



THE NEW SPANISH VILLAGE CIRCA 1926 - WITH SHUTTERS BEFORE THE 1926 HURRICANE - BY CLAUDE MATLACK PHOTOGRAPHER (22)

HISTORIC RESOURCES REPORT

FOR

1434 - 1440 WASHINGTON AVENUE + 400 - 418 ESPANOLA WAY

AKA THE
CLAY HOTEL

AKA THE
MARTHA WASHINGTON HOTEL

AKA THE
ESPANOLA HOTEL
MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139

AND

506 - 516 ESPANOLA WAY + 1438 DREXEL AVENUE

AKA THE
MATANZAS HOTEL
MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139

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September 22, 2016



THE SPANISH VILLAGE CIRCA 1927 GRAND OPENING (22)

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NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

"Espanola Way sits on land which formed the northern boundary of Ocean Beach, the first recorded plat in what was to become Miami Beach, as recorded by the pioneer Lummus Brothers' Ocean Beach Realty Company in 1912. The street was originally constructed by Francis F. Whitman in 1922 as "Whitman's Spanish Colony." The undeveloped land consisting of 20 corner lots and 40 inside lots was purchased by N.B.T. Roney and the Spanish Village Corporation in 1925 at the peak of the first great Florida land boom. Roney, one of the most prolific builders in early Miami Beach envisioned creating an artists' colony - "where artists and lovers of the artistic might congregate amid congenial surroundings." The idea of such a bohemian village was first suggested to Mr. Roney by former New Yorkers who mentioned that Miami Beach lacked an area with a creative atmosphere for artists as one would find in New York's Greenwich Village, or the artists' quarter in Paris." (20)

"Roney and his architect, Robert A. Taylor, with financial backing from Francis Whitman, chose to duplicate a miniature Spanish Village - "a Latin Greenwich Village of fiestas and song, mantillas and Spanish architecture was used throughout, both to enhance the appeal and atmosphere of a village, and because it was predicted that "the predominating architectural note in Southern Florida will eventually be if not already, in the Spanish design. " (20)



ABOVE: 1922 WASHINGTON AVENUE LOOKING NORTH FROM 3RD STREET, courtesy of CLAUDE MATLACK COLLECTION, (22)

MIDDLE: 1935 VIEW FROM OLD CITY HALL TOWER courtesy of WENDLER COLLECTION, STATE OF FLORIDA PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

LOWER: RONEY PLAZA HOTEL 1926 (22)



“As one of the first large- scale, authentic Mediterranean Revival developments in the city, the Spanish Village demonstrated the architectural style's suitability for sub-tropical living, and served in popularizing it as the dominate stylistic expression of the 1920's. ” (20)

ABOVE: WASHINGTON AVENUE & LINCOLN ROAD
1940 (22)

BELOW: CIRCA 1940's POSTCARD VIEW of 15th &
WASHINGTON WITH ESPANOLA WAY AT RIGHT (22)



THE CLAY HOTEL & THE SPANISH VILLAGE

BUILDING NAME:	ESPANOLA HOTEL aka CLAY HOTEL aka MARTHA WASHINGTON HOTEL
BUILDING ADDRESS:	1438 WASHINGTON AVENUE 1434 - 1440 WASHINGTON AVENUE + 400 - 418 ESPANOLA WAY
ORIGINAL ARCHITECT:	ROBERT TAYLOR
YEAR BUILT:	1925
RENOVATION of SOUTH SIDE:	Randy Sender, Stuart Grant, Dixon Alvarino & Todd Tragash Architects, 1984
RENOVATION of NORTH SIDE:	Sender Tragash Architects, 1986
PLAZA DE ESPANA:	Savino & Miller Design Studio, 2002
STATUS:	Historic

Espanola Way aka The Spanish Village aka Espanola Hotel has been an iconic part of Miami Beach since its initial design, development and construction in the early to mid-1920's. One of the mega-developers of early Miami Beach was Newton Baker Taylor Roney, although he preferred to be known as N. B. T. Roney. After the development of the Spanish Village, Roney would go on to build the palatial Roney Plaza Hotel. Roney retained his local Architect of choice - Robert Taylor - to design a mixed-use Spanish Village that could serve as a bohemian entertainment destination for his hotel guests.

