A Brief [but growing] Early History of the 420 Lincoln Road Building

- 420 Lincoln Road was built in 1941–42 in two phases on the site of Carl Fisher’s 1920 Lincoln Hotel.
- The building was designed by architect, Albert Anis.
- The building was designed with 60,000 square feet of office space, a theater on the first floor (the Beach Theater) and road-front retail.
- The building was developed by Moses Ginsberg, a New York steamship operator, as the largest single construction project in Miami Beach since the crash of 1926.
- The original name was the Lincoln-Washington Building. This changed in 1940 with the announcement of the Mercantile Bank of Miami Beach as the first and largest tenant.
- In 1945, Russian-born artist Leo Birchansky (1887–1949) painted a series of murals in the 420 Lincoln Road lobby detailing the American experience. Birchansky worked as a political cartoonist in Russia before fleeing to New York City in 1922 where he worked with the New York Daily News. He moved with his wife (also Russian-born) to Miami in 1943. He lived at 6950 Byron Avenue on Miami Beach and had an important solo show of his work at the Miami Woman’s Club in 1944.
- The building hosted numerous Jewish business and organizations, specializing in professional doctors, lawyers, dentists, real estate agents, and architects. In 1955, for example, the building hosted the offices of Seymour Gelber, The Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Kohen, Granat & Frank (Helen Kohen’s father-in-law), and architect Norman M. Giller in the penthouse.
- In 1955 ground floor tenants included Woolworths, Beck’s Shoes, Marsha Kay Gifts, Sandra Post’s Women’s Clothing, and Todd & Todd, Inc., Men’s Clothing.
Rendering of 420 Lincoln Road by architect Albert Anis.
*Miami News*
May 12, 1940
With the wrecking of the old Lincoln hotel under way, a Miami Beach landmark is soon to disappear. However, in its place the largest single development in Miami Beach since the boom days of 1925-26 will soon be started.

Moses Ginsberg, New York steamship operator, is investing $1,250,000 in a combination store and office building. The building will have a frontage of 323 feet on Lincoln road and a depth of 171 feet on Washington and Drexel avenus. The structure, which will be called the Lincoln-Washington building, will be a community in itself.

Ginsberg has selected the firm of Oscar E. Dooley, jr., of Miami; S. J. Halperin, Inc., of Miami Beach, and A. O. Birn of New York city as exclusive agents for the property. Myron S. Green-tree, associate of Oscar E. Dooley, jr., is actively in charge of leasing negotiations.

Announcement is to be made within the next two weeks regarding the tenant for the Lincoln-Washington corner, and also for the 60 feet adjoining the corner.

At present there is a lack of one commercial block in which all types of better merchandise may be purchased, and with this in view the selection of the ground floor tenants has been carefully planned, agents say. All stores will remain open during the entire year, a feature being made a part of every lease. The stores will also conform with Lincoln Road association rules.

Albert Anis, architect, is in complete charge of plans. The architecture is a simple straightforward expression of its function. It purposely avoids the obvious cliches, but depends rather on form and material for a rich, dignified building. The shop fronts will be of extended aluminum with lustrous black granite facing above and below the plate glass. Above the shops, on the office floors, the facing will be natural quarry keystone. All windows and spandrels are of special design aluminum.

The entrance to the building will be on the symmetrical axis, leading to a spacious lobby, from which the escalator to the bank floor, and two high-speed elevators to six office floors, are situated. Sixty thousand square feet of office space, modernly equipped with air conditioning and fluorescent illumination, will be devoted to professional as well as commercial lessees.

A vast area of vacant space has been reserved for parking facilities in the rear, with direct access to the building.

The structure will be triple A fireproof construction throughout, embodying the finest and most modern materials.

The construction contract has been awarded to J. Y. Gooch Co., Inc. Richard A. Belsam will be structural engineer, and Maurice H. Connell mechanical engineer.
Building Permit, 7/25/1940
420 Lincoln Road
Source: Ruskinarc.com
Moses Ginsberg gives 10-year lease to Greater Miami Jewish Federation for a $1

* * *

Miami News
March 23, 1948

A testimonial breakfast honoring Moses Ginsberg, president of the Lincoln Tower corp., 420 Lincoln rd., will be sponsored Sunday by the Greater Miami Jewish federation.

