

**The Atlantis Hotel, Paradise Above the Sea:
A Study of Art Deco Hotel Interiors in Miami Beach**

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Chapter One—Introduction

Introduction to Thesis

On January 19, 1936, the Atlantis Hotel opened its doors to rave reviews in the *Miami Herald*.¹ The newspaper gushed, “tradition of a lost civilization whose culture is linked to that of ancient Greece, whose glory and splendor has grown through the ages, is revived with the completion of the Atlantis Hotel.”² This grand description captured the excitement of the opening of this spectacular hotel. Designed by Lawrence Murray Dixon, the leading architect in Miami Beach, the Atlantis gave expression to the Art Deco style on a scale never before seen.³ The hotel is now considered “Dixon’s grand oeuvre.”⁴ Unfortunately, the Atlantis was demolished in 1973, so today we are only able to visit this unique hotel through photographs, remembrances, and written descriptions.

The architecture of the Atlantis, like many Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach, was streamlined and Modern. Art Deco buildings often had sleek, undecorated, and curved exteriors. The decoration that appeared on these minimalist buildings, like that found on the Atlantis, was often whimsical and playful. The exteriors of many Art Deco buildings in Miami Beach have been deeply researched, written about, and well documented. However, the interiors of Miami’s Art Deco hotels, such as the Atlantis, have not been studied or

¹ Atlantis Hotel (1936-1973), not the Atlantis Condominium (1982-present) in Miami Beach.

² *Miami Herald*, “The Atlantis, Distinctive Miami Beach Hotstelry, Opens Today,” January 19, 1936.

³ One of the most profound architects in Miami Beach was L. Murray Dixon. He was educated at Georgia Tech and created many Art Deco buildings in Miami Beach. In fact, over 100 of his buildings still stand today. Prior to moving to Miami Beach, Dixon worked in New York for the architectural firm Schultze & Weaver. This was where Dixon started working on hotels.

⁴ Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 172.

discussed in great detail. Largely this is because most of the interiors no longer exist or are not in pristine condition. Yet it was the interiors that were perhaps the best expression of the guests who frequented the hotels. The interiors also were the spaces where guests spent their leisure time and relaxed while on vacation. In this way, the interiors reveal the creation of a new kind of leisure. A more casual style of vacation started in the 1930s in Miami Beach setting the standard for leisurely middle-class vacations that became the norm after World War II. Miami Beach represented the ultimate escape to a leisurely and exotic vacation destination and the hotel interiors found there helped transport guests from their everyday lives into a fantastic paradise. Guests who experienced Miami Beach through its Art Deco hotels were truly living the American Dream.

The interior spaces of the Atlantis were highly decorated and ornate. A guest at the Atlantis could experience a wide range of atmospheres while walking through the hotel. This included a highly decorated lobby themed around the fantasy of a grand civilization below water, an elegant and sophisticated dining room, a more casual Eastern European dining space, and a Modern cocktail room. These unique interiors made the Atlantis Hotel one of the most elaborate, decorative, and magical Art Deco hotels in all of Miami Beach. This combination of themes found throughout the interior of the Atlantis allowed its middle-class guests from across the country to enjoy an environment that was Modern, tropical, and fantasy-like all under one roof. In addition, these diverse interiors

allowed guests to experience the exoticism found throughout the world without traveling outside of the United States.

If the hotel's exterior acknowledged high Modernist ideas about less ornament and sleek surfaces, the interior of the Atlantis took its guests in the other direction. It decidedly reveled in ornamentation, fantasy, and themes. But the Atlantis also incorporated design elements that were familiar to its guests. This balance of familiar and unfamiliar was common in many Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. However, the interiors of the majority of hotels were not as elaborate, well decorated, or themed as the interiors found in the Atlantis. As a result, the Atlantis set the tone for the numerous Art Deco hotels located throughout Miami Beach.

This thesis makes use of theories, themes, and evidence in the form of photography, advertising, and written descriptions from the 1930s and 1940s to explain the meanings of and bring life to the interior public spaces of the Atlantis.⁵ The first chapter of this thesis includes an introduction to the paper in addition to a history of Miami Beach and a discussion of the city from 1935 to 1941—the height of Art Deco Miami Beach.⁶ This chapter also includes a discussion on the Art Deco movement in Miami Beach. The second chapter is an introduction to the Atlantis Hotel, which includes a description and overview of

⁵ The interior public spaces included lobbies, lounges, dining rooms, cocktail room, and other areas where guests interacted with each other. Private areas for guests and staff like guest rooms will not be discussed. The main reason for this is that very little documentation on these spaces exists.

⁶ Construction on Art Deco hotels began around 1934 so by 1935 guests were staying in these hotels and by 1942 Miami Beach was practically turned into a military base as a result of World War II. Military personnel occupied many of the hotels in Miami Beach instead of tourists. This included the Atlantis, which stationed one of the military branches. (Howard Kleinberg, *Woggles and Cheeseholes: The History of Miami Beach's Hotels* (The Greater Miami & The Beaches Hotel Association: Miami Beach, 2005), 53).

the Atlantis in addition to materials about the hotel. The third and fourth chapters analyze the public interior spaces of the hotel. Chapter Three discusses the lobby and lounge, while Chapter Four explores the dining spaces and cocktail room. The final chapter concludes the thesis.

Before the journey about the exotic Atlantis Hotel begins, it is necessary to look at the larger context of Miami Beach, the city where the hotel came to life.

History of Miami Beach

Less than 100 years ago, Miami Beach was open land. It was not the bustling, glamorous vacation destination that it is today. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Miami Beach was essentially a swamp flanked by the green waters of the Atlantic Ocean. But the birth of Florida's future Gold Coast was soon to come about. Developers John Collins, Carl Fisher, John Lummus, and James Lummus were among the first to develop this beachfront land. The city of Miami Beach was incorporated in 1915 and the first hotels were under construction within months. Miami Beach experienced its first development boom in the 1920s. Wealthy vacationers traveled to hotels in Miami Beach to experience the fabulous weather and take advantage of the wide variety of activities available to them. These hotels were large, high-end, and luxurious resorts built in the Mediterranean Revival style, which was prevalent in the coastal areas of Florida. This first boom put Miami Beach on the map as a

popular vacation destination. As one historian explained, Miami Beach was “regarded as a relaxed, sporting alternative to Palm Beach’s formality” and as the beach town grew it attracted a broader range of Americans than Palm Beach.⁷

In the late ‘20s tourism and construction began to slow in Miami Beach. This downturn was partially caused by a hurricane that hit Miami Beach in September 1926. As it turned out, Miami Beach’s standing as a tourist destination was harmed by the storm more than its buildings; in fact, many of the hotels in Miami Beach were spared any damage.⁸ The Depression also played a role in slowing down tourism and development yet it did not affect Miami Beach like it did the rest of the country. While Miami Beach was almost unscathed economically by the Depression, the downturn in the economy greatly affected the type of tourist that could now travel to Miami Beach and in turn led to a new style of hotel where they would stay.

With fewer wealthy tourists, Miami Beach needed to attract a different type of tourist—the middle and working classes. The middle class had grown during the Depression because many in the upper class had lost a significant amount of their assets.⁹ Yet, these new members of the middle class still wanted to enjoy themselves on vacation as they had once done. They just needed to find a more affordable environment and Miami Beach was poised to be the perfect get-away destination. It enjoyed an environment similar to wealthier resorts like Palm

⁷ Ann Armbruster, *The Life and Times of Miami Beach* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1995), 10.

⁸ Lejeune and Shulman, 5.

⁹ Harold Mehling, *The Most of Everything* (Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, 1960), 177.

Beach, yet it had a sportier environment. As a result, hotels needed to be built in a more affordable and quick manner in order to accommodate the rapidly growing number of tourists. This meant that the buildings had to be smaller and less ornamental than the hotels built in the '20s. These new hotels were "originally designed to advantageously combine an extremely modest construction cost with a heightened flashy, popular and modern appearance to specifically attract a new, solidly middle-class group of tourists to this beach area, formerly a resort of the well-to-do."¹⁰ This new group of middle-class tourists brought a second boom of building to Miami Beach. By 1935 historians have emphasized that "Miami Beach was once again the fastest growing city in the country with a per capita building rate twenty times higher than the next city, Washington, D.C."¹¹

Ethnic groups who would be shunned in other resort cities were welcomed in certain areas of Miami Beach. This included a large Jewish population of tourists which added to the influx of middle class tourists to Miami Beach. Some of the Jewish population that made their way to Miami Beach became full-time residents. However, as in much of the world living and social conditions were not ideal for Jews living in Miami Beach. During the 1920s, Miami Beach was described as "one of the most anti-Semitic cities in America."¹² Nevertheless the Jewish population continued to grow especially in the area of South Beach. "Jews found it almost impossible to lease or buy property north of Fifth Street and

¹⁰ Jewel Stern, *Project Skyline* (Museum of Modern Art: Oxford, England, 1982), 4.

¹¹ Lejeune and Shulman, 11.

¹² Joann Biondi, *Miami Beach Memories* (Insiders' Guide: Guilford, Connecticut, 2007), 3.

therefore congregated in the lower end of the beach.”¹³ In fact, by the end of the ‘30s 20 to 25 percent of Miami Beach’s population was Jewish.¹⁴ In addition to visiting hotels in Miami Beach, some of the Jewish residents developed and owned hotels.¹⁵

“The growing popularity of Miami Beach with Jewish tourists” was “reflected in the *Jewish Daily Forward* newspaper ads of the ‘30s. In 1935, only the Nash Hotel at Collins Avenue and Eleventh Street, owned by Morris Nashelsky, and the Victor Hotel, on the Beach at Twelfth Street, advertised in the *Jewish Daily Forward*. But in 1939 the page dedicated to hotel advertisements was loaded with Miami Beach locations.”¹⁶ It is not known if the Atlantis advertised in the paper, but other existing Atlantis advertisements did not contain any anti-Semitic language that was used by other hotels in Miami Beach.

Life as a Tourist in Miami Beach

New classes of tourists traveled to Miami Beach to experience good times, good weather, and “the flashiest and most up-to-date...popular architectural fashion.”¹⁷ But what did the tourists do while vacationing in Miami Beach? During the ‘30s, Miami Beach was a city of leisure, pleasure, and play. The relaxed and leisurely atmosphere of Miami Beach even carried over to the name of one of its

¹³ Biondi, 3.

¹⁴ Armbruster, 79.

¹⁵ Biondi, 17.

¹⁶ Armbruster, 79.

¹⁷ Laura Cerwinske, *Tropical Deco: The Architecture and Design of Old Miami Beach* (Rizzoli: New York, 1981), 50.

leading radio stations, WIOD, which adopted as its slogan: Wonderful Isle of Dreams.¹⁸

In addition to sunbathing, visitors to this beach paradise would lounge by their hotel swimming pools, socialize in hotel lobbies, and play shuffleboard or croquet (Image 1).¹⁹ However, one of the most popular activities was gambling. One Miami Beach historian has suggested that “gambling was the primary diversion of the Florida tourist of the thirties.”²⁰ A dog track opened in 1926 followed by horseracing with the opening of Hialeah Racecourse in the early ‘30s and soon by two other horse tracks, and eventually casinos.²¹ Other types of gambling, not found in casinos at the time, such as roulette and blackjack also appeared in clubs along the beach. Even though these games were illegal, the police tended to look the other way during tourist season.²² Turning a blind eye on illegal activities was not new in Miami Beach law enforcement. During Prohibition, drinking was quite prevalent in Miami and also ignored by the police.²³

Other activities also drew tourists to Miami Beach. Simply being seen in Miami Beach was important. Therefore, lounging or sitting in the hotel lobby, bar, or restaurant became an acceptable social activity. Nightclubs also were popular. Watching live bands and dancing was a preferred way to spend evenings in

¹⁸ WIOD NewsRadio 610 Web site, “History,” WIOD, <http://610wiod.com/pages/history.html>.

¹⁹ University of Miami Libraries, <https://scholar.library.miami.edu/promo/1930s.htm>.

²⁰ Armbruster, 58.

²¹ Seth Bramson, *Images of America: Miami Beach* (Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, SC, 2005), 40.

²² Armbruster, 58.

²³ Miami Design Preservation League, Walking Tour, “Ocean Drive and Beyond,” August 2007.

Miami. Other “see-and-be-seen” activities included going to movie theatres, burlesque shows, the pier, speedboat races, and polo matches.²⁴ The Magic of Miami Beach, a 1938 book on the history of Miami Beach, painted this picture. “Today Miami Beach embraces exactly eight square miles of enchantment. There is no place quite like it on earth.” The author went on to praise the natural conditions of Miami and the developers who have “added every attraction that his ingenuity could devise.”²⁵

Throughout the ‘30s, the city of Miami Beach and its chamber of commerce advertised in order to draw even more tourists to the city. One slogan that proved popular was “Miami Beach is calling you.”²⁶ Brochures also were created to entice people to this tropical city. One brochure, *Life is Better in Miami Beach*, stated:

Here in Miami children and grownups play in the sunshine all twelve months... More than 400 miles nearer the sun than the southernmost point on our Pacific Coast, this Metropolis of the Tropics thus offers unique protection from winter ailments and an unparalleled opportunity for vigorous outdoor exercise or sunbathing. Here indeed is health headquarters not only for the infirm or those advanced in years, but for everyone wise enough to consult ‘Dr. Sun’ as often as opportunity permits. No wonder Miami has become a great city of homes where illness and worry are rare as furnaces and coal smoke.²⁷

Other travel brochures designed to entice tourists south included: *Miami, America's Sunshine Capital, Miami—Metropolis of the Tropics...Nearer the Sun*,

²⁴ Bramson, 42, 48.

²⁵ Charles Edgar Nash, *The Magic of Miami Beach* (Washington Square: Philadelphia, 1938), 140.

²⁶ Lejeune and Shulman, 10.

²⁷ University of Miami Libraries, <http://scholar.library.miami.edu/promo/1930s.html>.

and *Miami By the Sea: The Land of Palms and Sunshine*.²⁸ All of these advertisements and brochures were designed specifically as a call to the middle-class tourist encouraging them to escape everyday life and travel to healthy, leisurely, and tropical Miami Beach.

The call to tourists in a Miami Beach hotel and apartment book also was quite dramatic. Published in 1936, this guide was entitled "Welcome to Miami Beach, Florida 'America's Year 'Round Playground.'" The introduction of this publication proclaimed that Miami was one of the "best equipped" cities for "a large influx of vacationers." Since Miami was only a mile and a half wide, tourists could conveniently enjoy the Atlantic Ocean and Biscayne Bay. Additionally, the guidebook touted man-made amusements as well. Polo, fishing, golf, tennis, dancing, bicycling, boating, motoring, swimming pools, and dog racing were some of the many diversions that Miami offered. All of this was topped off by Miami being "the world's greatest winter playground" and having unequalled hotels. Indeed, according to the guide, the range of hotels offering "luxury suites" to "efficiency apartments" made the city a perfect destination for all budgets.²⁹

Clearly the writer of the publication was selling prospective tourists on the activities, amenities, modernity, hospitality, and most important the intoxicating beauty of Miami Beach. Such ads helped draw visitors to Miami Beach, who traveled south by plane, train, or automobile. A trip on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad from Washington, D.C. to Miami cost \$17.90 one way or round trip

²⁸ University of Miami Libraries, <http://scholar.library.miami.edu/promo/1930s.html>.

²⁹ *Miami Beach Hotel and Apartment Book*, Season 1936-1937, City of Miami Beach Archives, <http://weblink.miamibeachfl.gov/Search.aspx>.

\$32.25.³⁰ If flying down to Miami was in a tourist's price range, a seven hour one-way trip from New York to Miami with a layover in Charleston, South Carolina cost \$129.20.³¹

A fascinating look into life in Miami Beach is seen in the popular 1941 movie *Moon Over Miami*. Starring Betty Grable, Don Ameche, and Robert Cummings, *Moon Over Miami* is the story of Kay, a young woman who travels to Miami with her sister and aunt. The women conspire to get rich by marrying wealthy men. This lighthearted musical follows the women through their entertaining journey. Even though *Moon Over Miami* is cheery and sometimes silly, it is intriguing to see the way life in Miami is depicted during this time period.

Moon Over Miami features carefree vacationers in Miami partying, dancing, and enjoying life in the sunny weather. The only real work being done is by the employees at the hotel or by servants, which was likely the case in real life. Activities in the musical are exactly the same as what real vacationers enjoyed while visiting Miami Beach in the late 1930s. In the musical vacationers are drinking at parties, lounging or swimming at the pool, tanning on the beach, boating around the Florida swamps, and betting on horses at the racetrack.

Even though the hotel featured in the set of *Moon Over Miami* is not Art Deco, there are some interiors of the set that clearly contain elements that could be

³⁰ *The Washington Post*, Atlantic Coast Rail Line Advertisement, November 24, 1940.

³¹ John A. Stuart and John F. Stark, Jr., *The New Deal in South Florida: Design, Policy, and Community Building, 1933-1940* (University Press of Florida: Gainesville, Florida, 2008), 55.

found in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach at that time. For example, one scene is set in an Asian-inspired ballroom. The use of exotic motifs was common in many Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach during this time period. Another interior element that was common in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach was the use of glass blocks. The women's bathroom in *Moon Over Miami* had an entire glass block wall. This was one of the most Modern elements seen in this musical. The dining room in *Moon Over Miami* was very similar to dining rooms in Art Deco hotels. Many dining rooms in Art Deco hotels were simple with light walls, white tablecloths covering the table, and simple, dining chairs. The dining room in the musical contained the same elements. The focus in the dining room in the movie, like in the real interiors, is on the people—this is their stage.

Art Deco Miami Beach

The Art Deco style that was popular in Miami Beach from 1935 to 1941 was different from the Art Deco style that grew out of France and that was popular throughout the world in the 1920s. French designers turned to decorative objects from the 17th and 18th centuries for inspiration. As a result, the use of high-end, luxury materials that were popular in the past such as rosewood, ebony, sharkskin, ivory, and lacquer were popular in French Deco. These past styles were inspired by early Greek and Roman styles, so Greek and Roman elements carried over to French Art Deco as well. In addition to drawing on the past and incorporating expensive materials, Art Deco used bold and

colorful motifs such as zigzags, sunbursts, and geometric shapes. Many of these motifs were inspired by exotic sources from Africa, Asia, and Mesoamerica.

These motifs also carried over to Art Deco design in Miami Beach.

Art Deco was not just popular in France. This style's popularity spread throughout the world finding its way to the United States. Art Deco icons in America included The Wilmett Theater in Los Angeles (1931) and the Chrysler Building in New York (1930). As time passed, the style changed. One reason for this change was the movement itself lasted a long time—approximately 1910 to 1939—and the style simply changed over time. Another important reason for the change in the look of Art Deco was the Depression. Using expensive high-end materials was out of the question during and right after the Depression. As a result, the style became more minimal and streamlined. The streamlined look of Art Deco also was inspired by machines, aerodynamics, and speed that were rapidly becoming popular in the '30s. Where France was the leader of a more ornate and luxurious Art Deco in the 1920s, the United States was the leader of the more affordable, streamlined Art Deco of the 1930s.³²

Art Deco in Miami Beach was unique. While the style was inspired by French Art Deco of the 20's and 30's, Art Deco in Miami Beach was clearly inspired by the local environment that drew so many people to the area. Using

³² Charlotte Benton, Tim Benton, and Ghislaine Wood, editors. *Art Deco 1910-1939* (Bulfinch Press: Boston, 2003). Barbara Baer Capitman. *Deco Delights* (E.P. Dutton: New York, 1988). Alastair Duncan. *Art Deco* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1988). Bevis Hillier and Stephen Escrib. *Art Deco Style* (Phaidon Press Limited: London, 1997). Lejeune and Shulman. Nancy Troy, *Modernism and the Decorative Arts in France: Art Nouveau to Le Corbusier* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1991). Jonathan M. Woodham, *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Design* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004).

local elements for inspiration in Art Deco was not just popular in Miami Beach, it occurred through out other areas of the world in this movement. The inspiring tropical setting dominated both the outside and inside of buildings in Miami Beach. A 1938 article in *Architectural Forum* described Florida architecture by stating, "there is a basis for architecture in Florida that is both local in character and contemporary."³³

The contemporary elements being discussed in the quote above reflected the Modern and streamlined look that took over the streets of Miami Beach. The exterior of most of the buildings built during the '30s in Miami Beach were streamlined and contained curved stucco walls and simple details (Image 2). After the Depression, there was a desire to create a more uplifting atmosphere in the United States no where more so than Miami Beach. Since Miami Beach was a resort town, it had "resort architecture" that "intended to lift the visitor from the gloom of the Depression, to merge his shelter with the glories surrounding nature, and even, perhaps, to remind him of the spirituality of light and air and openness. This was an architecture designed to evoke feelings of delight."³⁴

Using fantasy-like, playful, and whimsical details both inside and outside of buildings was one way to create a positive and relaxing landscape. This uplifting and casual feeling carried over to the overall atmosphere of leisurely vacations in Miami Beach. Unlike other vacation destinations such as Palm

³³ "Florida Architecture: An Outstanding U.S. Resort Center Turns to Modern for its New Residences and Commercial Buildings," *Architectural Forum* 69 (December 1938): 451.

³⁴ Cerwinske, 12.

Beach that were more conservative in atmosphere, interior design, and architecture, Miami Beach offered upper, middle, and working class tourists a more casual vacation experience. This relaxed atmosphere was captured in "a *Chicago Tribune* article that stated: "millionaires 'are a dime a dozen. No one dresses up to visit them. Bankers appear in the shopping district in shorts.'"³⁵ In addition to lifting spirits, the Art Deco hotels and other buildings under construction in Miami Beach were cheaper to build because of their simple construction and materials. Not only did they cost less, they were quicker to go up so many buildings were constructed in Miami Beach in this style.

Many of the buildings in Miami Beach were white stucco yet different colors were used for the trim including greens, blues, oranges and pinks.³⁶ Other exterior details found on many of the Art Deco hotels included eyebrows above the windows, porthole windows, railings, curved walls, tropical details, and glass blocks (Image 3). The color on the hotels and the unique details added to the refreshing atmosphere of Miami Beach. The stucco landscape created by the hundreds of Art Deco buildings in Miami Beach was outstanding. As one historian stated, "it was 'new,' which had an obvious value during the Depression slowdown; it looked neat and cheerful; it was fast and inexpensive to build; it lent itself to colorful decorative touches that heightened the get-away-from-it-all

³⁵ Armbruster, 61.

