . . They come in there and they were an unbeatable foe. They had a good environment and they weren't bothered by storms like we were. If we had a 65-mile wind, all the fruit over three feet would be blown off. So it was just such a battle that [in] '38, we decided to quit. That was two years before World War II. We just quit and said, "The heck with it." . . . The trees grew up and still we shipped a few until the war came on. We shipped a few after the war was on. But nothing much, and that was the decline right there. —Lancelot Jones (Nordt 6)

Fishing with Millionaires

Three years earlier, in 1935, Arthur and Lancelot had started a side business: guiding. Cocolobo Cay Club, across Caesar Creek from Porgy, provided their primary clientele. After a brief decline, the club had been rejuvenated by legendary speedboat designer Gar Wood, inventor of the hydraulic lift.

Carl Fisher started the club in 1921 but at the time of the stock market crash there were about 46 members, including the Fishers of the Fisher Body family, the Honeywells and the Firestones. Many of them didn't pay their dues, so Gar Wood foreclosed on it in 1934. That's when I got into it as a fishing guide. —Lancelot Jones (Mensch 5)

During the '20s, Woods had been an active member of the club, serving as president for at least one year. After Fisher went bankrupt, Woods began paying the bills. By 1933, he was sole owner. The club supplied a steady stream of fishing clients for the brothers, as did the growing number of wealthy property owners elsewhere on the Bay. In the mid-1930s an estimated 600 millionaires wintered in Miami Beach; by the end of the decade, the area was described as "a world of moneyed industrialists, boulevardiers, and stars of stage and screen, its atmosphere gay, carefree, and expensive."¹⁴ The wealthy of Biscayne Bay differed from those of Palm Beach in that most were new-money millionaires, several from the Midwest; Will Rogers called Carl Fisher "the man that took Miami away from the Alligators and turned it over to the Indianians." Although surnames like Vanderbilt and Astor occasionally appeared in the Bay's social pages, most of the names there—Maytag, Hertz, Firestone, Florsheim, and others—held very different associations (Nordt 6–7; Leyne 21, 24).

One such transplant to Biscayne Bay was Mark C. Honeywell, multimillionaire owner of the Minneapolis Honeywell Heat Regulator Company. Honeywell and his wife purchased Boca Chita Key, north of Cocolobo, in 1937 as a rural retreat from their winter home in Miami Beach. On Boca Chita, they retained the existing house on the north end of the key as their main dwelling. Around it they built a number of support structures and landscaping features: a barn,

14 Quoted in Leyne, p. 21, from *The WPA Guide to Florida* (reprint NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), 210.

chapel, picnic pavilion, and lighthouse. The latter—65 feet in height and built of Miami oolitic limestone—sat at the mouth of Boca Chita's harbor. A favorite story of the time held that the lighthouse had been shut down by the U.S. Coast Guard after just one lighting because it was not an approved navigational aid; in actuality, there was never any hardware for affixing a light in the floor of the lantern, suggesting that the lighthouse had been constructed as a folly, for visual effect only (Leyne 26–27).

The Honeywells were prominent members of Miami society, belonging to all the important organizations and clubs, including the Miami Beach Women's Club, the Indian Creek Golf Club, Gar Woods's Cocolobo Club, and the Miami Beach Committee of One Hundred, of which Mr. Honeywell served as president from 1936 to 1951. Honeywell's improvements to the island were completed in 1938, just in time to host the annual Committee of One Hundred charity party, a practice that continued with the island's successive owners, the Emermans. The party was an exclusive event, with a guest list limited only to club members, politicians, celebrities, and—of course—the media. It began with a blast of Honeywell's cannon, welcoming each yacht as it entered the harbor, and was extravagance epitomized. A ride on an elaborately-decorated elephant named Rosie—first brought to the area by Fisher as part of a Miami Beach publicity stunt¹⁵—was one of the main attractions, as was feasting and a series of arcade-style games, each designed by one of the club members. The entry from Alec Squib, wealthy owner of Squib Pharmaceuticals, was a horseshoe pitch—"Doc Squib Welcomes Hopeful Horseshoe Hurlers Here, Where Harmony Depends on the Perfect Pitch"—and, from the son of a Chicago financier: "Fred Snite's Sunshine Saloon—One Drink and You'll be the Chaser" (Leyne 27–30; Zayas; Bremen).

