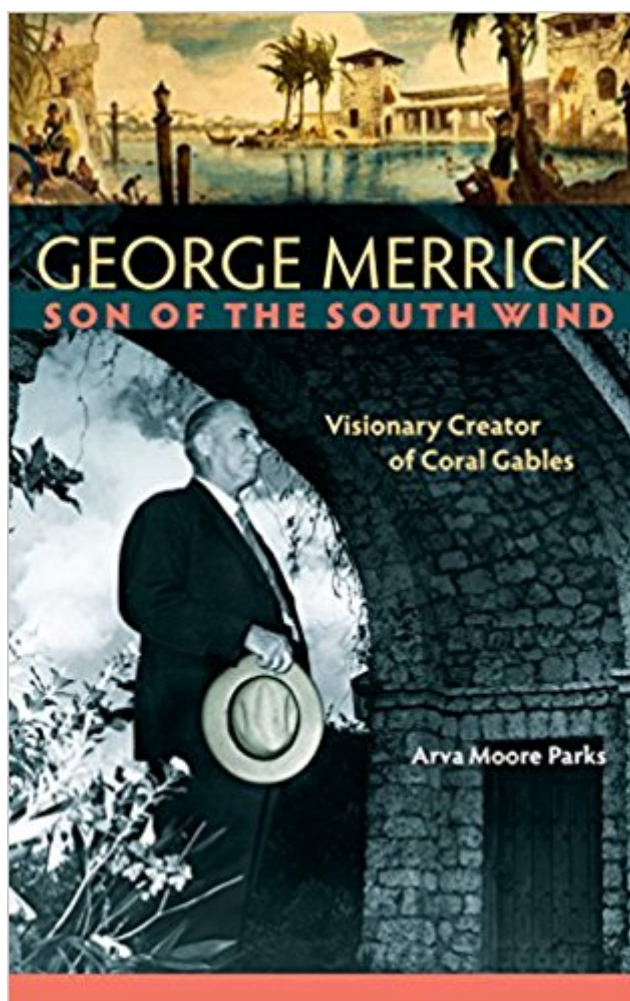


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# George Merrick, Son Of The South Wind: Visionary Creator Of Coral Gables



## Synopsis

“The reader is left breathless by the whirlwind achievements of master suburban planner and visionary George Merrick, so excellently written and documented. George Merrick, Son of the South Wind takes us on Merrick’s journey through pastoral grapefruit groves to a meticulous and innovative Coral Gables and its melancholy conclusion.

•Howard Kleinberg, former editor of the Miami News “At once an epic and sweeping story of the making of a place and a profoundly intimate story of a man and his dreams.

•Beth Dunlop, editor of Modern Magazine “Parks brings George Merrick to life his resources and passions, his colleagues and his adversaries. She guides us through the earliest guava groves to the City of Coral Gables we see today, providing insight into its creation and provoking reflection on our responsibility for stewardship.

•Joanna Lombard, coauthor of Historic Landscapes of Florida “Parks has written a passionate, compelling biography of George Merrick, one of America’s earliest developers of a carefully planned, Mediterranean-styled community.

•Paul S. George, author of Along the Miami River and Little Havana “The story of developers selling off the Sunshine State is as old as the first railroad tracks laid across the peninsula. But seldom do we hear about the men who actually built a better Florida. In George Merrick, Son of the South Wind, South Florida historian Arva Moore Parks recounts George Merrick’s quest to distinguish himself from the legions of developers who sought only profit.

Helping to create the land boom of the 1920s, Merrick transformed his family’s citrus grove just outside of Miami into one of the finest planned communities: the “master suburb of Coral Gables. With a team of architects and city planners, he built homes for the growing middle class in the Mediterranean Style using local stone, while investing in public infrastructure by designing and building parks and pools, trolley lines and waterways. He pledged land for a library and the university that would become the University of Miami. Hailed in national publications as a visionary, Merrick was green before green, a New Urbanist before the movement even had a name.

As Coral Gables and Merrick prospered, he reinvested in education, affordable housing, and other progressive causes. But the Great Depression ravaged Miami, and Merrick’s idealism cost him his fortune. He died with an estate worth less than \$400.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose essays and poems inspired Merrick, wrote, “An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man, and Merrick’s legacy is imbued in every stone and every tree of Coral Gables.

With unprecedented access to the Merrick

family, and mining a treasure trove of Merrick's personal letters, documents, speeches, and manuscripts, Parks presents the remarkable story of George Merrick and the development of one of the nation's most iconic planned cities.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A sweeping account of how one man came to symbolize the optimism of his time and how his idea for a master suburb with plenty of greenery would prove prescient." •Miami Herald

Arva Moore Parks is the former chief curator, interim director, and chair of the Coral Gables Museum. She is the author of numerous books on Florida history, including *The Forgotten Frontier: Florida through the Lens of Ralph Middleton Munroe and Miami, the Magic City*.

A fascinating complete look at one of South Florida's most important figures. Beyond being a beautiful city, Coral Gables has a wonderful history and it all started with George Merrick. Calling George Merrick a visionary doesn't even quite capture it - he was showman, architect, developer, deal maker and dreamer - and a poet to boot! Coral Gables was booming before the Florida Boom of 1924-1926, but the wave crashed in on Merrick as it did on almost everyone. The book was meticulously researched by Arva Moore Parks, who has written many sentinel books on South Florida history. Although there have been other books about Merrick, this one will serve as the

classic work. A must for any South Florida or Miami history fan or serious scholar on the subject.

Having grown up in Miami, I was always around Coral Gables for one reason or another. Went to the same places Mrs. Parks took her children. Worked with her husband, Bob. I am a great fan of Miami and South Florida history. This book has incredible details from the open fields of what would become Coral Gables- which is still distinguishable and easy to identify by Mrs. Parks' descriptive narrative- to the horrible story of the draining the Everglades for development. Mrs. Parks does an amazing job of bringing to life the people, including Mr. Merrick, and the places they inhabited and expanded on, that make the area the marvelous piece of South Florida history that it is. It is worth taking a trip into Mr. Merrick's world of Coral Gables and its environs, by using this book as a reference guide. Thanks, Mrs. Parks, for bringing me back to a place of wonder and beauty that is known as Coral Gables.

A very pleasant surprise; I wanted to learn more about Miami and especially Coral Gables and this was a great choice. The author did an excellent job keeping the book entertaining and paced. She definitely writes like a Miami/Coral Gables socialite but that's OK, it doesn't come across too strongly. She is very passionate about the topic and that helps a lot. The book is well annotated, contains good resource materials for further reading but not sure why that would be needed given the level of detail in this book. The next time I'm in Miami I look forward to investigating more of the sites and buildings described in this book.

Wow! If you're looking for the in depth, behind-the-scenes world of George Merrick and the founding of the City of Coral Gables, this IS THE volume to buy. I purchased it at full price and wonder if it will become a remaindered edition shortly, simply due to its esoteric quality.

Great history of Coral Gables and Merrick family

An absolute masterpiece by Arva Moore Parks. Meticulously researched, well written,

very interesting book, especially if you live in, or have visited Miami. The world needs dreamers.

Beautiful story on Coral Gables

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