"Although only a portion of his design was built, Taylor nevertheless produced one of South Florida's most fully realized examples of the scenographic potential of the Mediterranean style. The Spanish Village comes complete with a network of picturesquely planned and appointed streets and alleyways and provides a primer on the architectural history of the European Mediterranean region from the Medieval through the late Renaissance periods." (3)

"Miami Beach preservationist/historian Barbara Baer Capitman cited the Spanish Village as the likely inspiration for Addison Mizner's later development of Worth Avenue and the adjacent shopping passages of Via Parigi and Via Mizner in Palm Beach." (3) Whitman had begun envisioning the Spanish Village as early as 1922 while Worth Avenue was built in 1925. *"Roney's public relations machine pitched the village as an artists colony in the tradition of the Left Bank in Paris and Greenwich Village in New York."* (3)



1926 - June 17, 1926 - Spanish Village (Española Way) looking west from Washington Avenue

TOP PHOTO: OPENING DAY OF THE SPANISH VILLAGE 1925 (22)

MIDDLE PHOTO: VIEW LOOKING WEST ON ESPANOLA WAY. (22)

LOWER PHOTO: VIEW LOOKING WEST TOWARDS CURRENT PLAZA DE ESPANA (22).

NO EFFORT SPARED IN PLEASING PUBLIC

OLD SPAIN TRANSPORTED TO MIAMI BEACH TO AFFORD CENTER FOR PEOPLE OF ARTISTIC TASTES



VISIONARY IDEAS ARE
BASIS OF INCREDIBLE

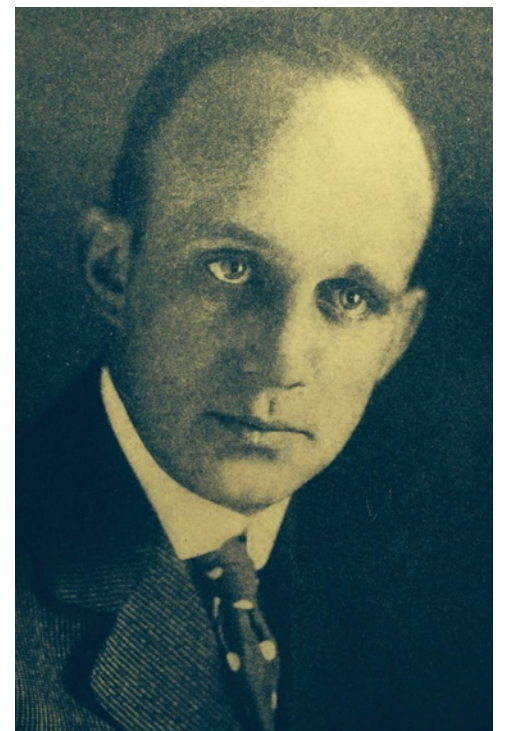
SCHOOL CENSUS

FIGURES REVEAL ACTUAL GROWTH
OF MIAMI BEACH YEAR BY YEAR

ESPAÑOLA WAY TO OFFER
UNIQUE CULTURAL CENTER

Above: An early newspaper article regarding the then proposed Spanish Village shows a remarkable likeness of what was to be built. Note that while this rendering differs from the completed building in terms of window detailing and awning placement - the overall architectural massing in the completed project bears a striking resemblance to the newspaper rendering above.

Right: Photograph of N.B.T. Roney (22)



“Richard Carney, foreman of the failed 1882 coconut plantation that predated Miami Beach, purchased a long, narrow tract of land on the border between the holdings of John Collins and the Lummus Brothers, between today’s 14th and 15th Streets. This tract was platted as Espanola Villas in 1922 by William Whitman, a Chicago industrialist.” (3)

William Frances Whitman (1859 - 1936) was a self-made man and played a major role in early Miami Beach development. In 1918 he first built the Whitman family house on the oceanfront just south of 33rd Street where the family would winter from Chicago.

Whitman went on to build the imposing ten story Whitman Hotel on Collins Avenue - the current site of the Sans Souci Hotel. “The profits from the sale of the Whitman property to the Sans Souci and the Saxony hotels enabled the Whitman family to purchase land north of Miami Beach where Stanley Whitman went on to develop Bal Harbour Shops.” (4)

Whitman originally envisioned the building of a Spanish colony back in 1922. (19) “Whitman also envisioned detached houses on a narrow street he named Espanola Way. Only a few of Whitman’s villas were built, and in 1924 the development was purchased by N. B. T. Roney, an important real estate developer in both Miami and Miami Beach, who was building the palatial Roney Plaza Hotel at 23rd Street and the Atlantic ocean at the time.” (3)

“The hype (about artists) finally turned to reality in the early 1980’s with the opening of the International Youth Hostel (in the Clay Hotel building) and the Espanola Way Art Center, in the Clay and Cameo Hotels respectively. A vivid, though not historically accurate, paint scheme turned the village into a magazine-cover confection.... The Plaza de Espana streetscape project, inaugurated in 2002 and inspired by the checkerboard patterned plazas of the Iberian Peninsula, transformed the intersection of Espanola Way and Drexel Avenue into the living room centerpiece for the village.” (3)

The National Register of Historic Places designated Española Way a historic site in 1979 as part of The Miami Beach Art Deco District listing. In 1986 the city named the street one of its first historic landmarks.



