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Abstract: Donovan Correll (1908–1983) worked as plant taxonomist for Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (FTBG) between 1973 and 1983. During his tenure at FTBG he and his wife, Helen Correll (1907–2000), published the “Flora of the Bahama Archipelago” in 1982. The project was initiated by William Gillis (1933–1979). The FTBG Archives has letters, photographs, manuscripts, and other documents that belonged to Donovan and Helen Correll. In this paper we present six of their photographs as well as a transcription of the last chapter of the autobiography of Donovan Correll. This work (entitled “Notes from a Singing Plant Explorer”) was finished in January 1983 but was never published. The last chapter of this autobiography bears the title “Fairchild Tropical Garden and the Bahamas” and provides some unique insights pertinent to the association of Donovan and Helen Correll with this botanic garden and to their field experiences in the Bahamas.

Key words: Botanical history, Florida, Caribbean Islands, archives, Helen Correll, William Gillis, Priscilla Fawcett


Palabras clave: History de la Botanica, Florida, Islas del Caribe, archivos, Helen Correll, William Gillis, Priscilla Fawcett
We, all of us who knew them (one can scarcely think of them separately) [...] held them in very high esteem for their botanical prowess, not less so for their wholesome, generous, and hospitable style.

Quote from Dr. Robert K. Godfrey (Florida State University) about Donovan and Helen Correll (Godfrey, 1983).

Introduction

In 2012 Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (FTBG) in association with the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), the College of the Bahamas (CoB), and Florida International University (FIU) celebrated the 30th anniversary of the publication of “Flora of The Bahama Archipelago.” This work was initiated by William T. Gillis (1933–1979), but the final book was authored by Donovan Correll (1908–1983) and Helen Correll (1907–2000) [illustrated by Priscilla Fawcett (1932–2012)] (Correll & Correll, 1982). To commemorate this landmark in the botanical history of the Caribbean Islands these four institutions organized a symposium entitled “Celebrating 30 Years of the Flora of the Bahamas: Conservation and Science Challenges” that took place at BNT and CoB on October 30 and 31, 2012. As a contribution to this symposium our team conducted research in the Archives of FTBG pertinent to plant exploration and botanical work achieved by Donovan and Helen Correll in the Bahamas. Prior to our study Kass & Eshbaugh (1993) performed studies at these archives, focusing on the important contributions of William Gillis to the Bahamian flora, particularly on the correspondence between him and Donovan Correll. Professional relationships between these two plant taxonomists were uneasy, following the dismissal of William Gillis as curator of the FTBG herbarium and the recruitment of Donovan and Helen Correll as plant taxonomists for this botanic garden (Kass & Eshbaugh, 1993).

Donovan Stewart Correll was born in Wilson, North Carolina on April 13, 1908 and spent most of his early years in that state. From an early age his parents instilled in him a deep appreciation for nature which influenced his decision to become a botanist (Godfrey, 1983; Schubert, 1984). Before his formal training at Duke University (A.B. 1934; A.M. 1936; Ph.D. 1939) he spent several years in Florida working various jobs and taking voice lessons, singing being his first choice for a career. Realizing that singing would probably never bring him a stable livelihood, he opted for a career in the study of plants. Fortunately for the botanical world, he brought his considerable energies and talents to the field, but he never totally gave up his love for music. Throughout his life he engaged in dozens of opportunities to perform in local choirs and with amateur troupes.
Between 1939 and 1943 Donovan Correll started his botanical career as a research associate at the Botanical Museum of Harvard University. Just before the war, during which he served as a gunnery officer for the U. S. Navy (1944–1946) he participated as botanist with the botanical and geological survey for the Alaska-Canadian Highway being built to link the lower 48 states to Alaska. He later wrote a book about his adventures “Alaska Highway Adventures” self-published in 1981 (Correll, 1981). After the war, he returned to Harvard to complete his projects before spending nine years working in various divisions of the USDA (1947-56). He left the government in 1956 to head the Botany Department of the Texas Research Foundation, Renner, Texas. Between 1971 and 1973 he was Program Director for Systematic Biology at the National Science Foundation.

In 1973, at age 65, when most people are thinking about retirement, he joined FTBG and started work on the daunting project of documenting the plants of the Bahamas. On March 28, 1983, shortly after the publication of “Flora of the Bahama Archipelago”, Donovan Correll died of pancreatic cancer.

