

January 1960

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### Recommended Citation

Dunn, Hampton, "Edison launched Fort Myers' 'Avenue of Palms'" (1960). *Hampton Dunn Phototouring Florida Collection*. 68.

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## EDISON LAUNCHED FORT MYERS' 'AVENUE OF PALMS'

By HAMPTON DUNN

FORT MYERS --- This tropical paradise in South Florida lives up to its name, "The city of Palms."

It was the inventive genius, Thomas A. Edison, who settled here in the town's pioneer days of 1885, who launched the project that began a citywide palm planting.

McGregor Boulevard, which bisects his Winter home estate here, is famous as one of the most beautiful avenues of palms in the world. The inventor brought these original palms in from the island of Cuba in 1900 and planted two miles of them on this avenue. There was a plentiful supply of the Royal Palms growing wild about 60 miles south of Fort Myers at the edge of the Everglades. But when Edison started his beautification program it was easier to bring the trees by sailboat from Cuba than by ox teams through the dense Florida swamps. McGregor Boulevard now has over 15 miles of palm lining.

More than 70 different varieties of tropical palms grow here. The official palm count is 10,752 --on city land and right of way.

Edison was a booster of his adopted city and prophesied, "There's only one Fort Myers --- and 90 million people are going to find it out."

After Edison built an electric light plant on his grounds, he reportedly offered to install free lights in the town, provided the community would furnish the poles. The town council turned down the offer, because the lights might keep the cattle awake. But while he was in his residence, Edison brilliantly illuminated his grounds with the new incandescent electric light.

