

Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Miami Original: Part One

Written by Paul S. George, Special to the BT
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A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami



Marjory Stoneman Douglas was a Miami original, a remarkable 20th-century American remembered for her rich journalistic output, leadership of an environmental movement aimed at saving the Everglades, and as an iconic link between the frontier town that was early Miami and the booming metropolis of her later years.

Born in Minneapolis in 1890 to Frank B. Stoneman and Lillian Trefethen, she was just six when her parents separated and she moved with her mother to Massachusetts. To compensate for the turmoil in her young life, Marjory read voraciously and began publishing articles.

Marjory graduated from Wellesley College with a degree in English in 1912. Two years later she married Kenneth Douglas, a con man 30 years her senior. The marriage ended abruptly the following year, sending Marjory to the frontier settlement of Miami in 1915 to join her father, whom she had not seen for almost 20 years.

Her description of Miami, with a population of little more than 10,000 in 1915, is remarkable. Upon disembarking from the Florida East Coast Railway station on the western edge of downtown, Marjory recalled in her book *Florida: The Long Frontier* walking along the city's sandy streets to her father's office at the *Miami Herald*

, where he was publisher, and feeling almost blinded by the bright light emitting from roadways dusted with a limestone powder. Soon she was writing a society column for her father's newspaper.

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Marjory lived with Frank Stoneman in the picturesque, riverine community of Spring Garden, and quickly became involved in community activities in her adopted city. She is seen in the accompanying photograph (second from right) participating in city's World War I war stamp drive, designed to help finance the nation's war-related expenses. During the war she also enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a Yeoman (F) first class and later joined the American Red Cross, serving in Paris.

To order a copy of this photo, please contact HistoryMiami archives manager Dawn Hugh at 305-375-1623, dhugh@historymiami.org.

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