TOP PHOTO: POSTCARD VIEW INSIDE SPANISH VILLAGE COURTYARD (22)

LOWER PHOTO: POSTCARD VIEW OF FUTURE PLAZA DE ESPANA (22)



2016 GOOGLE EARTH VIEW OF ESPANOLA WAY WITH CLAY HOTEL AT LOWER LEFT AND MATANZAS HOTEL AT CENTER RIGHT



Robert Taylor's original architectural plan designed six hotels - all on corner lots - plus eight apartment buildings and four other buildings. This plan was not fully carried out. Instead only two hotels were built (initially) and a number of shops - all with a Spanish design.

"Taylor modeled the Spanish Village after San Sebastian and Fontarable on the coast of Spain, as well as Biarritz, Cannes, and Mentone in France. · The project consisted of one block of development between Washington and Drexel Avenues, spilling across to include the western corners of Drexel Avenue as well. Construction totaled 16 buildings including two fifty-room hotels, apartment buildings and shops, and cost an estimated \$1,500,000." (20)



All buildings in the Spanish Village are remarkable for their authentic reproduction of the Mediterranean style, including the Clay Hotel (briefly renamed the Martha Washington), the Village Hotel (now the Cameo Hotel), the Grace Hotel, the Barcelona Hotel (now the Sinclair Hotel) and the Matanzas Hotel. The concentration, alignment and design of these buildings and the narrowness of the street all combine to create a realistic impression of a Mediterranean Village. (20)

TOP PHOTO: ESPANOLA WAY CIRCA 1930 (21)

MIDDLE PHOTO: ESPANOLA WAY CIRCA 1930 (21)

LOWER PHOTO: ESPANOLA WAY CIRCA 1930 (21)





ABOVE: ESPANOLA HOTEL aka CLAY HOTEL CIRCA 1930 (21)

BELOW: ESPANOLA HOTEL aka CLAY HOTEL CIRCA 2014 (21)





CLAY HOTEL 1940'S (1)

The photograph above from the 1940's is one of very few showing the building with window shutters, as it had been originally designed and built. Those original shutters were most likely blown away during the great hurricane of 1926. Apparently shutters only re-appeared on the building at this one time.

However with the addition of shutters it is apparent how these shutters contributed to the Architect's original vision for the facades. The window proportions with the additions of the window shutters fit much better into the overall proportions of the building.

The early history of Espanola Way is rather colorful. In addition to being home to many of Miami's finest, in the late 1920s, it also served as a gambling destination for some of the U.S.'s most notorious bad men - like Al Capone - who played at the Clay Hotel, and later became an area where folks would gather to dance to the beat of the music of Cuba and South America.



FLORIDA JULY 1955

The Spanish Village of Espanola Way deployed, more than any other project before it, image-making and city-building potential of a unified civic art. As completed under guidance by architect Robert Taylor, the complex is a self-contained artist's colony in the guise of a narrow Spanish street. (6)

The idea of such a bohemian village was first suggested to Mr. Roney by former New Yorkers who mentioned that Miami Beach lacked an area with a creative atmosphere for artists as one would find in New York's Greenwich Village, or the artists' quarter in Paris. (7)

Roney and his architect, Robert A. Taylor, with financial backing from Francis Whitman, chose to duplicate a miniature Spanish Village "a Latin Greenwich Village of fiestas and song, mantillas and Spanish architecture was used throughout, both to enhance the appeal and atmosphere of a village, and because it was predicted that "the predominating architectural note in Southern Florida will eventually be if not already, in the Spanish design. (7)

The project consisted of one block of development between Washington and Drexel Avenues, spilling across to include the western corners of Drexel Avenue as well. (9)

The Mediterranean Revival contributed three important influences to the urban structure of Miami Beach; the implantation of a sophisticated urban ensemble, the refined elaboration of the grand hotel type and the 'stagey' and more urban development of the small apartment building type. (6)

"This picturesque area had a reputation in its early days as a gambling and red light district." (14)



TOP PHOTO: 1955 (1)