The breakfast is to honor Ginsberg for making available offices of the federation in the Tower bldg. for 10 years.

* * *

Joseph Stein, chairman of the breakfast committee, in announcing the testimonial affair, said:

“The entire Jewish community of Greater Miami is privileged in having in its midst a man of the caliber of Ginsberg. Knowing the place which he occupies in the hearts of his fellow citizens, we know that a legion of his friends want to pay due honor to this warm-hearted and devoted worker for every good and worthy cause.”

* * *

Ginsberg tore up a 10-year lease which would have cost the federation a total of $75,000. He recently gave the federation a new 10-year lease for the mezzanine floor at $1 a year.
Polk's Miami Beach City Director
420 Lincoln Road Tenants
1955
Polk’s Miami Beach City Director
420 Lincoln Road Tenants
1955 (continued)
Street continued

421 Lee's luggage ΔJE8-3857
423 Carousel Children's Shop clo
    ΔJE8-4574
424 Creagh W M Ltd jews ΔJE1-0956
425 Todd & Todd Inc men's furngs
    ΔJE1-1425
427 Schoen Jules Inc shoes ΔJE1-5974
429 Marsha Kay Co gifts ΔJE8-4684

LINCOLN RD—Contd

430 Beach Theatre ΔJE1-0996
431 Post Sandra women's clo
    ΔJE1-3064
433 Fairfield's Inc women's clo
    ΔJE4-2339
434 Patsy Shop women's clo ΔJE1-0871
437 Bo-Peep Shoppe Inc children's
    clo ΔJE8-3777
438 Stephens Inc men's furngs
    ΔJE1-5624
441 Slater's Boat Shop Inc ΔJE1-0522
445-49 Gillette Jules Inc men's clo
    ΔJE4-2244
440-50 Beck A S Shoe Corp ΔJE1-0688
451 Effie Louise Dress Shop women's
clo ΔJE1-5685
455 Lumines Inc men's clo ΔJE8-5408
Leo Birchansky Exhibition
“Ally Exhibit,” 1944
Miami News
January 16, 1944

Exhibit Extended

The current exhibition of the 30 oil paintings and seven water colors of Leo Birchansky, 6950 Byron ave., Miami Beach, which is being held at the Miami Woman’s club building, has been extended to Wednesday, Jan. 26. Presented by Mrs. Myrtle Taylor Bradford, state art director, the one-man show is called the “Ally Exhibit” and is the first of the 1944 exhibits to be held at the club building. Mr. Birchansky is noted for his murals of the Russian revolution.
LEO BIRCHANSKY

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2009)
pg. 27

LEO BIRCHANSKY

MIAMI, Fla., March 9 (AP)—Leo Birchansky, 62-year-old Russian-born artist, died today of a heart attack at his home. For ten years he was political cartoonist and art director for Odesskia Novosti, a South Russian newspaper. He fled to the United States in 1922, worked in the art department of The New York Daily News for twelve years and came to Miami six years ago. Best known of his works was a series of canvases of the Russian revolution.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
BIRCHANSKY, LEO (1887-1949) Russian-American cartoonist born in Odessa, Russia, in 1887. Lev (Leo) Birchansky studied art at a private school in his native Odessa. In 1907 he became the editorial cartoonist and later the art director of Odesskaia Novosti, one of the city's leading newspapers, and he continued in these positions until 1917. He then took part in the Russian Revolution and published sketches depicting scenes of the revolution.
In 1922 Birchansky left the Soviet Union for western Europe and later came to the United States, finally settling in New York. There he freelanced cartoons and illustrations, also illustrating books in Russian by his fellow émigrés. He worked for 12 years (1931–43) in the art department of the New York News. In 1943 he moved to Miami, where he worked for various local publications as a cartoonist and illustrator. He died in Miami on March 8, 1949.
Leo Birchansky was a noted political cartoonist in his native Russia, but his style of cartooning never found favor in the United States. His career spanned two continents and two vastly different political systems, and this fact makes his contribution worthy of acknowledgment.
M.H.