

Negroes

MB Jan
February 25th, 1919.

Mr. Thomas J. Panboast,
Mr. I. E. Schilling,

Miami Beach, Florida.

Gentlemen :

We are continually facing the proposition of the shortage of negro labor and this situation is causing an unusual cost on the peninsula, both in employment of labor and loss of time and effectiveness. Something must be done and done at once - and I think it is up to the Miami Beach Improvement Company, the Schilling Company, who employ a good many laborers, and ourselves, and to immediately erect fifteen small houses suitable for negro laborers, furnish them with suitable sanitary arrangements, and surround the entire plantation with a fence that is properly built, so that the place will not be an eye-sore to the rest of the property. We should also have a small store-room so that some one of their own number can operate a store.

Now, we have dodged this issue for a long time, and we are to the point where something must be done. I will be glad to attend a meeting at any time, and subscribe our share toward this work.

Yours very truly,

CGF:1

THE ALTON BEACH REALTY CO.

THE MIAMI BEACH IMPROVEMENT CO.

OCEAN FRONT PROPERTY

OFFICE TWENTY-THIRD AND COLLINS AVE.

MIAMI BEACH, MIAMI, FLORIDA

Sept. 23, 1920

Negro

Mr. Carl G. Fisher,
434 N. Capital Ave.,
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Mr. Fisher:

We have a problem on our hands that is going to be a little difficult, I am afraid, to handle, and the longer it goes the more difficult it is going to be. About two years ago the negro in Miami had very few liberties, and as you know, they were not allowed to drive an automobile. The tourists who came to Miami with their negro drivers resented this very much, and as we didn't want to keep the tourists away we finally opened the door to the negro driver. Then the negroes of the town commenced to buy cars and now on Thursdays and Sundays especially, the negroes come over to the Beach car load after car load. Just this afternoon inside of an hour there have perhaps been twenty-five cars go by our office, everyone loaded to full capacity with negroes.

They go up the Beach between Snowden's property and the House of Refuge and park the cars along the Ocean Drive and go in to bathe. They use the cars as dressing rooms and bath houses. Some of them come all the way from home in bathing suits.

At a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce sometime ago, I brought this question up and some people favored putting a stop to it absolutely, while others stated that the negroes are our servants and we could not well get along with ^{them} and we must to some extent take care of them, and there was no one needed an Ocean bath worse than the negro, therefore to cut them off without giving them some other place to go would be wrong.

This side of Jacksonville at Pablo Beach, they selected a place south of the regular bathing ground for the white people and designated it as a place where the negro could bathe, and it seems to have worked out very well.

Of course one time it was understood that the negroes were to use the island south of the government out for bathing purposes, and a colored man by the name of Dorsey tried to buy it and rent it out for bathing to the negroes, but the trouble was to get a boat that would take them over and it never amounted to anything. No place will amount to anything for them unless it is where they can drive to it with a car. Now it might be that we could get a piece of land above the road that goes over from Fulford, and lease it to someone who would rent bathing privileges to negroes up there, but I do not know whether you could get anyone to sell a piece of land without negro restrictions in it or not. But it seems to me any place between the Fulford road and the Causeway would be a great mistake as this is quite a popular drive for the tourists and others as well.

I was talking to a man by the name of Johnson, who stated that he had lived in the South a number of years and that that he knew pretty well about how to handle the negroes and he stated he could get an appointment as Deputy Sheriff from Moran, and he that he could handle the situation. Of course we would have to pay his salary as it is above the City limits. But as stated before this would just merely be to run them off from our property and not provide any place for them to go. If you

