

THE CAROLINA PARAKEET

AKA The Infamous Stuffed Bird

*Excerpt from History of the Carlin House
by William Carlin White
Edited by Lillian M. White*

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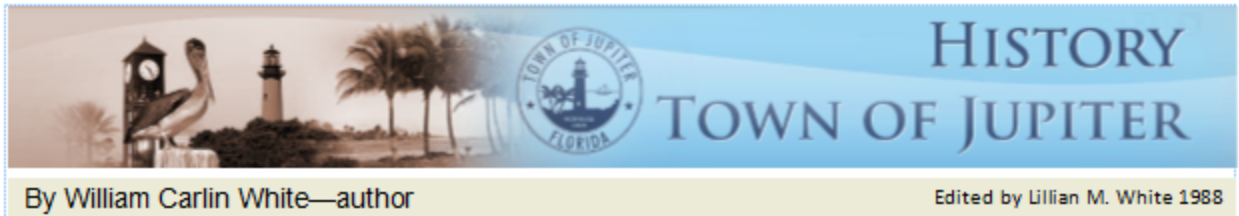
As to the nautical truisms, the one that the family relied on the most was watching the flight of the Frigate Birds. When you observed them flying along the beach with their tails forked, it was an indication that bad weather would follow. Conversely, when they flew with their tails straight, good weather was in store. Do not knock it or laugh, this method was as unreliable or reliable, as some of the weather forecasting of today. These things, the barometer, and the almanac were all the pioneers had. They had many Frigate Birds; when was the last time any of these birds have been seen locally?

FLORIDA RARE BIRDS

In addition to the Frigate Birds, there many other tropical types here then. The Florida scrub jays were so abundant that when they flew their large numbers, resembling a swarm of locust, blackened the sky. Even the species of birds that are still here were seen in uncountable numbers. Those types that are now extinct, or nearly gone, were plentiful in the early 1800s: The Ivory Billed Woodpecker, the Whooping Crane and the Carolina Parakeet were all here then.

During a summer a few years after the hotel was opened, a group of taxidermists from the Smithsonian Institution stayed at the Carlin House. While here they collected rare bird specimens; indigenous area birds that, reportedly, were quickly dying out. Their principle interest was in the Carolina Parakeet.





This bird had, originally, ranged from the southern tip of Florida to the southern border of Virginia. The parakeet's demise was so swift that when the group arrived only a few were left in the swamps and near the rivers, west of the Jupiter area.

TEDDY ROOSEVELT'S TAXIDERMISTS AT THE CARLIN HOUSE

These scientists were members of the same group that accompanied Teddy Roosevelt on his famous African wildlife collecting expedition. To show their appreciation for the assistance the Carlin family had given them during their visit, one of the parakeets was mounted and placed in a bell-jar display case. This was given to Mrs. Carlin on one of her wedding anniversaries. My wife Lillian and I have this item in our home den and, after all these years, it is still in a state of perfect preservation.

The bird collectors were fortunate that they picked the particular summer that they did. Grandma Carlin told me that the weather for that period was the best for any summer that she could remember. Had it not been an unusual summer, she believed that they could not have accomplished their mission.

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