



Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



'THE WEATHER IS BALMY AND SO IS FISHER'

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MIAMI BEACH --- An unusual monument to an unusual person at Alton Rd. and 50th St. features the figure of a kindly man with a slouch hat. It's a salute to Carl Graham Fisher and also carries the legend: "He Carved a Great City From a Jungle."

And so he did. Like a hero in a Western movie, he came dashing forward in 1915 with his fortune and rescued John S. Collins and the Lummus brothers, J. N. and J. E., who had run out of money in trying to develop the beach. Fisher, who'd gotten rich selling Prest-O-Lite gas auto lights and at one time was owner of the Indianapolis Speedway, loaned the pioneers \$200,000. But that was just the beginning of his investment in this tropical isle. He spent six million before selling the first lot and eventually poured \$50 million in the development.

He was a real promoter. He brought in a pair of India elephants Rosie and Carl, to help clear the "jungle"; offered waterfront lots free to any one who would build. He offered the oceanfront property where the Roney Plaza later was located to any one who'd build a \$150,000 hotel on it. There were no immediate takers.

The Fishers built their own home, "The Shadows" on the ocean at Lincoln Road. It later became a gambling place. He built the first luxury hotel, The Flamingo. Although he was flamboyant in his promotion of Miami Beach what he really had in mind was a community similar to Palm Beach. He built polo fields and promoted other sports.

Fabulous Miami Beach itself is a monument to Carl Fisher and a rebuke to those who chided: "the weather is balmy and so is Fisher."

