

Here comes the sun



Miami is usually hit by hurricanes that blow in from the Caribbean. But in February 1964, a storm swept in from Britain: Beatlemania. The Fab Four's visit to Florida launched the Beatles' first American tour, and it marked a pivotal moment in their careers – when they morphed from Brit boy band into global superstars.

During the previous year, the Beatles had scored three number ones in the UK, but had

bombed across the pond. 'I Want to Hold Your Hand', released in the US in December 1963, changed all that, reaching number one on the *Billboard* charts. And after triumphant appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show* in New York, the band flew to Miami for the sequel. On 13 February, the group's plane – a National 11 DC-8 flown by a pilot wearing a mop-top wig – landed at Miami International Airport, and pandemonium ensued. 'Do you

after the railroad arrived, Miami's first paper, the *Miami Metropolis*, rolled off the presses; in July 1896, Miami was granted city status; in September the first school opened. Flagler built the enormous, luxurious Royal Palm Hotel. Tourists began to visit, lured by advertisements that described Miami as 'the sun porch of America', 'where winter is turned to summer'.

Despite Florida's earlier attitude to slavery, blacks played a prominent role in Miami's creation. The first shovel of earth that began construction of the Royal Palm Hotel was dug up by the Reverend AW Brown, who was black, as was WH Arston, who signed the original city charter. When the city was incorporated, a third of the voters were former slaves, despite the fact that blacks had few rights elsewhere in Florida. However, right after incorporation, the city's blacks were disenfranchised.

To ensure growth took place in an organised fashion, the city's founders laid out a basic grid plan to the north and south of the river, only to see most of the wooden buildings destroyed in a

fire in December 1896. Perhaps it was the shock of seeing her dream go up in flames, but Julia Tuttle died unexpectedly soon afterwards, aged just 48. Miami's founding mother was gone, but the city was quickly rebuilt and the tourists kept coming. However, they were joined by some less welcome visitors.

During the ten-week Spanish-American War in 1898, 7,000 US troops were stationed in Miami, waiting to be shipped down to Cuba. They amused themselves by using coconuts for target practice and swimming naked in the bay, much to the chagrin of local residents. Tensions between the army and the church-going black community were rife and occasionally escalated into violence. Between the residents and the mosquitoes, the soldiers were miserable. One wrote home: 'If I owned both Miami and Hell, I'd rent out Miami and live in Hell.'

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY

With the new century came new settlers. Both the population and the town grew rapidly; a business district, banks, movie theatres and a