

The following morning the Fisher properties' personnel received a stern memorandum signed by Carl Fisher. "Avoid in the future all errors resulting from a similarity of names."

As the land sold, Carl continued to build more land. He drove customers over Biscayne Bay in his speedboat and pointed to a spot in the smooth water. "I'm going to build an island right there. Might be a good spot for you to buy."

And almost before the prospect's eyes an island would arise, created by deepening the bay and utilizing the sand. In this way Carl built Star Island and Belle Island and the island in the bay where he raised the shaft in honor of Henry Flagler.

Now all who bought at Miami Beach, joined in the building. The homes built were fashioned after those on Spanish haciendas. The Spanish trend predominated—the mellow walls, the iron fretwork, the pools gleaming in the palms, the tiled staircases leading to blue water were as Carl had portrayed in the first posters. This trend swept America from coast to coast within a few years. Yankee architecture had gone Spanish.

Miami Beach grew lovelier each day, sweeter in fragrance, more glorious in color. Nowhere else in the northern hemisphere was such luxurious bloom. Tropical climbing flame-vines, Brazilian rubber trees, avocado pear, pineapple, banana, coconut and hibiscus—all these were here, and the air was heavy with the fragrance of orange blossoms and oleander. The swamp had been made into "a city of the Arabian Nights." Carl Fisher had his wish. He had created a new world, and a new way of living for the special people of that world.

Within a space of five years this city and its way of life had been established as a part of the American scene. From 1920, when the population of Miami Beach had been 644 souls, to 1925, when its winter population was 30,000 the city of Miami Beach was the fastest-growing city in America. It more than doubled its growth within six years. Its assessed valuation in 1925 was five and a half million dollars. Only a dozen years before, its yearly taxes had amounted to a little over three hundred dollars.

Now Carl really was the "fabulously wealthy Carl Fisher."

Miami Beach was making millions for Carl, and for all the "damn fools" who had pinned their faith in "Swampland"—Collins, Pancoast, the Lummus brothers—and pioneered our man-made frontier.

"The Barnum of real estate," Carl was called. And his friend Will Rogers, who wrote so much about Carl and knew him so well, dubbed Carl "the midwife of Florida."

Will Rogers wrote of Carl: "He's the man who took Miami Beach away from the alligators and gave it to the Indians. This guy has done more unique things before he heard of Florida than any man I ever met."

And again Will Rogers wrote: "Had there been no Carl Fisher, Florida would be known today as just the turpentine state. . . . He rehearsed the mosquitoes till they wouldn't bite you until after you bought."

"He was the first man smart enough to discover that there was sand under the water. So he put in a kind of a dredge, all-day sucker arrangement, and he brought the sand up and let the water go to the bottom."

"Carl discovered that sand would hold up a real estate sign, and that was all he wanted it for. Carl rowed the customers out in the bay and let them pick out some nice smooth water where they would like to build, and then he would replace the water with an island, and today the dredge is the national emblem of Florida."