



CHARLES FRANCIS COE, noted American author and lecturer, writes from his Florida home:

“MIAMI MILLIONS is a whacking good book. In it you will find everything that ever was in a boom, and that is everything we call life. Personalities, politics, problems, profits, percentages, prognostications and percussions combine with love, laughter, libel, lachrymose liability and languorous liquidation. Booms are tricky things. Read this book and you will recognize the next boom that stares you in the face. You will also smile, shudder and salaam to figures which presaged the present era of billions.

CHARLES FRANCIS COE.”

GOOD FUN WHILE IT LASTED



In the following pages may be found the true story of the Florida land boom of 1925, when paper millionaires took the land of sunshine from the Seminole Indians and gave it to the binder boys.

Originally published under the title of "BOOMER-ANG" this account will recall to those who lived through the boom that parade of events which convinced the rest of the world that we were all quite mad down here in Florida. But it was good fun while it lasted.

The author desires to express appreciation for the invaluable advice and counsel given so freely by Frank B. Stoneman, beloved editor of The Miami Herald.

THE AUTHOR

MIAMI MILLIONS

THE DANCE OF THE DOLLARS
IN THE GREAT FLORIDA
LAND BOOM OF
1925

By KENNETH BALLINGER

1 9 3 6

Printed By THE FRANKLIN PRESS, Inc.
MIAMI, FLORIDA



. . . when Miss Ruth Woodall won the 1925 Miami bathing beauty contest, the girl-beach-palm picture became the keystone of Florida resort publicity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE most spectacular real estate boom of modern times was getting ready to sprinkle its heedless millions over the state of Florida in 1924, and Miami, at its very heart, was entering upon a decade of growth that has made it headline material wherever newspapers are printed.

The very obvious fact that the dark years of the hang-over from that spree are ended, and Florida again is being seeded with the dollars of rich Yankees and hopeful natives, makes it desirable, perhaps, to recapture the days of 1924, 1925 and 1926 when Miami was transformed from a sleepy little town on the edge of Biscayne bay into a Magic City of modest skyscrapers and legendary real estate profits.

From Miami, the nerves of the boom spread out into every corner of Florida. No land was too poor or too remote to attract buyers or to be subdivided, so long as it was within the confines of the state of Florida. The coasts where pirates under Morgan and Lafitte once plied their evil trade sprouted such riches that in one place ocean-side developers actually abandoned a pirate chest they could feel with their dredges; to get on with the more remunerative work of building a subdivision to sell. Pirate gold was nothing but museum antiques in the days when the binder boys had money flowing into Florida at a rate that would have put even the New Deal to shame.

Just what is a boom such as Florida lived through? How long did the boom, as such, last? What marked its limits? What makes a boom?

"Building activities," says Kenneth Keyes, president of the Keyes Company. "Profits," asserts G. D. Brossier, who has dealt in Miami real estate since 1893.

Continues Mr. Keyes, who today ranks as one of the largest and best realty operators in the Miami field:

"In my opinion the real estate boom which reached its climax in the summer of 1925 began to get under way in the spring of 1923. Building permits in April, May, June and July of that year totaled \$5,723,695, almost a million and a half dollars monthly. Gaining momentum more rapidly in early 1924, building permits increased to almost \$4,000,000 in the single month of August.

"The all-time high was reached in October, 1925, when Greater Miami building permits for a 31-day period totaled \$15,787,539, slightly more than the permits issued for Miami, Miami Beach, Coral Gables and the balance of the present Greater Miami area for the entire year of 1935.

"It is my personal belief that the climax of the boom was reached in the fall of 1925, but few of us realized it at that time.

By January or February, 1926, it was apparent to many that the boom was over."

Mr. Brossier places the beginning of the boom in July, 1925. "The upward trend in Florida real estate values began as early as January, 1924," he believes, "when investors could purchase property and realize a quick turnover at a small profit. The selling gathered momentum and was at its highest from July until October 31, 1925. In November there was a noticeable slackening of investing and the stock market crash of November, 1925, was really the finish of Miami's boom.

He recalls that about October, lots which ordinarily were offered for \$2,000 to \$3,000 each were being sold for as much as \$50,000, and it was not unusual for people with as little as \$1,000 deposit on a "proposition" to sell their option for \$60,000.

The full story of the Miami and Florida boom has never been written, and so we shall venture into those uncharted waters with our readers as partners in an effort to fix its boundaries and the meanders, to the end perhaps that we shall be able the next time to recognize a boom and to navigate it without so many wrecks.