MIDDLE PHOTO: 1967 (1)

LOWER PHOTO: 1970 (1)



TOP PHOTO: 1970 (1)

"Shops present on the street during the 1920's included purveyors of antique jewelry, rare books, fine clothes, painting, furniture and decorative arts "of the period of the Spanish Don", as well as ladies dress and hat shops where merchandise, it was touted, was "aimed to set the style for Paris, rather than to imitate it.".2. Restaurants and tea houses were available to satisfy most tastes, including, in addition to the expected Spanish, those serving English, French, and Chinese cuisine." (20)

The remainder of Espanola Way's development was concentrated in the period 1933-1940, following recovery from the devastating 1926 hurricane and ensuing Great Depression, and before the onset of World War II. A number of prominent local architects participated in the street's creation, in the then dominant Art Deco and Streamline Moderne architectural styles. Among these are Henry Hohauser (1444 and 1450 Collins Avenue, and 724 and 735 Espanola Way), L. Murray Dixon (525 and 531 Espanola Way, 1436 Pennsylvania Avenue, and 1435 Meridian Avenue), Roy F. France (1440 Euclid Avenue), and Carlos Schoepel (446 Espanola Way). R.A. Taylor, architect of the Spanish Village, designed 1440 Pennsylvania Avenue for himself as a residence and studio.



LOWER PHOTO: 1967 (1)



1970 PHOTOGRAPH OF CLAY HOTEL AND ESPANOLA WAY (1)

"Espanola Way elicited great expectations. "The Spanish Village of Miami Beach is destined to become a famous place among the artists and intellectuals of the nation" raved the Miami News in 1925. But artists and their associates never seemed to adopt the street, with its carnival atmosphere as their own. Rather, the Spanish Village attracted a more raucous crowd, who would dance at block parties in the roped off streets, frequent bookies and bootleggers, witness the infamous Al Capone or attend the Port of the Missing Men, a popular nightspot." (20)

"By the late 1930's, however, "the street had begun its seedy slide." Z. Bookies, winos, and prostitutes now called the street home. The infamous S & G Gambling Syndicate is reputed to have been created and run from Espanola Way until its demise in the 1950's. " (20)

"As throughout Miami Beach, the hotels on Espanola Way housed soldiers training here during World War II. After the war, the Spanish Village briefly revived its tarnished image, as dance studios cropped up along the street to spread the rhumba craze, said to originate there. Espanola Way, at that time, was known as "The Rhumba Capital of the World", perhaps the last time the street produced anything near the bohemian atmosphere." (20).



CIRCA 1975 PHOTOGRAPHS OF ESPANOLA WAY
(22)





ABOVE: APRIL 12, 1987 MIAMI NEWS - ESPANOLA WAY FANTASY DAYS (22)

The Miami Beach Building Card list two names for the property - the Martha Washington Hotel and the Clay Hotel.

According to the 1932 Miami Beach City Directory the Espanola Hotel is listed at 404-408 Espanola Way. Across the street at 1448 Washington Avenue is the Village Hotel. See Sanborn Map on page 8. The Ortega Hotel was at 443 Espanola Way on the NE corner at Drexel Avenue. The Guelta Hotel was located at the SE Corner.

Everything had Spanish names. The hotels were the Espanola, the Matanzas and the Barcelona. The apartment buildings were named the Andalusia, Granada, La Perla, Pizarro, Venetian, Cortez,



1980 PHOTOGRAPH LOOKING WEST ON ESPANOLA WAY WITH CLAY HOTEL AT LEFT (5)



ABOVE: 1982 ESPANOLA WAY VIEWED FROM WASHINGTON AVENUE (22)

BELOW: 2011 ESPANOLA WAY VIEWED FROM WASHINGTON AVENUE (8)





ABOVE : 1992 (2)
BELOW: 1992 (1)





PHOTO LEFT: CLAY HOTEL 2006 (8)

PHOTO BELOW: CLAY HOTEL 2016 (8)



CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS



ABOVE: ESPANOLA WAY 2016
BELOW: CLAY HOTEL 2016 (8)





TOP RIGHT: QUOINS AT TOWER 2006 (8)
 TOP LEFT: ESPANOLA WAY ENTRANCE 2006 (8)
 LOWER RIGHT: CORNER AWNINGS 2006 (8)
 LOWER LEFT: CLAY HOTEL FROM CORNER OF
 ESPANOLA WAY AND WASHINGTON AVENUE.
 (8)



COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS 2006 (8)
SEPIA TONE PHOTO MIAMI NEWS 1975