³⁶ Lejeune and Shulman, 5.

vacation experience; and it bore a moviesque familiarity that guaranteed its popularity.”³⁷

One of the best descriptions of Miami Beach Art Deco states that it was “one part International Style puritanism, one part Art Deco indulgence.”³⁸ This simple quote says it all. The interior and exterior of Art Deco buildings in Miami Beach were a splash of bold, bright and extravagant, but there also was a splash of simple, sleek, and futurism that was found in Modernism. This mix created a unique environment only found in Miami Beach. In Miami Beach, it was not the case of Art Deco versus Modernism it was Art Deco plus Modernism. When this combination was done at its best, like in the case of the Atlantis, the results were breathtaking for tourists.

³⁷ Armbruster, 82.

³⁸ Lejeune and Shulman, 7.

Chapter Two—Atlantis Hotel

Introduction to the Atlantis Hotel

The Atlantis Hotel was located at 2655 Collins Avenue. The eight-story, oceanfront hotel was made of “steel, concrete block and stucco.”³⁹ Guests would enter the Atlantis property by driving “through an attractive entrance of quarry key stone pylons at Collins avenue” that ended at the hotel entrance in a circle.⁴⁰ After exiting their car, a guest at the Atlantis would then experience an up-close look at this attractive and Modern hotel (Image 4).

Construction on the 150-room Atlantis Hotel began in the summer of 1935.⁴¹ At that time, the expected cost for the furnished building was \$500,000, but when the hotel opened eight months later the real cost had escalated to \$750,000.⁴² The developers were over budget by half of the original estimated cost of the hotel which may have been a result of the developers and builders of the Atlantis sparing no expense on creating this marvelous hotel. Developers of the Atlantis included the Atlantis Corporation, Harold Sirken, and B.F. Shoenberg. Bruno Weil and Jack Miller were the real estate brokers.⁴³ Clearly both Miller and Weil were appreciative of their association with the Atlantis as seen in the ad they ran in the *Miami Herald* the day the hotel opened wishing the

³⁹ *Miami Herald*, “Construction on Nine-Story Atlantis Hotel on Ocean Front Plot in Miami Beach,” May 19, 1935.

⁴⁰ *Miami Herald*, May 19, 1935.

⁴¹ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁴² *Miami Herald*, May 19, 1935. *Wall Street Journal*, “Atlantis Hotel Opens Second-Season December 15,” December 14, 1936.

⁴³ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

owners of the hotel great success.⁴⁴ Lawrence Murray Dixon served as the architect while L.B. Taylor designed the structural engineering.⁴⁵

Though this paper focuses on the interior of the Atlantis, it is important to briefly describe its dynamic and Modern exterior since it was closely related to the interior of the hotel. The hotel was a large, streamlined, and sleek building (Image 5). The exterior was, according to the *Miami Herald* in 1936, “very simple, and what ornamentation” there was had “been deliberately applied to the outside.”⁴⁶

The front façade of the Atlantis was “slightly asymmetrical.”⁴⁷ Instead of being flat, the front was stepped, which was a type of fashionable decoration used in architecture and other forms of Art Deco design such as furniture, ceramics, and metals. This “stepped-tower configuration” resulted in what appeared to be a “fully realized miniature skyscraper of a hotel.”⁴⁸ Most of the façade was smooth and undecorated. However, there were a few decorative features. The Atlantis was “encrusted with plant life reminiscent of Auguste Perret’s rue Franklin apartment building in Paris (1909).” This decoration was located on the first two floors of the façade, beside the porticoed entrance of the hotel (Image 6).⁴⁹ The “vegetal-themed Deco panels” surrounded “four hollow

⁴⁴ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁴⁵ *Miami Herald*, May 19, 1935.

⁴⁶ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁴⁷ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁴⁸ Lejeune and Shulman, 44, 7.

⁴⁹ Lejeune and Shulman, 70.

piers of quarried keystone.”⁵⁰ Between these piers were recessed “window bays and spandrels” that emphasized “the intervening pilasters” that “delivered a powerful vertical surge.”⁵¹ Located six stories above the piers were “capitals that looked like electric condensers.”⁵² The pilasters were playful and added a charming and Modern look to the hotel. This whimsical combination of classical and Modern found on the exterior of the Atlantis carried over into its interior.

The back of the Atlantis “was just as playful and full of invention” as the front of the hotel (Image 7).⁵³ The back façade was L-shaped and instead of using vegetal decoration, “Dixon used black vitrolite in a pattern that mimicked the plan of the hotel” (Image 8).⁵⁴ Vitrolite was a new type of glass tile that was commonly used in the interior and on the exterior of buildings in the ‘20s and ‘30s typically in the Art Deco style. There were three vitrolite panels placed at the back entrance of the hotel. Circles emulating portholes were cut out of the top portion of these panels. This added a nautical element to the Atlantis, which was common in other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. Six stories above the vitrolite panels Dixon used the same capitals that were on the front of the building.

“The Atlantis,”—two architectural historians have noted—“molded to its site and program, exhibited a rather typical lack of formality; entered off-axis, its frontal asymmetry was diffused by a series of setbacks while in back the building

⁵⁰ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁵¹ Lejeune and Shulman, 53.

⁵² *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁵³ Lejeune and Shulman, 172.

⁵⁴ Lejeune and Shulman, 172.

was bent to capture more oceanfront views.”⁵⁵ Both the back and the front of the Atlantis were “somewhat awkward, yet pleasant and witty, as if the architect intended to demonstrate that the exercise should not be taken too seriously.”⁵⁶ The interior of the Atlantis also was pleasant and witty, which gave a lighthearted and relaxing atmosphere to the interior spaces found throughout the hotel and Miami Beach.

Clearly, the back of the Atlantis was just as important as the front of the hotel since it was the back of the hotel that overlooked the ocean. As a result, the guests would spend a majority of their time relaxing oceanfront. Guests would spend time sitting at the terrace located off the back of the hotel, where they could sit and enjoy the sun and a bite to eat. In fact, the *Miami Herald* reported that “many sunny hours will be spent at breakfast and luncheon on the attractive terrace of the Atlantis, overlooking the beach walk and the Cabana Colony.”⁵⁷ The *Miami Herald* also reported that the terrace extended “across the entire ocean front with a lawn between it and the ocean boardwalk.”⁵⁸ At the time of construction, there was supposed to be a “series of fountains with unusual lighting systems” on the lawn, yet is unclear if this interesting and unique feature ever was created.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it is clear that this exterior space was very important to the Atlantis hotel and its guests. In fact, the “In New York” syndicated column included the “ocean front off the Atlantis, with the water a

⁵⁵ Lejeune and Shulman, 53.

⁵⁶ Lejeune and Shulman, 172.

⁵⁷ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁵⁸ *Miami Herald*, May 19, 1935.

⁵⁹ *Miami Herald*, May 19, 1935.

clear and turquoise blue” in its segment on “Lovely Sights in Miami Beach.”⁶⁰

Clearly, the exterior space in the back of the Atlantis was highly regarded by the public.

As a result of its unique exterior (and interior as will be discussed later), the Atlantis Hotel promoted itself as one of the most chic hotels in America. The owners ran advertisements throughout the country constantly from 1935 to 1941. The majority, if not all of these ads, ran during the late fall and into the winter in order to attract additional business for those seasons. An ad about the Atlantis ran in *The New York Times* more than a month before the hotel opened. This ad stated, “The ATLANTIS, on the Ocean. Newest and smartest resort hotel in America. Write for booklet. Wm. G. McKeenin, Manager.”⁶¹ This ad, which ran more than 11 times in the winter of 1935 and 1936, was often placed around other ads relating to Miami Beach. A larger advertisement promoting the Atlantis ran in the *Miami Herald* the day the hotel opened on January 19, 1936. This ad described the Atlantis as “America’s Newest and Smartest Resort Hotel, Opening Today, A veritable paragon of advanced engineering and architectural design, combining the latest developments in residential comfort with the efficiency of modern hotel operation. Continental standards of Cuisine and Service add a note of Old World charm to an ensemble as smart as tomorrow.”⁶² From the start, these advertisements about the Atlantis were making a bold statement about the

⁶⁰ George Ross, “In New York,” *Ironwood Daily Globe*, February 11, 1936.

⁶¹ Atlantis Advertisement, *The New York Times*, December 10, 1935.

⁶² *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

high-quality service and unique and Modern lodging available at this well-designed hotel.

Advertisements about the Atlantis continued to be published after the hotel's first season. A want ad ran in *The New York Times* during the winter of 1936-37. It was simple, short and to the point. "In Miami Beach—The Atlantis, America's smartest resort hotel. Directly on the Ocean. Advance reservations available."⁶³ In addition to the want ads, the Atlantis started to publicize itself using large, sleek advertisements that included their logo. One ad ran several times in *The New York Times* in addition to other large market newspapers such as *The Washington Post* and *Chicago Daily Tribune*. This ad stated, "The Atlantis on the Ocean at 27th St...Miami Beach. Modern magnificence, together with Old World standards of cuisine and service, distinguishes The Atlantis...acknowledged one of America's Smartest Resort Hotels. The Balkan Room, a fantasie [*sic*] in decoration and the most talked of spot in Miami Beach, will be more popular than ever."⁶⁴

This ad described the Modern aspects of the hotel. However, the ad also tied the Atlantis to the past by mentioning its Old World standards. Combining Modern elements with those from the past, like we saw with the exterior, was prevalent throughout the Atlantis and other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. In addition, this ad was important because it showed the importance of the interior

⁶³ Atlantis Advertisement, *The New York Times*, December 15, 1936.

⁶⁴ Atlantis Advertisement, *The Washington Post*, November 24, 1940.

spaces of the Atlantis. By mentioning the Balkan Room, the owners were placing just as much importance on that space as they were on the oceanfront location of the hotel. In fact, more space is given to the Balkan Room than the prime location of the hotel.

Another ad that ran in *The New York Times* played off the vacation experience of others, "Ask those who have been here...Ask Atlantis guests...their praise will confirm what you have already heard."⁶⁵ This advertisement, focusing on the power of word of mouth advertising was important since a 1939 Works Progress Administration survey of Florida tourists found that nearly 45 percent of the tourists discovered vacations in Florida through word of mouth.⁶⁶

The most eloquent and boastful advertisement about the Atlantis appeared in the 1936 Miami Beach Hotel and Apartment Handbook, which was a guide for tourists that included advertisements from many Miami Beach hotels and apartments (Image 9). This ad stated,

Florida's Finest Resort Hotel....Centuries ago, the fabulous palaces of the 'lost continent' of Atlantis sank into the sea bearing with them a culture that lives in legend, even today, as the outstanding civilization of its time. Now beside that same shimmering sea, there rises a new Atlantis, a palatial hostelry, the Queen of America's winter playground, built in the same tradition of superiority that marked its namesake continent. True to the tradition that inspired its building, the hotel itself is a paragon on modern construction. Its unusually spacious and luxuriously appointed public rooms are designed to take full advantage of the seaside location. A unique and exclusive feature is

⁶⁵ Atlantis Advertisement, *The New York Times*, December 14, 1941.

⁶⁶ "The Florida Tourist Project: The Florida Tourist Survey of Tourists," Work Projects Administration, 1939, 9.

the Recreation Room, occupying the entire top floor of the north wing, where lectures, concerts, and recitals are staged. The dining room is glass-enclosed on the ocean side with massive windows extending from floor to ceiling. Here the finest viands prepared by world famous chefs are served in the true continental style. Sleeping rooms are large and airy and are equipped with the most modern of de luxe furnishings. For rare occasions when the temperature drops below normal, the entire building is supplied with steam heat. In a word, the Atlantis is your ideal of an ultra-modern winter home in America's tropics... a home expertly staffed and completely devoted to your comfort, pleasure and entertainment.⁶⁷

This advertisement was extravagant and a boastful appeal to tourists. One likely reason for this was because the ad ran in a booklet filled with ads from other hotels in Miami Beach. Since there were no photos to showcase the exotic and unique setting, the owners of the Atlantis described the hotel in a way that would make it stand apart from other oceanfront hotels. One can imagine that by just reading this ad, potential guests would be curious and drawn to visit this exciting hotel.

The Atlantis Hotel also was mentioned in several newspaper articles throughout the country. Many of these references appeared in the social pages of newspapers as large as *The Washington Post* and as small as the *The Portsmouth Times* (Ohio). *The Portsmouth Times* ran in its social pages that Mrs. Dan Labold was going to winter in Miami Beach at the Atlantis Hotel (Image 10).⁶⁸ The photograph of Mrs. Labold depicted an older woman dressed in black. She appeared to be conservative and stiff, and one must wonder if the leisurely

⁶⁷ *Miami Beach Hotel and Apartment Book*, Season 1936-1937, City of Miami Beach Archives, p.13, <http://weblink.miamibeachfl.gov/Search.aspx>.

⁶⁸ *The Portsmouth Times*, "Weddings, Engagements, organization Activities," December 26, 1937.

environment enticed her to loosen her collar and let her hair down once she arrived at the Atlantis.

The quality of the Atlantis extended beyond its structure. The staff of the Atlantis, as mentioned in their advertisements and the *Miami Herald*, was experienced in their field and they knew how to pamper hotel guests. For example, the superintendent of the hotel, Thomas P. Kennedy, had worked 18 years at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York and “had established a name for himself” and had “kept a constant personal contact with his clientele;” Edward Collins, the assistant manager, had experience at large resorts on the East Coast, including eight years at the Greenbrier; and “managing director at the opening of the hotel was William G. McKeenin, who had experience working at Miami Beach hotels since 1922.”⁶⁹

It is not known who did the interior design work in many of the Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. “Contradictions in the role of the Miami Beach architect are apparent. On one hand, architects coordinated the murals, etched glass, abstract patterns of terrazzo, ornate stainless steel and tubular steel metalwork, and lighting fixtures; they selected the furnishings, matchbook covers and employee uniforms. On the other hand, the interior decoration of hotels was largely systematized by outside showrooms and designers.”⁷⁰ Though it is not clear if one or more of these groups designed the interior of the Atlantis, it is known that

⁶⁹ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁷⁰ Lejeune and Shulman, 66.

the real estate brokers, Miller and Weil, played an important role in the interior design in addition to other aspects of the creation of the Atlantis Hotel. "The opening of the Atlantis on the Ocean front at 26th street sees the completion of an idea suggested by these two realtors to their clients nearly one year ago. From the selection of the site to the completion of the artistic furnishings, Miller-Weil have assisted in creating an outstanding modernistic hotelstry [*sic*]."71

One can assume that several people with different backgrounds, in addition to Dixon, had a hand in the outcome of the interiors of the Atlantis. "The decorative scheme in the new Atlantis Hotel...is in the gay continental manner through all the public spaces, including the lobby, lounge, dining room and cocktail room, according to L. Murray Dixon, designer of the structure. The theme is smart and fashionable and prevails from the first floor to the commodious roof garden overlooking the ocean."72 Nevertheless, we will see in the following chapters that what resulted in the interior public spaces in the Atlantis were fashionable, fun, and unique.

⁷¹ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁷² *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

Chapter Three—Lobby and Lounge Area

The Lobby

The first interior space a guest would encounter when they entered the Atlantis was the two-story lobby (Image 11, 12, 13). It was the largest and most elaborately designed public space in the hotel because the lobby was the first space a guest would experience upon entering this hotel. Indeed entering this hotel lobby was an experience. In fact, the lobby of the Atlantis was likely the most elaborate space in all Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. Visitors to the Atlantis “entered an almost Egyptian pillared lobby designed to emulate the ‘massive marbled halls of Atlantis.’” Blue columns reinforced the idea that the visitors were underwater, while the silver leaf that covered the ceiling represented the lush, exotic, and rich qualities of the mysterious continent of Atlantis. The fantastic theme of the aquatic land continued in a mural by Chester Tingler.⁷³ The reaction of guests must have been one of awe and wonder as they walked through this lobby. As soon as they crossed through the doors, guests at the Atlantis were transported to an exotic and tropical fantasy unlike any other hotel interior they had likely experienced before.

The two-story lobby of the Atlantis was large compared to the majority of Art Deco lobbies built in Miami Beach. Since the majority of Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach were about four stories high, they did not have room for such spacious lobbies. The Atlantis’ lobby was large and had four columns located

⁷³ Lejeune and Shulman, 70.

around the room that supported a 20-foot ceiling.⁷⁴ There was a mezzanine that allowed guests to look down upon the lobby. The mezzanine had a banister with a curved rail that wound through horizontal rails.

Large windows in the lobby allowed guests to look out at the ocean and sunlight filled the room during the daytime. One set of windows was located at the entrance, while the other set was opposite. Historical photographs of the lobby of the Atlantis do not show the Ocean front windows, but instead showcased those at the entrance. These windows were located above the three sets of double doors at the entrance all of which were made out of mahogany.⁷⁵ Between the doors and windows were three shells decorating the wall in relief. Long, dark patterned curtains hung from the ceiling to the floor on each side of the windows and doors. Wall sconces shaped like four fountains stacked on top of each other also were located between the windows. Both the shells and fountains were an illustrative example of tropical décor used throughout the lobby of the Atlantis.

In addition to the tropical elements, Modern elements often appeared in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. This included architectural details such as large windows, open floor plans, and two-storied rooms. Although the architectural details of the Atlantis' lobby were Modern, the furniture used in this space was quite different from what was used in other interiors typical of the Modern style.

⁷⁴ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁷⁵ *Miami Herald*, May 19, 1935.

Where the furniture used in other Modern interiors often were made of metal and were new forms, the furniture in the Atlantis was a Modernized version of familiar forms. Art Deco furniture in the 1920s was luxurious, decorative, and contemporary takes on past styles. The Art Deco furniture used in the Atlantis also was a contemporary take on past furniture, but instead of being luxurious and decorative the furniture was more affordable and streamlined. This Modern architecture combined with Art Deco furniture was an illustrative example of the marriage of Art Deco and Modernism found in Miami Beach Art Deco in the 1930s.

Most of the seating furniture in the lobby of the Atlantis was placed around the four columns in the room. This included “inviting chairs” and small sofas which resulted in many areas for guests to leisurely sit.⁷⁶ It appeared that no chairs or sofas were used twice, and even if the furniture was similar in form, they had different upholstery. The chairs used throughout the lobby were armchairs. Some had wooden arms while others had upholstered arms. Some of the chairs and small sofas had straight backs while others had rounded backs. As mentioned earlier, the style of the chairs and the sofas were not overly Modern in that they were not made of tubular steel or leather. They were made of wood and upholstery. However, the designs of the chairs and sofas hint at Modernism, because of their clean lines and interesting upholsteries.

⁷⁶ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

Photos reveal that one sofa was dark with a minimal pattern and a light trim while another sofa had medium colored fabrics with a larger pattern. The chairs around the lobby also had small patterns on their upholstery. A couple of chairs had a small checkered pattern while another had light colored diagonal lines on a dark background. Even though it is hard to determine the exact colors used on the fabrics it is important to point out that these fabrics coordinated with the Atlantis-themed mural on the upper walls of the lobby.⁷⁷ Compared to the other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach, the Atlantis had one of the largest varieties of seating furniture, and these “lavish furnishings” were “characteristic of the hotel throughout.”⁷⁸

Even though there were a variety of fabrics on the furniture, the same rugs were used throughout the lobby. These large rugs had a dark background with a medium and light pattern of circles in the foreground. These rugs were placed on a light-colored terrazzo floor that had darker geometric designs. Terrazzo, which was the most common floor treatment for lobbies in Art Deco Miami Beach, is “mosaic flooring made by embedding small pieces of marble or granite into concrete.”⁷⁹ The bold abstract designs on the rugs and the terrazzo floor were representative of the bold patterns popular in both Art Deco and Modernism. Other Modern decorative accents found around the Atlantis’ lobby included the pendant light fixtures made of bronze and glass that hung from the ceiling and

⁷⁷ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁷⁸ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁷⁹ Cerwinske, 68.

the circular metal ashtrays that were placed throughout the seating areas so guests could both relax and extinguish their cigarettes.⁸⁰

There was at least one end table positioned by a group of furniture placed around one of the columns. There also was a lamp with a simple white lampshade on this table. Floor lamps also were placed around the lobby of the Atlantis. These lampshades were not as Modern as the other light fixtures in the room such as the metal wall sconces.

Two interesting details found in the lobby of the Atlantis that reflected the tropical location of the hotel included a large globe that sat on the floor in the center of the lobby and a large marlin that hung on the wall. Giant palm plants placed around the lobby were not only tropical, but also gave the appearance that the trees growing outside were also growing inside the hotel. These smaller decorative features added to the atmosphere of the interior and made the Atlantis lobby pleasant and relaxing for guests enjoying the space.

As mentioned earlier, the Atlantis was the first large-scale Art Deco hotel built in Miami Beach and it remained one of the more spacious hotels throughout the era. Yet after the Atlantis was built, other large hotels such as Dixon's Tides Hotel, Victor Hotel, Raleigh Hotel, Grossinger Beach Hotel, Igor Polevitzky's Albion Hotel, and Shelborne Hotel were built with similar features.⁸¹ Many of

⁸⁰ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁸¹ See Appendix A for full description of these hotels.

these copycat features included: high ceilings, light colored walls, large columns placed throughout the rooms, mezzanines or balconies overlooking the lobbies with decorative metal railings, murals, and large windows located through out the lobbies. Some of these elements even carried over to smaller Art Deco hotels.

Like the Atlantis, the Tides Hotel, Victor Hotel, WinterHaven Hotel, Albion Hotel, and Shelborne Hotel all had two-level lobbies with mezzanines or balconies that overlooked their spacious lobbies (Image 14, 15, 16, 17). All of these hotels also had large windows that allowed large amounts of sunlight to fill the lobbies. These features were common in Modern architecture that was popular during the time these hotels were built. However, the architecture was not the only Modern elements found in the interiors of Art Deco hotels. The use of metal and glass light fixtures in a Modern style was common in most Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. While the Atlantis had metal wall sconces that gave the interior a Modern touch, the Victor and WinterHaven hotels also had glass and metal pendant lights hanging from their ceilings that added to the Modern feel of the space. Even the small 60-room Essex House Hotel incorporated Modern light fixtures into their lobby (Image 18).

As mentioned earlier the Atlantis had a terrazzo floor. Terrazzo was a new technique in flooring used in many Miami Beach Art Deco hotels. The terrazzo flooring was laid out in abstract patterns. The floors were often designed to reflect the bold patterns that were popular in both the Art Deco and Modernism

movements. Sometimes there were hidden messages in these floor designs. An example of this was seen in the terrazzo floor of the Essex House Hotel.

Geometric designs on the floor included arrows, which pointed guests to the location of the illegal gambling operations hosted in a more private room off of the lobby.⁸² The Raleigh Hotel incorporated an image of a bubbling cocktail on its terrazzo floor in its cocktail room.