During most of his professional career, Donovan Correll was joined by his wife Helen Butts Correll, who was a distinguished botanist in her own right. Helen Butts was born in Providence, Rhode Island on April 24, 1907. She received her undergraduate degrees from Brown University (A.B., 1928; A.M., 1929). She attended and received her Ph.D. from Duke University in 1934. She was an instructor at Smith College between 1929 and 1931; at Wellesley College from 1934 to 1939; associate professor at the University of Maryland, Towson in 1956; and research associate at Texas Research Foundation, Renner between 1959 to 1965.

Although she originally studied zoology, she quickly changed her focus and honed her skills to complement those of her husband. Along with being a mother and raising a family of four children, she also co-authored “Aquatic and Wetland Plants of Southwestern United States” (Correll & Correll, 1972). She became an expert on the grasses and sedges. After the death of Donovan Correll, Helen continued her work at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden until 1993. She married William Merton Carter, Oct 10, 1992. She died on November 13, 2000 in Miami, Florida.

Donovan Correll’s Autobiography – The Archives of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

The archives of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden have the documents, photographs, manuscripts, and correspondence of Donovan and Helen Correll. These documents are currently being catalogued, scanned, and databased. They include family photographs like the one that was taken during their wedding (Fig. 1). The number of photographs from their field expeditions to the Bahamas is limited to 12.
slides, and in this article we reproduce two of them (Figs. 2–3). The first one (Fig. 2) was taken in Abaco in 1975 and shows Donovan Correll processing herbarium specimens in the field. The second photograph depicts Donovan and Helen Correll together with Prof. Billie Turner from University of Texas at Austin and Mrs. Alfred B. “Inchie” Frenning (Fig. 3). The latter was a close friend of the Corrells who provided tremendous help with their visits to the island of Exuma (see below). Donovan Correll named *Bursera frenningae* after her (Correll, 1979). Another interesting photograph is the one showing Donovan and Helen Correll during a field trip in South Florida in 1981 (Fig. 4). We know that they also had plans to produce a flora for Florida as mentioned in his autobiography (see Appendix). Unfortunately this was a work that was not completed.

Among the most relevant items found in the Corrells’ Collection is an unpublished and unedited autobiography of Donovan Correll entitled “Notes from a Singing Plant Explorer” – a title that clearly makes reference to his singing avocation (see above). This work was finished in January 1983 and it has 18 chapters (193 printed pages, including figures). The last chapter bears the title: “Fairchild Tropical Garden and the Bahamas”. In order to celebrate this 30th anniversary we have decided to publish this last autobiographic chapter as an appendix to this paper. Our paper does not aim to present a full study of the account presented by Donovan Correll in this chapter; however it has some insights that are worth mentioning. We have chosen to present this in unedited form although we understand from the family that Donovan Correll would most likely have edited out some of the text. We know that Donovan Correll loved the Bahamas and other Caribbean Islands and their people, but this text was finished shortly before he passed away without any final editing from him or his family. Through this chapter we know that Donovan Correll met David Fairchild in the late 1930s in the “Old Gray Herbarium building” at Harvard University and that both Donovan and Helen Correll highly admired the accomplishments of David Fairchild as a plant explorer and for leading plant germplasm introduction in the USA. Donovan Correll also reported that his first talk at FTBG took place in 1967 where he was hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Edward C. Sweeney two of the most important benefactors of FTBG. Donovan and Helen Correll came to FTBG after William Gillis left. Gillis continued his taxonomic studies of Bahamian plants (Kass & Eshbaugh, 1993); however, Correll’s autobiographic account does not have any reference to the work conducted by Gillis. Concerning Donovan’s trips to the islands, he indicated that the first time that he set foot on “The Isles of Perpetual June” was in June 1974. After this initial trip he indicated that he made more than 100 trips to more than 30 major islands, as well as many smaller cays, in the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands. During this time the Corrells obtained more than 11,000 numbers of botanical collections, with many duplicates. His field trips run smoothly except for a few times when he had to fly in small planes through stormy weather and when he was navigating
on rough seas in a little boat with a "tiny" engine in Little Inagua. In addition, there was at least one worrisome incident when they encountered packages of smuggled drugs when performing field work at Andros. His account makes extensive mention of people, including those he met and those who went with him to the field. Among them the most notable was Mrs. Alfred B. "Inchie" Frenning (see above, Fig. 3). This chapter finished with a conservation pledge for the archipelago that extends to "the irreplaceable destruction of our tropical forests."

