

## Foreword

History should be written as it is made but it seldom is. So far as we know, no attempt has been made, heretofore, to record the happenings of Fort Myers BEACH and its vicinity. Much of the earliest history has been lost completely, and much we think we "know" is, in reality, mere legend.

It is too much to hope that the STORY OF FORT MYERS BEACH will be entirely accurate. Memories are faulty, and oft times "authorities" disagree with each other. But before more of the old records are lost, and our pioneers are beyond questioning, we have made an attempt to gather what facts we could and, interweaving them with local lore, put them into print.

Estero Island and its sister island, San Carlos, make up the community of Fort Myers Beach. It is a tiny bit of an Island, seven miles long and in no place as much as a mile wide. From the north-west point to the south-east tip, a gleaming white sand beach fronts the Gulf of Mexico.

Shrieking gulls and terns ride the winds, sandpipers twinkle-toe after the receding wavelets seeking tiny bits of luscious sea foods; stately herons, roseate spoonbills and a dozen other shore and water birds abound in the mangroves of Estero Bay. Porpoises rise and dip and roll as they play off-shore. The mighty tarpon whips the water and flashes his silver sides as he rolls and tumbles until the very ocean "boils." On the ocean floor are sand dollars, star fish and prickly sea urchins. Palms, the trade-mark of the tropics, bougainvilleas, flaming royal poincianas, hibiscus and alamanda keep the island a-bloom the year around. Sea grapes hang in great clusters among huge golden-green leaves, and the tree (or sea) hibiscus glows with blossoms opening in the early morning, changing during the day from golden yellow to orange, then to russet and red until late in the evening they drop their now maroon flowers ready to start another golden day tomorrow.

A quiet town of friendly citizens, artists, fishermen and winter residents, with a healthy quota of welcome tourists, make up the island population.