An ad for the Atlas White Company, a group that manufactured terrazzo floors, ran in the December 1938 *Architectural Forum*. The ad mentioned the positive aspects of terrazzo: “here is flooring that has everything. It is attractive, durable, of moderate cost, inexpensive to maintain—the flooring you refinish with water and a mop!”⁸³ The ad also included a large color image of the lobby of the Dixon’s Victor Hotel. Using an image of a Miami Beach Art Deco hotel shows that these hotels were important and stylish enough that they were used in national advertisements in order to help sell products. The image also speaks to the high quality of designs found on the terrazzo floors in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach.

Often terrazzo floors were covered with rugs as they were in the Atlantis and added a splash of Modernity to the interiors. Sometimes the rugs were less decorative such as the solid colored rugs found at the Tides and Grossinger Beach hotels, while others had more decorative patterns such as the repeating palms on a rug in the lobby of the Grossinger Beach or the repeating circular

⁸² Miami Design Preservation League, Walking Tour, “Ocean Drive and Beyond,” August 2007.

⁸³ Atlas White Company Advertisement, *Architectural Forum* 69 (December 1938).

pattern used on the rugs throughout the Atlantis lobby and lounge (Image 19, 20). However, the most interesting and Modern rugs studied for this paper were the rugs found in the large Victor Hotel and the small Beach Plaza Hotel (Image 21). Even though these hotels were at opposite ends of the spectrum in size, the Modern interior design found in both hotel lobbies was quite similar. There were abstract lines and circles on the terrazzo flooring of both hotels that were covered by dark rugs. These rugs had very dark backgrounds with abstract boxes, lines, and curves that sometimes connected and other times did not. The most striking aspect about the rugs in both the Victor and the Beach Plaza was how similar they were to artwork by Wassily Kandinsky. As a result, it appeared that guests at these hotels could walk on Modern art. By using Modern patterns on rugs, it was an attempt to make Modernism a little more accessible to hotel guests. If one was uncomfortable with bold and abstract designs on a canvas, it was possible these designs could be made more acceptable on a rug.

The columns that held up the large ceilings of the larger lobbies often became decorative elements in the interior of Miami Beach Art Deco hotels. In the case of the Atlantis, the blue columns helped draw the hotel guests' eyes up to the truly unique—and unequalled—silver-leaf ceiling. Other hotels left their large columns undecorated, simple, and round. In the case of the Raleigh and the Albion hotels, they both had columns that hinted of the tropical climate where they were situated. In both hotels, the columns resembled palm trees since they

were fluted at the top and had incised horizontal lines. As a result, a guest at either hotel could experience the outside environment inside the hotel.

No other hotel built in Miami Beach during the Art Deco era had a ceiling as dramatic as the silver leaf one at the Atlantis. In fact, many hotels shied away from having any decoration on the ceiling at all. Yet there were two techniques that appeared in the ceilings of Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. This was the use of coved and stepped ceilings. Coved ceilings often used recessed lighting to light the lobbies or other public spaces of the hotels. The Shelborne and Raleigh hotels had rectangular coves in their ceilings and the Albion Hotel had a large round cove in its ceiling. Not only was the look Modern, but the lighting technique was as well. Neon lights were used in these coves, which was a brand new look. Colored lights were sometimes used to make the effect even more Modern. Pink was one of the most popular colors used. In fact, “the expression ‘in the pink’ was derived in the 30’s when pink lighting was used in clubs and glamour spots to give skin tones a healthful and attractive glow.”⁸⁴ The other common decorative ceiling accent was known as steps. In the case of the Victor Hotel, the ceiling had large steps to match the large size of the lobby, while the Essex House had scaled down, less dramatic steps along the edge of its ceiling.

Another element that was prevalent throughout almost every Art Deco hotel in Miami Beach was the use of murals. Murals—no matter what size or quality—were visible in almost every lobby and other public space in Miami

⁸⁴ Cerwinske, 77.

Beach's Art Deco district. The themes of the murals were not chosen at random. Some of the murals related to the theme of the hotel or the design of the room where the mural was located. As mentioned earlier, the theme of the mural in the lobby of the Atlantis Hotel depicted the lost city itself. The Marlin Hotel had a mural of a marlin swimming above the front desk, the Mayan Room at the Shelborne Hotel had a Mayan mural, and the Betsy Ross Hotel displayed a colonial-themed mural.

While some murals depicted themes that coordinated with the hotels or certain rooms, the majority of the murals in Art Deco Miami Beach sported tropical or Floridian themes. The large colorful mural on the upper level of the Victor Hotel showcased flamingos and native Florida flora and fauna. The Tides Hotel had murals that depicted the ocean, with breaking white capped waves. The Essex House's mural surrounded its fireplace and "depicted an Indian poling his dugout canoe through the Florida Everglades."⁸⁵ The Grossinger Beach Hotel had two murals with Floridian and tropical themes. One was a nautical-inspired map while the other mural had cranes taking flight in a natural setting.

Murals appeared frequently in many buildings during the 1930s. This was largely the result of different mural projects being created by organizations such as the Works Progress Administration that found work for unemployed artists. These murals decorated the walls of many public buildings across the country. This was the case in Florida as well. Throughout Florida, post offices had murals

⁸⁵ Lejeune and Shulman, 69-70.

with Floridian themes that often depicted scenes of Florida's history. Many of the murals also found in the Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach related to Florida, whether it was telling the story of the state's history and culture such as the mural at the Essex House or depicting flora or fauna native to Florida like the mural on the ceiling in the main dining room at the Atlantis. Whether the murals were in a hotel or post office they played an important role. One historian described it this way: "murals were used as narrative devices, to illustrate a theme or depict a local connection. As such, they were important elements of Miami Beach's public relations and advertising infrastructure."⁸⁶

Returning to Art Deco hotel lobby furniture, the Atlantis had a broad range of furniture in different shapes and with different types of upholstery throughout its lobby. Some Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach also used a range of furniture with different upholstery as well, but they did not have as large of a variety as found at the Atlantis. Other hotels in Miami Beach chose different forms, but had similar fabrics. Nevertheless, the placement of the furniture in the lobbies of all of these hotels was often similar.

One of the most interesting, but not necessarily best examples of furniture in an Art Deco hotel lobby was at the WinterHaven Hotel. This hotel had an open two-story lobby with Modern features including decorative glass, mirrors, and abstract terrazzo flooring. However, the furniture in this hotel was not Modern at all. More classic forms of furniture were covered with what appeared to be chintz

⁸⁶ Lejeune and Shulman, 69.

fabric—not what one would consider Art Deco or Modern. This furniture was likely more familiar to the guests staying at the hotel, so if the interior architectural details were too Modern for the guests, they would be comforted by the familiar furniture. Using more conservative furniture in the hotel lobbies was not rare. “Most hotel lobbies arranged with doily-covered sofas and armchairs, area rugs, standing ashtrays, etcetera, all the comforts of the Brooklyn or Bronx apartment their thirties patrons had left behind.”⁸⁷ Though the furniture in the lobby at the Atlantis was not this traditional or conservative, the forms of the furniture would have been familiar to guests and they would have been able to sit comfortably in these chairs and enjoy the enchanting atmosphere of the Atlantis lobby.

Art Deco Hotel lobbies in Miami Beach also often incorporated tropical details to finish off the atmosphere of the lobby. This was seen in the use of fabrics and rugs that incorporated plants and flowers. The rugs at the Albion had large plant leafs, while the rugs at the Grossinger Beach hotel had smaller leafs. The use of live plants, such as those found at the Atlantis and other hotels like the Victor and the Raleigh, was another common tropical finish added to hotel lobbies. The use of fountains inside hotels lobbies also was common and they added a tropical atmosphere of these interiors. Examples of this include the fountain-like wall sconces between the windows of the Atlantis, the fountain in the center of the Albion Hotel, and a water feature inside the Raleigh Hotel.

⁸⁷ Armbruster, 89.

Several dominant themes appeared throughout the interior spaces of the Atlantis Hotel and other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. These themes included Historicism, the use of past and traditional styles, forms, or imagery; Modernism, the use of new technologies or ideas in addition to incorporating elements in the Modernist style; Floridianism, a term I created that combines tropical, nautical, and Floridian elements; and Exoticism, the use of exotic or fantasy-inspired motifs. These four themes often were used in combination with each other in many of the public interior spaces of the Atlantis and other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. Each of these four themes was dominant in four different rooms found in the interior of the Atlantis Hotel. The theme most prevalent in the lobby of the Atlantis was Exoticism.

Exoticism was especially important in Miami Beach because it was an Exotic environment. It was located far south, an area likely foreign to its Midwestern and Northern guests. The weather was idyllic for its Northern visitors, and Miami Beach's playful environment was exotic. The 1938 book, The Magic of Miami Beach, described Miami as a "swamp that man, money and imagination made into a city of the Arabian Nights."⁸⁸

Asian, African, and Mesoamerican motifs found in the Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach also promoted the idea of Exoticism. Examples of this included bamboo etched on glass and a Chinese-themed etched mirror at the WinterHaven Hotel, the Mayan bar at the Shelborne Hotel, and African-inspired

⁸⁸ Nash, caption of photo before page 129.

patterns such as the zig zags found on the furniture in the lower lounge of the Albion Hotel. Why was exoticism so important to Art Deco design in Miami Beach and throughout the world? "Exotic imagery and motifs were plundered from many cultures. Fuelled by the romance of recent archeological discoveries, the public imagination was fired by the ancient cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica, whose veiled histories were open to endless fantasy and interpretation."⁸⁹

Using Exotic motifs evoked feelings of romanticism and fantasy, and were especially important in a vacation destination since there is a sense of fantasy in vacation itself. While on holiday one eats out, relaxes, drinks, and does not work. Vacation did and still does evoke feelings of fantasy. While being swept away in the fantasy of vacation, guests likely found it easier to spend money on activities and experiences they were unlikely to treat themselves to at home.

"Miami Beach responded to the dream of escape from the industrial city and the search for an ideal climate and landscape."⁹⁰ Even the weather in Miami Beach was dreamlike; *The Magic of Miami Beach* described the climate as "one long gorgeous summer with Nature trying to outdo herself in magnificence from month to month."⁹¹ In addition, there were no cemeteries in Miami Beach and this absence of death gave tourists and residents alike a sense of living forever, which further encouraged the idea of fantasy in Miami Beach. Not only did the

⁸⁹ Bention, 125.

⁹⁰ Lejeune and Shulman, 12.

⁹¹ Nash, 143.

climate add to the fantasy of Miami Beach, the interior design of the Art Deco hotels was crucial in creating the idea of fantasy. No hotel was better at creating the theme of fantasy than the Atlantis Hotel, whose concept, architecture, and interiors were rooted in fantasy and escapism.

The name Atlantis set the tone for an exotic tropical destination. The theme of this hotel was based on fantasy and one could only imagine that staying here would evoke a sense of escapism and make believe—a true vacation. “Dixon’s Atlantis was one of a number of hotels that used exotic materials, murals and other ornament to develop its own culture of fantasy around a theme or legend.”⁹² By simply entering the lobby guests would feel as if they stepped into the legendary continent of Atlantis with its blue columns, marlin on the wall, and Atlantis-themed mural. But this was not the Atlantis of legend. This was a new Atlantis, inspired by the past, but also the promise of the future. This play of old, tropical, exotic, and Modern filled the lobby of the Atlantis and continued throughout the hotel.

The theater also influenced Art Deco around the world and in Miami Beach. The theater was considered exotic because it was (and still is) a fantasy based on a make-believe environment. “The architecture of Old Miami Beach (which was constructed primarily during the 1930s) manifested in a style that was once theatrical, romantic, streamlined, sculptural, culturally derivative, and

⁹² Lejeune and Shulman, 70.

imbued with a sense of fantasy and animation.”⁹³ The theatrical qualities found in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach included “the marquee entry, the two-story lobby with wrap-around balcony, wall murals, decorative metalwork and lighting.” Larger hotels were theatrical but “the theatrical ambiance was reproduced in smaller hotels as well.”⁹⁴

Sitting in the lobby was an important activity because it was a place where guests could see and be seen. Lounging in the lobby also was quite theatrical. The lobby of the Atlantis was theatrical since it was so extravagant. However, the lobby itself also was very much like a theatre. The lobby was part stage and part audience. You could be on stage while sitting in a chair, but you also could be the audience. An additional level of theatricality in the Atlantis’ lobby was created by the mezzanine, where the audience could look down on a large dramatic stage—the lobby. Vacationers at the Atlantis had a choice, whether sitting in the lobby, bar, dining room, or lounge they could either be on stage or part of the audience.

The Lounge

The lounge of the Atlantis, located off the lobby, was another large public space (Image 22). It was a little smaller than the lobby, but it was more intimate as a result of its one-story ceiling. Like the lobby, the lounge had windows at two

⁹³ Cerwinske, 11.

⁹⁴ Lejeune and Shulman, 45.

ends, but there were more at the back to highlight the oceanfront view. The “deep-hued rugs” that were used in the lobby and were “soft and pleasing to tread” also were used in the lounge.⁹⁵ The same Modern ashtrays and traditional floor lamps were in both the lobby and the lounge.

Armchairs similar to the ones in the lobby were placed around the lounge for guests to sit. They were similar to the chairs and sofas in the lobby. There also were large lounges to sit in placed around the room. These lounges were a dark color and had a Modern look because of their curved shape and sleek lines. As a result of the comfortable furniture and intimate atmosphere, one article declared “many an interesting leisure hour will be spent by visitors to the new Atlantis in the inviting lounge” which had “ocean front windows, deep chairs and spacious lounges.”⁹⁶

Modern sleek, oval-shaped coffee tables with sphere-like decoration were placed in front of the lounges. The curve of the table mirrored the curve of the lounges. The repetition of the bold shapes, like the form of the lounges and the interesting shape of the tables, added a Modern look to the lounge that was repeated in the abstract rug and floor. Since the lounge was connected to the lobby, the atmosphere and the themes found in the lobby carried over to the lounge. But the low ceilings and lack of some of the more elaborate decorations such as the colored columns, mural, and silver-leaf ceiling, gave the lounge a

⁹⁵ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁹⁶ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

more private atmosphere. As a result, a guest would be able to sit and relax in an environment that was elegant, sophisticated, and unique, but likely calmer than the lobby.

Incorporating a lounge into an Art Deco hotel was not unique. Most of the larger hotels built in Miami Beach did have some sort of lounge for guests to relax. However, the smaller hotels did not have room for such a space. What separated the Atlantis' lounge from other lounges in Miami Beach was size. The lounge in the Atlantis was almost as large as its lobby perhaps expressing the Atlantis' desire to provide more space for guests to socialize and relax in.

At the opposite end of the spectrum was the Raleigh Hotel. The lounge at the Atlantis appeared to be inspired by contemporary design, while the lounge at the Raleigh was directly inspired by the past. Alone, the name Raleigh conjures up images of Sir Walter Raleigh and Elizabethan England and the indeed Elizabethan theme brought this lounge to life. The focal point of the room was a faux Royal painting above the fireplace. Instead of light walls like those in the Atlantis' lounge, the walls in the Raleigh's lounge were darker. Windows were still important in this room; however, they had a scrolled cornice above them. The cornice was covered with dark upholstery, which had a coat of arms decorating it. This English-inspired fabric also was used for the curtains. The furniture in the Raleigh's lounge also was inspired by Elizabethan England.

The hotel lounge that was most similar to the one at the Atlantis was at the Albion Hotel (Image 23). Built in 1939, this lounge was located on a lower level off of the lobby. Like the Atlantis, the same rugs used in the lobby were used in the lounge. Another similarity between the two hotels was that the seating furniture used in the lobby was different from what was used in the lounge. Even though the Albion used Modern looking furniture in its lobby, the furniture used in the lounge was bolder and even more Modern. The Albion lounge, like the lounge at the Atlantis, had several armchairs, some with upholstered arms and others with wooden arms. There also was an armless sofa. The most exciting and bold fabric found on any piece of seating furniture researched for this paper was found on two L-shaped sofas that faced each other in the Albion's lounge. The upholstery had a large, bold zig-zag pattern that would definitely draw the guests' attention. By far the most interesting design aspect of the Albion lounge was the "real aquariums" that "formed screen walls between the main lobby and ground floor lounge."⁹⁷ Details such as the aquarium and the use of dynamic upholstery made the Albion Hotel quite alluring. Nevertheless, the Atlantis had a more sensational and unique atmosphere thanks to the other interior public spaces like its dining areas and cocktail lounge that will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁹⁷ Lejeune and Shulman, 69.

Chapter Four—Wining and Dining

The Main Dining Room

As visitors came from places such as Ohio, Michigan, and New York to escape cold winters, they also were escaping everyday life. Instead of eating in a dining room similar to the ones in their homes or favorite restaurants back home, guests dining at the Atlantis were able to escape to dinner in a variety of unique areas with high-quality food only a short distance from their hotel rooms. The exceptional variety of spaces to wine and dine at the Atlantis included the main dining room, the Balkan Room, the cocktail room, and the outdoor terrace that was discussed in Chapter Two. Each of these spaces offered the hotel guest a totally different experience based solely on their unique environments.

The main dining room, located on the first floor of the Atlantis, at first seemed more subdued than the lobby located just down the hall. But once guests were able to acclimate, they found themselves in an elegant yet tropical paradise (Image 24, 25). In fact, the *Miami Herald* stated, “supplementing the excellent cuisine of the dining room of the Atlantis is the luxurious setting.”⁹⁸ The rectangular room was spacious with columns supporting the high ceiling. The walls were a light color, which glowed when the light from the large windows filled up the room. There were “four large windows stretching across the full width and affording an excellent view of the ocean.”⁹⁹ The floor to ceiling windows were

⁹⁸ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

⁹⁹ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

“divided by panels of march marble in mottled rose.” The use of rose-colored marble added a sophisticated atmosphere to this charming room.

In addition to the tropical views out the windows, guests were treated to an additional tropical view on the ceiling. As reported by the *Miami Herald* on opening day, the hand-painted mural on the ceiling depicted “wild geese and pink flamingos of the tropics in flight across an azure background, to which the ivory and red furnishings lend an interesting accent.”¹⁰⁰

The dining room was full of tables covered in white tablecloths. Ivory-colored wicker-looking chairs, likely made of wood, were placed around the tables. The wicker look of the chairs added to the tropical theme visible throughout the room. The floor was covered with dark carpet that had a pattern of plants. Plants also decorated the curtains that framed the large windows. Even the sheers on the windows had a plant-like pattern on them. Guests were enveloped by the tropical elements found throughout the main dining room of the Atlantis.

Dome-shaped pendant lights hung from the ceiling providing light that supplemented the natural sunlight that freely entered the room. These fixtures appear to be made of glass and metal, but instead of looking Modern, they looked more elegant and traditional. In the main dining room, there was a combination of elegant and tropical elements. The tropical details were soft and

¹⁰⁰ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

subtle; they had an elegant quality that was prevalent throughout this room. This simple and stylish dining room kept the guests' attention focused on the food being served, conversation at the table, and magnificent views inside and outside of the room.

The main dining room in the Atlantis was similar to other dining rooms in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. In fact, most similarities between Art Deco hotels could be found in their dining rooms. Overall, dining rooms in Art Deco hotels were simple, classic, and elegant. They were not overly Modern, like the bars that will be discussed later in this chapter, and they were not overtly tropical. The only tropical element in many of the dining rooms found in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach were the views of the landscapes outside of the windows.

Like the Atlantis, the dining rooms at the Raleigh Hotel, Grossinger Beach Hotel, Victor Hotel, and the Tides Hotel were two-stories tall and had columns supporting the room (Image 26, 27, 28). Often these dining rooms had light colored walls. The majority of dining rooms also had large windows with tropical ocean views. These windows took up most of the walls in the dining room. As a result, the tropical outdoor views were a focal point of the room. The furniture used in the dining rooms of Art Deco hotels also often had a more historical and classical look.

Why were the majority of dining rooms often less decorative and conservative in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach? This could be because the act of eating dinner was more of a traditional activity. Even though guests were staying in a Modern hotel it was important to continue the tradition of eating a fine meal in an elegant and formal atmosphere. As a result, the majority of hotels in Miami Beach—including the Atlantis—followed this tradition. The Atlantis by far had the most tropical dining room because of the lush mural on the ceiling and the wicker-inspired chairs. Because of its elegant yet tropical environment, the dining room at the Atlantis was one of the most unique dining rooms found in all of Miami Beach.

The main dining room of the Atlantis, like the lobby, also had a reoccurring theme, Floridianism. Floridianism was the most common theme or type of decoration found in Miami Beach Art Deco hotels interiors. This vernacular style was a combination of tropical, nautical, and other local elements inspired by the state of Florida and its tropical environment. Tropical elements included the use of the sun, water, birds, and plants. Nautical elements included ship railings, balconies, and porthole windows. Local elements were imagery of swampland and American Indians native to Florida. Floridianism was not found in Art Deco throughout the world, it was unique to Art Deco in Miami Beach. However, certain tropical elements occurred frequently in Art Deco design.

Examples of tropical elements found in other Miami Beach Art Deco hotel interiors included the fountain in the center of the Albion Hotel, the fountain-like wall sconces at the Atlantis Hotel, and a water feature located inside the Raleigh Hotel. However, there were many other tropical or Floridian elements used in the Atlantis and other Art Deco hotel interiors in Miami Beach. These elements were used not just because they were popular at the time; they were used because they also reflected the unique environment of Miami Beach.

Floridian elements were popular in the Atlantis and other hotels in Miami Beach because they emphasized the unique environment of South Florida. Miami Beach Art Deco used Floridian, tropical, and nautical motifs such as pipe railings, ships' ladders, exotic plant life, waves, fountains, tropical fish, birds, serpents, reptiles, and shells.¹⁰¹ Birds used in Miami Beach Art Deco included flamingos, herons, and pelicans—all of which were common in South Florida. The use of the sun also was important as it symbolized time, linear radiance, and it had an uplifting affect. The sun was especially important for Miami Beach because it was the reason the plants grew so lushly and people visited the area.¹⁰² Ghisalaine Wood, in the chapter on "The Exotic" in Art Deco 1910-1939, states, "iconography of tropical birds and animals, lush vegetation, sunbursts, dancing girls, lotuses, ogress and zig zags gave an exotic flourish to all kinds of design."¹⁰³ The only problem with this statement in relation to Miami Beach was that these were not exotic flourishes. These were local elements that were

¹⁰¹ Lejeune and Shulman, 62, 68.

¹⁰² Lejeune and Shulman, 68.

