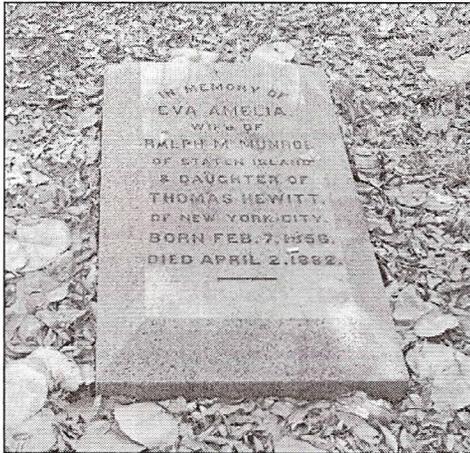

GRAVE OF EVA AMELIA HEWITT MUNROE

Adjacent to 2875 MC FARLANE ROAD

Designation Report



Grave marker of Eva Munroe

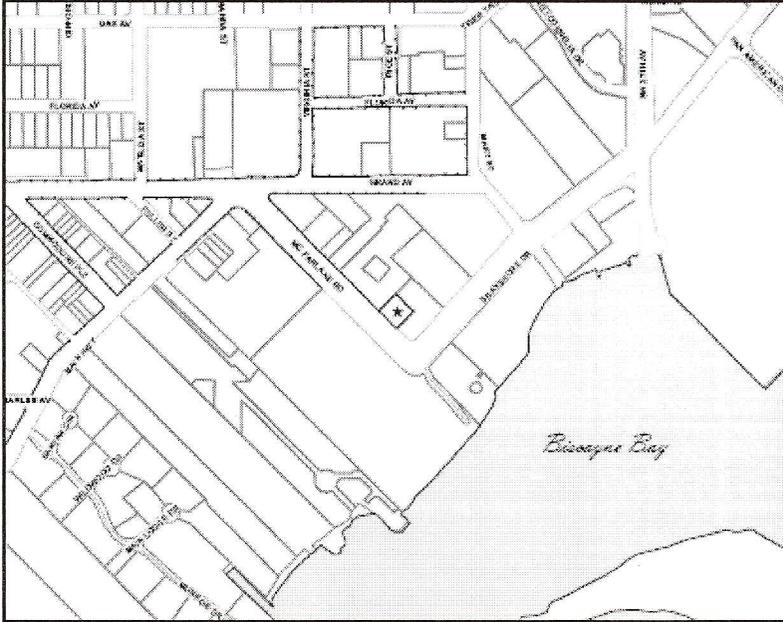
October 6, 2009

Historic and Environmental Preservation Board

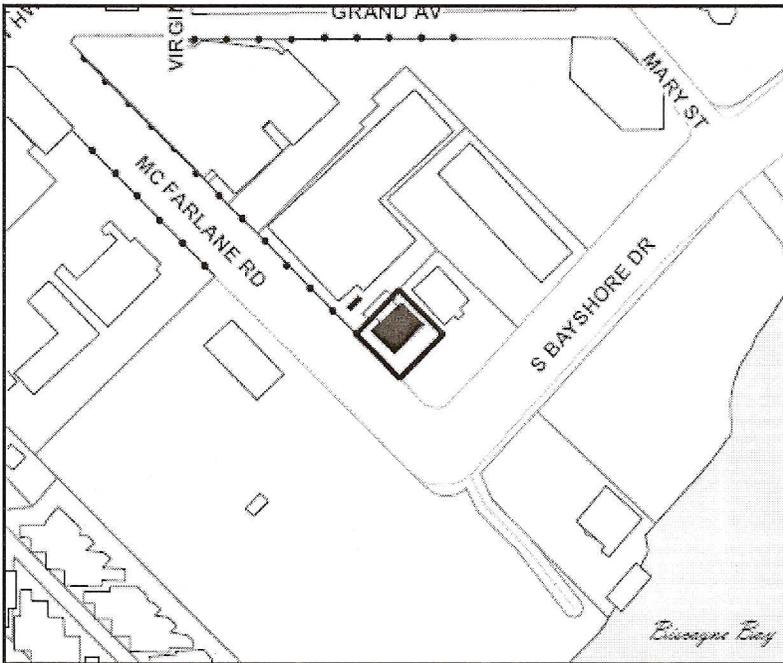


City of Miami

GRAVE OF EVA EMELIA HEWITT MUNROE ADJACENT TO 2875 MCFARLANE RD




Location




Site Plan

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II. GRAVESITE OF EVA AMELIA HEWITT MUNROE

A. General Information

Historic Name:

Gravesite of Eva Amelia Hewitt Munroe (1858-1882)

Current Name:

Gravesite of Eva Amelia Hewitt Munroe

Date of Burial:

Died in 1882, buried in current location in c.1884¹

Location:

Adjacent to 2875 McFarlane Road, Miami, Florida

Present Owner:

The Munroe Family
c/o Charles P. Munroe
7641 SW 53rd Avenue
Miami, Florida 33143

Boundary (Legal) Description

Beginning at a galvanized pipe situated 5ft. 10in. in a southwesterly direction from the west corner from the Coconut Grove Library Association Building (Miami-Dade Public Libraries), and on the boundary line between the Library lot and that of the Community Club (Women's Club) property fronting on MacFarlane Road, in the city of Coconut Grove, thence southwesterly along said boundary line to the center of MacFarlane Road, thence run (20) feet along said MacFarlane Road in a northwesterly direction; thence in a northwesterly direction to the intersection of a line drawn between the Library Association (Miami-Dade Public Libraries) property and the Community Club (Women's Club) property, which said line shall be drawn from a point on the boundary line distant fifteen (15) feet northeasterly from the point of beginning.