As Miami and Miami Beach and Coral Gables and many another Florida city took a fresh purchase on life from the 1925 boom, so The Miami Herald entered into a new phase of existence at that time. It was the newspaper of the boom, dwarfing all other Florida publications, and leaping into a national prominence from the boom that has kept it ever since the largest newspaper in the state.

Under the guiding hand of its owner and publisher, Frank B. Shutts, The Miami Herald for more than 13 months in 1925 and 1926 became the largest newspaper in volume of business in the entire world. It made The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune and even The Los Angeles Times appear skimpy and undernourished by comparison. The Herald reached its peak in January, 1926, when it carried twice as much advertising business as in any month of the preceding year.

Ah, those were the happy days, when customers with cash in their fists pleaded in vain for page advertisements that couldn't find space even in an 88-page daily. A woman told a Herald circulation man: "I'd like to take The Sunday Herald, but I'm afraid it would fall on me." It was not unusual for the harried staff to turn down as many as 15 pages of advertising in one day. Principally in The Miami Herald the purchaser and the speculator found listed the opportunities they sought so avidly, not only in Dade county property, but in land from Key West to the far-off Perdido river. For as Miami was the heart of the boom, The Herald was the main artery through which the life blood of those pulsing times poured.

Equipped in early 1924 to turn out a 24-page newspaper comfortably, The Herald was as unprepared for the crest of the boom as were the railroads, the steamship companies and the public utilities and government itself. The principal press on which the

paper was printed had run night and day for 20 years in the plant of The Denver Post before it was moved here. To supplement that, another second-hand press was set up in a garage across Second street from The Herald building while new presses were being built.

These two valiant old relics were run until they shed bolts and loose parts like a love-sick maiden's tears. They kept rolling, somehow, on a 24-hour schedule through those weary months, until a new four-story printing plant equipped with a modern battery of presses took over the job in 1926.

But alack-a-day! The boom was ended by then. It has only been in the last two or three years that the complement of printing equipment ordered in the fullness of 1925 hopes has caught its stride. Now the plant again is crying for expansion as The Herald leads the state in circulation all the year, and tops the newspapers of all but eight states in the nation in advertising during the winter and spring.

The business that made The Miami Herald what it is today also made Miami and her sister cities. We shall not bore you much with statistics, for no tables or charts can give us the story of the boom. Men and women, what they said and did, made the Florida land boom. Many of them are here today, ready again to take up the fight for profits and fame. In the ensuing chapters we shall attempt to give you a chronicle of the lives of those who dealt in millions back in 1925, of the mansions they built and the towering buildings they put up, the hopes they so freely expressed for publication and the dream of empire they nursed as the floodgates of credit and cash turned Florida sand into gold.

The famous banker commission headed Miami's government in 1924, having been re-elected the preceding year on the popular assumption that Miami in the hands of its five leading bankers could not fail to assure capital of a safe haven. How well founded was this belief!

The mayor was Edward Coleman Romfh, president of the First National Bank, and today the only one of that group whose institution has survived. The mayor before him was Commissioner Charles D. Leffler (Miami Bank and Trust Company), and general agent in Miami for the Gulf Refining Company. The other commissioners were James H. Gilman (Bank of Bay Biscayne), J. E. Lumms (Southern Bank and Trust Company), brother of the first mayor of Miami Beach, and J. I. Wilson (Dade County Security Company), now dead.

Nineteen twenty-four was the first of three big building years for Miami, when \$17,038,154 in construction was started. The city then covered 8 1-3 square miles, about one-fourth its present land area, with the towns of Silver Bluff, Coconut Grove and Buena Vista clustered about it. The county offices were housed in a two-story stone building, begun in 1904, on whose bare and cheer-

less site the present 27-story city-county building rests. The city government was conducted in the stone building now devoted to the police department, a structure designed in 1909. Two bridges spanned the Miami river within the city, one at Miami avenue and the other at Flagler street.