¹⁰³ Benton, 125.

common to the designers and architects; however, vacationers would consider them exotic.

Colors relating to life in Florida added to the Floridian atmosphere of Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. Colors such as reds, greens, and yellows were frequently found not only in the interior but also on the exterior of the hotels.¹⁰⁴ These tropical colors could also be found in the murals that appeared in almost every Art Deco hotel in Miami Beach including the mural on the ceiling of the main dining room in the Atlantis.

Another way to add Floridian or tropical elements to the interior of an Art Deco hotel was to add plants. Flower and plant reliefs often decorated the interiors and exteriors of the Atlantis and other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. "Flowers, especially voluptuous gladiolas, alluded to the fecund floral paradise."¹⁰⁵ Even the columns at the Raleigh and Albion resembled palm trees. Some hotel interiors included living plants. Though images show no plant life inside, the photos clearly show a swaying palm tree that was framed by the large windows of the main dining room in the Atlantis. Having such large windows show-casing fabulous views of the tropical Floridian beach could not be ignored by guests dining in this space. Fabrics, upholstery, and carpeting decorated with flowers and plants also were common in the interiors of many Miami Beach Art

¹⁰⁴ Lejeune and Shulman, 67.

¹⁰⁵ Hatton, Hay. *Tropical Splendor: An Architectural History of Florida* (E.P. Dutton and Co.: New York, 1971), 95.

Deco hotels including the main dining room of the Atlantis where plants decorated the carpet, sheers, and curtains.

There were many Floridian elements in the Atlantis Hotel and this theme was show-cased in the hotel's elegant and sophisticated main dining room. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, the Floridian elements reinforced the idea that the guests at the Atlantis were on a vacation in a unique, leisurely, and tropical environment.

The Balkan Room

The elegant and formal main dining room contrasted with the more casual Balkan room, which offered guests at the Atlantis a place to informally dine in a unique yet historic setting. The Balkan room had dark walls with a light scalloped border at the top of the walls (Image 29, 30). The border contained folk-like decoration similar to what would be found in Eastern Europe. The Balkan imagery was likely familiar to many of the middle-class tourists vacationing at the Atlantis Hotel, because some of the guests were likely descendants of Eastern Europe. In addition, folk-inspired designs were popular during this period so other guests would likely be familiar with this imagery as well.

Round tables without tablecloths were scattered throughout the room. The lack of tablecloths added to the casual atmosphere of the Balkan Room. The

country or folk feel of the Balkan room continued in the decoration on the back of the chairs used in the room. This folk-like decoration, an organic scroll-like pattern with three medallions above, contrasted with the Modern banquette found along the windows of the Balkan room. The banquette was similar to the sleek lounges found in the lounge of the Atlantis. The colors used in the banquette appeared to be similar to that of the tables and chairs. The Modern and curving shape and tufted back of the banquette also contrasted with the historic and folk-inspired designs found throughout the room including the circular pattern of apples that decorated the floor at the center of the room. Adjacent to the banquette was a bar. The bottom of the bar was tufted similar to the banquette. The bar stools were shaped similarly to the chairs paired with the tables, but they were lacking the decoration found on the back of the chairs. The bar stools had piping decorating them in a lighter color. The ceiling of the Balkan Room was coved. Inside the cove was more Balkan decoration. The exterior of the cove was stepped, which was described earlier in other Art Deco hotel ceilings in Miami Beach. The combination of the Modern stepping and the historic Balkan decoration was another example of different themes combining in order to create a unique style found throughout Miami Beach.

The windows in the Balkan Room had horizontal blinds and sheers. From photographs it appeared that downlights—a new form of lighting technology—were used to illuminate the room. In addition to the downlights, there were uplights that were shaped like pineapples which sat behind the bar and around

the room. The use of pineapples to decorate the room was quite strange as they were not found in the Balkans, but it did tie in with the tropical location of the Balkan Room. The use of plants around the room added to this quirky pairing of tropical and Eastern European decoration. This resulted in a lighthearted atmosphere which was unique to the Atlantis Hotel.

Although the Balkan Room was one of the most striking spaces in the Atlantis, oddly this room was not mentioned in the article published by the *Miami Herald* for the opening of the Atlantis. However, the advertisement that ran during the winters of 1939 to 1941 did highlight the room. "The Balkan Room, a fantasie [*sic*] in decoration and the most talked of spot in Miami Beach, will be more popular than ever."¹⁰⁶ Clearly the owners of the Atlantis felt it was important to advertise one of the most decorative and themed rooms in all of Miami Beach. The Balkan Room's atmosphere was comfortable and casual and it would be easy for all guests—middle or upper class—to feel at ease while dining in this space.

Other hotels followed the lead of the Atlantis in creating extravagant public spaces like the Balkan Room. Opening five years after the Atlantis, the Shelborne Hotel created an interior space similar in layout to the Balkan Room in another over the top, extravagant expression. The Mayan Room at the Shelborne was a place where guests could drink a cocktail or dine in a casual setting (Image 31). Like the Balkan Room, the Mayan Room had tables scattered

¹⁰⁶ Atlantis Advertisement, *The Washington Post*, November 24, 1940.

around the room in addition to a c-shaped bar with bar stools. Decoration on the front of chairs matched other Mayan-themed decoration found around the room on the ceilings, the floor, and the border at the top of the walls. This decoration was in "reds, greens, blues and yellows and depicting in queer-shaped hieroglyphics and gargoyle grinning heads the calendars and shields of Mayan-land which is now Central America."¹⁰⁷ The centerpiece of the Mayan Room was the mural, which depicted "True Man', ruler of this ancient civilization seated on his throne of gold and jaguar skins, dressed in finest jades, embroideries and a very elaborate headdress of quetzal plumes."¹⁰⁸ Even though the themes of the rooms were totally different, the bold decoration and colors found in the Mayan and Balkan rooms were similar to each other. The Balkan imagery was likely more familiar to guests than the Mayan imagery; still they both offered a unique atmosphere for visitors to the Atlantis and Shelborne. Since there were many similarities between the two rooms, it is possible that the Mayan Room was inspired by the Balkan Room.

The imagery found in the Mayan room would have been exotic to visitors to the hotel, while guests at the Atlantis would find the imagery in the Balkan room historical and more familiar. Historicism, though it occurred less than the other three themes discussed in this paper, was very important to Miami Beach Art Deco. As stated earlier, the Art Deco movement drew from past styles and this was true in Miami Beach. Instead of using past styles to reflect a time when

¹⁰⁷ Shelborne Hotel Web site, www.shelborne.com/historic.php.

¹⁰⁸ Shelborne Hotel Web site, www.shelborne.com/historic.php.

there was “better design”, in Miami Beach this was a way to connect the middle-class tourists to their vacation environment by providing them familiar imagery to ease the transition into the Modern and unique vacation destination. Historicism in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach was most visible in the furniture and rooms themed around the past like the Balkan Room.

Historical forms inspired many pieces of furniture—especially the seating. Armchairs, side chairs, and sofas often have the same forms they have had in past centuries. However, the seating furniture had bold upholstery or simplified lines, which gave them a more up-to-date look. Furniture in the Atlantis Hotel in addition to that found in the Essex House Hotel, and Raleigh Hotel lobbies were illustrative examples of furniture that was an updated version of past styles.

Vacationers easily accepted the traditional furniture and historical decoration found in the Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach, as they were more likely to be familiar with this style of decoration. Traditional elements would have been more comforting to people post-Depression, as it would remind them of better times. Again, it would be easier to accept the Modern exterior and interior architectural details if the furniture in the space was more familiar to vacationers. Easing people into modern design and furniture was not new. Large French department stores such as Atelier Primavera eased their shoppers into Modern designs by also selling reproductions of antique furniture. “During the 1920s when competing design studios were established, the department stores

continued to offer copies of antiques to 'a clientele that is frightened by anything new.' Their showrooms regularly features both traditional styles and contemporary designs, which in their catalogues were often juxtaposed on the same or facing pages."¹⁰⁹

Like the Art Deco objects and interiors that were created in Europe in the '20s, historic elements appeared in Miami Beach Art Deco hotels from 1935 to 1941. There were a handful of cases where the historical elements dominated a room, but in most cases these historical and traditional elements were sprinkled throughout and worked with other themes to enhance the interior. Often historic elements and the other three themes—Modernism, exoticism, and Floridianism—were used in combination with each other. In the case of the Balkan Room at the Atlantis, both Modern and Floridian elements appeared in a room dominated by historic themeing. The Modern banquettes and bar do not necessarily match the folk and historical Balkan theme, but they work better than the quirky use of the pineapple sconces placed on the walls in the room. This play on past, present, and future resulted in creative and unique interiors as seen in the Atlantis and other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach.

The Cocktail Room

The bar, or cocktail room as it was referred to in Dixon's floor plan, was located on the first floor of the Atlantis next to the main dining room. The cocktail

¹⁰⁹ Troy, 174.

room contrasted with its elegant neighbor, the main dining room, and the pastoral Balkan Room. The cocktail room was one of the most Modern spaces found in any interior in Miami Beach Art Deco hotels. It was intimate with its “low ceiling, covered by gunmetal mirrors,” which not only reflected the activities of the room but also reflected the “long strips of lighting” that illuminated the room.¹¹⁰ Light also entered the room from the glass brick wall that lined one side of the room.¹¹¹

The bar in the cocktail room was made of “antique chestnut and burnished copper.”¹¹² Once again this shows the combination of themes used in the interior of the Atlantis Hotel. The use of old wood mixed with a Modern use of mirrors and glass showed how the designers of this space were combining the past with the present. There were no barstools used in the cocktail room at the Atlantis, but there were aluminum tables and leather benches.¹¹³ Four triangles decorated the leather on the back of the benches. Two of the triangles were dark colors, while the opposite triangles were a lighter color of leather. The tables used in the cocktail room had interesting Modern forms. One had a rectangular top which had legs decorated with a loop, while the other table had a round top and circular tubes that connected the simple legs. The most interesting detail in this small space was the floor. It was terrazzo, like the lobby, but this floor was decorated with designs of inlaid metal—quite a unique and Modern addition to the room.¹¹⁴ It is easy to imagine happy tourists with cocktails in hand discussing the day’s

¹¹⁰ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

¹¹¹ Lejeune and Shulman, 172.

¹¹² *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

¹¹³ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

¹¹⁴ *Miami Herald*, January 19, 1936.

activities as their reflections danced in the mirrored ceiling in this contemporary and smart setting.

The cocktail room of the Atlantis was one of the most Modern spaces in any hotel in Miami Beach. This intimate room contained Modern design trends and Modern technologies, like the glass brick, mirrored ceiling, tubular lighting, and aluminum furniture. However, there was another Modern bar competing for the attention of locals and tourists. Dixon's Raleigh Hotel incorporated Modern elements to create a bold space to enjoy cocktails (Image 32). It contained many elements that would be found in other Modern interiors at this time including a cove ceiling, new styles of lighting, and tubular steel bar stools. However, the mural found in the bar was clearly influenced by French Art Deco's love of Ancient motifs. The mural depicted several people dressed in Grecian clothing sitting at a table in the woods, raising their glasses in a toast.

The use of glass, mirror, and aluminum conjures images of other Modern bars including Charlotte Perriand's Bar in the Attic created for the 1927 Salon d'Automne in Paris which used mirrors and nickel-plated steel.¹¹⁵ Why were so many bars decorated in the Modern style? This was likely because the idea of drinking cocktails was progressive and Modern. Cocktail parties like those described in The Great Gatsby, where "the bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside," also helped popularize the

¹¹⁵ Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999) was a French furniture designer. Le Corbusier, who she worked with for over 10 years, discovered Perriand after she exhibited the Bar in the Attic. Along with Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier and Perriand created some of the most iconic Modern furniture of the 20th century.

happy hour and drinking cocktails at bars.¹¹⁶ The birth of cocktails was a result of mixing other liquids into alcohol to make the prohibition-era liquor, which tasted poorly due to its amateur distilling, taste better. After prohibition, “the skills developed in illegal bars became widespread and heralded the golden era of the cocktail, the 1930s.”¹¹⁷ New equipment also was designed to make the cocktail experience even more Modern. In fact, an article in *The New York Times* from 1935 stated that “manners, customs and costumes, morals and social usages, industry in the precious metals, even furniture and interior decoration have been influenced by the spread of the cocktail vogue,” and it is likely that the cocktail room at the Atlantis was in some way effected by the cocktail fashion.¹¹⁸

The use of Modern materials and decoration dominated the cocktail room in the Atlantis. In fact, no other theme was present in this room beside the small hint of Historicism visible in the use of antique wood in the bar. Modernism, unlike Art Deco, completely rejected the past. It used new materials and ideas to create innovative forms of furniture and architecture. However, there were artists, designers, and architects who worked in both styles. As a result, some Modern objects are considered to be Art Deco. Similarities between the two styles included “the use of flat, abstract shapes, geometrically conceived forms and modern materials.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *The Great Gatsby* (Scribner: New York, 1953), 40.

¹¹⁷ Wikipedia Web site, “Cocktails,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cocktails>.

¹¹⁸ John. W. Harrington, “Our Cocktails Travel Far They Influence Habits Manners Even Arts,” *The New York Times*, January 20, 1935.

¹¹⁹ Woodham, 289.

Glass was one example of the use of new techniques or materials.

Though not a new material, there were many new techniques created using glass. “Glass was the most technically advanced material of the 1930s” and it “was ideal for Tropical Deco architecture. A hallmark of modernity, glass block conducted light of the year-round Florida sun with little transmission of heat, allowing interior surfaces to be permeated with cool light. Glass block also offered effective sound insulation and was practical to maintain, its surface requiring no polish or paint. Furthermore, its block form added to the geometric statement of the architecture.”¹²⁰ Another new glass technique that also appeared in many Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach was vitrolite. Vitrolite was a pigmented glass that was a “hygienic replacement for marble.” When used in Art Deco, vitrolite was common in red, mint green, or black.¹²¹ Black was the color of choice for the exterior of the Atlantis.

Another modern element found in Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach was lighting. Light fixtures—especially the pendants—in many of these spaces were modern. They were made out of metal and glass and had a sleek, clean, modern form. New lighting techniques from this period, such as recessed and down lighting, also appeared in Art Deco hotel interiors in Miami Beach. These types of hidden lighting were used in hotels like the Raleigh, Shelborne, and the Beach Plaza.

¹²⁰ Lejeune and Shulman, 67, 68.

¹²¹ Lejeune and Shulman, 67.

Modern details often were found in the interior of Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach. As discussed earlier, some of the best examples of Modernism were found in the interior architectural details in the lobbies of these hotels. However, the furniture used in these spaces was not as Modern. In fact, most of the furniture in these interiors recalled past styles, even if they were given contemporary upholstery and Modern lines. The examples of Modern furniture found in hotels included tubular steel tables used in the lobby of the Victor Hotel, the tubular steel stools used in the bar of the Raleigh Hotel, and the aluminum and leather seating at the Atlantis Hotel cocktail room.

Modernism was based on ideals and beliefs. Modernism tried to improve the lives of all human beings through these ideals and beliefs. Well-being for all was important so designers and architects began to create new and simple environments that promoted active lifestyles. As a result, there was an emphasis on healthy lifestyles. Clearly this idea was prevalent in Miami Beach as seen in the ads discussed in Chapter Two, where the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce promoted the city through the healthy lifestyle it embodied.

In order to create a better life for all, designers and architects tried to create Utopia. Utopia is defined as "a place of ideal perfection esp. in laws,

government, and social conditions.”¹²² Modernism created a world that included ideal conditions for living, but was this the case in the Atlantis and Art Deco Miami Beach? A book on the architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon states:

Miami Beach’s eclectic warm and boldly demonstrative architecture had no apparent place in the ‘cold and abstract Utopias’ of Modernism. Its architects were not remote to these Utopias, having been educated and having worked in environments where they were sure to have come into close contact with modern ideas. Rather, their designs belonged to the resort utopias of leisure and pleasure, escape and renewal. The role of the architect was to dress up the hard iconographic relevancy of ‘industrial-looking’ facades of modern housing types... Within this utopia, Miami Beach’s modern buildings were in fact ‘follies’. Consciously designed ‘figures of unreason’, and adapted to the needs of pleasure and leisure, they were the furniture of the ideal city.¹²³

I agree with the statement that Miami Beach was a resort Utopia. I also think a resort or leisurely Utopia was as close as middle-class America could get to a place of perfection. Miami Beach had the ideal climate with an average temperature around 70 degrees in January and 80 degrees in August.¹²⁴ Miami Beach was not only a resort Utopia but an American Utopia since most Americans believed and prided themselves on hard work in order to be rewarded. Americans earned their time for vacation and vacation was likely as close to Utopia as middle-class Americans would get. The cocktail room and the other public spaces in the Atlantis were a further attempt to reach Utopia as they transported hotel guests to a place of ideal perfection if it was only for a few weeks at a time.

¹²² *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Home and Office Edition* (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, Publishers: Springfield, MA, 1998), 576.

¹²³ Lejeune and Shulman, 72.

¹²⁴ Nash, 142.

Chapter Five—Conclusion

The Legacy of the Atlantis Hotel

The Atlantis created an essence of glamour, elegance, and quality throughout its public interior spaces. Themes such as Historicism, Modernism, Exoticism, and Floridianism combined throughout the hotel to create a unique ambiance and style only found at the Atlantis. The joining of these themes helped to establish a leisurely atmosphere for all classes of American tourists to relax and enjoy. Vacationing at the Atlantis allowed its guests to live the American Dream even if it only lasted a couple of weeks. In a short amount of time, this exotic, new world, which was vastly different from day to day life in Northeastern or Midwestern industrial cities, could be reached by car, train, or airplane.

In addition, the Atlantis, like other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach, played with the idea of familiar traditional elements and unfamiliar Modern elements. This idea even appeared in the advertisement discussed earlier for the Atlantis, which stated "in a word, the Atlantis is your ideal of an ultra-modern winter home in America's tropics...a home expertly staffed and completely devoted to your comfort, pleasure and entertainment."¹²⁵ The owners of the Atlantis conveyed the idea that yes this is a Modern, tropical paradise and if that worries you it is ok: you will be comforted and the Modern elements will become familiar since this is your home away from home. The Atlantis provided an experience that was

¹²⁵ Atlantis Advertisement, *Miami Beach Hotel and Apartment Book*, Season 1936-1937, City of Miami Beach Archives, p.13, <http://weblink.miamibeachfl.gov/Search.aspx>.

sufficiently familiar that the guests would not be intimidated by their surroundings during their stay.

The heart of the Atlantis Hotel was its lobby and this was where the theme of lost paradise was most prevalent in the hotel. This idea of themed hotels was new; other themed Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach started to appear after the construction of the Atlantis. As a result, the Atlantis Hotel was likely the first themed hotel in all of Florida. Themed hotels are now commonplace in Florida at resorts such as Walt Disney World and Universal Studios, where hotels have been inspired by diverse places such as Africa, Polynesia, and Italy. Guests at these hotels, like the guests at the Atlantis, are able to escape to exotic places and times without leaving the comfort and familiarity of their own country and spared the expenses of traveling overseas. The guests at these resorts—from a range of social classes—continue to enjoy a leisurely time where they are transported outside of their usual environment while continuing to have benefit of their day to day conveniences of home, which started in hotels like the Atlantis in Miami Beach during the 1930s.

The Atlantis was unique in Miami Beach because it was the only hotel that had the best of everything. There was not another hotel in all of Miami Beach that had all of qualities found in the Atlantis. For example, the Raleigh had a similar bar but it did not have a lobby as extravagant or fantasy-like as the Atlantis. The Shelborne had a themed dining space similar to the Atlantis' Balkan Room, but

its lobby and other spaces were not as glamorous or well themed as the Atlantis. The lounge of the Atlantis was similar to the lounge at the Albion; however the other spaces in the Albion were not as grand as those in the Atlantis. The combination of eclectic and creative public spaces found at the Atlantis Hotel was unique and the best of its kind because of its magical, exotic, and well-designed interiors. It is likely that the Atlantis influenced other Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach built after it because of its spectacular interior design. As a result, the Atlantis Hotel exemplifies the Art Deco hotel made famous in Miami Beach.

Today, the popular Art Deco hotels of the 1930s are bustling with guests sitting in lobbies, eating in restaurants, and drinking in bars. The popularity of Miami Beach with European and South American visitors has only compounded its allure as an exotic place that still maintains the elements Americans are familiar with. It is a shame that the Atlantis is not one of these hotels. Since the hotel was demolished, the Atlantis is not able to shine like the renovated and Modernized Victor Hotel or Tides Hotel as one of the grand Art Deco hotels of both the 1930s and today.

Appendix A—Hotel Descriptions

Tides Hotel

Lawrence Murray Dixon, 1936

The tallest hotel on Ocean Drive was Lawrence Murray Dixon's 12-story Tides Hotel, which was built in 1936. The lobby of the Tides had high ceilings, light walls, and a mezzanine that overlooked the lobby. There were several round undecorated columns located throughout the lobby. The furniture in the lobby was placed around these columns. The furniture used in the lobby was rather simplistic. There were no patterns on the fabric and many of the chairs and sofas used were repeated throughout this interior. The large rug on the floor of the lobby of the Tides also was subdued and lacked decoration or pattern. This large rug covered the terrazzo floor, which had geometric shapes. One side of the lobby contained a glass brick wall, which spread almost the length of the lobby. There were two murals in the lobby including one that depicted large breaking ocean waves. Other details found around the lobby of the Tides included a round mirror that was about the same size as the round windows located above the doors to enter the hotel. There also were ashtrays located throughout the lobby. There was a variety of lighting in the lobby of the Tides including table lamps, floor lamps, and wall sconces.

On the other side of the glass wall was a dining room. The dining room was not overly decorated. In fact, it was quite sparse. Square tables were covered with white table clothes and surrounded by simple white armchairs. There were smaller windows opposite the wall with glass bricks. There was another wall with floor to ceiling windows.

Victor Hotel

Lawrence Murray Dixon, 1937

The Victor Hotel, which was built in 1937, was eight stories tall. But instead of a mezzanine, the second level had a balcony that wrapped around the room. Large windows that stretched almost from the floor to the ceiling were on one side of the lobby. These windows contained large curtains that traveled the length of the window. Between these windows were decorative panels. There were five square panels, made of copper that contained floral decoration, placed above one another. The design found on the panels was repeated in decoration on a large mirror located on the wall at the end of the lobby. The terrazzo floor in the lobby of the Victor Hotel contained abstract designs. Abstract designs on the floor continued on the rugs. In fact, the designs on the rugs were similar to what was on the flooring. However, the rugs were dark and contrasted with the light colored floor. The walls of the Victor were light color and the lower part of the wall was covered with what appears to be a medium-toned stone, marble, or vitrolite. The

ceiling of the lobby was stepped and had pendant light fixtures. Wall sconces that were similar to the pendant lights were located on the square columns found in the lobby.