Fourteen of the Bahamian endemic species currently recognized are based on descriptions or combinations made by Donovan Correll (Table 1). The contributions of Donovan and Helen Correll have received recognition by other taxonomists, and four species endemic to the Bahamas [i.e., *Aristida correlliae* P.M. McKenzie, Urbatsch & Proctor (Poaceae), *Cyperus correllii* (T.Koyama) G.C. Tucker (Cyperaceae), *Koanophyllon correlliorum* (Plettman ) R.M. King & H. Rob. (Asteraceae), and *Matelea correllii* Spellman (Apocynaceae)] have been named after them. Indeed the latest endemic species described for the Bahamian flora (*A. correlliae*) was named to honor Helen Correll (McKenzie et al., 1990). In the Fairchild archives there is a photograph of her holding the article where this species was published (Fig. 5). Also among the relevant photographs found in these archives is one of Donovan and Helen Correll and Priscilla Fawcett holding a copy of the final flora as it was published in 1982 (Fig. 6).

**Acknowledgements**

This is contribution number 238 from the Tropical Biology Program of FIU. We dedicate this paper to the memory of William Gillis in recognition for his important contributions to the Bahamian flora. The Bahamas Environmental Fund supported the symposium "Celebrating 30 Years of the Flora of the Bahamas: Conservation and Science Challenges" that took place at BNT and CoB between October 30 and 31, 2012. The Latin American and Caribbean Center of FIU and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden supported travel expenses to attend this symposium. We are grateful to the Correll families for providing information concerning dates and names of individuals shown in the pictures and for their support in publishing this article.

**Literature Cited**


--------- 1981. Alaska highway adventure. Published by the author.


Table 1
Bahamian endemics species currently recognized based on descriptions or combinations made by Donovan Correll

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ateleia popenoei Correll (Fabaceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1981</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borreria felisinsulae Correll (Rubiaceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bursera frenningae Correll (Burseraceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chiococca stricta Correll (Rubiaceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clematis orbiculata Correll (Ranunculaceae)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erithalis diffusa Correll (Rubiaceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erithalis salmeoides Correll</td>
<td>Correll, 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ernodea gigantea Correll (Rubiaceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ernodea serratifolia Correll</td>
<td>Correll, 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portulaca minuta Correll (Portulacaceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spermacoce capillaris (Correll) Howard (Rubiaceae)</td>
<td>Correll, 1979; Howard, 1988</td>
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Appendix

Transcription of last chapter (Chapter 18, entitled Fairchild Tropical Garden and the Bahamas) of the unpublished autobiography of Donovan Correll (Notes from a Singing Plant Explorer).

Note: Editorial comments are indicated in brackets.

Beginning with my work in 1947 in the division of Plant Exploration and Introduction, an office established in the United States Department of Agriculture by David Fairchild in 1898, my life and work has been touched at intervals by what that adventurous plantsman represented or accomplished during this life time.
I first met Dr. Fairchild during the late 1930's [sic] in the old Gray Herbarium building in the now defunct Botanical Garden of Harvard University, on the corner of Garden and Linnaeus Streets in Cambridge. He was at the time doing some research on some one of his several books. Helen had just read Dr. Fairchild's *Exploring for Plants*, and I surmised that she secretly hoped that the man she would eventually marry would become a plant explorer. He did, but, unfortunately, her explorer did not have Fairchild's clout nor the resources that were available to him during his lifetime.

The more than ten years that I spent in the office that Fairchild founded for our Department of Agriculture made me a great admirer of Dr. Fairchild and to appreciate even more the work that he, Wilson Popenoe, and others in the Division had done for our country. Among their accomplishments was the encouragement or establishment as a crop or industry the date, fig, avocado, mango, pistachio, and other lesser known crops. These explorers were also concerned with introducing germ plasm, or breeding stock, for the improvement of traditional field crops, vegetables, and fruit plants, as well as the introduction and establishment of ornamental and other economic plants such as bamboos and Meyer's Zoysia grass.

While I was with the Department I was administratively responsible for the budget of several field stations, including Chapman Field in South Miami. Chapman Field, a World War II airfield, had been established as a Plant Introduction Station for our Department through the influence of Drs. Fairchild, Walter T. Swingle, O. F. Cook, and other noted plant scientists of the time. When I was concerned with the Station, my good friend, Harold F. Loomis, was in charge.

