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The Commodore's Story

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To anyone who has spent much time in southern Florida, or on the blue waters of Biscayne Bay stretching southward from Miami inside the keys which fringe the low-lying coast, Ralph M. Munroe, endearingly known as 'The Commodore,' needs no introduction. A pioneer, who first felt the charm of that palm and pine-fringed coast over 50 years ago, when the end of the peninsula was as inaccessible as the western plateau in the days of the covered wagon, he soon succumbed to the lure of the country and became one of its early settlers, building a home in what was then practically a wilderness, and is now within the boundaries of a large city.

In the development of the lower east coast of Florida he played a quiet but important part. to those who knew him it is easy to believe that his personality, his friendliness, and his good will were in a measure as responsible for attracting those who early followed his lead in settling the coast near the mouth of the Miami River, as were the climate and other features which have made the shores of Biscayne Bay irresistible to many.

Ralph Munroe was a seaman before he went to Biscayne Bay, but the waters and life there gave him an opportunity to develop his love of boats, and to turn his talents to the designing a sailing craft that was peculiarly suited to shoal water, and was also so seaworthy as to be able to make the long runs up and down the coast outside, and to stand up in the rough waters of the Gulf Stream.

These reminiscences of a long, useful and interesting life have grown from a simple note-book which Munroe started originally for the benefit of his children, in order that the pioneer days of the country he loved and which he did so much to develop should not be forgotten.

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