



## The Long Haul

THIS IS MY GREAT-AUNT JULIA LESLIE MING. LIKE MANY MIDDLE FLORIDA BLACK folks trying to find jobs during the Great Depression, Aunt Julia left the area with her husband, William—whom the family called “Uncle Honey”—not for the North, but for Miami. Even though it was as segregated as the rest of the Jim Crow South, there was more opportunity down there than on our family’s Jackson County, Florida, farm. And there’d be no snow. The Mings were officially Miamians by 1937, when one of the nation’s first housing projects for African Americans was completed in the Liberty City neighborhood. The Liberty Square complex was part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration, created to aid the nation’s recovery from the Great Depression. Aunt Julia and Uncle Honey lived in one of the apartments. She was a housekeeper; he was a porter for Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railway. Back then, Liberty Square was home to other working- and middle-class Black folks. The City of Miami responded by building concrete walls around the complex to separate it from nearby white neighborhoods. Even the city’s beaches were segregated. This photo reminds me that though the power of the law was against her and her people, Aunt Julia was still able to find abundance and joy at least for one day in 1954.

—ROSALIND BENTLEY