From the lavish parties, the yachts, and the innovative architecture, to the sultry summer days, the mosquito bites, and the hurricanes, Muriel Murrell captures in a series of charming vignettes Miamis earlier days—from the Roaring Twenties, through the Depression and Deco Days, through the war, and on into the Fifties. Her remembrances are populated with a fascinating mix of eccentric millionaires, artists, shysters, heiresses, and mobsters, some of whose names are recognizable today, and others whose names have disappeared into history along with the gracious winter homes once lining Brickell Avenue. The backward glance still tells us a little about that time, that place, and those who left their mark. Youll encounter the duPonts, the Deeringss, the Vanderbilts, Winston Churchill, David Fairchild, Tennessee Williams, Al Capone. There are the sheikhs luxurious, but unused, estate—and his brother-in-laws unpaid-for palace up the road; a trip to Czarist Russia with the niece of Isadora Duncan; the Nazi submarines sighted off the coast; the crazy schemes of a would-be socialite living off her daughters inheritance. And there are the simple pleasures: turn back the clock to a trolley ride to the beach for a nickel, watermelon gardens in the summer, wild parrots downtown, schoolgirls catching fiddler crabs along the shore, and an old astrologer who came every winter. And if you weren’t there, you'll wish you had been. Part memoir, part history, Miami, A Backward Glance reminds us how the Magic City rose from the swamp, developing from a pioneer town to a luxury resort to an important crossroads of the entire Western Hemisphere.

My Personal Review: I really really enjoyed this book. Ms. Murrell delves into the past of the places and people that make Miami so fascinating, uncovering much non-residents (or even current ones) may not know. She grew up during an interesting time in the city and knows her subject well. She takes you along with all the characters and events from Miami’s earliest days to the present, and as they say, "it's all about the journey". A really great "retro" read! Loved the photographs as well.
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