

Beach itself was being made. The new house, although it was isolated in wilderness, surrounded by cranes and dredges and hundreds of hard-working men and sweating mules, gave the entire undertaking a feeling of permanency. It was the start of the new city.

We moved in with the carpenters, as always. When the hot water heater blew up, Carl got mad at Pfeiffer, the architect, and sent for August Geiger to finish the house. That association lasted during Carl's lifetime.

The immensity of the empty rooms was almost frightening. Again I was sent to Grand Rapids with the blueprints of a home to be furnished, and again Carl said, "None of that piddling parlor furniture, please honey; buy the biggest things you can get."

The Shadows, when finally complete, was enchanting, spacious and cool. The green lawn and the moving Atlantic seemed to enter the three hundred square feet of ceiling-high window frontage and become a part of the immense drawing room with its sea-green carpets and large sofas and chairs lushly padded with down and covered with pale green cotton damask. One came down a curved twin stairway, framed with the golden tubes of the pipe organ, into these wide, beautiful rooms that held the serenity of the garden and the sea. Cypress logs burned in the fireplaces, the construction of which had driven our matter-of-fact architect almost into a nervous breakdown, for Carl had, as usual, stormily insisted they be large enough for him to "walk into and turn around."

Final touches in the house were two immense brass cuspidors I had been obliged to buy, one for the drawing room and one to stand guard by Carl's bed. I had learned to accept the spittoons.

That house was Florida. Even the table china I ordered from Lennox was made with an orange-tree design, and our silver bore the same device.

In the lovely living room, before the fire, we could forget the volcanic upheaval of the surrounding land. The day-and-night sucking and spewing of the dredges was lost in the sound

of the sea under our windows. There I would sit in my little geranium-red chair at Carl's feet, the brass spittoon on his other side; and pressed against his knee, Rowdy.

Rowdy, by the way, was the most ornery of airedales. He hated every living human except Carl, whom he adored. I was only tolerated. Rowdy bit everyone who came to the house unless Carl held him back.

The Beach Shadows became the center of all that went on in Miami Beach during those early years. With no hotels or stores on the Beach, our home was headquarters for all who visited or pioneered.

I might have been keeping house on a desert island. Every item of food, every stick of furniture or building material, even the water we drank, was transported by wagon or barge or truck across Biscayne Bay. In those early days, the brackish water used on Miami Beach came from wells sunk deep in the ground. It was too salty to drink or use to make coffee or tea and for bathing curdled with the soap. When oilman James Snowden bought the Firestone estate, he sank several wells for water and some said he drilled for oil as well as water. But it did not occur to me that playing hostess in this sandy wilderness presented any great difficulty. Carl asked me always to be ready to entertain anyone who might come to Miami Beach. Among our guests would surely be some who would fall in love with this new land and be willing to buy lots and share our fascinating pioneer existence!

So I was always prepared for guests—any number. Canned stuff was ordered by the crate from the mail-order houses. Among my domestic duties was the daily warfare against the insects, land crabs and snakes that retreated toward The Shadows in advance of the dredges filling in their marsh retreats. Indian Creek was a rendezvous for alligators. Often a dozen of them could be seen.

I hated those land crabs most of all. The spindly-legged creatures burrowing into everything I planted gave me the horrors. But I learned that they gave way before the application of touch paste, and wrote the manufacturers of my discovery.