Supported by these wealthy families, Lancelot and Arthur became bonefish guides full time after leaving the lime business. During World War II, Arthur served as a technical sergeant in the army, having previously served in the Navy during World War I. Back in the bay, Lancelot's reputation as the best guide in the area grew rapidly. Other than a brief period during World War II when it was difficult to get fuel, he was busy with a range of well-to-do clients on a daily basis. His clients included American presidents, starting with Warren G. Harding. "Harding wasn't much of a fisherman," Jones later said. "He liked the environment of the club life" (Sugg 3; Tomb 2B).

I fished with Herbert Hoover. He liked to fish between November and April. He fished with me for over seven years in the 1940s. . . . Then there was Danile Topping, who owned the New York Yankees. I fished with him for almost 20 years . . . He was a very generous tipper. He had a lot of friends and they kept my brother and me very busy. —Lancelot Jones (Mensch 4)

The brothers also provided shellfish for Boca Chita and Cocolobo guests.

I supplemented the clubs food with stone crabs, lobster, and seafood. My brother and I did a lot of work in the dock area. I met a lot interesting people, including Mrs. Carstairs of the Carstairs Liquor family. —Lancelot Jones (Mensch 5)

15 In 1921 a picture of Rosie as a "golf caddy" for vacationing President-elect Warren Harding "fixed Miami Beach in the public's mind as a place you had to see to believe" (*Mr. Miami Beach*).

Lancelot fished with Gar Wood from 1935 until 1954, when the latter sold Cocolobo Club to Bebe Rebozo and Sloane McCray. Rebozo, famous for his friendship with Richard Nixon, renamed the resort the Coco Lobo Fishing Club and Lancelot's services were once again in demand (Mensch 4).

Mainly [we were after] sportfish; that is, bonefish, permit, and tarpon. I had to teach most of my clients how to fish. But they were quick learners and by the time we got to the fourth trip, they knew the technique. —Lancelot Jones (Mensch 4)

Among Lancelot's clients during that time were dozens of U.S. Senators, countless millionaires, and at least three more presidents—Nixon, LBJ and JFK. Of these, he especially liked Johnson for his "very descriptive adjectives" and Nixon, "who was no dummy" (Tomb 2B).

A frequent client was U.S. Senator George Smathers, who credited Jones with being knowledgeable not just about fishing, but about many things in life. Smathers is said to treasure a late 1950s photo of Rebozo's boat, the Cocolobo, crewed by a group of young senators, including himself, Herman Talmadge, Johnson, and Kennedy, and skippered by Sir Lancelot (Sugg 3).

Tourism and Development

Miami and the southern Keys, fueled by Henry Flagler's railroad south to Key West, prospered in the post-war era. Property values soared as more and more Americans began vacationing in south Florida, and developers and residents of the northernmost keys, those bypassed by Flagler's railroad, wanted their slice of the pie, too. Bridges, roads, and high-rise hotels were envisioned, all sitting on thousands acres of dredged up bay bottom ("Park History" 2; Larsen 1).

In 1961, thirteen of eighteen eligible landowners voted unanimously to create the City of Islandia in Biscayne Bay. Islandia became Dade County's smallest municipality, consisting of a chain of thirty-two islands, including the Jones properties on Porgy, Old Rhodes, and Totten Keys. Lancelot and Arthur were the second largest property owners within Islandia and, by the time of the vote, Lancelot was one of only two year-round residents left on the islands (Walls).

Originally there were 12 people in this area, but by 1935 that had dropped down to six people, and by the 1940s everyone had left except me. I am the last one. —Lancelot Jones (Mensch 5, 14)

Lancelot wasn't among the thirteen Islandia landowners who voted that day. He was, in fact, against the incorporation of the new city, not because he was against development of the keys, but because it would mean a substantial increase in his taxes. Theretofore, Lance had been barely able to pay his minimal Dade County tax, which was low since his property was classified as farmland.

Once Islandia became a municipality, however, Lancelot was suddenly one of the largest individual taxpayers "in town." He had to borrow money in order to pay his taxes each year, and then work, as his former caretaker Keith Barnes put it, "like crazy mad" to pay off the loan through the year (Barnes).