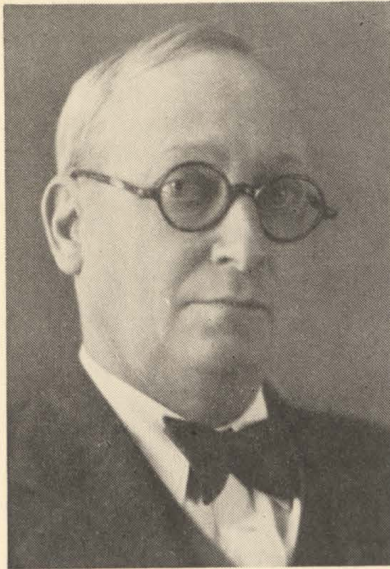
Across the county causeway, Miami Beach was concluding its tenth year of corporate existence. It had first been linked to Miami by the long wooden bridge begun by the late John S. Collins in 1912 and completed the following year at a cost of \$90,000 with the financial aid of Carl G. Fisher of Indianapolis, the same Carl Fisher who had come to Miami to loaf but who remained to help fabricate out of mangrove swamps the foundations of today's Miami Beach.

Miami Beach in 1924 dangled between bay and ocean at the end of a narrow strip of land, since cut through and bridged at Baker's Haulover to permit the tides to sweep upper Biscayne bay clean. Its municipal functions revolved about the wooden building north of Fifth street which houses the Miami Beach Athletic club. Smith's and Hardie's casinos drew the bulk of the bathers at south beach, while the Roman Pools, formerly the Casino St. John, caught the winter crowds from the two Fisher hotels, Lincoln and Flamingo, from the Wofford, the Breakers and the Pancoast.

Louis F. Snedigar, former Stetson athlete, had succeeded T. E. James as mayor. John H. Levi, who handled the engineering when Fisher was filling in the beach and who later became president of the Miami Ocean View Company, headed the city council then as now, directing its affairs with infinite humor and good

sense. Although its growth had been exceptional since 1920, Miami Beach building really took the biggest spurt in 1923 with \$4,185,600 in new construction, mounting to \$7,014,750 in 1924. The Miami Beach which added 19 hotels in 1935, was beginning then to fear it was slightly overbuilt.

During August, 1924, Miami had its best building month of the year with \$3,578,980 in new permits, second in the South. The Clark Dredging Company began pumping in 1,000,000 cubic yards of sand and rock to form Bayfront park out of the bay bottom whose waters lapped almost at the front steps of the McAllister Hotel. Dozens of houseboats too infirm to move were burned or buried at



JOHN H. LEVI

their moorings along what then was N. Bay Shore drive.

Elser Pier, fishing and loafing center for years at the foot of Flagler street, finally was bought by the city under condemnation proceedings from Locke T. Highleyman for \$375,000, although the owner bitterly protested the site had a speculative value of \$1,000,000. The pier was leased for the season to Jack Cleary for \$25,000, then destroyed. Meantime the white sand poured in under it, and the whole fill was finished by November. J. Gerry Curtis soon began to plant grass over portions of it, to still the clamor which arose from eating houses and homes into which the fine white sand was blown. Parking on the fill was started in January, 1925.

William Jennings Bryan had returned to Miami from the turbulent 16-day Democratic national convention which nominated John W. Davis and his brother, Charles Bryan, for president and vice president. In a colorful speech from the Royal Palm Park bandshell, he predicted progressive Democrats and progressive Republicans would defeat Calvin Coolidge, and recounted his successful efforts to prevent the Democrats from condemning the Ku Klux Klan. Before leaving on a speaking tour, he sold 280 scattered acres in Dade county for \$72,250, retaining 90 acres.

Fred L. Weede, Miami Chamber of Commerce secretary, was planning a 68-page booklet of 150,000 copies to mail during October. E. G. Sewell, president of the chamber, advanced the slogan, "The Season Opens In November." A hurricane killed 80 on the Virgin islands. There were no further advisory notices. Van C. Swearingen, attorney general under former Gov. Sidney J. Catts, delivered the Labor day address in Royal Palm Park. Gus' Bath opened its new 930-foot pier at Palm Beach. It was destroyed four years later.