The seating furniture in the lower level of the lobby was covered in upholstery. The upholstery was light in color and striped. The same sofas lined one side of the room while curved sectionals wrapped around columns on the other side of the room. Small side tables and ashtrays were placed around the seating furniture. The seating furniture in the upper level around the balcony had dark fabrics and there were several wooden armchairs placed around this small area. Several club chairs, sofas, and tubular steel side tables also were located in the upper level of the lobby. There was a mural located on the upper level of the lobby. The large, colorful mural contained flora and fauna typical to Florida.

The dining room of the Victor Hotel had Modern light fixtures that hung from the ceiling. The marble, stone, or vitrolite found on the lower part of the wall in the lobby continued in the dining room. White table clothes covered the tables while dark classical chairs were arranged around these tables.

Essex House Hotel

Henry Hohausser, 1938

The Essex House Hotel, built by Henry Hohausser, had around 60 rooms. Because the Essex House was smaller, it did not have large floor to ceiling windows, it had smaller octagonal windows. The use of geometric shapes continued on the terrazzo floors in the Essex House lobby.

In addition to geometric windows and floor decoration, other Modern elements at the Essex House included a metal and glass light fixture that hung from the ceiling. The exterior of the ceiling was stepped. The usage of stepped elements continued in the fireplace, which was compiled of four tiers. The fireplace was made of Florida keystone.¹²⁶ Another Floridian design element in the Essex House lobby was the mural located above the fireplace. The wall with the fireplace and the mural gave homage to Florida. The Floridian theme continued on a large etched mirror that contained palm trees.

The two sofas in the lobby were identical and they were placed back to back. Other pairs of chairs and tables were located around this sitting area. The three stripes on one of the chairs looked like racing strips or even speed whiskers commonly found in Art Deco design. Tropical palms and shells decorated some of the chairs and sofas. Flowers and plants also decorated the lobby of the Essex House.

¹²⁶ Lejeune and Shulman, 69.

WinterHaven Hotel

Albert Anis, 1939

The WinterHaven Hotel was a medium-sized hotel with six stories and about 70 rooms.¹²⁷ The lobby was two stories tall and had large windows that wrapped around the room, which made it a bright and open space. The lobby had a geometric terrazzo floor, floating staircase, and clear glass balls with red centers decorating the metal railing on the second floor of the lobby. There also were Modern light fixtures that hung from the ceiling.

In addition to the Modern elements found in the Essex House lobby, there were exotic motifs used in the hotel interior. The WinterHaven had decorative mirrors and glass that were etched with Chinese decoration including bamboo. However, the exotic and Modern motifs did not carry over to the furniture. Glass, mirrors, floating stairs, and terrazzo were coupled with traditional furniture. The feel of the furniture was more Victorian than Modern Art Deco. Dark, floral upholstery was placed on chairs and sofas.

Raleigh Hotel

Lawrence Murray Dixon, 1940

Another large Art Deco hotel built by Lawrence Murray Dixon was the Raleigh Hotel. This hotel, built in 1940, was over seven stories tall. The two-story lobby had light walls and large windows that filled the space with light. The glass doors to the entrance were etched with square decoration. There were large columns that supported the lobby, but instead of being plain, these columns were fluted at the top and had incised vertical lines. The furniture used in the Raleigh's lobby was historical in form however the style was Modern. Wooden armchairs and sofas covered in upholstery were found throughout this interior.

The bar at the Raleigh contained many elements that would be found in other Modern interiors at this time including a cove ceiling, new styles of lighting, and tubular steel stools. In addition, a bubbling, geometric martini glass was designed into the terrazzo floor of the bar.

The interior of the Raleigh's dining room had medium to dark colored walls. The chairs used in this space looked Gothic as a result of the repeating arches in the back splat. This coincides with the English theme of the hotel, since the Gothic and Gothic Revival style were popular in England. The carpeting used in the Raleigh's dining room was more traditional with a repeating pattern as opposed to the more common carpet with plants found throughout other Miami Beach Art Deco dining rooms.

¹²⁷ WinterHaven Web site, <http://www.winterhavenhotelsobe.com/index.html>.

Albion Hotel

Igor Plevitzky, 1939

Igor Plevitzky's Albion Hotel had about 115 rooms. The lobby was two-stories tall and had large floor to ceiling windows and a balcony that looked down upon the first floor. The balcony railing was made out of glass and metal. In addition, the glass was etched with an "A", the hotel's initial. The wall of the lobby opposite the balcony contained a large mural that covered the entire wall. This mural appears to have a mythological theme with a horse, chariot, and stars.

The columns found in the lobby had incised vertical lines and were fluted at the top. There were other tropical elements found in this lobby including the centerpiece of the Albion lobby, a fountain. The sculptural element in the center of the fountain had a palm branch base and marlins jumping out of the water.

Curved sofas were placed around the fountain. The curved sofas had no arms and they were scalloped. These two features made them appear like seashells. In addition to the curved sofas, there also were armchairs, round side tables, and ashtrays located around the room.

Grossinger Beach Hotel

Lawrence Murray Dixon, 1940

The Grossinger Beach Hotel, built by Lawrence Murray Dixon, had a lobby that was two-stories tall and had smooth, round columns located throughout the room. There were large windows in the lobby and a mezzanine that had a decorative metal railing that separated the upper level from the lower level of the lobby.

Different seating areas were scattered around the lobby. The furniture used in this space was clearly inspired by Art Deco's interest in past styles—especially the Empire style. The best example of this was a table located in the lobby. It had a plain rectangular top, but the table had curule legs. The chairs used in the lobby also had curved legs that hinted to the Empire Style.

The furniture in the Grossinger Beach Hotel sat on rugs that had large palms. There also were tropical and nautical-inspired murals. Both murals were on the upper part of the lobby walls. One mural was a map of islands, while the other contained cranes—birds local to the area.

The dining room at the Grossinger Beach Hotel was a curved room that had large windows. Pendant lights hung from the ceiling. They appear to be made out of glass and metal. The carpet decorated with palms was similar to the rugs found in the lobby of the Grossinger. Tables with white tablecloths were paired with simple dark armchairs.

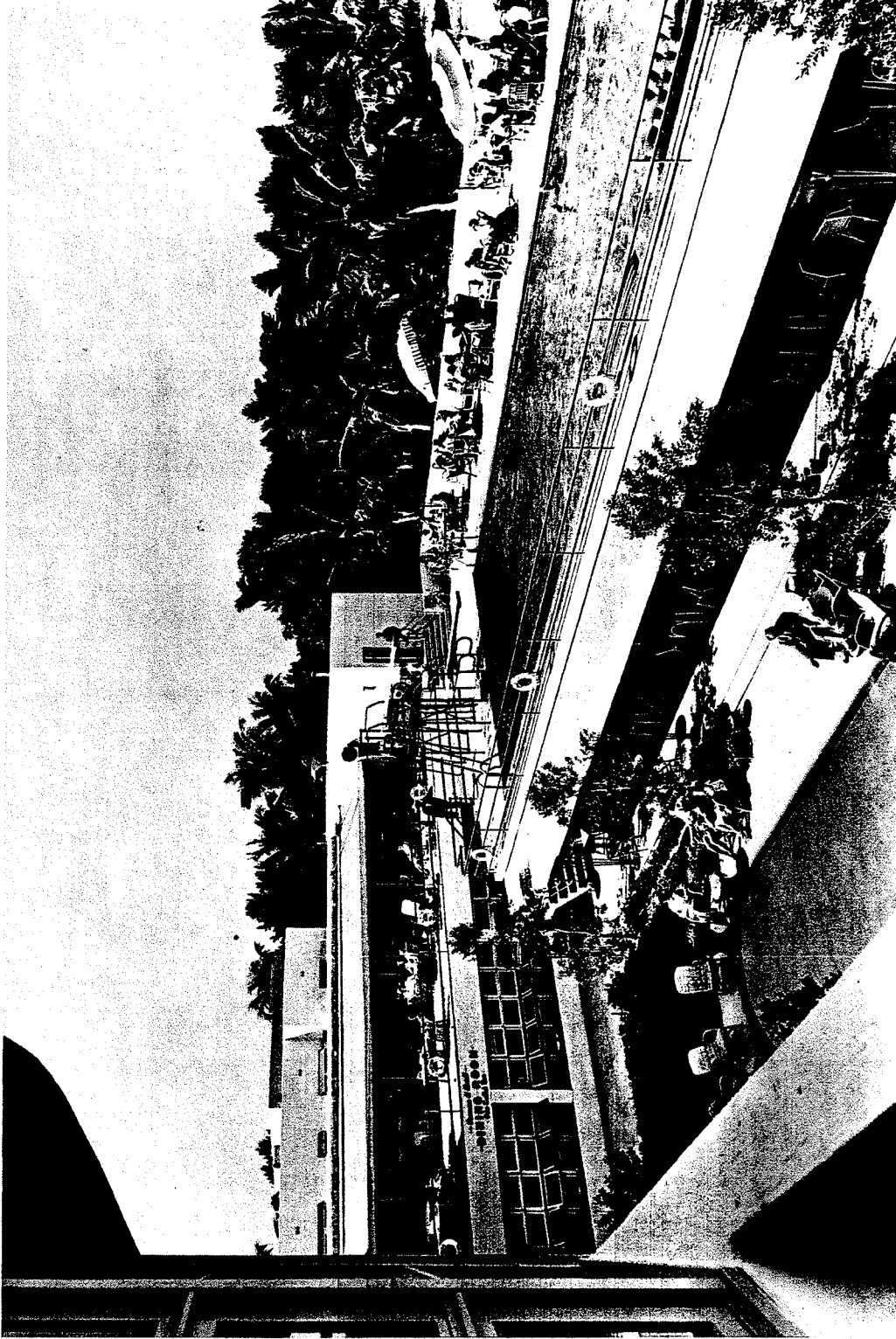
Shelborne Hotel**Igor Plevitzky, 1940**

The Shelborne Hotel built by Igor Plevitzky had 14 floors and 300 rooms.¹²⁸ The exterior was sleek and clean and this Modern look continued in the hotel's lobby. The lobby was tall. It had two levels and the first level was connected to the second by a sweeping staircase. It was dramatic yet Modern. The dark columns contrasted with the light walls and ceilings in the lobby. However, the long dark lines of the columns repeated in the dark curtains that hung around the large floor to ceiling windows. This window took up almost one entire wall of the lobby. The ceiling of the lobby had recessed lighting that was hidden in a long rectangular cove.

¹²⁸ Root, 61.

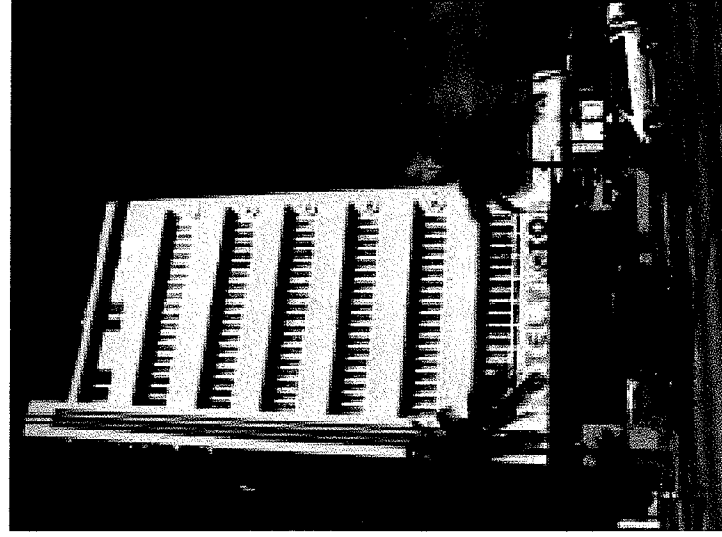
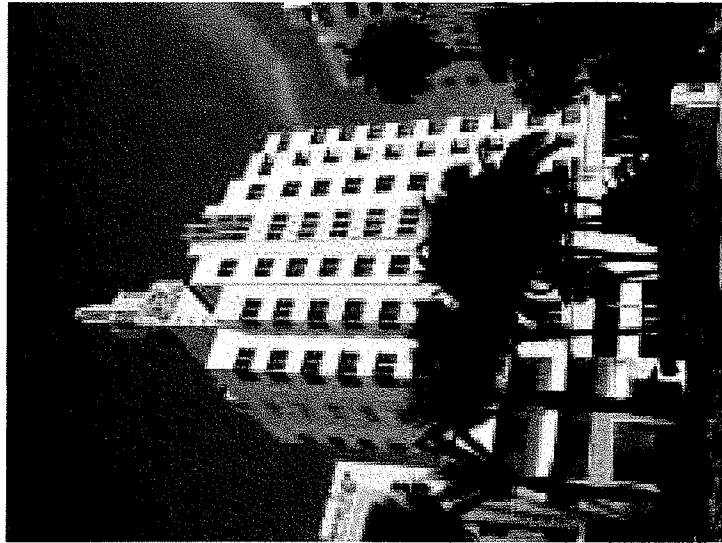
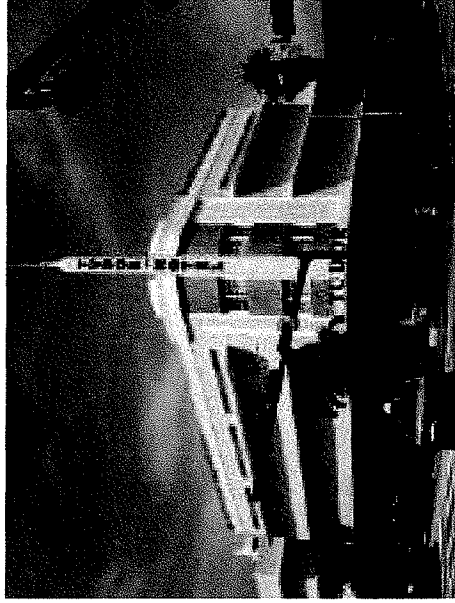
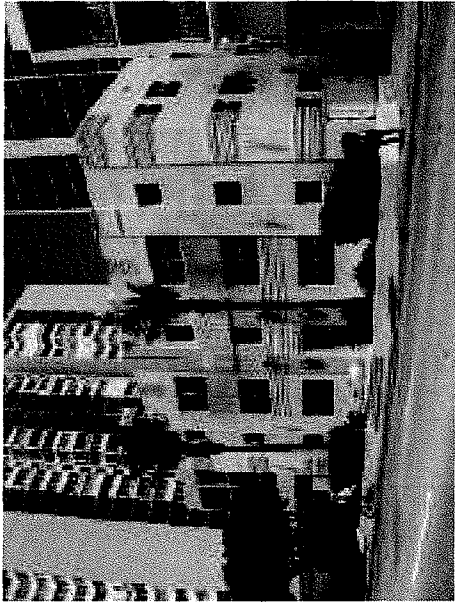
Appendix B—Images

Image 1



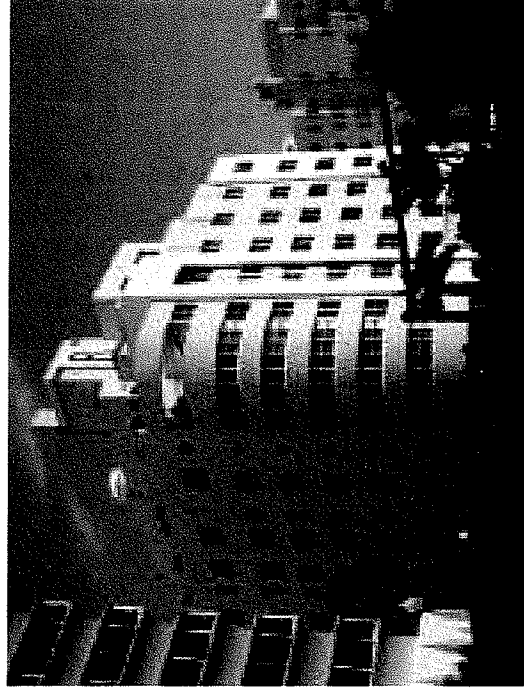
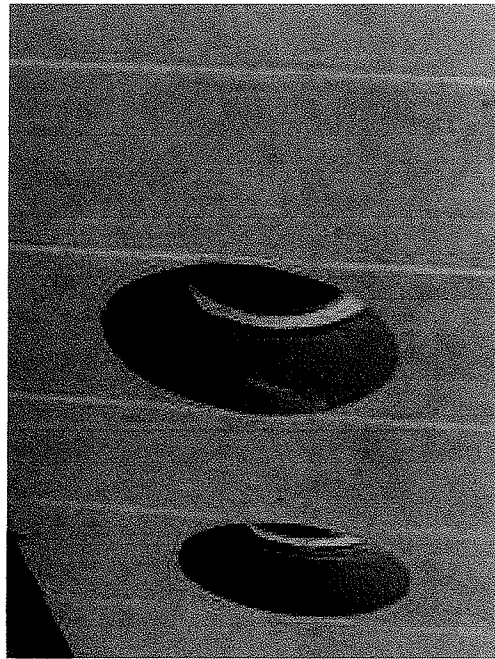
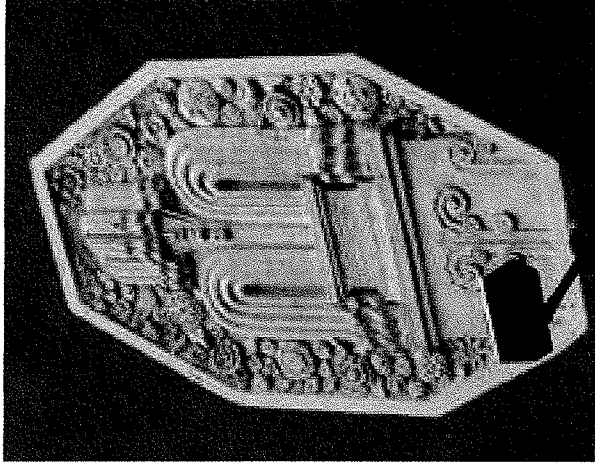
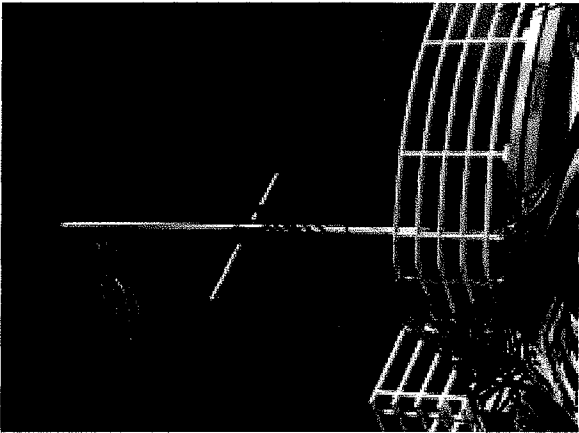
Albion Hotel, Pool (Polevitzky)
Image: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Library, Number 1986-222-233(N).

Image 2



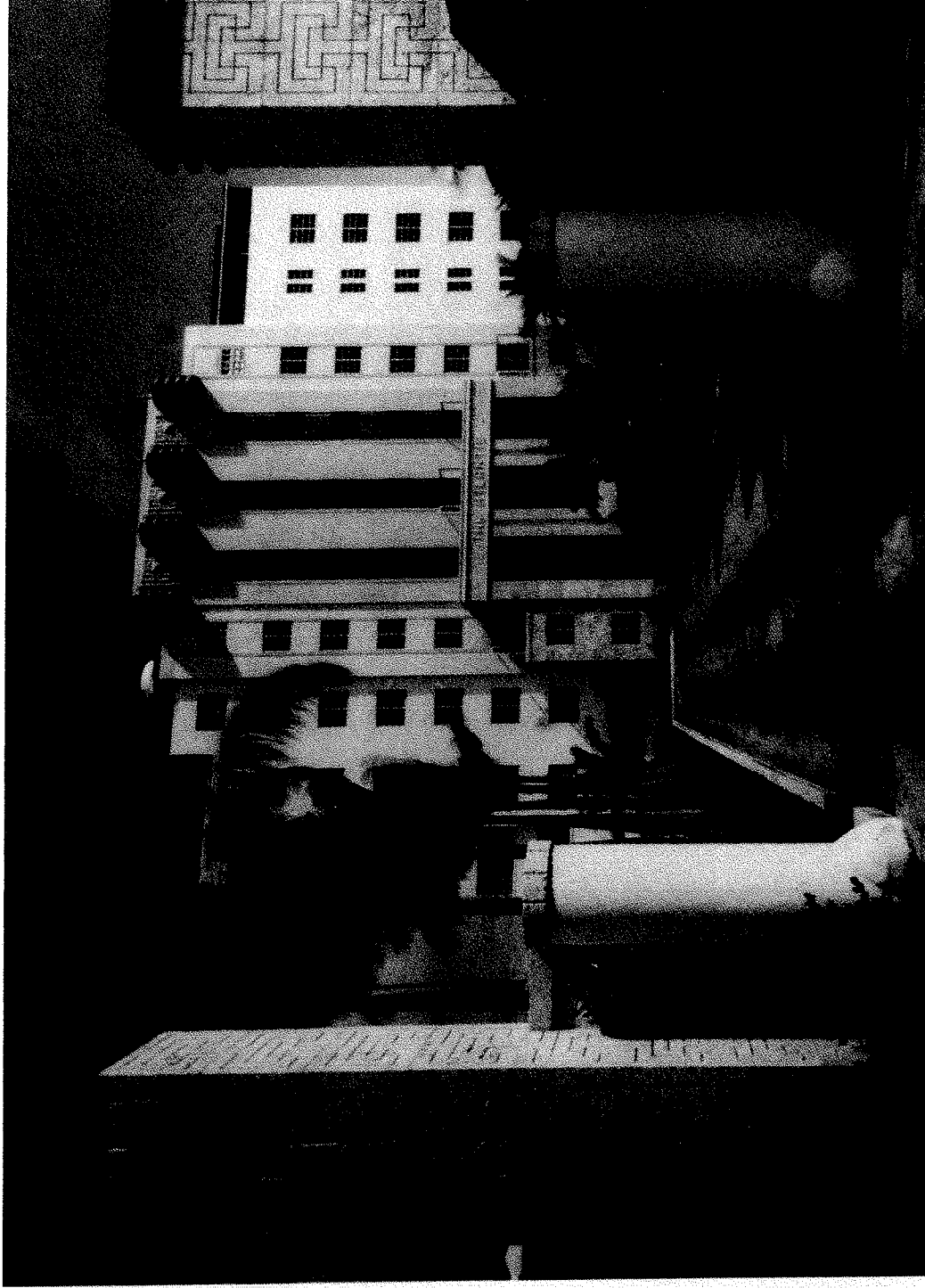
Art Deco Buildings in Miami Beach
Image:<http://www.mdpl.org/Art%20Deco/images.html>.

