

"No, Signora," they answered in astonishment.

"Well, I'll throw down an address and you write Carl Fisher there if you want to go. It's just like Italy," I added as an inducement, for I knew they were just what Carl needed around the pools to complete his picture.

Miami Beach was theater—but it held the charm of music and tropical languor. Carl was pouring out copy. Much of it he wrote himself. He had written ads for Speedway. Later he would employ crack publicists—good-looking, smiling young fellows like Steve Hannagan and Joe Copps. From his publicizing of Miami Beach, Steve would go on to become soon the world's most spectacular publicity man.

Slogans helped sell Miami Beach as a paradise for the sports lover, a playland for youth, a haven of peace and beauty for the aged. Northerners plodding through streets of frozen slush were maddened by posters of beautiful girls ocean-bathing in January, and there was drawing power in the slogans:

"It's Always June in Miami Beach."

"Where Summer Spends the Winter."

Later there would be radio broadcasting stations with romantic names, such as (WIOD), "Wonderful Isle of Dreams."

Unwittingly, I was the original of the Miami Beach bathing beauty that was to help make our city famous. Carl had built the Casino, with its pavilion for pleasure, sun-bathing and swimming, and its Roman pools where many swimming champions were to begin their careers. The first women of the Beach swam there each morning in long black stockings, bathing suits that would serve today for street dresses, and bathing shoes. Demure mop caps covered our long hair.

I had mastered the new racing stroke, the Australian crawl, and longed for greater freedom in the water. I found it in what I have been told was the first form-fitting bathing suit, with a shockingly short skirt that came only to my knees, and, most daring of all, anklets instead of the modest long black stockings. The following Sunday a minister in a church on the mainland used my bathing suit—and me in it—as a symbol of the brazenness of the modern woman. Miami Beach was compared

to Sodom and Gomorrah, and I to a female biblical character I prefer not to name.

I was in tears over the scandal of this public attack and, as might be expected, curious people crossed the Collins Bridge and stood around the Casino pool waiting to see "the woman in the suit." I was so afraid Carl would be angry with me. Usually he was very strict in all matters pertaining to his wife—if not to other women. Before the lenient 'twenties "ladies" did not take cocktails or wear lipstick, and I myself still regarded a woman who touched cigarettes as little better than lost.

But Carl, to my astonishment, was indignant with the minister and not with me. He said, "Honey, that's the first sensible bathing suit I've seen. You hold your head up and keep right on wearing it. I don't see why in hell a woman with a damn pretty figure hasn't a right to show it."

Within a few weeks of my public pillorying, not a black cotton stocking was to be seen on the Beach. How I blessed a gay young creature, later famous as Peggy Hopkins Joyce, for flaunting her lovely figure during this crisis on our Beach in a svelte black suit printed all over with gay green parrots!

Carl told me excitedly: "By God, Jane, you've started something! Why, dammit, I've been trying for months to think up an idea for advertising the Beach nationally. We'll get the prettiest girls we can find and put them in the goddamnedest tightest and shortest bathing suits and no stockings or swim shoes either. We'll have their pictures taken and send them all over the goddamn country as 'The Bathing Beauties of Miami Beach!'"

The bathing beauty and Miami Beach became synonymous terms. The beauties were a big part of the inspired ballyhoo designed to bring buyers to the new land where Carl and his cohorts were waiting.

Pete Chase sat under an umbrella through those first lonesome winters, perking up and smiling into the blinding sun if a chance tourist wandered over the Collins Bridge. That umbrella was the beginning of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce. Sometimes Carl sat with him, but not for long. Carl was too restless to lie in wait for customers.