I had Mr. Henning see Tub Palmer and go over the "Bay Shore" proposition. This he did on Saturday and here is his report. About 1916 Claude E. Sawyer sold the property as the "Claude E. Sawyer Biscayne Bay Company"; About 1917 the same property was sold to a company called the "North Bay Shore Land Company, Inc"; About 1918 the same land was sold to the "Bay Shore Investment Company", a corporation of Delaware. All the stockholders in this company are northern residents with the exception of Tub Palmer. The whole tract, as I understand it, has three hundred fifty building lots of about nine thousand square feet each. A large part of this land had to be built by suction dredge, which work is just about completed, and they are selling the land as the "Bay Shore Addition to Miami". The lots are being sold at a dollar a square foot or nine thousand dollars each, with the exception of the Bay front lots, of which there are about twenty-five, and these are thirty thousand dollars each, as they have about thirty thousand square feet in them. They are now forming a "Bay Shore Construction Company" to build houses. So practically they were on the ground first with their name and I don't believe we can do anything to get it changed. The only thing that we must be careful about is to always mention Miami Beach Bay Shore Company. There can then not be any confusion. However, if you want me to do anything further in regard to this, let me know, but personally, I don't believe it will make a great deal of difference to us.

This morning I am in receipt of a letter from Huston Wyeth as follows:

"I would like to know in what position you will be this coming winter to keep some horses at the Beach. I have been thinking something of shipping down a couple of saddle horses, but do not know how much room they have at the stables where the polo ponies are kept, or whether there will be any room available this winter.

"I will appreciate it very much if you will let me know if there are any good stalls available, and what charges are made for horses, per month."

I have written him stating that we were very glad indeed to know that he was going to consider having saddle horses here at the Beach this winter, and that I was writing to you to see what arrangements could be made, and would notify him of your reply. He is a good sport and I think would be a good man to have interested at the Beach.

Very truly yours,

Thos J. Pawcosh

Secy-Treas.

Personal

8 Oct. 1st, 1920.

Mr. Frank D. Stalnaker,
Indiana National Bank,
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Stalnaker:-

I had a talk to day with Mrs. Ellinwood and I am very anxious to help, in some manner, provide a place for colored women and colored children of this town to be properly taken care of. It is a job that the city and citizens together could combine on and make a thoroughly first class place that would be properly managed, and be large enough to furnish several branches of assistance.

I have noticed recently that the old work-house is vacant. This is a very large and substantial building that could be really worked into a wonderful Community Welfare House and particularly for the colored people as it is in about the proper location. Do you happen to know whether this building could be secured for this purpose, and do you think it would be possible to get the co-operation of the city and a substantial number of business men to complete the job?

Very truly yours,

THE CARL G. FISHER PROPERTIES

Negroes

MEMO TO Mr. Carl G. Fisher

DATE October 11, 1929

FROM Paul Kunschik

SUBJECT Lewis Taylor

My attention has been called to the fact that Lewis Taylor has written you a letter concerning his discharge from this organization and that you desire a statement of the facts in the case.

The immediate cause of his discharge was rowdiness in the office building at night. In preparation to protect the office building against the approaching storm we had employed a few extra colored men to assist Lewis in moving the furniture on all floors away from the windows to the center of the office and had taken up rugs and had piled these on top of the furniture. Mr. Duffy had very kindly consented to stand on guard all night at the office with the watchman and he had asked the colored men to arrange to stay in the building also in case a window would blow out and their help would be needed in getting things boarded up quickly. As night approached Mr. Duffy told Lewis to take the colored men down to the first floor, turn out all lights and lie down on top of the tables and rugs and go to sleep. He told them that if the storm became worse and their help was needed they would be awakened and called into service. Lewis accompanied the men to the first floor but instead of obeying instructions as to turning out lights and going to sleep they left the lights burning and started a rough house. Duffy went down stairs and ordered them to quiet down and turn out the lights, which was done, but later on in the night they again turned on the lights and started some more rough house. By that time the reports which had been received indicated that the storm would not strike that night so Duffy went down stairs and ordered all the niggers including Lewis to pile into his car and took them over into nigger town and dumped them, telling Lewis he need not report back to the office without first getting my consent as he had violated instructions. That night, as every night while the storm was pending, I communicated with Duffy by telephone and he advised me what had happened. Accordingly the next morning I asked Lewis to turn in his keys, paid him his week's wages and also told him we would not press him for payment on his note, on the automobile or on the balance he owed us for fines which we had paid the police department.