After leaving Beltsville to accept a position with Texas Research Foundation in 1956 I was invited many years later, in 1967, to give a lecture at the Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami, which I did. As an invitational guest speaker for the Garden my wife and I were invited to stay at the Kampong, David Fairchild’s home while he was alive, by its then owners, Dr. and Mrs. Edward C. Sweeney. Both my wife and I were delighted to be placed in what had been the Fairchild’s upstairs bedroom over the entrance-way that ran through the main house to the water-front lawns and gardens. The several days and nights that we were guests at the Kampong, and the fishing trip with the Sweeneys out into the Gulf Stream on their fishing yacht, are among the highlights of our various experiences. While on the fishing trip, Ed Sweeney, at the time President of The Explorers Club, invited me to become a member. He also asked me if my wife and I would take time off for six months or so to do island hopping throughout the world so that Kay, his wife, might enjoy studying and observing tropical plants with us. I gave him a sincere and vigorous “yes!” Regrettably, Ed died of cancer only a few months later. The acceptability of my “yes,” as Ed put it to me, was dependent upon his overcoming this fatal illness that he had at the time.

Incidentally, when I attended The Explorers Club’s 64th annual dinner in New York at the Waldorf-Astoria in 1968, I was surprised and delighted to find that I
had been placed at the center table nearest the speaker’s platform in the seat that faced the podium. Later, in retrospect, I supposed that having been sponsored for membership the year before by Ed Sweeney, President, had resulted in my being given consideration above and beyond. Mixed with my pleasure at the dinner was some misapprehension since only a few feet away on the podium James M. (Jim) Fowler, as he spoke, was completely entwined by an enormous snake that I took to be either a python or a boa constrictor. Lowell Thomas and other dignitaries were also on the platform.

Served with our drinks, and to prepare us for a gourmet’s meal, were exotic hors d’oeuvres of flying squirrel, octopus, Icelandic smoked sheep, tile fish, reindeer meatballs, Chanterelle mushrooms, birds nest soup, horsemeat, iguana, mougloun, boar’s head, Roquefort (from the caves), candied violets, and raccoon. Who could ask for more!

The last and most gracious touch from David Fairchild was my being offered a position on the staff of the Fairchild Tropical Garden that he had helped Colonel Robert H. Montgomery to develop, and which honors the name of the great man. In September 1973, my wife and I set up house-keeping in the “Davis House” in the Fairchild Tropical Garden. The house, built for tropical living, was a contribution to the Garden by the wealthy aluminum magnate, Arthur Vining Davis, in 1953. It was built in an idyllic setting on the southwest corner of the Garden facing Old Cutler Road, and was to be the home of the Garden’s first non-family Director, Paul Allen. Dr. Allen and his wife, Dorothy, had long been associated with the United Fruit Company in Central America. Paul was professionally well-qualified for the position but he was not administratively prepared to handle the necessary routine of the Garden, and he remained its Director for little more than a year.

As I have noted elsewhere, I was one of those instrumental in obtaining Dr. Allen for the Directorship of the Garden. As a friend, I had also been a guest of the Allens in the Davis House only a short time after they had moved in when I was on one of my visits to Chapman Field. At the time, little did I realize that 20 years later my wife and I would become occupants of this same house. In the meantime, Paul and Dorothy, who had returned to the United Fruit Company, have passed away.

Incidentally, upon Paul’s return to the United Fruit Company, he spent several years searching for and selecting bananas whose individual fruits possessed long pedicels. The selection and development of these long-pedicelled fruits saved the banana industry from disease created by tightly sessile fruits, and it also enabled the industry to cut from the stem and ship “hands” in cardboard boxes.

Only a couple of months after our arrival in Miami, during the latter part of November, 1973, Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson was the guest of Mrs. Stephen Sanford in Palm Beach where she was to attend the opening night party for the newly formed Poinciana Club on Thanksgiving eve. We, at the Fairchild Tropical Garden, hoped to
have Mrs. Johnson visit us while she was in South Florida, and she would have done so if it had not been during the oil crisis. The Secret Service personnel convinced her that it could be considered unpatriotic for her to make the trip to Miami during such a crisis. Mrs. Johnson took a “rain check” on the visit, that we hope she might make some day.

With the support of a 5-year grant from the National Science Foundation my wife and I began the fascinating and challenging task of preparing for the Fairchild Tropical Garden an illustrated *Flora of the Bahama Archipelago*. This could never have been accomplished without the help of the Garden’s staff artist, Priscilla Fawcett, and our colleagues and associates in and out of the Garden.