Miami in September, 1924, was quick to shake off its customary summer sloth. George E. Merrick sold five lots in five days for \$5,500 in the former Merrick plantation west of Miami where the city of Coral Gables was born eight months later. The Miami-Palm Beach Company divided 1,000 lots within two blocks of the depot at Boca Raton and announced 5 and 10-acre farming tracts on 3,000 near-by acres

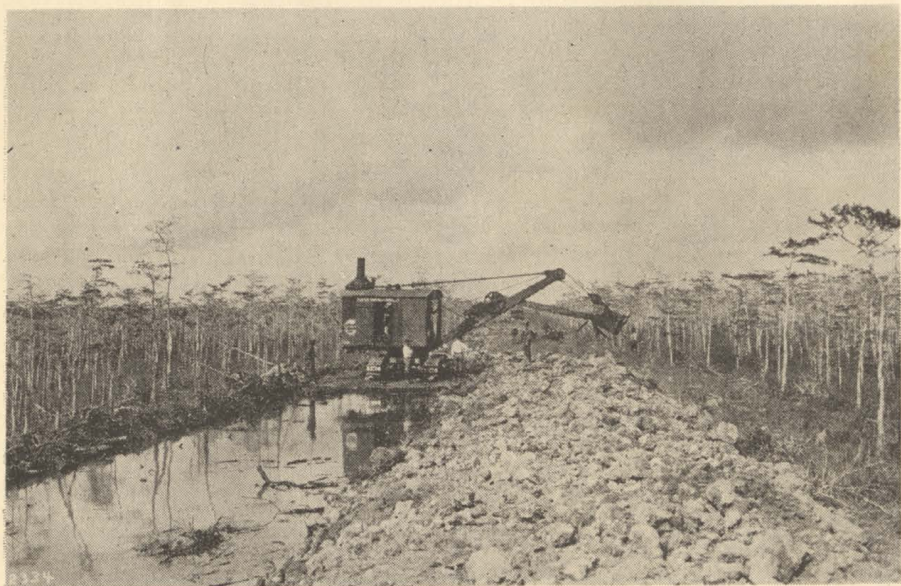
United States Senator Duncan U. Fletcher, guest of John Gramling, opened Avocado week in Miami, predicted President Coolidge would not receive a vote of confidence from the people in November. The Herald editorially deplored the occasional wearing of golf knickers in the business district; was answered by two heated letters from knicker-addicts. The Sweetwater Hotel, \$2,000,000, was announced for construction just west of Luna park on Flagler street by T. R. Knight and William G. Just. Dr. and Mrs. John DuPuis planned an \$80,000 home in Lemon City.

Miami was groaning about Florida roads. Parts of the Dixie highway, complained The Herald, "are paved only with good in-

tentions." An antique ferry blocked the Melbourne-Kissimmee road, later forming the basis for the removal of the state road department chairman, Judge H. B. Philips, when John W. Martin succeeded Gov. Cary A. Hardee. The "Miami Theater" was begun by Paramount Enterprises on the old Airdome site. We know it as the Olympia Theater, 10 stories.

Ground was broken for the First State Bank of Hialeah. Plans were prepared by Architect Martin L. Hampton for a \$50,000 yacht club building on "filled land east of the Royal Palm Hotel." (The present Royal Palm club.) Five acres near the Florida East Coast railroad at Arch creek were sold for \$10,000. Sixteen thousand acres in Brevard county changed hands for \$220,000. Tatums advertised Grove Park lots for as low as \$3,000. The \$90,000 Kreuger building in Stuart was started.

Miss Laura Cushman announced the building of her private school at N. E. Thirty-eighth terrace, Buena Vista. Henry Copinger, pioneer Miami horticulturist, died on his Miami river estate. The Belcher Asphalt Paving Company got a \$23,119 permit for its present office building near the causeway.



. . . and for 75 miles the Tamiami Trail was blasted out of rock and swamp, as George F. Cook and the Chevelier Corporation are doing here.

CHAPTER TWO

IT IS a far cry from the magnificent Bayfront park which makes up the front porch of Miami today, to the casual lettering of an unsung draftsman who was drawing the original plat of Miami in 1896 and unthinkingly penned in the word "park" at a convenient blank space on the line of the bay front.

The bay front was not in fact a public park in the beginning. When James E. Ingraham came here to lay out Miami for Henry M. Flagler, after planning the cities of Tampa and Sanford, he cannily reserved from 10 to 60 feet above high tide all along the bay from the north city limits at about Thirteenth street around to the Miami river, and land on both banks of the river. The Standard Oil fortune that Flagler invested here was not made by leaving water front openings for competitors to land and store their products.

Charles D. Leffler began shipping groceries from New York for his Miami store at the turn of the century. He found that he could save money by taking advantage of the water rates of the Mallory line into Key West, and bring his goods to Miami on the vessels of Capt. Dick Albury and others. The little schooners would come in to the front of one of the streets at the bay front and unload, and Mr. Leffler's truck would pick up there and carry the merchandise to his store.