Image 3



Details of Art Deco Buildings in Miami Beach
Image: <http://www.mdpl.org/Art%20Deco/images.html>.

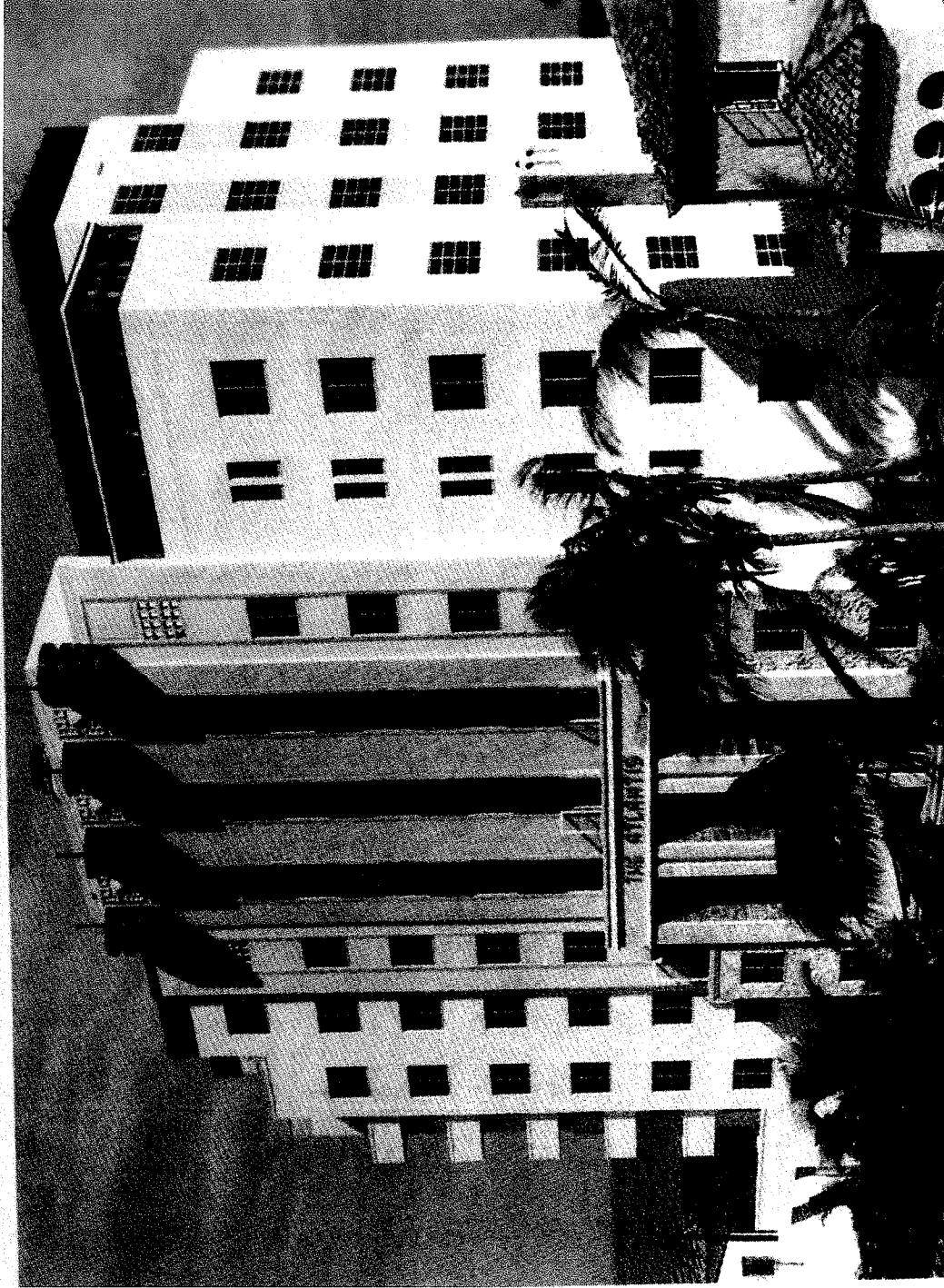
Image 4



Atlantis Hotel, Exterior-Front

Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 76.

Image 5



Atlantis Hotel, Exterior-Front
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 172.

Image 6



Atlantis Hotel, Exterior-Front Entrance
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 77.

Image 7



Atlantis House, Exterior-Rear

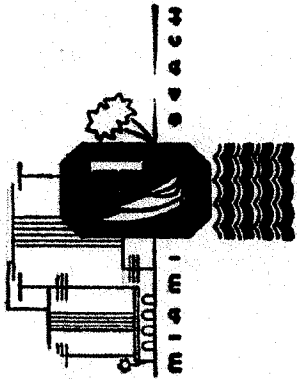
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 79.

Image 8



Atlantis Hotel, Exterior-Rear
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 73.

Image 9



Florida's Finest Resort Hotel

Centuries ago, the fabulous palaces of the "lost continent" of Atlantis sank into the sea, bearing with them a culture that lives in legend, even today, as the outstanding civilization of its time.

Now beside that same shimmering sea, there rises a new Atlantis, a palatial hostelry, the Queen of America's winter playground, built in the same tradition of superiority that marked its namesake continent.

True to the tradition that inspired its building, the hotel itself is a paragon of modern construction. Its unusually spacious and luxuriously appointed public rooms are designed to take full advantage of the seaside location. A unique and exclusive feature is the Recreation Room, occupying the entire top floor of the north wing, where lectures, concerts, and recitals are staged.

The dining room is glass-enclosed on the ocean side with massive windows extending from floor to ceiling. Here the finest viands prepared by world famous chefs are served in true continental style. Sleeping rooms are large and airy and are equipped with the most modern of de luxe furnishings. For rare occasions when the temperature drops below normal, the entire building is supplied with steam heat.

In a word, the Atlantis is your ideal of an ultra-modern winter home in America's tropics . . . a home expertly staffed and completely devoted to your comfort, pleasure and entertainment.

THE ATLANTIS
ON THE OCEAN AT 27th STREET.

Page Thirteen

Atlantis Advertisement

Image: Miami Beach Hotel and Apartment Book 1936, City of Miami Beach Archives, <http://weblink.miamibeachfl.gov/Search.aspx>.

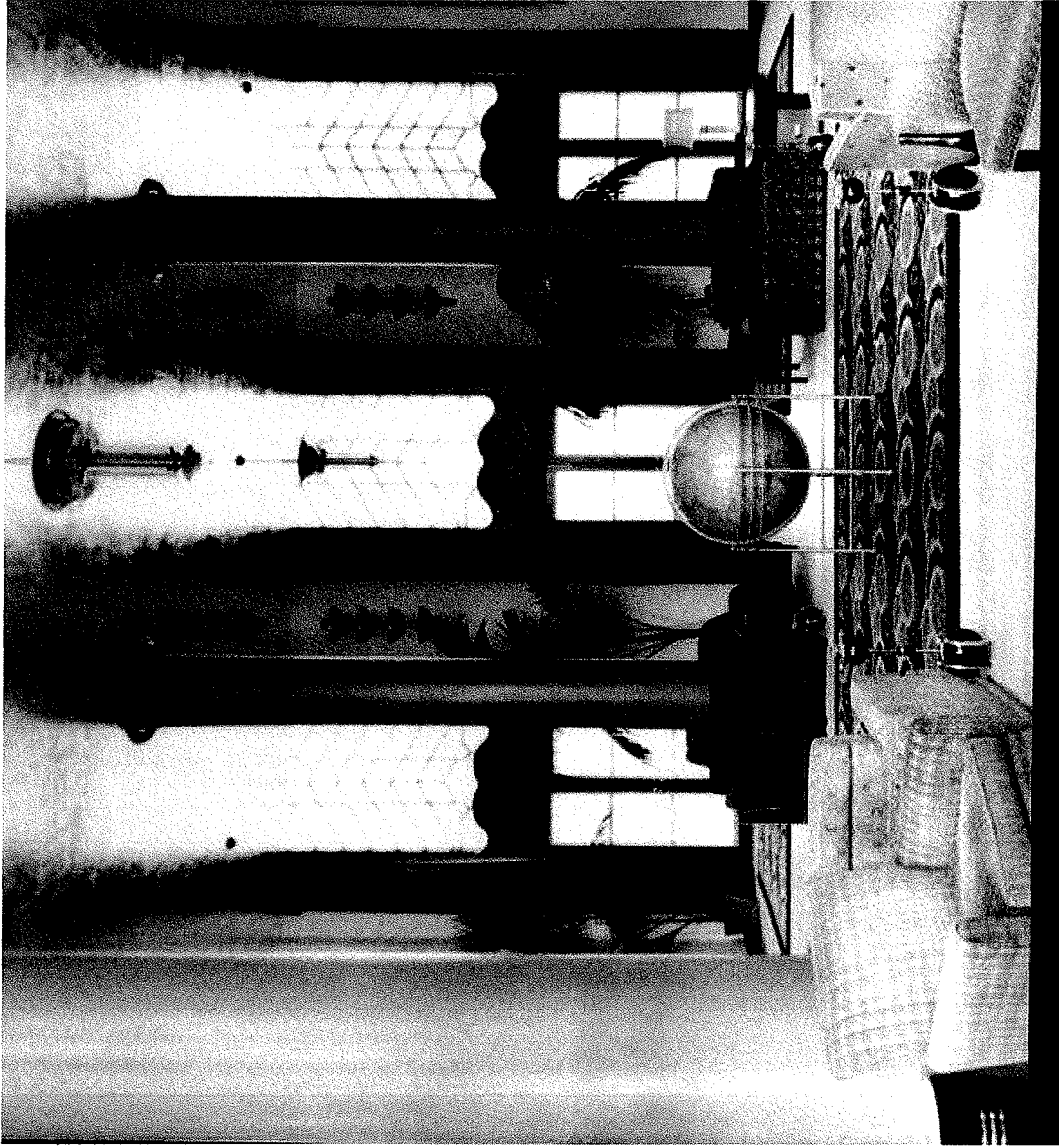
Image 10



Mrs. Dan Labold

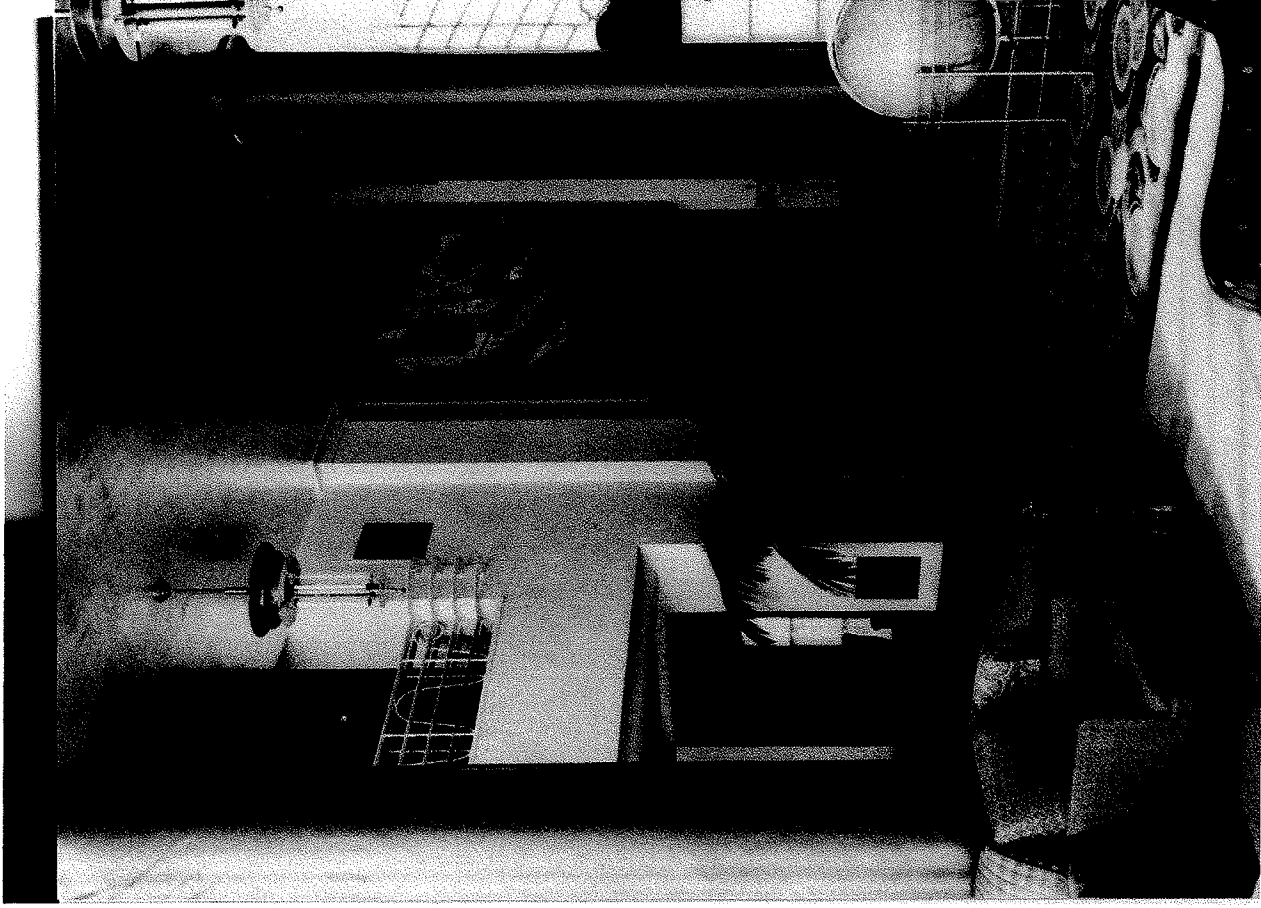
Image: *The Portsmouth Times*, December 26, 1937.

Image 11



Atlantis Hotel, Lobby
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942*,
The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 82.

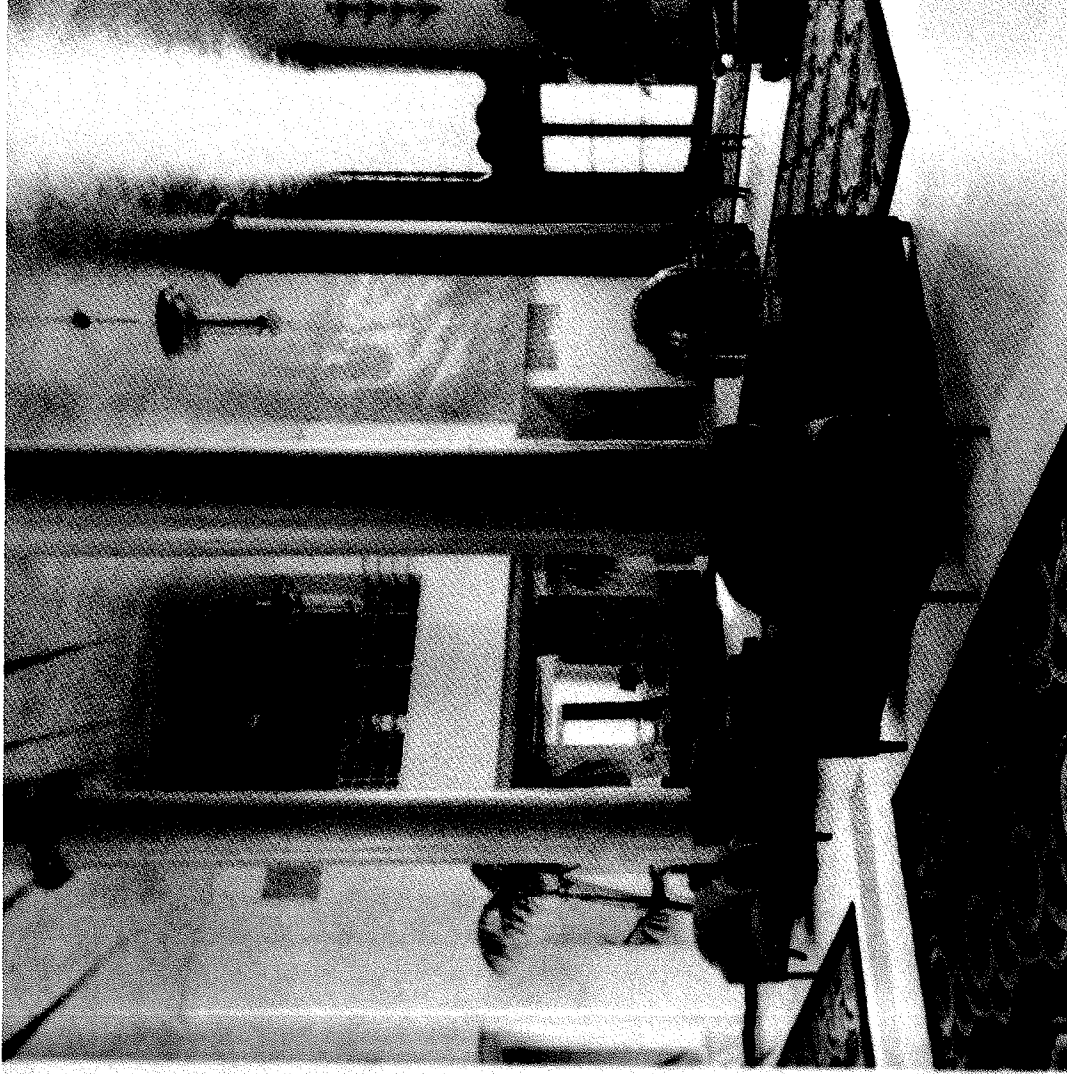
Image 12



Atlantis Hotel, Lobby

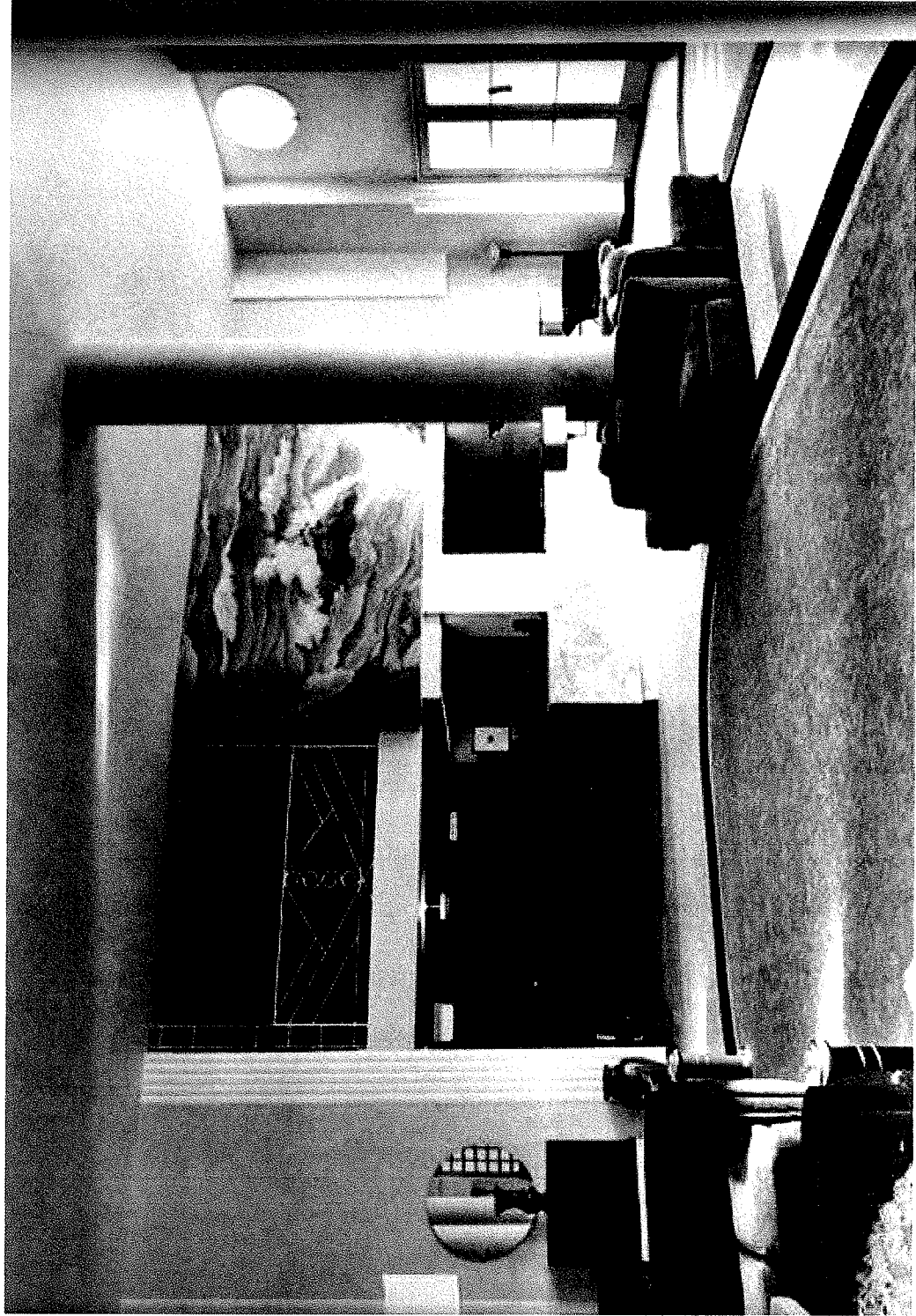
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 78.

Image 13



Atlantis Hotel, Lobby
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942*,
The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 83.