Although he was anti-Islandia, Lancelot was—at least in the early years—in favor of development. In a 1959 interview with Juanita Greene, he said, grinning,

I think I'll go into the real estate business. Then I'd like to travel. I'd like to spend some time in Honolulu, then the East. I'd like to work my way slowly from Japan to India. After all, I've spent two thirds of my life here. What do I know about the outside world? —Lancelot Jones (“Wealth” 5F)

By that time, boat traffic around Old Rhodes and Porgy had grown substantially:

They ask us about how we feel now that civilization is about to catch up with us. It's already caught up with us. We've been reached and overtaken. On Saturdays and Sundays there'll be a hundred or more boats racing out there. We almost need a traffic cop. —Lancelot Jones (“Wealth” 1F)

At the time of Islandia's incorporation, Lancelot and his brother had significant land holdings, having added to their father's legacy over the years, slowly purchasing additional tracts on Old Rhodes. Lance never had any development plans of his own but he was interested in selling, although only in very large parcels. He was approached by a number of people interested in purchasing small plots—an acre or less—but he refused, holding out for a larger offer. That offer never came, at least not from a civilian buyer (Barnes).

The Fight to Preserve the Bay

After the incorporation of Islandia, gung-ho landowners—Ralph Fossey, Luther Brooks, and others—immediately began planning its “improvement.” Central to their scheme would be a causeway connecting all the keys in Biscayne Bay to the mainland. In the meantime, plans for Seadade—a major industrial seaport, including an oil refinery and related petrochemical plants, to be located south of Miami directly on the bay—had been unveiled. To bring tankers and other large-hulled ships to port, a channel would have to be dredged through the shallows of the bay—a channel 32 feet deep, 300 feet wide, and 15 miles out through the Bay and into the Atlantic. The proposed course of the channel cut directly through Caesar Creek. Lancelot, John Sugg recalls, opposed Seadade “with indefatigable stubbornness,” refusing to sell his property to Daniel K. Ludwig, the billionaire shipping mogul behind the scheme (“Park History” 2; Larsen 1; Toner; “How Much” 6B; Sugg 3).

An initially small, but committed, group of protesters had a different idea for Biscayne Bay: A national park. The group, which called themselves the Safe Progress Association, consisted of wealthy business people and ordinary citizens, pilots and doctors, farmers and writers. They were locals and frequent visitors who knew the area intimately and envisioned a national park unlike any other in the country—one mostly covered by water, protecting not only the islands but the bay to the west and the reef to the east. It would provide a haven for wildlife and for greater Miami residents (“Park History” 2).

The fight proved to be bitter. President of the local Izaak Walton League, Lloyd Miller, who supported the park idea, claimed that the opposition poisoned his dog and tried to get him fired. The opposing sides resorted to name-calling. Tempers flared and fights broke out. Slowly, support for the park within the larger community began to build, thanks in part to a series of informative newspaper articles written by *Miami Herald* reporter Juanita Greene (“Park History” 2).

Soon, local politicians and Interior secretary Steward Udall were calling for the preservation of the Bay. After a campaign underwritten by vacuum cleaner heir Herbert Hoover, Jr., to get U.S. senators and congressmen on board, park proponents were ultimately successful in their bid to save the Bay. President Johnson signed the bill creating Biscayne National Monument on October 18, 1968 (Laine).

In the meantime, King Arthur had passed away. He died in a VA hospital on February 22, 1966, leaving behind a wife, Kathleen (Nordt 4; Finney 15).¹⁶

Sir Lancelot and Biscayne National Park

Although he was initially for Islandia's development, at some point early in the fight, which he described later as "violent," Lancelot fell out on the side of the park. Neither he nor his brother, however, was actively involved in the struggle to preserve the Bay. Instead, Lance was doing what he always did—guiding would-be fishermen through the backwaters of Biscayne, in search of the illusive bonefish and others. And, like his father before him, he frequently came to the aid of a less experienced boat captain, stranded or in distress (Tomb 2B).

I met Jones almost 40 years ago on Biscayne Bay, the shallow waters around the Miami metropolis . . . I was on a small sailboat with three high school classmates, and we had started out in the morning—sunny then—to sail to an island near to the tip of Key Biscayne called Soldier Key to gawk at a legendary commune of hippies that squatted there.

South Florida weather had disputed with our intentions, and mighty winds mauled and buffeted the boat south down the length of a long island called Elliott Key. Our outboard motor had failed; the jib was in shreds. We bumped the bottom several times, bailed a lot of water, discovered that vodka and high seas are a noxious mixture, and finally decided to beach the boat.