Soon, he recalls, the movement became an epidemic, and envious checkers for the Florida East Coast railroad sat all day along the bay front under the hot sun and watched boats unload merchandise that might better, in their opinion, have come down in freight cars. One day the Florida East Coast sent in a crew equipped with second-hand cross ties and barbed wire, and ran a three-strand fence from what is now Belcher property to the Royal Palm club at the foot of S. E. Second street, thereby putting a sudden stop to the schooner business along that part of the bay.



FRANK B. SHUTTS

About 27 little Lefflers, Worleys, Romfhs and others lived within a block or two in bayfront homes north of the present Columbus Hotel, and the new barbed wire fence resulted in scratched hides and torn britches as the children went to and from their wading on the edge of the bay. Tempers of George A.

Worley, sr., and of Mr. Leffler finally dictated the purchase of wire clippers and one morning long stretches of the fence were cut, and the children romped through. But another railroad crew appeared with more crossties and more barbed wire. Soon after, the fence was cut again. So it went, back and forth, during 1901 and 1902, until the fence was the center of a town row.

The matter came to a head in a lawsuit against George Worley, in which the State Supreme court finally decided that the part of the bay front marked "park" on the original map belonged to the city of Miami, and the part left blank belonged to Flagler. From the center of old Seventh street to the center of Third street, north of the present Fifth street, was city property, and the remainder belonged to the Florida East Coast, and the Model Land Company, except for the site of Elser Pier at the foot of Flagler street.

The city wanted very badly to get the bay front closer to the foot of Flagler street than the "park" which the Supreme court handed it, because the federal government promised to spend \$100,000 to start a harbor if the city would build the docks. The Florida East Coast railroad had entered into a contract with the United States to construct a turning basin and channel across the bay to the government cut, but after its completion of the railroad to Key West, its interest in channels ebbed, and it refused to carry on the contract. The federal government found it could not get satisfaction out of the courts.

Miami's only prospect for a harbor, therefore, lay in its own efforts coupled with what the war department was willing to do. Through Frank B. Shutts, who had founded The Miami Herald in 1910 and was also starting a law practice, the Flagler interests in 1913 gave Miami a three-year option to buy all the bay front from Flagler street to the P. & O. docks, including the channel and a spur track, for \$415,000 in 5 per cent bonds.

By then, however, S. Bobo Dean was in command of the old Metropolis, and he began a fire-eating crusade against the F. E. C. that soon had much of the town's population believing that this "greedy corporate monster" was about to devour them, body and soul. As a result, Mayor John W. Watson vetoed the bond issue ordinance and the Flagler spokesmen retired into their shells in St. Augustine.

The city then began suit against the railroad and the Model Land Company to take the bay front by right of eminent domain, but A. J. Rose finally had to report failure. In 1917 the city offered the Florida East Coast \$1,500,000 for the land from S. E. Second north to the P. & O. terminals, and got nothing but a curt refusal, by letter. After 15 years of bickering and litigation, the city and the Flagler estate reached an impasse where the trustees finally refused even to answer letters from the city or to treat with its spokesmen.

The deadlock was broken in 1920 when Mr. Shutts, at the city

council's request, went to the Flagler trustees in New York and finally wheedled the trustees of the Flagler estate into selling the bayfront property for \$1,000,000 in 6 per cent Miami bonds. The actual acceptance was made in Miami with Mr. Shutts, W. A. Blount, widely known Flagler attorney, S. P. Robineau as city attorney and Chester B. Masslich of New York, Miami's bond attorney, conducting the negotiations.

The site of Elser Pier at the foot of Flagler street, belonging to a company headed by Locke T. Highleyman, was offered to the city at this time for \$175,000 but the city fathers were a little slow in accepting. When they found in 1924 that they had to have Elser Pier, they paid \$375,000 for it at forced sale.

Had the matter of the bayfront been permitted to drag two or three years more, until the boom got well started, there is no question that the Model Land Company and the Florida East Coast would not have parted with the site of the present park for anything like \$1,000,000. In fact, it is doubtful if there would have been a park along Miami's bayfront today if the purchase had not been made just before the dawn of the boom.

The germ of the park idea, planted by an anonymous draftsman, lived through 40 years, of which half of it was passed in bitter squabbling between the city of Miami and the Flagler interests. Credit and conditions on the eve of the boom enabled the city of Miami to create one of the world's finest parks in place of the scraggly shoreline where the children of the Lefflers and the Romfhs and the Worleys splashed so many years ago.