A planned trip in the 1930’s [sic] that never materialized for the Duke University Explorers Club was to far away Nassau in the Bahamas. Although I had been in Bahamian waters in 1926 while serving as a cabin boy aboard the Yacht “Jessie Faye,” out of Miami, I never set foot on the “The Isles of Perpetual June” until 1974. The trip made in October of that year was to be the first of more than 100 trips to more than 30 major islands, as well as many smaller cays, in the Bahamas, Turks and the Caicos Islands, which I choose to call the Bahama Archipelago. These trips were made to explore for the native plants that are to be found there.

There is no question in my mind that I have traveled over and seen more of the Bahama Archipelago than any man ever had, dead or alive – be he colonist, buccaneer, pirate, privateer, or what-have-you. From Walker Cay in the north to Salt cay, south of Grand Turk, and from the west side of North Andros and Duncan Town in the Ragged Islands to Rum Cay and San Salvador Island in the east was my plant hunting ground for parts of more than seven years. During this time we obtained more than 11,000 numbers of botanical collections, with many duplicates.

From the coastal shallows and inland swash of sucking mud mangrove flats in western Andros, through that Island’s vast midland of pine forests that spring from pitted limestone, to its rich broad-leaved coppices in the east, dotted with fern-filled “banana holes,” or solution pits, one finds a botanical paradise. To find the “mountains” of the Bahamas one has to go to Cat Island where Mt. Elverina, capped by The Hermitage, an unoccupied monastery, towers for more than 200 feet above the oceans that one can see on both sides. Although most of the 30-odd inhabited islands in the Archipelago have much in common, each usually has one or more points of difference. The “cut-and burn” or Shifting Agriculture is still the practice on most of the islands but this is becoming more stabilized on some of the islands with the introduction of mammoth machines that pulverize the rocky soils for more permanently placed agricultural endeavor. I hate to see this happen since in its finality it will be more disastrous to the islands than the more primitive agricultural activities that have existed for centuries.
Except for a few tumbles on the rocky terrain and several uneventful drops into superficially covered "banana holes," I was never in any real danger but a couple of times during my many exploratory trips. This was on the occasion when I was one of four adventurers in a very small private plane flying from Duncan Town, Ragged Islands, to Nassau non-stop in stormy weather. We flew for the last 15 minutes without any obvious fuel being registered on the meter. From my back seat behind the pilot I could see him intermittently jerking forward in rhythm with the snapping of his fingers. Mentally, I could hear him frantically intoning with each forward hunch – "Come on Betsy, just a little bit more." We finally landed with less than a pint of fuel in our tank. The worst part for me about the incident was that I had not been given the chance to activate all of the elaborate plans for survival that were flashed to me through my apprehensions.

Another small plane incident that might have spelled "demise" was when we inadvertently entered an enormous funnel cloud in a severe storm. The plane went completely out of control with the "you are going to stall" buzzer activated as we ascended like a leaf in the violent updraft from about 4,000 feet to about 8,000 feet in a few seconds. We fell miraculously unscathed from the great, billowy pillow of clouds as quickly as we had entered it.

During the last year of our field work in the Bahamas, in 1980, we faced several dangerous situations because of the increasing traffic in drugs and illegal aliens. Perhaps the potentially most dangerous situation was when we accidentally encountered a drug haven on the swash on the west side of North Andros, just north of drug-ridden Williams Island. We found bundles of new plastic bags stored beneath a large buttonwood tree, and many wheel marks on nearby salt flats where planes had landed. We sensed that we were being watched from a nearby thicket; so, as we would say in North Carolina, we got aboard Ken Fehling's cruiser and "hightailed" it to Red Bay. The isolated, uninhabited area is convenient to Cuba, from whence drugs are considered to be transshipped.

It would be possible to write a complete book if I were to narrate in detail all of my numerous visits and experiences in the archipelago. The miles of isolated superb beaches, the elfin forests that grow on pitted rock flats, the vastness of pinelands on the extreme northern and southern islands, the dense growth of coppices clothing the rolling hills, the friendliness and simplicity of out-island peoples with their warmth and diversity. All have their individual charm and appeal.

Adventure and romance has continually washed over the Archipelago since the day Christopher Columbus first came ashore on San Salvador Island. Not too far away from his Landing, rising upon a hill overlooking the sea, are the ruins of the pirate Watling's stone "castle" – Watling, whose fearful name this lovely island bore for many years. A smaller land mass in the Abacos, Walker Cay, also bears the name of a notorious bloodthirsty pirate. Bimini Islands, haunt of Ernest Hemingway; Long
Cay, previously called Fortune Island, on which once stood the General Post Office of the Bahamas, now a place of ruins; Galloway Cave on Long Island, whose mouth is covered by long, draping strands of “Spanish moss” hanging from tall trees; Little Inagua, the largest uninhabited island in the Archipelago, with isolated fresh-water sinks that support stands of giant Hispaniolan royal palms; the Turks and Caicos with their unpredictable weather and past guardian of the Windward Passage. All have their centuries of history replete with mystery and intrigue.

