

FOUNDATIONS OF BROWARD COUNTY WATERWAYS

by COOPER KIRK

To comprehend the development of Broward County's waterways and their role in contributing to the county's prosperity, it is necessary to understand their relationship to the Everglades and its outfall, the Atlantic Ocean. The county's history has been dominated by the impact of the Everglades and the latter's dominance of the county's waterways. The Atlantic also contributed to the development and wealth of the county by serving as a barrier to Everglades silt entirely emptying into it, a barrier which formed the potentially valuable mangrove swamps and lagoons located up to a mile inland. But until this swamp area could be conquered and utilized for residences and recreation activities, development of the beach and adjacent area proved an impossible task for early settlers.¹

Could southeast Florida pioneers have been privy to a personified dialogue among the Everglades, natural and artificial waterways, and the Atlantic Ocean, they could have grasped the positive symbiosis of this triad. Bereft of this, still the mysterious and blustering harmony of the triad, while escaping direct observation, was intuitively grasped by entrepreneurs and visionaries. To most pioneers a harmonious relationship between the triad seemed out of the question, but eventually visionaries and practical men joined forces and, by corrective adjustments, brought a utilitarian, observable, though still partial, harmony to the activities of the Everglades, waterways and ocean triad. In the case of Broward County the visionaries and practical men created a wonderful fairyland which has surpassed the alluring dreams of the Grimm Brothers.

2 BROWARD LEGACY

It was only seventy years ago that Broward County came into corporate existence on October 1, 1915. Carved from Palm Beach and Dade counties, its name honors Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, one of Florida's greatest governors. The county embraces the coastal area from the Hillsboro River on the north to the Rio Raton River, known as Snake Creek, on the south.²

Floridians and transients learned about the extent and character of the Everglades during the Second Seminole War of 1835 to 1842. Until then, the region had remained a mystery. John Lee Williams, an expert on Florida topography who did not believe in the existence of Lake Okeechobee, the primary source of the Everglades, omitted the lake in his 1837 map of Florida. The first detailed maps and the first fragmentary descriptions of the Everglades came from the explorations and cartographic productions by United States Army and Navy officers, while civilian observers traveling with the army gave the public very readable accounts of the seemingly tangled Everglades. These accounts, however, dealt mainly with the miseries of fighting in and marching through them. These officers and authors believed that not only were the Everglades a waste, but that they were a formidable if not a fatal barrier to the development of civilization in south Florida.³

But after the war ended and after numerous explorers reported the richness of Everglades soil and food sources, political and economic leaders on the peninsula began to consider the possibilities inherent in this enormous inland sea. In 1847, in response to the Florida Legisla-

ture's interest in the drainage and reclamation of the Everglades, United States Senator J. D. Westcott, Jr., of Florida requested that United States Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker appoint an agent to "reconnaissance" or examine these lands and to file a report regarding the practicability of reclaiming the Everglades. It was Westcott's intention that the report be laid before Congress at its next session. Secretary Walker appointed Buckingham Smith of St. Augustine as agent. Thus, Smith corresponded with military officers and other individuals who



Scholar, statesman, and diplomat Buckingham Smith explored the Everglades and prepared an 1848 report to the United States treasury secretary supporting reclamation (photo courtesy of the St. Augustine Historical Society).

had practical knowledge of the Everglades. Although not dissatisfied with this type of positive material gathering, for it bolstered his own preconceived notions, Smith made a thorough exploration of the area generally considered to be the Everglades. Invariably, the reports that he received regarding the drainage and reclamation of the swamps were favorable in part or whole. To these he added his own glowing and optimistic conclusions. Smith's detailed report to Secretary Walker in 1848 became the basis of all well-informed conceptions about the Everglades in the nineteenth century.⁴

One portion of his own report, which described the Everglades in general, fit the condition of the Everglades of the future Broward County:

Imagine a vast lake of fresh water extending in every direction from shore to shore beyond the reach of human vision, ordinarily unruffled by a ripple on its surface, studded with thousands of islands of various sizes, from one quarter of an acre to hundreds of acres in area,

which are generally covered with dense thickets of shrubbery and vines.

The surrounding waters, except in places that at first seem like channelways (but which are not), are covered with the tall sawgrass, shooting up its straight and slender stem from the shallow bottom of the lake to the height often of ten feet above the surface and covering all but a few rods around from your view.

