

Carl raged: "Then make it twice as wide—make the goddamn street a hundred feet wide. I tell you that Lincoln Road is going to be the American Rue de la Paix."

He would risk everything he owned to prove he was right. The millions spent in building these streets, homes, public buildings and hotels largely represented Carl's personal fortune, and the greater portion of that fortune was being poured into Miami Beach. Millions had been sunk in creating the land itself. Millions more went into its clearing. He was still literally pouring money into the sand. Even for Carl's fabulous financial resources, the inroads were staggering.

His incessant demand was for the best in materials and workmanship.

I believe he personally inspected every foot of pipe line and every inch of scaffolding. I would see the familiar slouched hat bobbing through a newly dug drainage ditch in a torn-up street, or silhouetted from a skeleton structure against the blue, blue sky. Then I would remember the first time I had seen Carl in his white car suspended in the clouds. The crowds staring up at him then had called him "that crazy fellow, Carl Fisher." People were saying that still of Carl, but in lower tones.

Curious visitors drove over the rattling wooden boards of Collins Bridge to inspect our man-made paradise. They wandered through the city-in-the-making and were dumfounded by the lovely little new houses and the extravagant flowering of this newly created land. There was a widely quoted quip among them: "The Florida climate here is balmy, and Carl Fisher is as balmy as the climate."

Many who asked to have pointed out to them the famous Carl Fisher were amazed to see a medium-sized, stockily built man, dripping in the heat, climbing out of a sewerage ditch or down from a scaffolding. Friendly, interested, vividly cursing and lashed with fatigue, Carl was one with the workmen in this great area of sprawling confusion and activity.

But Miami Beach rose like a city from the sea, fabulously beautiful, magically towered. Carl's imagination had always been captured by towers, and all his office buildings were crowned with them.