In August 1975, I explored all accessible areas on Great Inagua, east to Gun Point on south shore to the turtle ponds beyond West Point on the north shore. Perhaps the most excitement generated was by a small flock of rare, garrulous Inagua parrots that I encountered in the later location.

While I was exploring Great Inagua in 1975 arrangements were made through the good graces of Charles Brener, manager of Morton Bahamas, Ltd., for me to be placed on uninhabited Little Inagua for several days of field exploration. My companions were to be Richard E. Haxby, biologist with Morton Bahamas, Ltd., and his brother, and Karen Bjorndal, University of Florida researcher on the island’s green turtles. The converted naval landing craft of the Morton Company, after an unsuccessful first attempt at fighting a storm, finally reached Little Inagua and left us in a sheltered harbor on the west side of the more or less square-shaped Little Inagua. The larger, more exposed, Moujean Harbor lay to the southeast of us. The vessel that was taking the furniture and possession of several expatriated families from Great Inagua back to the Caicos Islands had towed a small motor cruiser along with a small boat with a 5-horsepower outboard motor. The cruiser, whose motor failed on the second day of use, was anchored in the calm bay. At a point near where we had set up camp was an osprey nest about ten feet high. This nest was actually used as a landmark by vessels running between the two Inaguas.

I explored by walking much of the western and southern sections of the approximately 75 square miles that comprised the island. Karen found that many turtle nests had been pillaged by the “Domingans, [sic] as the Great Inaguans had previously told us to be the case. She slept for a couple of nights in depressions formed by scooped out nests in the hope that she would witness turtles coming ashore and making their nests. Considering the isolation of these nests, about a mile from camp, we thought Karen to be a most dedicated scientist, not to mention her bravery.

Undoubtedly the most foolhardy and dangerous occasion during the more than 100 trips I made into the Bahama, Turks and Caicos islands occurred while we were on Little Inagua. After the motor cruiser conked out getting around the island was solely by shank’s mare. The little boat with outboard motor had been brought along to transport us, supplies, and equipment from the cruiser to our camp ashore. Ed suggested that he, Karen, and I take the small boat and go north along the west shore to the north shore, itself, after which we would go east for a few miles. This
would enable us to go ashore to explore this section of the island. Although it looked somewhat stormy we thought nothing of it since our bay and waters of the entire west side of the island was a calm sheen.

We foolishly, without life preservers, chugged slowly northward through deceptively placid waters. However, when we reached the northwest corner of the island we suddenly lurched out into a strong northeast wind that was creating waves three to five feet in height. Instead of turning back, Ed, [we presume that “Ed” refers to Richard E. Haxby] who was handling the motor, turned directly into the strong winds. Karen, in a bathing suit, sat chillily scrounged in the bow seat with her back to the wind, I sat in the bottom of the boat’s center scooping out as fast as possible water that gushed over and into our boat with each plunge beneath the high waves. Ed was overly busy with the engine. After less than one half mile we struggled to the rocky shoreline, and with great difficulty got ashore.

After making shore we should have left the boat for more clement weather and walked back to camp. Ed, however, convinced us that we could make the return safely. This proved to be ill advice because the high waves threatened to kill the tiny motor, in which case we would undoubtedly all have been drowned. It was a miracle that we finally reached the calm leeward side of our island.

To make matters worse, and to drive home how lucky we were, the vessel’s return from the Caicos Islands was delayed several days by the same stormy weather that we had encountered in our short but dangerous trip. Ed, whom we had depended upon for supplies, had not counted on the vessel’s delay. Hence, for several days we ate speared fish for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. To add insult to injury, as one might say, after taking filets from sizeable groupers and yellowtales with a dull knife Ed thoughtlessly tossed the flesh-laden skeletons into the nearby water that had been our swimming and bathing area from the day of our arrival. No more! Almost immediately our swimming hole was filled with eight and ten foot long sharks that were seemingly playing “follow-the-leader.” There were hammerheads, lemons, nurses, sands, and possible others not recognized. The four of us from then on always went in bathing bunched together only a few feet from shore.