The water is pure and limpid, and almost imperceptibly moves, not in partial currents, but as it seems, in a mass, silently and slowly to the southward.

Lilies and other aquatic flowers of every variety and hue are to be seen on every side, in pleasant contrast with the pale green of the sawgrass, and as you draw near an island the beauty of the scene is increased by the rich foliage and blooming flowers of the wild myrtle and the honeysuckle and other shrubs and vines that generally adorn its shores.

The profound and wild solitude of the place, the solemn silence that pervades it . . . add to the awakened and excited curiosity feelings bordering on awe.

No human being, civilized or savage, inhabits the interior of the Glades. The Seminoles reside in the region between the Glades and the Gulf Coast.

Acting through the Florida Legislature, land speculators and agricultural visionaries alerted Congress to the feasibility and desirability of draining and reclaiming the Everglades and other wastelands in the state.⁵

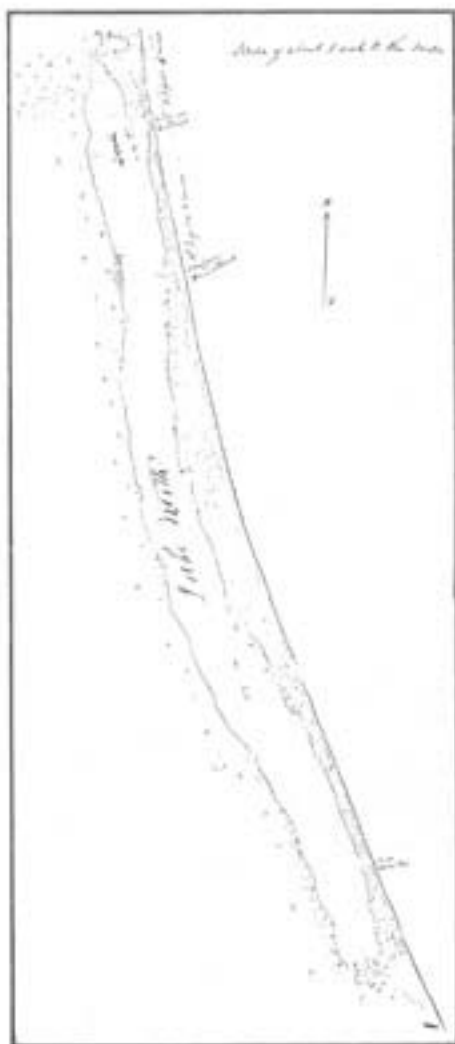
Through the efforts of Senator Westcott and other legislators, the swamp and overflowed land grant act was enacted and, by amendment, made applicable to all the states. Under this act, approved by Congress on September 28, 1850, twenty million acres of land eventually were patented or deeded to the State of Florida which could reclaim the swamp and overflowed land within its limits by any legal means it saw fit.

In 1855 the Florida Legislature created the legal entity, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund to administer this vast acreage of which the Everglades roughly composed twenty-five percent. The governor, comptroller, treasurer, attorney general, the commissioner of agriculture, and their successors, comprised the trustees. For more than a generation after the Civil War, poverty and the sumptuary laws of Florida prevented development of the twenty million acres of unusable lands except in fringe areas. Instead of draining and reclaiming the swamp lands, the Florida Legislature violated the intent of Congress by granting vast acreage to railroad and canal companies. The giveaway was so extensive that, by 1904, from fifteen to eighteen million acres had been granted to those land-hungry companies that did nothing to drain and reclaim them. In effect, the land entrepreneurs controlled the destiny of Florida because they owned, by outright gift, forty percent of the land in the state, including valuable parts of the Everglades. The Flagler railway interests benefited the most when they gained land along the Atlantic coast. Although it was the most undeveloped portion of Florida, its potential value was greater. Thus matters rested until Napoleon Bonaparte Broward's controversial 1904 gubernatorial campaign.⁶

As Florida entered the twentieth century the Everglades was as primeval as it had been when Buckingham Smith surveyed it in 1848. Except for a few enthusiasts, drainage and reclamation seemed an impossible task. Even the huge Flagler interests had no intention of digging more than the few drainage ditches which they had needed to protect and enhance their interests when they extended the Florida East Coast Railway along the coast from West Palm Beach to Miami in 1896. In 1900 the few poor settlers along the Atlantic from Deerfield to Hallandale found themselves at the mercy of the water which flowed



This 1841 military map delineating the "District temporarily assigned to the Seminole Indians" was among the earliest showing the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee with any degree of detail or accuracy.