It is understood and agreed that this conveyance is made for the purpose of re-vesting title to the above tract of land, which is the burial plot of the wife of R.M. Munroe, it being further understood that title to the above described land shall revert to and become re-vested in the grantor hereto in the event that the remains of Mrs. R. M. Munroe should at any time be removed from said plot for interment elsewhere.

(From the Warranty Deed of R.M. Munroe dated July 20, 1925)

Setting

The grave is located at the southwestern corner of the Coconut Grove Library, near MacFarlane Road.

¹ Sources speculate that Eva Munroe was re-interred sometime between the Spring of 1884 and December 1889.

Integrity

The grave has been located on the same site since c.1884

B. Significance

The grave that serves as the oldest marked grave in the county belongs to the wife of one of the Grove's first citizens, Ralph Munroe, who made his first trip, to what is now Coconut Grove, in 1877. During his initial visit he was immediately impressed with the scenic beauty and returned four years later, bringing his new wife, Eva Hewitt, her sister Adeline, her brother Thomas and a nurse, Mrs. O'Dea. His return was spurred by his wife's diagnosis with tuberculosis, for which doctors suggested a warmer climate to promote her health.

The Munroe's set up camp at old Fort Dallas, located at the mouth of the Miami river, and quickly reconnected with an English couple, Charles and Isabella Peacock, whom Munroe had met on his initial visit. The Peacocks helped care for Eva but within a year of their arrival, she also passed away and was buried near their camp. Ralph Munroe returned to Staten Island and it would be another two years before he would return to Biscayne Bay. Upon his return he reconnected with the Peacocks and helped them establish their hotel, the Bay View House, an endeavor Munroe had encouraged them to pursue. To show their appreciation of his efforts and in encouraging Munroe to become a permanent resident, the Peacocks deeded Ralph four acres of land, north of their hotel.

In 1884, Munroe moved his wife's grave from its original location to its current site on his newly acquired property which he marked with a perimeter fence. Munroe had donated the land immediately adjacent to build a community church. When later the community church was moved, the gravesite was deeded back to Ralph Munroe in 1925.

The site of Eva Amelia Munroe's grave relays an important historical connection to the era of the first settlers to Coconut Grove and the outlying Miami area. The City of Miami Library System took over the historic library from the Coconut Grove Library Association in 1957, along with the care of Eva Munroe's gravesite. In the early 1960s Dade County became responsible for the library system and made plans to build a new and larger structure to house the collection. During the construction process the protection of the grave was a priority, "Architect Trip Russell thought of a beautifully landscaped front. A small green island of turf with a polished granite marker, that tells a tale of sorrow, has been accepted in the planning."²

C. Description

The grave is located just outside of the library's property, surrounded by a metal fence, a replacement of the original iron fence. The grave is marked by a simple rectangular granite stone with the inscription, "In Memory of Eva Amelia, Wife of Ralph M. Munroe of Staten Island and daughter of Thomas Hewitt, of New York City. Born Feb. 7, 1856, Died April 2, 1882." (Fig. 2)

² "The Grove Keeps Past and Adds New Look," *The Miami News*, June 16, 1963

D. Application for Designation Criteria

The grave of Eva Amelia Hewitt Munroe possesses integrity through history and association. The property is eligible for designation under the following criteria (as numbered in Sections 23-4(b):

The site of Eva Amelia Munroe's grave relays an important historical connection to the era of the first settlers to Coconut Grove and the outlying Miami area.

Criteria Exceptions

Chapter 23-8 (b)

Ordinarily cemeteries, birth places, or graves of historical figures.... Shall not be considered eligible, unless they fall within the following category:

- (3) A birthplace or grave of a local historical figure of outstanding importance if no appropriate site or building exists directly associated with his or her productive life.

In the case of Eva Munroe, her importance derives from her husband's contributions to the establishment and growth of Coconut Grove. The grave site is unique to all of Miami, and has survived every type of disaster (including development pressure), throughout its long history. While Ralph Munroe is immortalized forever in The Barnacle State Park, the grave site is a wistful, early reminder of the hardships and sacrifice that so many endured.

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REPRESENTATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS



Fig 4: Grave to the left of the Coconut Grove Library on McFarlane Road
Photo: May 2009



Fig. 6: Eva Amelia Hewitt Munroe's Grave

Photo: May 2009