But as we steered toward Elliott, we spied a cut, Caesar Creek, between islands with several boats at anchor. "Look, a dock," one of us yelled as pilings emerged from the steaming downpour.

A thin man materialized on the dock and shouted: "A line, you young men there, throw me a line. Quickly." I still remember very well the deep voice and what I thought was a British—actually Bahamian—accent coming from the darker-than-storm-clouds face. The boat tied, we scrambled onto the dock.

"I guess you're not where you intended to be," the man said as he hurried us along a path and into the shelter of an old stone house. He would later help us get the outboard started with the ease of someone who has kicked life into many apparently dead motors. —John Sugg (1-2)

Even after the Biscayne National Monument bill was signed, a few angry Islandia landowners vowed to go ahead with their development plans. Islandia Mayor Luther Brooks, owner of the south end of Old Rhodes, was particularly difficult. He continued undaunted with his plans to construct between 70 and 100 home sites and two apartment buildings with 117 units on the island. "Until they've got the money," Brooks told a *Miami Herald* reporter, "I'm going ahead"

¹⁶ Kathleen was Arthur's third wife; he had no children, although Kathleen adopted two—a boy and girl (Leah Forbes)—after his death. Lance married once; he had no children (Nordt 5).

(Giles 1B; Larsen 2).

By contrast, Lancelot Jones was the first Islandia resident to sell his property to the federal government for the creation of the monument.¹⁷ Rather than see the destruction of the island and waters he loved, Sir Lancelot, along with King Arthur's widow Katherine, sold his lands on Totten, Old Rhodes, and Porgy Keys—a little more than 277 acres—to the Park Service for \$1,272,500. Park archaeologist Brenda Lanzendorf estimates that he could have made at least three times that much if he'd sold to a developer (Barnes; Finney 15; Bennett 3E).

This place isn't going to do me much good any longer, so I decided to retire from the guide business and enjoy things for a while before I got too friendly with Saint Peter. —Lancelot Jones (Toner)

Lancelot refused to sell if it meant he would have to vacate the property. As one of two permanent residents, he was granted the right to live out his remaining years in the family home on Porgy Key, with three acres surrounding it held in reserve as his life estate.¹⁸ The deed transfer provided that Jones had to abide by all NPS regulations applying to monuments, as well as by Coast Guard and State of Florida rules (Wilker 4A; Tucker 1A).

James W. Todd, superintendent of Biscayne from 1973 to 1980, was interviewed about the arrangement in the late 1970s:

When we agreed to let [Lancelot] live out his life in the monument, most of us thought it would be a matter of only a few years. After all, he was about 70 at the time.

Now, I'm not so sure he won't outlive us all. —Jim Todd (Toner)

Most of the time, Lancelot's days on Porgy were quiet and uneventful. He continued to guide on occasion and took a trip—every three weeks or so—into Homestead for shopping or to visit friends. He used rainwater for washing, solar panels for 12-volt electricity, and a sawdust hole housing a block of ice as a refrigerator. The makeshift ice chest kept all he needed cold, other than his favorite indulgence: mint chocolate chip ice cream. Rangers living on Adams Key, on the site of the former Cocolobo Club,¹⁹ remembered frequent visits from Lance, hoping to indulge in the sweet and creamy treat.

He was so disappointed when we didn't have any ice cream, so we always tried to have some in the freezer. In fact, we kept it around just so he would be tempted to stay and talk for a while. —Becky Rutledge

Lancelot was known throughout the region for his knowledge of Bay wildlife. From January to April, he volunteered to talk to school kids spending three days and two nights on Adams Key as

¹⁷ The sale was finalized by the end of 1970, after Lance had raised the money to pay the taxes on the sale.

¹⁸ The other private citizen living within the park—Virginia Tannehill, widow of Eastern Airlines executive Paul Tannehill, living on Elliott Key—was also granted permission to stay (Wilker 4A).

¹⁹ In 1975 the casino of the Cocolobo Club burnt to the ground.

part of the Park Service's environmental education program. His knowledge came at a price: "In exchange for a key lime pie," said a former ranger, "teachers would bring their students to hear his sponge lectures." He taught school children in grades four through eight about sponges and other creatures on the northern keys twice each week, until he was well into his 90s. In 1991, a group of 17 Dade county fourth- and fifth-graders listened intently as he told them what it was like to make a living sponge fishing at the turn of the century. The kids were curious, the *Miami Herald* reported, but they were more interested in how old *he* was. "Military secret," Lancelot told them, smiling (De Gale; Nordt 13; Tomb 1B).

