

STORY NUMBER 13 - I NEARLY BOUGHT ONE-HALF OF MIAMI BEACH
- MIAMI, FLORIDA

As told by William J. (Bill) Kuhrt, 1990

This story has to do with the time after Northwest Grain had been taken over, my wife and I had gone up on a fishing trip, and then we went home in western New York to help out with the grapes. We next went down to Washington, and from there down to St. Augustine, Florida to visit my brother. And then we went down to Miami.

It was right in the middle of the Depression and we were able to get a nice flat in Miami right on Biscayne Bay for \$45.00 a month. You could buy grapefruit anywhere from a nickel to ten cents a dozen, so you know things were in pretty bad shape.

Anyway, Dorothy and I used to go over across the bridge from the mainland in Miami to what they called Miami Beach which is where the swimming was. And we went over every day at least once, sometimes twice.

One day we were over there just, of course, sunning ourselves and a fellow came up to me and said, "I'm sorry to disturb you but you look like somebody that is responsible. I'd like to talk some business with you." I said, "Well, what's it about?" He said "Well, you know I own this island, Miami Beach. I own the whole thing, about seven-and-a-half acres. They've raised the taxes some on me and I'm short of money so I'd like to sell half of it for \$10,000.00." I looked around and of course there was nothing but sand and brush and what not, and I thought, oh heck, you couldn't grow anything on this place. I wasn't thinking of development at all.

But anyway I wondered if he was legitimate and I guess he sort of read my mind. He said, "Let's go over to the state house and we'll look up the records. I'll show you that I really own this property and that I'm a responsible party." So the three of us went over to the record office, he looked up the maps and what not, and sure enough he owned that island and it was all free and clear and everything. I was very much tempted, but my financial situation was just not quite right. I had the \$10,000 I had saved when I was general manager of Northwest Grain and I was still on a contract. But that's all the income I had because I didn't have a job and I was thinking about going to Harvard to finish up my Ph.D. That was one of my options, and also I had some feelers from the west coast to come out to California to do some marketing work. So I finally turned him down.

And I don't need to say anything more about what happened to Miami Beach. Of course everybody who stops to think about it says you certainly missed up on a good deal. But I couldn't handle it and there wasn't any use in my trying to do it. So anyway, I

turned it down, the wife and I went back up to Washington, and from there we came out to California and I took the job out here.

So that's how I got out here and that's how I ended up not owning one-half of Miami Beach. Thank you very much. That's my story.