In July 1976 I returned to Little Inagua, taking with me Sammy and Jimmy Nixon, the Bahama National Trust wardens for the Flamingo Reserve on Great Inagua, and a professor from Rutgers and his several students that were researching the fresh water turtles of the Bahamas. I rented a commercial fishing boat for the trip. While on Little Inagua we located the Royal Palms that we had been looking for, but the fisherman who had hoped to fill their freezers with fish were disappointed because, as they said, the “Domingans” [sic] had been there ahead of us!

Although explorations have taken Helen and me, often more than once, to many of the several thousand islands, cays, and rocks that make up the Archipelago, undoubtedly our most thorough investigations have been on Great and Little Exuma.
This was made possible by the always to be remembered generous hospitality of Mrs. Alfred B. Frenning, who owns a home on Goat Cay, northwest of Georgetown. Mrs. Frenning, niece of Professor Oakes Ames, with whom I studied and had my first position at Harvard University, and her brother, Richard Borden, and sister, Joan Colt, treated my wife and me as one of their own, and thus made it possible for us to visit the Exumas during various seasons of the year. The Colts and Bordens, along with Mrs. W. Robert G. Holt, comprised the only other owners and inhabitants on Goat Cay.

Although we made many trips throughout Great and Little Exuma with “Inchie,” as Mrs. Frenning was known to her friends, none were more eventful than our visit by a small one-engine plane to Hog Cay, below Little Exuma, and to Cat Island. Ruben Sauleda, our botanist-pilot, flew the plane. His wife, Diane, remained on Goat Cay. The extremely short landing strip on Hog Cay was cut out of the bushes, and consisted of rather tall grasses among which was scattered large rocks. It was very tricky landing and taking off. The visit, however, enabled us to make a short exploration of the Cay.

Upon landing at New Bight, Cat Island, we learned that there was no gasoline available, and hence no ground transportation. We finally inveigled the Bahamasair agent to take us north to Stephenson if we gave him five gallons of aviation gasoline from our plane and a little Bahamian money. When we got in his car we realized that his transmission wasn’t working. The agent, however, used unconventional means for getting the car moving. We all got in, he opened his door, leaned far out, reached under the car and tapped the transmission with a ball peen hammer. For each gear shift this was the ritual he performed. With many taps we made the trip with incidental botanical stops in between. This was just one of the many vicissitudes of botanizing in the Bahamas.

It was through this friendly association with “Inchie” Frenning that my wife and I were privileged to meet one of the most fascinating women in the world, Princess Alexandra, of England, and her Scots husband, Angus Ogleby. This occurred during March 1976. Previous to then, for some years Mrs. Holt, a Canadian, had turned over her Goat Cay home for a couple of weeks each year to the Princess and Angus for a relaxing holiday. During this time, with no official or mandatory social functions to attend, the young couple were relaxed and became just “one of the folks” on the Cay. The only activity that made one realize that they were important and somewhat different was the arrival and departure every four hours of the change of guards in the around-the-clock protection provided by the Bahamian Government.

During our stay on Goat Cay in March 1976 we first met the Princess and Angus at an intimate cocktail party given by Mrs. Frenning, our hostess. Later in the week a dinner party was given at the Borden’s home for all the residents and guests on the Cay. To my surprise and pleasure, I was seated between the Princess and Angus.
During the course of the dinner there was no let up in the conversation, none of which I could ever recall. After all, I was so infatuated with the Princess's loveliness and personality that little else mattered. After dinner, the hosts had arranged to have the royal couple hear some songs that were sung by the natives. At the outset a motherly Bahamian welcomed the young couple. To everyone's amusement, she addressed them as "Princess Alexandra and Mr. Princess." I thought to myself, "No one should object to playing second fiddle to such a lovely lady."

It was not too long afterwards that I read that the International Bachelor's Society named Princess Alexandra "the most exciting woman in the world." All I can say is that the Society has excellent taste.

As a sort of epilogue, when my wife and I attended the charity Flamingo Ball given by the Bahama National Trust at The Lyford Cay Club on March 13, 1978, Mrs. Holt presented us to the Princess. She, surprisingly to us, graciously recalled the occasion of our dinner together on Goat Cay.

It is ironical that through the centuries when the islands that comprise the Bahama Archipelago have attained periods of unusually lush material well-being, it has usually been at the 'expense' and discomfiture of the rest of the world, especially the United States.

Exclusive of fishing (a Bahamian non-expertise), the lack of extensive agricultural lands, forests, minerals, industry, and all of the other primary supportive factors needed to develop one of our thriving, modern, "civilized" societies, had forced the Bahamians to depend more or less upon happenstance factors for their survival.