Lake Worth, seen here on an 1838 military map, was one of the series of natural waterways parallel to Florida's east coast which were connected to form the Intracoastal Waterway.

eastward from the Everglades and inundated the crops and primitive dwellings. Flooded fields and dwellings left them bewildered.⁷

It remained for John B. Mizelle of Jacksonville's *Times-Union and Citizen* to relate, in terms the general public could understand, the effects of the Everglades on the lower south Florida coast. In January 1903, he explained the functions of the Everglades and its waterways.

For a more complete description [of the Everglades] we will compare this wonderful formation to a large bowl with two rims, the inner basin to consist of Lake Okeechobee, a small inland sea within itself.

The normal condition of the Glades proper is rarely ever affected as to the depth of water on the surface until the inner basin is taxed by its tributaries beyond its capacity to relieve itself by the flow of water down the Caloosahatchee River which flows into the Gulf

of Mexico, except such as flows to the east through the numerous small rivers and streams that flow into the Atlantic on the east coast side.

All these short rivers on the Atlantic coast side have been produced in prehistoric times by some extraordinary head of water overflowing the inner basin which is Lake Okeechobee, it being by far the deepest portion of the basin. And being unable to force its way down the Caloosahatchee River, sought the most available places to force its way to the eastward across the outer basin which has a narrow rock rim in most places within a few miles of the coast. But for this rock rim small rivers would long since have penetrated far into the interior, and would have unaided, accomplished immeasurably a complete drainage system for this vast territory, but for the fact that the force of water was not sufficiently strong to remove this rock formation.⁸

Inherent in Mizelle's concept are the notions that a catastrophic head of water, surpassing that of "prehistoric times," could cut additional rivers through the "narrow rock rim," and could increase the number of current small rivers that flow into the Atlantic. Thus, nature would perfect nature. Included is the possibility that the Everglades played an extensive role in determining such south Florida features as inlets, mangrove swamps, lagoons, and those offshore islands some European cartographers drew on many pre-nineteenth century maps. But only cataclysmic confrontations between Everglades water and those of the Atlantic during stormy seasons could adequately account for major topographical changes.⁹

More than one hundred years earlier Gerhard DeBrahm, the British surveyor for the southern colonies during the 1760s, had reached a similar conclusion. His description of the violent confrontation between Everglades water and the raging Atlantic implies that he had witnessed an offshore storm that affected the course of the New River and the marshes for several thousand feet inland:

The great Rains in May 1765 filled this River (Rio Nuevo) and its marshes with so much water that its weight within and the Sea without by Force of the N.E. gales demolished the Bank and made this Inlet between 25th and 30th May 1765, 17 common miles to the No. of this inlet is a fine fresh water spring, issuing out of a Rock on the Beach.¹⁰

Several observations may be gleaned from DeBrahm's statements about the atmospheric and topographical conditions that prevailed along the southeast Florida coast. His retention of the Spanish nomenclature assigned to such rivers as Rio Nuevo, Rio Blanco, and Rio Boca

Ratones along the southeast Florida coast indicate the chronological antiquity that the rivers had attained among Europeans by mid-eighteenth century. The spring of fresh water, issuing out of a rock on the beach north of Hillsboro Inlet, lent credibility to cartographic renderings which shifted the location and direction of coastal rivers for more than a century. Succeeding mapmakers displayed their professionalism by revising maps which were outdated by new streams, bays, and inlets which resulted from the competition between the ocean and land waters for the same space. Hydraulic pressure from the east forced the land water in the Hillsboro area to submerge until it reached a yielding location under a rock on the present Deerfield Beach littoral. That this stream had been absorbed by other waters within three quarters of a century is evident in that no maps or literature or correspondence from or since the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) indicate the existence of this stream.¹¹

Within three years after Florida had become United States property, the federal government contemplated the construction of a military road from St. Augustine to Biscayne Bay. The government contracted with Colonel James Gadsden to survey a route and to comment upon the feasibility and cost of such a roadway. Gadsden completed his favorable report in August 1825. He estimated that construction would cost \$28,700, including necessary bridges. He commented extensively upon the topography of the Atlantic coastal region. Because his was the first in-depth survey of the region, it contains graphic information about such factors as the primeval condition of rivers, littorals, Everglades encroachment, inlets, and tides which might affect the construction of the military road.