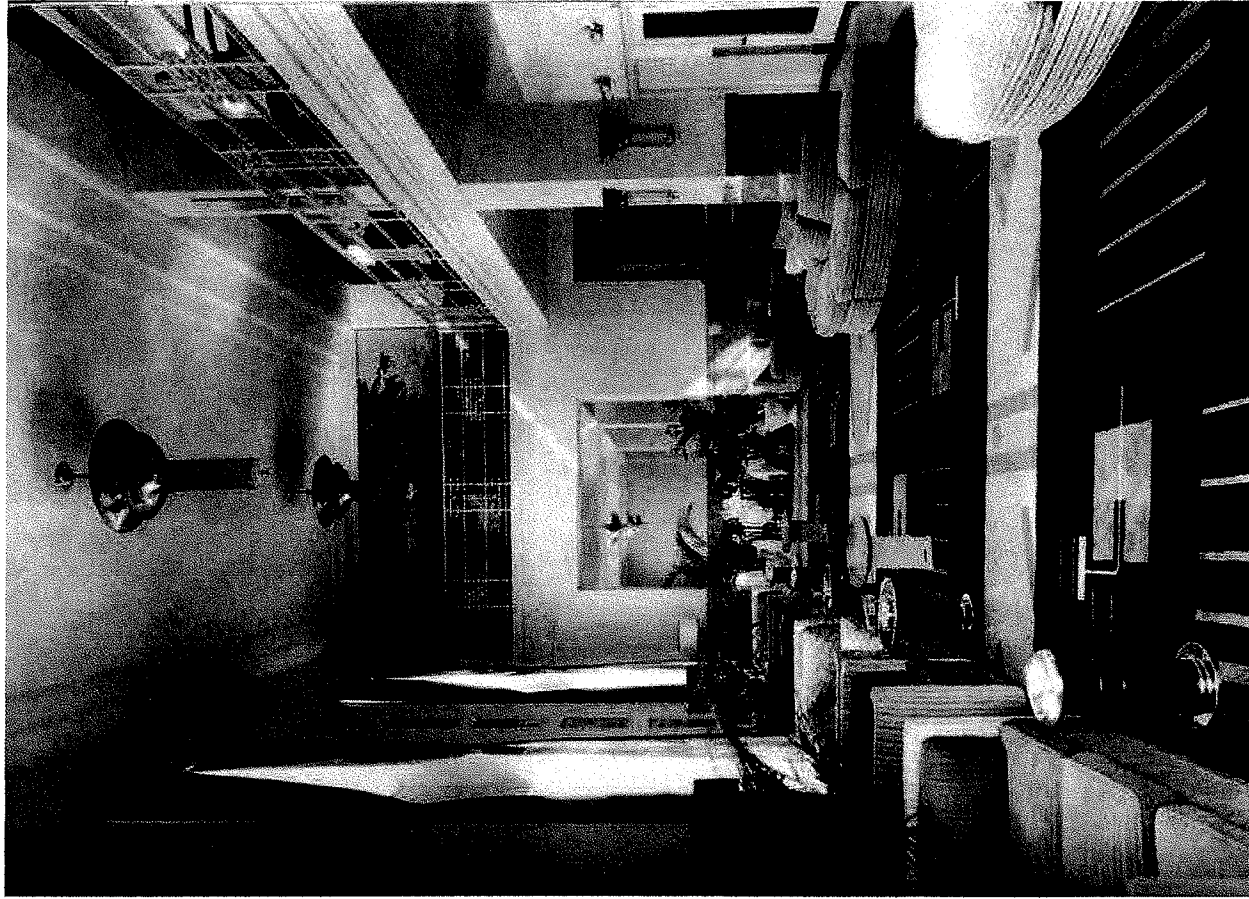
Image 14



Tides Hotel, Lobby (Dixon)

Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 92.

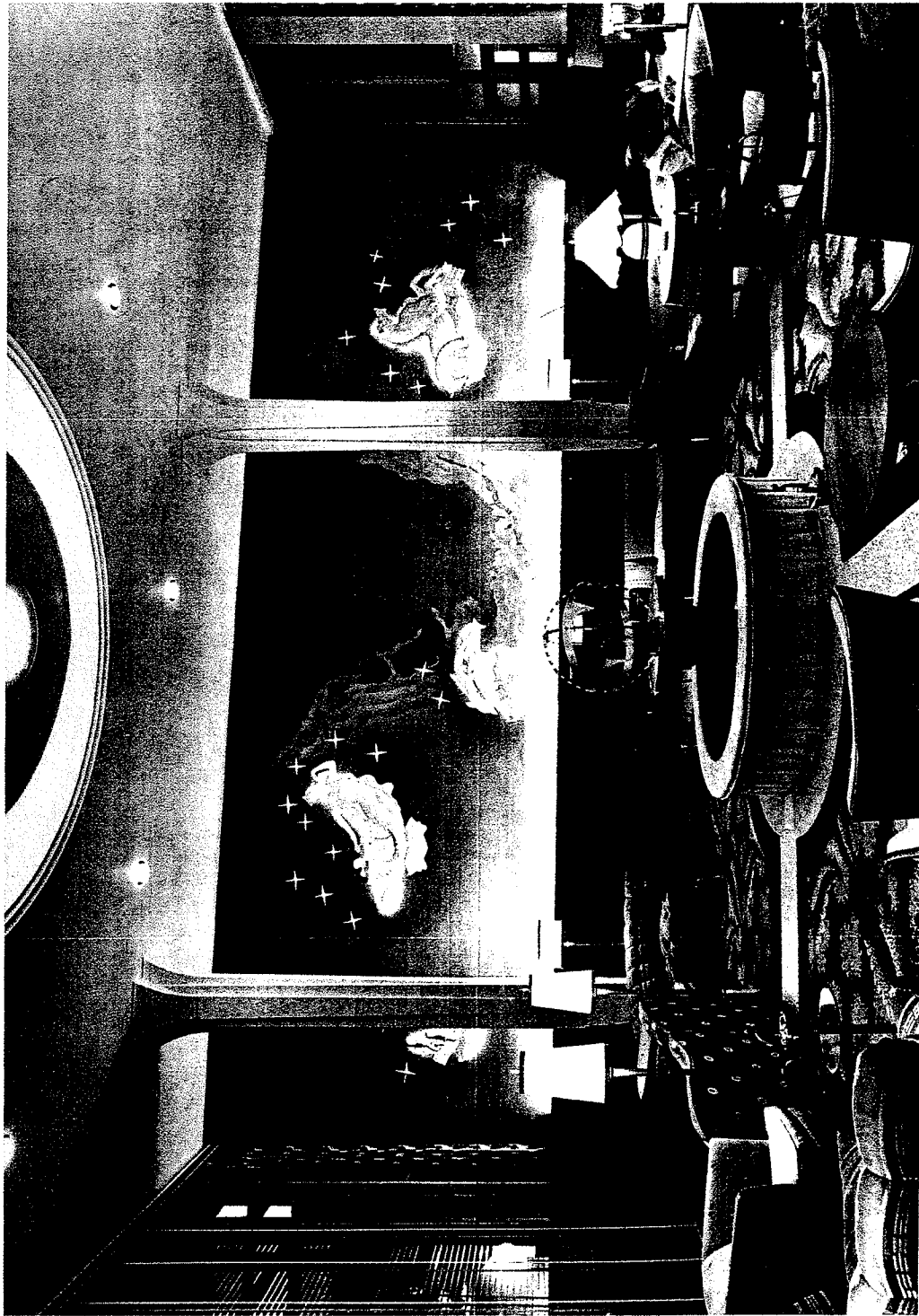
Image 15



Victor Hotel, Lobby (Dixon)

Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 99.

Image 16



Albion Hotel, Lobby (Polevitzky)
Image: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Library, Number 1986-222-236(N).

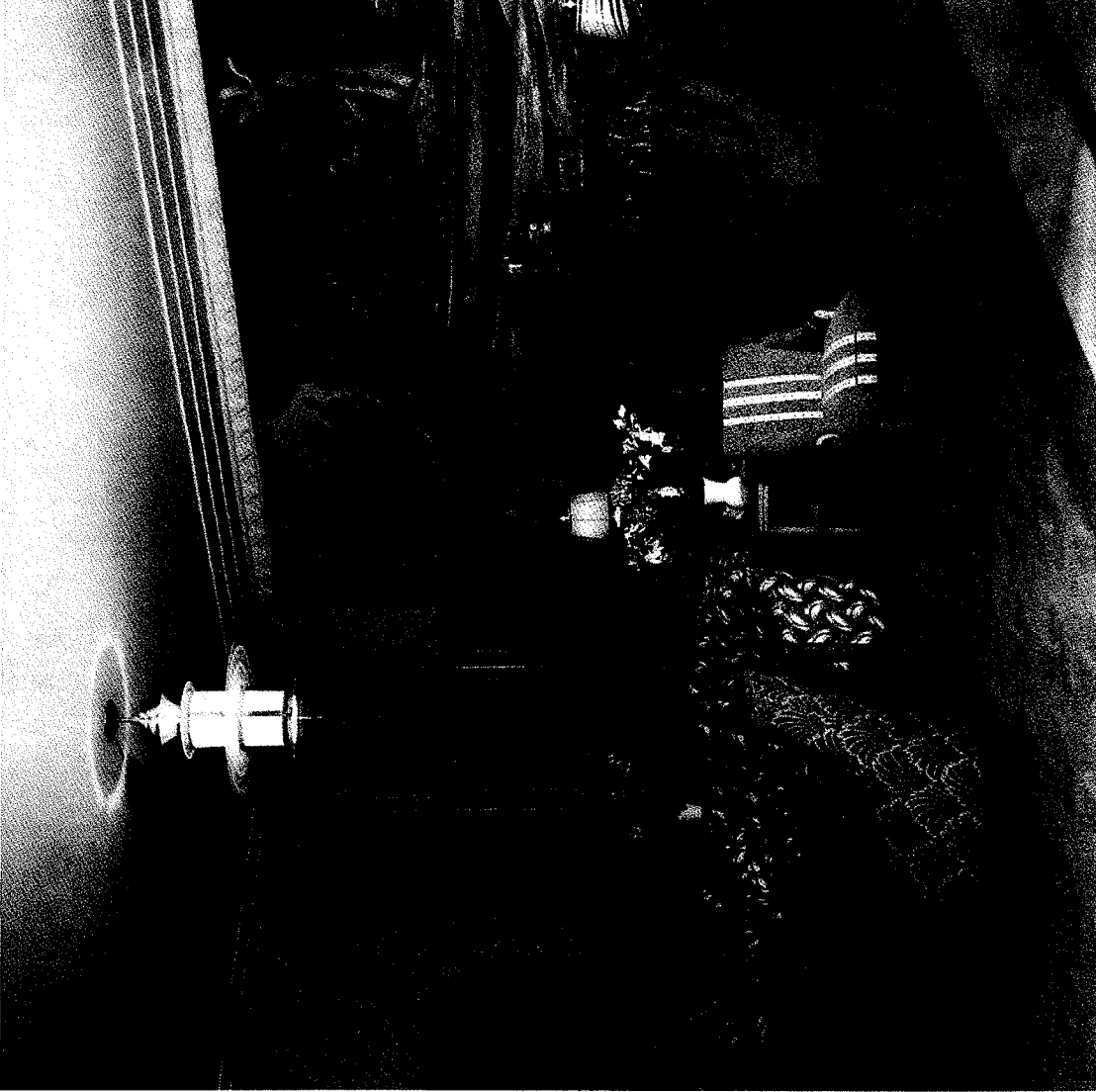
Image 17



Shelborne Hotel, Lobby (Polevitzky)

Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 188.

Image 18



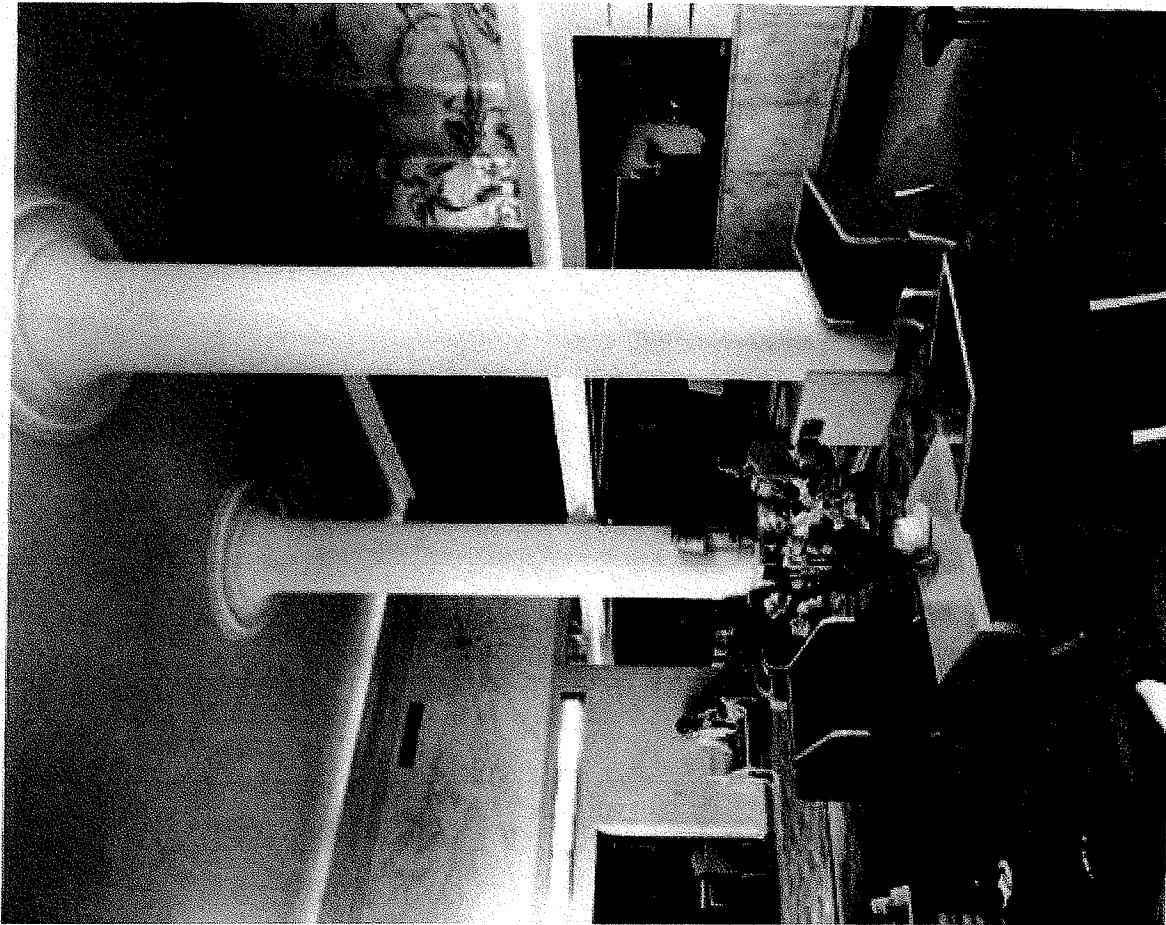
Essex House, Lobby (Hohauser)
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 69.

Image 19



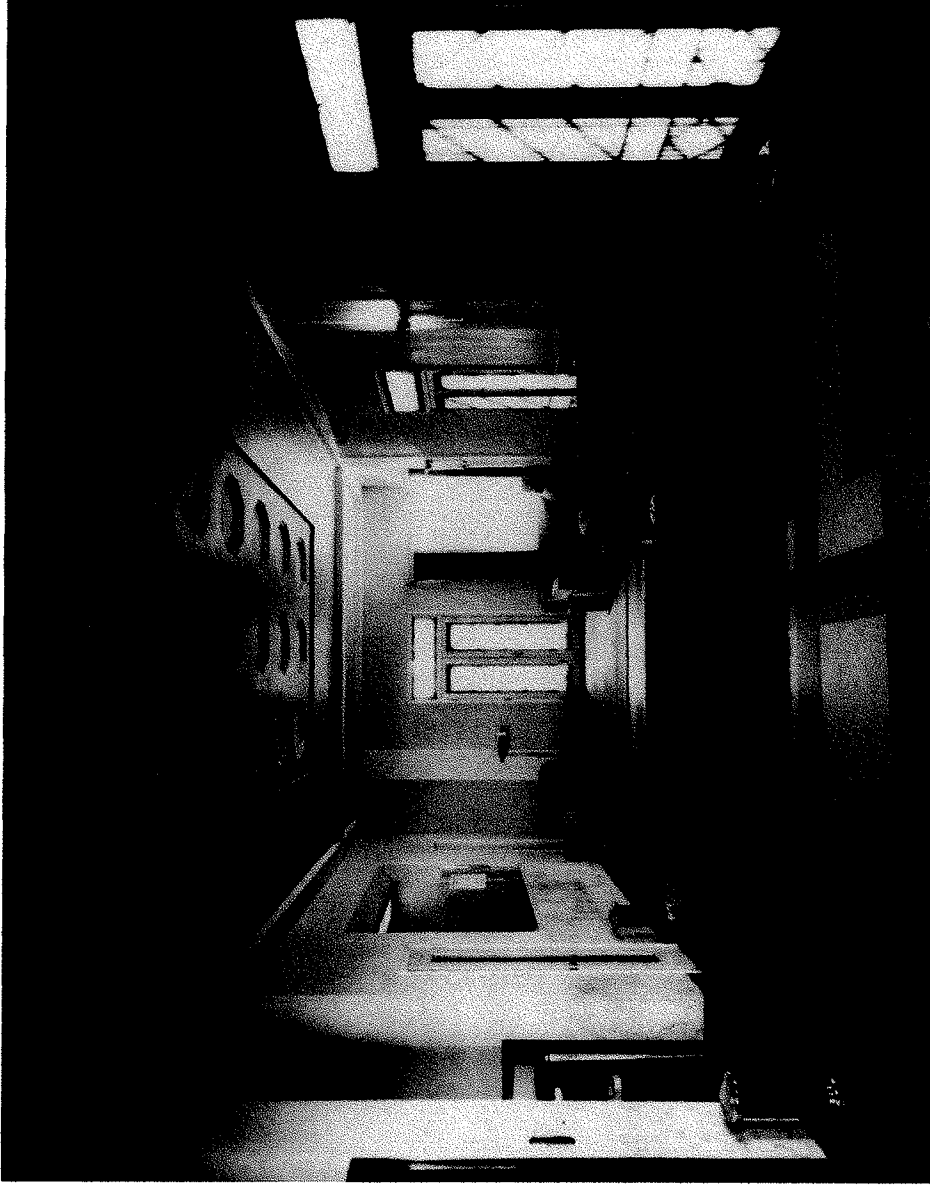
**Grossinger Beach Hotel, Lobby (Dixon)
Image: Library of Congress, LC-G612- 39558.**

Image 20



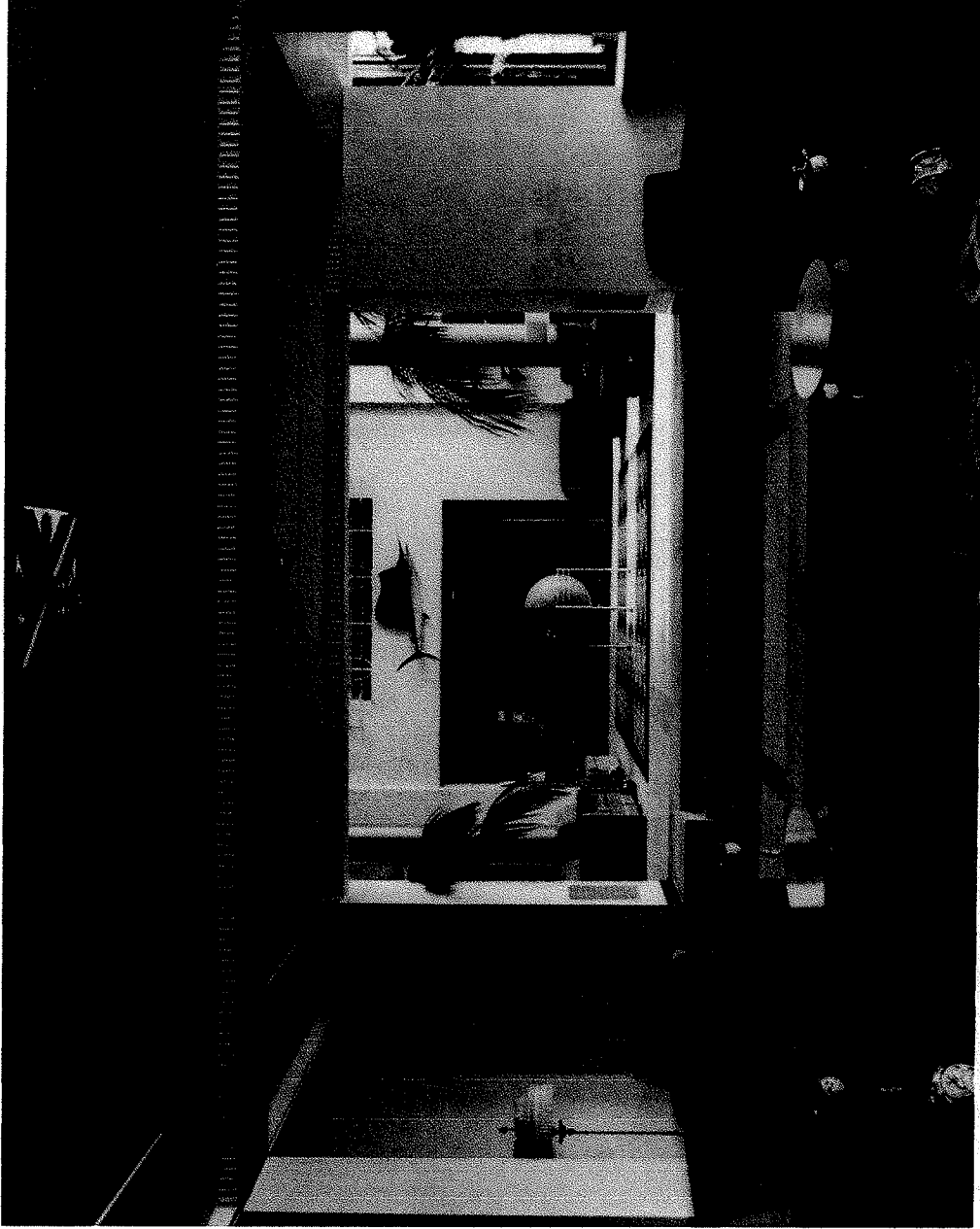
Grossinger Beach Hotel, Lobby (Dixon)
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 118.