I stated that this was the immediate cause of his discharge, but this was only the climax of other causes which I mentioned to you in my memodated May 23, 1929 which Walter Thompson can probably produce from your files at your office. Under date of June 3rd you answered my memo stating that you were glad I called your attention to his negligence as to tolerating negroes to sleep in our vacant offices and crap games. I quote from your memo "My advice is to immediately run all the negroes you have away from there, including Lewis. The fact he has been with us sixteen years does not allow him to shoot crap or drive a car while drunk. Let him go to work with a pick and shovel and he will know how to appreciate a steady job".

I did not immediately dismiss Lewis at that time because I felt sorry for him, but I did give him a severe talking to and put him on his good behavior. I also discussed his case with Mr. Collins both by mail and in person. Mr. Collins in a letter to me dated May 27th stated "I think he should be given to understand his position and the next time he transgresses or gets into trouble it is good-bye. You could give him rules and regulations which I will stand up with you, especially the discontinuance of the wccem friends around the building".

THE CARL G. FISHER PROPERTIES

MEMO TO Mr. Carl G. Fisher

DATE October 11, 1929

FROM Paul Kunschik

SUBJECT Lewis Taylor

#2 - Continued

I have turned the job over to Harold Strown who has been running our elevator for some time and have employed a brother of Harold Strown's to assist with the janitor work and elevator service. In the short time that these boys have had charge we have already noticed a very decided difference in the cleanliness around the building, particularly the lavatories. Mr. Chase advised me that he had never been able to get Lewis to clean the walls in the sales office which showed finger prints, particularly around the water cooler where people would stand with their hands propped up against the wall. Harold has cleaned these places and is making an effort to keep them clean. Personally I think that our janitor services have been improved by the change that has been made.

I did and still feel sorry for Lewis, but I think he was given every chance to mend his ways but refused to do it. If you want us to do anything for Lewis other than what has already been done, you may be assured that your wishes will be respected.

While discussing the foregoing I again would like to bring to your attention the same matter which I mentioned in the P.S. of my memo to you of May 23rd and that is the practice last winter on the part of our salesmen of keeping one or more negroes loafing around the back of the office building to clean and polish their cars. This was done last year with the approval of Mr. Chase in order that the salesmen's cars might be kept in a more presentable condition. At that time you stated "If the salesmen want their cars dusted off, let them leave them down the street, or have a distinct understanding that we don't want a lot of loafers around the building". Mr. Collins expressed himself on this subject as follows: "I think these boys a nuisance and should not be allowed. The salesmen should keep their own cars clean". On the strength of these statements I have suggested to Mr. Chase that his salesmen find some other place to have their cars washed and cleaned. I do not think it looks well to have an auto wash stand at the rear of our office building. By eliminating that we can eliminate some of the colored loafers if not all of them.

I shall be very glad to hear from you further regarding Lewis Taylor and the auto wash.

PK:MKH

Paul Kunschik
PAUL KUNSCHIK

MEMORANDUM

FROM MR. FISHER

DATE April 9, 1930

TO Mr. Duffy and Capt. Borden.

SUBJECT Negro bathing.

As much as we would like to help the negroes, we are afraid we are going to have trouble on Terminal Island if we continue to use it as a bathing beach. Therefore, the use of this island for a bathing beach must be discontinued.

You can tell the negroes, if they can find some other place which they can fix up themselves, we will donate some cash to help them fix up another place.

C. G. Fisher.

CGF:T

Negroes

December 19, 1931

Judge A. Frank Katsentine,
Congress Building,
Miami, Fla.

Dear Frank:

I enclose you a statement from a colored boy who works here on the Beach. He has been hauling three servants back and forth to the Beach to work, in his Ford car. It is a great accommodation for these people to be hauled over here and back to town. Of course they divide up the expense.

I know that indiscriminate fines are no good, and that there should be some control of them, but no law can be made to stick, that will fine a workman under these conditions. This has been tried in other courts and will not stick, and while I don't want to back the law and have an argument, I do think this fine should be remitted, and this boy should be given a license to haul these employees to and from the Beach.

The young man works here at the Maren Apartment, 1543 Michigan Avenue, and if you wish him to, he can come down and have a talk with you.

Yours,

C. G. FISHER

CGF-HM
Enclosure.