And the fill which covered that shore line and created Bayfront park buried more than tangible evidence of nature's whims. It buried, probably forever, the animosity against the Flagler interests which all the preceding years of Miami's existence had nursed and fattened.

Paced by the opening of the \$62,000,000 Miami Shores development, north of Miami, preparation for the boom gathered speed after the first of September, 1924.

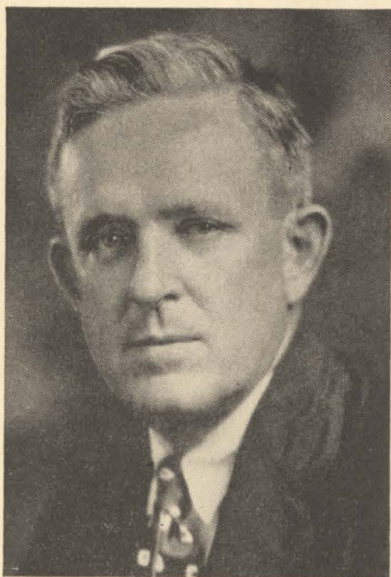
All through the early part of that year, buying and selling of property by Miamians and the slightly swollen winter crowd had pushed up values in the more settled parts. Capitalists with money and ideas then began bidding for acreage which might be subdivided and improved after patterns laid down in Coral Gables, Miami Beach and lesser Miami subdivisions.

So it was that Miami Shores came into being. It was the child of the Shoreland Company, which meant Mrs. E. S. Harris, Hugh M. Anderson, Roy C. Wright and the late J. B. Jeffries, recently chairman of the Everglades Drainage District. The present Miami Shores Village occupies a tract bought from L. T. Cooper out of his large holdings in the northern end of Miami. Altogether 2,500 acres were pieced together for this development, which later

was even to reach into Biscayne bay and attach the island on which the exclusive Indian Creek Golf club now rests in isolated peace.

Alex Riach returned in September from Italy, where he had studied architecture and landscaping for Miami Shores. A \$2,000,000 hotel was announced for a site on the bay just south of Arch creek. This somehow never took form. But it was forgotten anyway in the rush of buyers for the 12,000 building sites carved out of the Shoreland holdings.

Elegant offices were opened with fitting ceremonies in the Shoreland Building, near the First National Bank, offices that have since been subdued to meet less spectacular requirements. Ten Cadillac touring cars and four de luxe busses were bought to assist the sales staff.



HUGH M. ANDERSON

The first opening early in December, with Mr. Jeffries as sales manager and Hamilton Michelsen directing the field operations, brought \$2,509,000 in purchases. Thereafter the new Miami Shores offices had to close for several days to allow the clerical force to dig out from under the effects of the first sale. Of course, that was big doings for Miami. We lived to see the day, however, when more than \$30,000,000 worth of Miami Shores property was sold in a single day's campaign.

Despite the frenzy of that period, Miami Shores somehow escaped the issuance of bonds.

After the water was squeezed out of values and the Phipps estate had salvaged what was left, Miami Shores emerged as a debt-free and highly improved municipality. Some say the boys of the original Shoreland Company spent too much money on their "front" downtown to have anything left for the lean years.

The Miami Realty Board decided in September to erect a 15-story \$650,000 building across from what then was the Central school property, subsequently acquired for the present federal building. The name since has been changed to Postal building. George W. Langford of the McAllister Hotel paid \$200,000 (\$4,000 a front foot) for the strip of land between the hotel and the Elks club and began the 10-story McAllister addition to cost \$1,500,000.

Fifty-seven ballots were cast by Miamians in a School District No. 2 election approving \$200,000 in bonds, \$40,000 of which went to George E. Merrick in repayment for the Coral Gables Elementary building. A. D. H. Fossey Real Estate Company added eight

salesmen, one stenographer. The Fisher building, \$127,000, was nearing completion at Miami Beach.

Public resentment flared up against closing Ocean drive from the Firestone estate to Baker's Haulover. Sheriff Louis A. Allen posted armed guards on this long stretch of ocean-side road after a part of it had been torn up by scarifiers. The courts finally were asked to decide whether the Miami Beach Bayshore Company and the Tatums could move the roadway back from the high sandy ridge along the beach to a less expensive location near the bay. The Tatums contended they had built it originally. Witnesses declared it was constructed out of a public bond issue. By degrees the public became reconciled to losing its access to the ocean and the first thing anyone knew the ocean front was private property again and that part of Ocean drive was only a memory.