Image 21



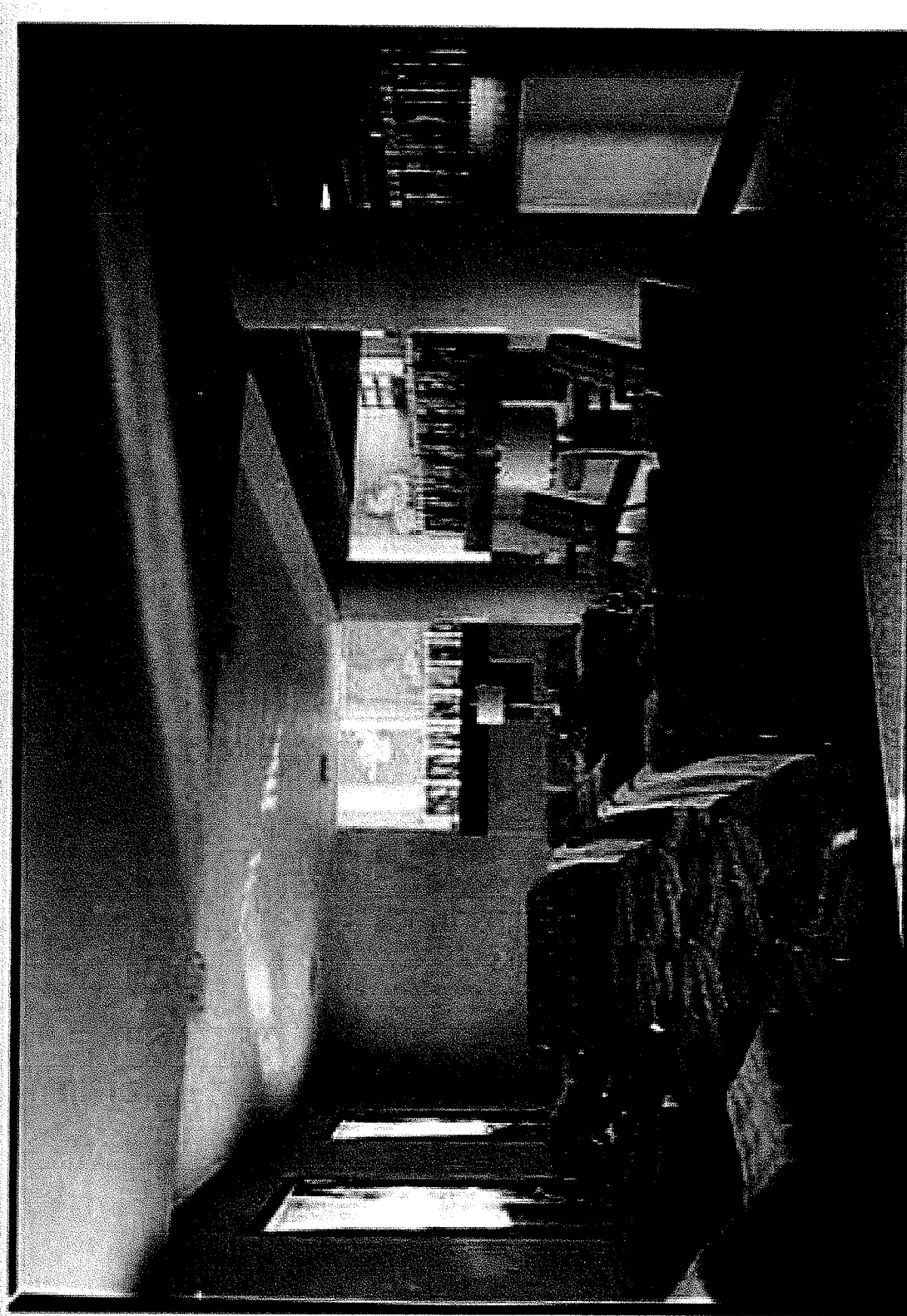
Beach Plaza Hotel (Dixon)
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 96.

Image 22



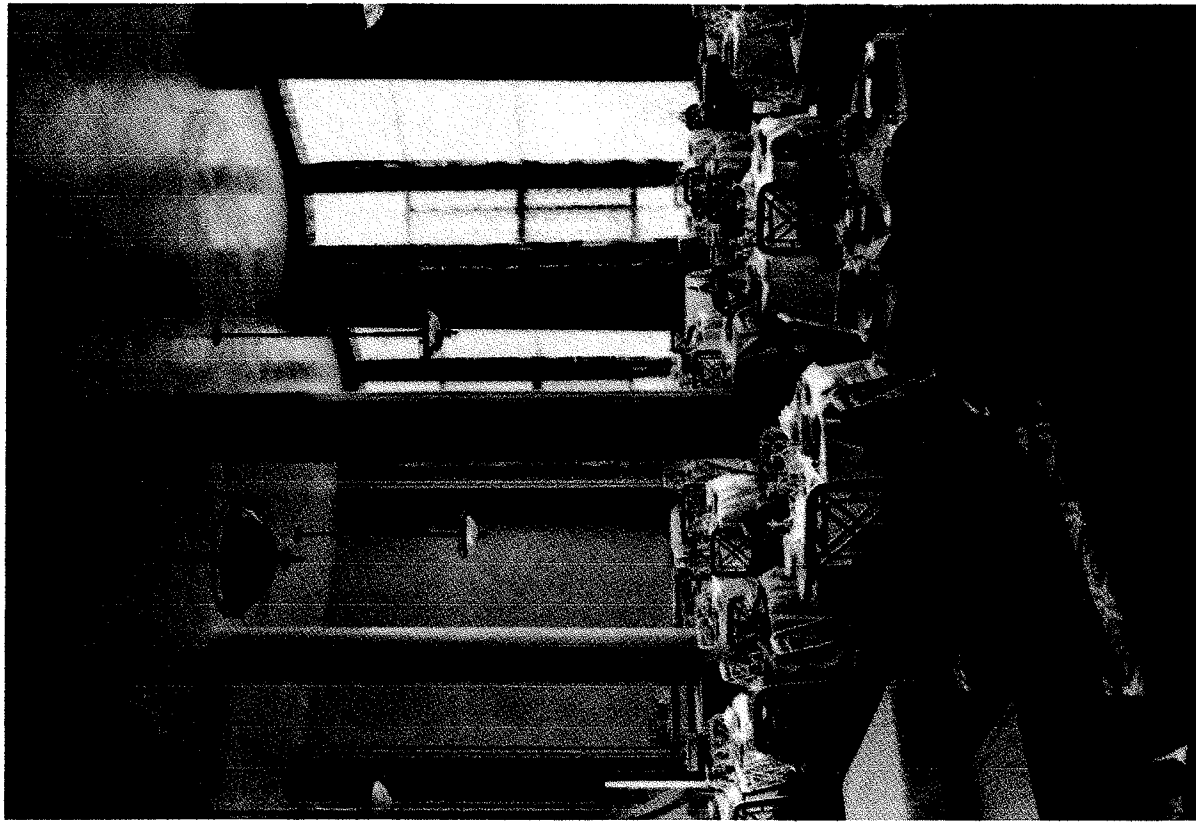
Atlantis Hotel, Lounge
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942, The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 83.

Image 23



Albion Hotel, Lower Lounge (Polevitzky)
Image: Library of Congress, LC-G612-36849.

Image 24



Atlantis Hotel, Dining Room

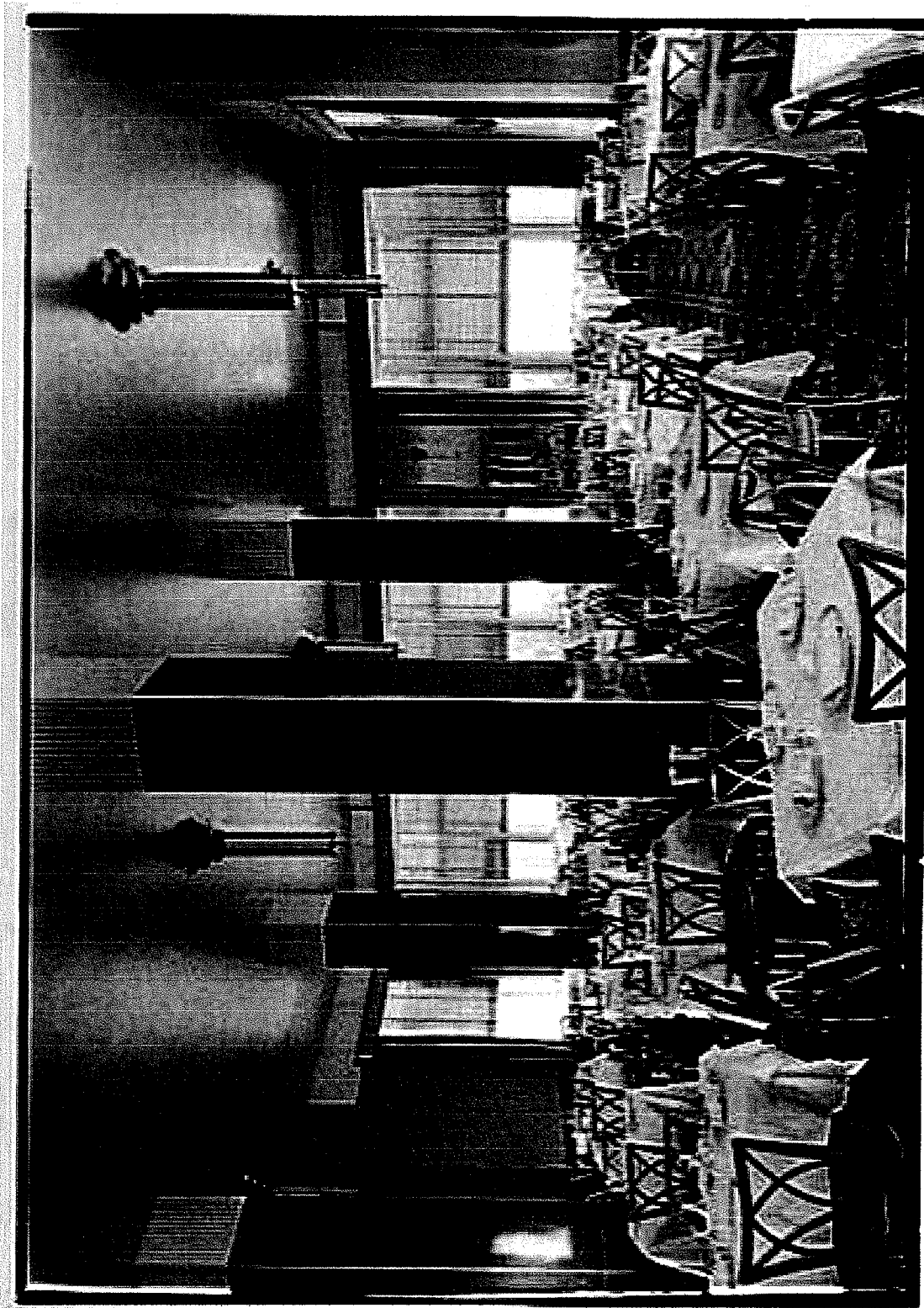
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942*, *The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 80.

Image 25



Atlantis Hotel, Dining Room
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942*,
The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 81.

Image 26



Raleigh Hotel, Dining Room (Dixon)
Image: Library of Congress, LC-G612-39552.

Image 27



Grossinger Beach Hotel, Dining Room (Dixon)
Image: Library of Congress, LC-G612-39557.

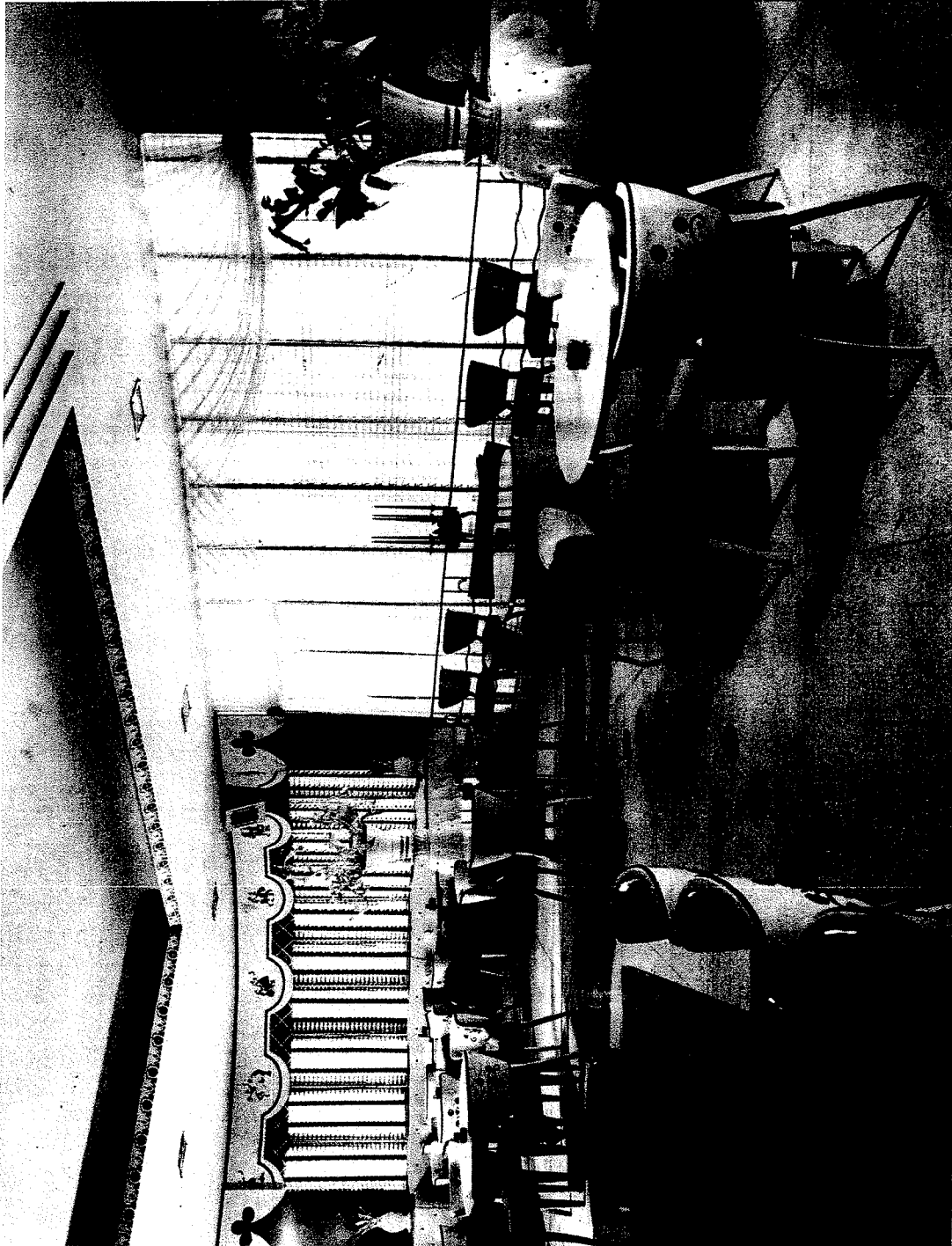
Image 28



Tides Hotel, Lobby (Dixon)

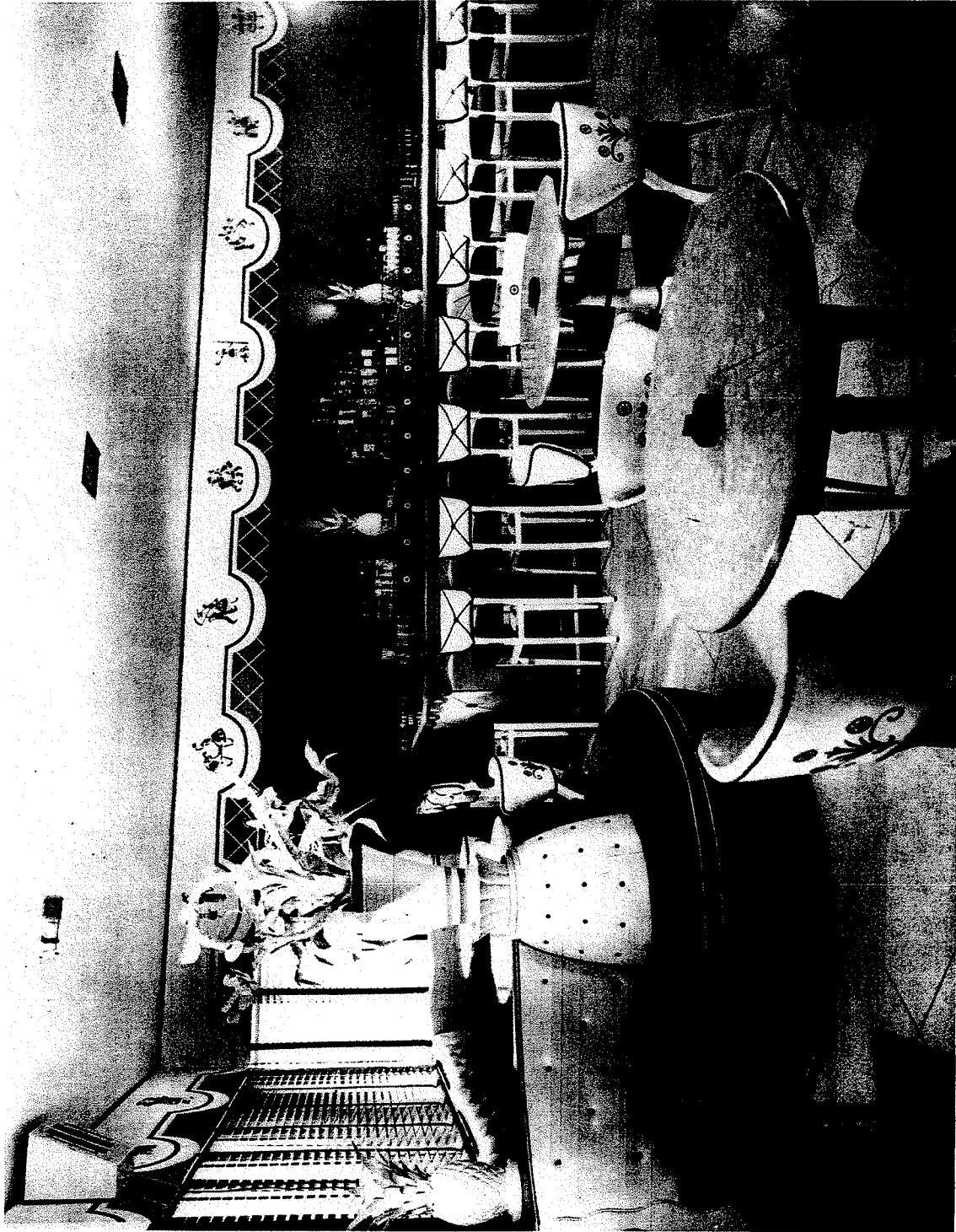
Image: Jean-François Lejeune and Allan T. Shulman, *The Making of Miami Beach: 1933-1942*, *The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (The Bass Museum of Art: Miami, 2000), 90.

Image 29



Atlantis Hotel, Balkan Room
Image: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Library, Number 1986-222-350.

Image 30



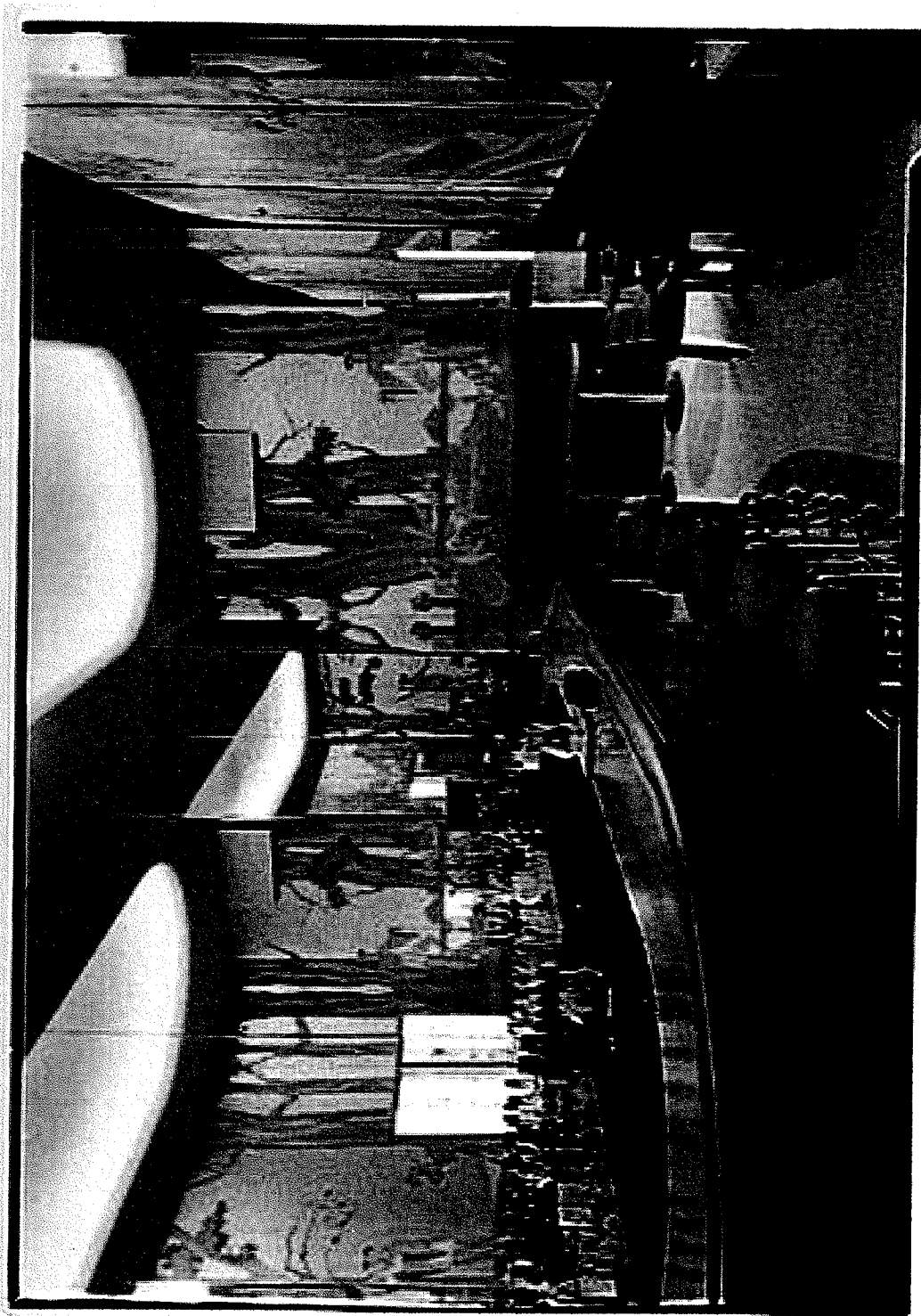
Atlantis Hotel, Balkan Room
Image: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Library, Number 1986-222-351.

Image 31



**Shelborne Hotel, Bar (Polevitzky)
Image: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Library, Number 1986-222-157.**

Image 32



**Raleigh Hotel, Cocktail Room (Dixon)
Image: Library of Congress, LC-G612-39553.**

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