

Faith indeed was needed for the ambitious ~~beginning~~ plans for a new city that were evolving from blue prints into canals, streets and homes on the ocean beach. Miami, on the mainland, was just a small, country town dominated by the big, wooden Royal Palm hotel where the winter visitors stayed and snuggled against the single railroad track that ran all the way from Key West to Jacksonville. That railroad spanned near-jungle for most of its miles and served more as an auxiliary transport to water shipping than as a main artery of commerce.

Yet, with all the vacant acreage, with all the miles of empty oceanfront, there were people like the Pancoasts, the Lummus brothers and that new automobile millionaire from Indianapolis, Carl G. Fisher, who were dredging more land and bridging Biscayne Bay to reach it, in order to build a new ~~village~~ village.

John S. Collins probably started it. Collins obtained a considerable part of what now is Miami Beach many years before a resort development was considered. His interest was in farming. Traces of his agricultural planning still may be seen. The pine trees along Pine Tree Drive were planted as windbreaks for some of his groves. Collins Canal was dug so that he could move his produce to the mainland by barge.

Miami Beach's first subdivision was platted and filed by J. N. and J. E. Lummus in July, 1912. It included 605 acres south of 15th Street, most of which was purchased for ^{\$160}~~\$150~~ an acre, but some small parcels cost up to ~~\$12,500~~ an ~~acre~~. The second plat was filed by Collins in December of the same year. Fisher's first plat was filed in 1914 and included land between 15th and 23rd Streets.

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~~Neither~~ ^The Lummus brothers, Collins or the Pancoasts were ^{NOT} wealthy. But their activities intrigued Fisher, who was, and when they ran into financial troubles, Fisher bailed them out. One of the first crises developed in bridging the bay and it was Fisher's money that completed the project, at the time the longest wooden bridge in the world.

Fisher brought in a number of friends such as James Allison, Arthur C. Newby, James and George Snowden and Henry McSweeney, all of whom were millionaires, but it was Fisher who invested the most money and who kept Miami Beach going forward in those early, struggling years. By 1920 the basic structure of the city was completed and the population numbered 644.

Miami Beach's growth can be most succinctly told in census figures. These are: 1925, 2,442; 1930, 6,494; 1935, 13,330; 1940, 28,012; 1945, 32,327; 1950, 46,282; 1955, 50,981.

But while the census tells the story, it gives no details. It does not reveal, for example, the collapse of the Florida land boom in 1926, ending a period of wild speculation and leaving local economic disaster in its wake. It does not show how the national depression followed on the heels of the state debacle, wrecking the nation's economy. It does not show how Miami Beach was changed from a resort in 1942 to a military training base, almost overnight and practically in toto. But it does show steady growth.

And so, on the 45th anniversary of the founding of their city, thousands of Miami Beach residents gathered today to indulge in a bit of nostalgia and a lot of dreams of the future.

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Miami Beach was planned originally as a winter home for the wealthy, for in 1915 only the wealthy could afford the long and sometimes trying journey from the north to this sub-tropic tip of the United States.

Sports facilities therefore were in keeping with the tastes of the winter visitors. One of the first was a regatta course, dredged by Carl G. Fisher, who not only built a grandstand for the spectators but also provided trophies for the race winners.

The first regatta was held in January, 1915, and was a feature story in Power Boating magazine.

Other early recreational developments included a golf course and a polo field and stables. There were two tennis courts in Lummus park.