In Miami, the public impatiently received the news that the new redwood water mains from Hialeah to Miami would not be completed until the first of 1925. These wooden conduits were advertised to last a lifetime and promised Miami and Miami Beach the first palatable water out of spigots. The redwood mains were replaced this year with cast iron pipe, after numerous leaks had developed.

Civic clubs and private citizens complained bitterly about the condition of Miami's streets, torn up by an ambitious paving program, the laying of water mains and extension of the lines of the Miami Gas Company, newly acquired by the American Power and Light Company. The city commission was accused of going to sleep on the job. The city decided to double-track Flagler to Twelfth avenue while the paving was in progress.

Miss Alice Brickell, first postmistress of Miami, was killed by a live wire at her Brickell Point estate. M. F. H. Koch planned a \$1,600,000 hotel at N. Bayshore drive and Third street, but the lot still is bare. Walker-Skagseth's store was sold for \$40,000. Miami Beach approved, 41 to 1, a \$177,000 bond issue for water mains and other improvements. The beach residents, like Miamians, got their drinking water out of bottles until the mains were extended across the causeway.

A. B. Hurst bought the northeast corner of Everglades avenue and the E. Dixie for \$75,000, to put there a pharmacy, grocery store and Odd Fellows hall. Joseph H. Adams arrived to take possession of his new Belle Isle home. Dr. and Mrs. M. H. Tallman started construction on their \$25,000 home in Grove Park. Jerry Galatis (Seven Seas restaurant), bought a \$20,000 house on South Miami avenue.

To make room for widening of S. W. First avenue, the farmers' market was moved to the bank of the Miami river where the S. W. Second avenue bridge was to go. Frank Smathers sold 200 acres at the corner of Flagler street and Ludlum road for \$200,000, having paid \$170,000 for it a month before. The Florida East Coast railroad completed to Hialeah a spur that was intended to continue up the Miami canal to Lake Okeechobee. R. M. (Bob) Davidson,

first city manager of Coral Gables, directed the work. The first passenger train pulled into the Hialeah station in November, but the line was not built farther north. Later, it was continued around to rejoin the main line south of Miami and make a shuttle route, eventually dissipating the irritation of citizens held up at the Flagler street crossing by prolonged switching of freight trains.

City Manager Frank H. Wharton predicted that traffic lights would be a success, as General Electric representatives arrived to conduct a signal survey. Hamilton Michelsen began carload shipments of avocados from Miami to California. The Macon Telegraph editorially referred slightly to Miami as a frontier town, harboring criminals and rascals. The Miami Beach aquarium finally was closed by James A. Allison, Carl Fisher's former Prest-O-Lite partner, when Miami refused his offer of the equipment.

The addition to the old post office, the present home of the Miami Chamber of Commerce, was being rushed as Postmaster J. D. Gardner expressed the hope it would relieve congestion in mailing facilities by January.

The nation then was waiting to see what the November elections would bring forth. Clarence Darrow had saved Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb from the chair for the "thrill" murder of 14-year-old Bobbie Franks. Gen. John J. Pershing retired as general of the American armies. Red Grange was the sensation of the football world. John Phillip Hill of Baltimore discovered that 2.75 per cent cider was illegal. The first victim was claimed by the new Florida electric chair. William Lee Popham, the oyster king, was indicted for using the mails to defraud, growing out of his oyster farms at Apalachicola, using a method of breeding later adopted by the United States government.

On a bright, sunny day in September, two murders shook Miamians out of their lethargy. Mrs. Hattie Freckleton shot and killed her husband, Joseph, on First street across from the post office. She subsequently went free when Moman Pruiett, sensational criminal lawyer from Oklahoma, pictured her as "the woman scorned" and an all-male jury agreed. The same day W. Y. C. Hume, president of the Tropical Realty Company, shot and killed Recio Celona in the South Miami avenue restaurant of his father. Hume claimed the younger Celona intruded in his home. He later was acquitted of murder.

Julian Brain was convicted, sentenced to 20 years in prison, for the murder of Raymond Lee in a brawl. The Ashley-Mobley gang of Everglades bank robbers had shot their way out of several tight spots, robbed the Pompano bank, thumbed their noses at the law from the dank fastnesses of swamps that sheltered them. It was indeed a lusty period for Florida, the last frontier.