When asked why he always came out to meet with the kids, Jones answered:

I don't get any enjoyment out of isolating myself. Most of these kids have never had the privilege of seeing these things. —Lancelot Jones (Tomb 2B)

Other than the rangers and the occasional school group, he saw very few people during the week. Although he didn't seek isolation, the remoteness of the area didn't bother Lancelot in the slightest.

I tell [people] I like the quiet out here. I'm not pestered or bothered by a lot of people. I enjoy a feeling of safety and ease. I am alone, but I'm not lonely. —Lancelot Jones (Tomb 2B)

When you have plenty of interests, like the water and the woods, the birds and the fish, you don't get lonely. —Lancelot Jones (Tucker 13A)

Weekends were another story, with as many as 200 powerboats roaring through the creek. Jones didn't appreciate the park visitors who stopped by Porgy to ask questions. "There are so many of them these days," he quipped to a *Herald* reporter in the 1970s, "that sometimes I think I'm going to have to put a receptionist down on the dock" (Toner).

Still, Jones never lost his love for the Bay and the breeding ground it provided. He continued to argue for the protection of the mangrove trees until the last years of his life. In response to a friend's sarcastic comment about it being a "sin" to trim a "sacred" mangrove tree, Jones replied,

Well, that's a nesting place for marine life; . . . I know that small fishes, shrimp and lobsters, and [other creatures] breed in there. . . . When the tide rises and falls, that's a great breeding place for marine life.

[Hardy Matheson: 'It's also a great place for Clorox bottles and beer cans.']

Well, yeah, but in spite of that . . . they should be protected, because they're breeding areas.
—Lancelot Jones (Nordt 12)

In 1982, a fire caused by a propane tank burned the Jones family home, built by Parson and his brother seventy years earlier, to the ground. Other than some mild burns on his arms, Lance was unharmed. After that, he lived in a rustic structure previously built by caretaker Keith

Barnes. A whitewashed, two-room shack, the building stood on stilts very close to the first house on Porgy Key, where Lancelot had lived as a very young child. There, he stayed alone for the next ten years, spending his days fishing, watching sports on a small television, reading voraciously, and toughing out storms. Having weathered plenty of hurricanes in the past, he refused to leave even during the most severe weather conditions (Wilker 4A; Donnelly).

We like [Lancelot and Virginia Tannehill, the permanent residents] to evacuate during hurricanes. Virginia takes her boat over to Matheson Hammock, gets in her car and goes to Coral Gables. But Lance—well, he likes to ride ‘em out. —BNP Superintendent James Sanders (Wilker 4A)

In a 1985 interview with *Miami News* reporter Debbie Wilker, Lancelot concurred. “Hurricanes don’t scare me,” he said. “We’ve been through so many, why, we just shutter everything up” (Wilker 4A).

When Hurricane Andrew came through in 1992, Lancelot again refused to budge. In a last minute rescue, he was airlifted to the mainland, just before Andrew hit. The hurricane first touched ground in the United States on Porgy and the other Islandia keys, its eye passing directly over the park. Porgy Key was devastated and Lance could not bear to return to see it. He lived out the remainder of his days in Miami at the home of Sarah Wood, his friend of many years (Donnelly; De Gale; Woodard).

Sir Lancelot Jones died on Monday, December 22, 1997. One of the first and last residents of Biscayne’s out islands, he was 99 years old when he died, having lived nearly a century on the Bay (De Gale).

More than a decade earlier, he’d been interviewed by the *Miami Herald* about the creation of the national monument from lands that his family had homesteaded.

All in all, the monument is a good thing. Some people would have liked to make this place the No. 2 Miami Beach, but I think it’s good for people to have somewhere that they can go to leave the hustle and bustle behind and get out into the quietude of nature.

I like the name “monument.” It means that things here are going to stay pretty much as they are today. —Lancelot Jones (Toner)

When speaking of his own legacy, Jones has been quite modest.

I’m not a great person. I’m a very private person. I don’t picture myself as being a great contributor. But one thing I’ve done I’ve been helpful to people in need out here. It’s like the story of the Good Samaritan. I’ve tried to lend aid to the needy. —Lancelot Jones (Mensch 14)

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