During the days of piracy in the late 17th and early 18th centuries the plunder of ships of all nations by buccaneers and pirates was a lucrative activity for the islands and islanders. The privateer days of blockade-running, with the islands as a stopover or base of operation, though a boon to the islands, was a thorn in the side of the English during the Revolution, and later to the North during the American Civil War. As one writer has written, the latter period was merely a "brief interlude of garish prosperity."

World War I, and especially World War II, were prosperous days for the islanders. The latter war actually accelerated, if not propelled, these sleepy, easy-going islands into the 20th Century, and into eventual independence. Although an undercurrent of tourism has been a development of stability, it is still the irrational enterprises that have created intemperate wealth.

During our Prohibition days of 1920 to 1933 "bootlegging" of intoxicating liquors from the Bahamas to the States became an extremely lucrative Bahamian industry. Al Capone became, and still is, a hero to the natives of West End, Grand Bahama. Through his "rum-running" he represented prosperity to them.

The last great surge of excessive as well as immoral wealth, and possibly portending to be the most destructive to the well-being of the islanders, themselves,
is their tolerance if not encouragement of the smuggling of illicit drugs and illegal aliens into the United States. Unfortunately, because of their geographic position, the islands are in the direct route of these infamous activities. There is every possibility, if not stopped, that the trammeling of Bahamian youth by smugglers in the form of gangsters, mobsters, hoodlums, thugs, ruffians, and just plain cutthroats will leave their indelible mark on the nation for generations to come! This young nation can not afford to have its youth, and thus future leaders, traumatized.

The booty resulting from these nefarious enterprises is so great that a poisonous aristocracy had developed, or is developing, to a high degree. Bribery, legal corruption, and excessive immorality appear to have become rampant and brazen. Piracy in the beautiful island waters is burgeoning to where it may soon pale the relatively minuscule activities of those rogues of yore.

It is rather sad that these islands with one of the finest climates in the world, the most beautiful waters to be found anywhere, with hundreds of miles of unmatched beaches, should have to suffer the likes of the above. It is one region of the world that might have been more beneficial to mankind if it had been established as an International Park.

As I place my pen to this last page I am at a loss as to what I should write. Should I say that this is my “swan song?” Yet, with a “flora of Florida to be” perched like a monolith on a limited time factor how can I cry “quits!” Shouldn’t one continue to work as long as the boot fits? There really is so much left to be done. For instance, the World is in great need of being saved. But, how does one save an object as large as the World?

One can wave a red flag but instead of being accepted as a warning it seems to infuriate not only the bovine but one’s fellowmen. The need for some men’s destructive outlet seems to increase with each cry for restraint from his fellowmen. As knowing scholars warn of the irreplaceable destruction of our tropical forests – the home of innumerable endangered plants and creatures – the fury of destruction continues unabated and even on the increase. Brazil may one day be this hemisphere’s Gobi Desert. In fact the use of the word “may” is too generous. If present destructive activities continue Brazil will become one of the world’s great deserts.

We all must bend our efforts to drive home the fact that each of us must save the World for himself! If all humanity could become selfish enough in this respect to save the World it will never regret doing so. There are, oh, so many living things that depend upon us! Let’s not let them down.
Fig. 1. Wedding of Donovan and Helen Correll at 179 Elmgrove Avenue, Providence, RI, U.S.A. (26 June 1937). From left to right: George Lyman Butts (the bride’s father), the groom Donovan Stewart Correll, the bride Helen Elizabeth Butts Correll, the bride’s mother Albertina Louise Christenson Butts, and the bride’s sister Albertina Louise Butts. Courtesy of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Archives.

Fig. 2. Dr. Donovan Correll processing herbarium specimens in the field on Abaco, 1975. Courtesy of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Archives.
Fig. 3. From left to right: Mrs. Alfred B. "Inchie" Frenning, Prof. Billie Turner (University of Texas, Austin), Dr. Helen Correll, and Dr. Donovan Correll. Exuma Island, 1975. Courtesy of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Archives.

Fig. 4. Donovan and Helen Correll performing field work in South Florida, November, 1981. Courtesy of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Archives.
Fig. 5. Dr. Helen Correll posing with the article describing Aristida correliae P.M. McKenzie, Urbatsch & Proctor. A species named after her. Photo by W. Houghton. Courtesy of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Archives.

From left to right: Helen Correll, Priscilla Fawcett, and Donovan Correll holding copies of the Flora of the Bahama Archipelago, 1982. Courtesy of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Archives.