

Miami Beach and Carl himself seemed unreal to our visitors. They would go away shaking their heads. "It can't last," some of them said. "It's too purty." And no one offered to buy land. Four months before the opening of Collins Bridge, on February 19, 1913, the first attempt had been made to sell lots in the unborn city. On that day a small and skeptical crowd crossed Biscayne Bay on wooden barges towed by motorboats and private launches. Seated on planks stretched between kegs in what was still jungle, a few had been brave enough to bid on the first lots auctioned off on Miami Beach. Twenty-five lots sold that day.

The site of the Breakers Hotel brought the staggering sum of twenty-seven hundred dollars. Other sales were equally absurd. The total taxes for Miami Beach the year before had been three hundred and seventy-five dollars. No one, not even Carl, could have guessed that twenty-seven years later Miami Beach's municipal tax would be over sixty-one million; or that Miami Beach, first incorporated as a town March 26, 1915, with J. N. Lummus its first mayor, would be within two years the city of Miami Beach. I recall the day of its incorporation with a warm glow of pleasure. I considered it my birthday present.

We pioneers in paradise knew the loneliness of those who break frontiers. In the beginning, Christmas was the worst time for the families from the North. I knew that the other wives were missing snow and sleighbells and everything that was associated with the Yule season.

Discontent spread around Christmas time. Water was the major source of complaint. Wells had been dug by this time, but the water came from too near the surface; it tasted of stagnant sea water and was unfit for human use. The fifty-pound blocks of ice brought over from the mainland melted before they reached the Beach.

Even Lee Appleget told Carl that he hadn't had a decent drink of water since he started working on the Beach, and he wanted to go home to Indianapolis.

I was determined to have a Christmas that would bring the feeling of the North to our discontented paradise. While build-