Gadsden noted that one general feature of the coastal strip was its alluvial deposit which had been formed by successive encroachments toward the Atlantic. As a result, a chain of inlets and freshwater lakes extended along the greater part of the distance from St. Augustine to Biscayne Bay. A narrow barrier of beach and sand hills separated the formations from the ocean. Shallow entrances appeared at intervals.¹²

Gadsden described a marshland, interrupted only by elevated pine barrens, which extended west of the inlets, sounds, and freshwater lakes to the Everglades:

On the west of these inlets and lakes is a parallel chain of sand hills from ¼ to ½ of a mile wide intersected by considerable pine flats and oak hammocks; the western base of which is washed by another succession of smaller lakes or saw grass ponds and swamps occasionally connected with each other by natural canals — To the west of these ponds com-

mence the pine planes and saw palmetto surface common to low latitudes, varying in the character of their surface and elevation, and more intersected by grassy and cypress ponds as you descend south, until they are lost in communication with the Everglades, or submerged flats of Cape Florida spotted with small islands of pine, palmetto, etc.

Although he labored under primitive conditions and operated with rudimentary equipment, Gadsden recognized at that early date the existence of the Everglades basin. Presciently, he ascribed to it the source of "almost all the rivers which intersect and flow through the promontory of Florida."¹³

Gadsden proposed that the military road be constructed on the pine barrens from St. Augustine to Jupiter Inlet. But south of the inlet, the rivers and marshlands, attributable to the Everglades overflow, necessitated a different location for the roadbed. He ascertained that only the beach could furnish a practical roadbed south of the inlet to Biscayne Bay, a distance of some seventy-four miles, stating: "The beach at low tide is spacious and firm with the ocean on the east and sand hills and chain of fresh water ponds or lakes on the west sufficiently convenient to furnish to the traveller an abundant supply of water."¹⁴

Gadsden found the Everglades and environs to be a formidable barrier. Water, ranging in depth from five inches to three feet, barred his way. Of the south Florida rivers fed by the Everglades, only Middle and New rivers would necessitate the utilization of ferries. And William Cooley and a "Mr. Williams" offered to operate a

ferry at the New River inlet. Gadsden noticed that the inlets on many rivers which passed through southern, coastal mangrove swamps either had changed or closed. He discerned that the whole Atlantic coast of Florida presented evidence of these struggles between the ocean and river currents, the former striving to close and the latter struggling to maintain an outlet for their waters. Rio Seco, Spanish River, had been closed by a sandbar. Although Middle River was fordable at its mouth, sand had reduced New River Inlet to a four foot depth. Gadsden foresaw that the closing of Middle River Inlet and the consequent diversion of its waters to New River would, in all probability, counteract the ocean's effect on the inlet.¹⁵

An ingenious explorer operating in a pristine jungle, Gadsden assembled a robust group of assistants and had acquired rudimentary cartographic notes and maps. The 1822 H. S. Tanner map was the most valuable tool. In general, it correctly located and profiled the short rivers and natural waterways to their sources, which extended no more than ten miles inland, in what is present-day Broward County. The Tanner map delineated ten waterways. They ranged from the Natural Cut in the north, which connected the Hillsboro River with Boca Ratone Sound, to Rio Ratones in the south. As later and more accurate maps confirm, except for the various inlets, none of these waterways had such a well defined and reasonably permanent route as New River.¹⁶

While numerous travelers and explorers exclaimed upon the heavy but inconsistent rainfall in south Florida, it probably did not exceed Broward County's annual sixty inches. In early March 1838,

Lieutenant Levin M. Powell of the United States Navy explored the sources of the various waterways. He recorded that his topographical expedition suffered from a lack of recent rains, a result of the winter dry season. Later that month, however, about 525 American troops under Colonel James Bankhead had to wade and struggle through water and mud up to their hips in their ill-fated effort to capture Seminole Indians at Pine Island. Thus, the military had faced the seasonal rainfall and floods which would plague twentieth century farmers who raised crops and transported them by boat to market.¹⁷

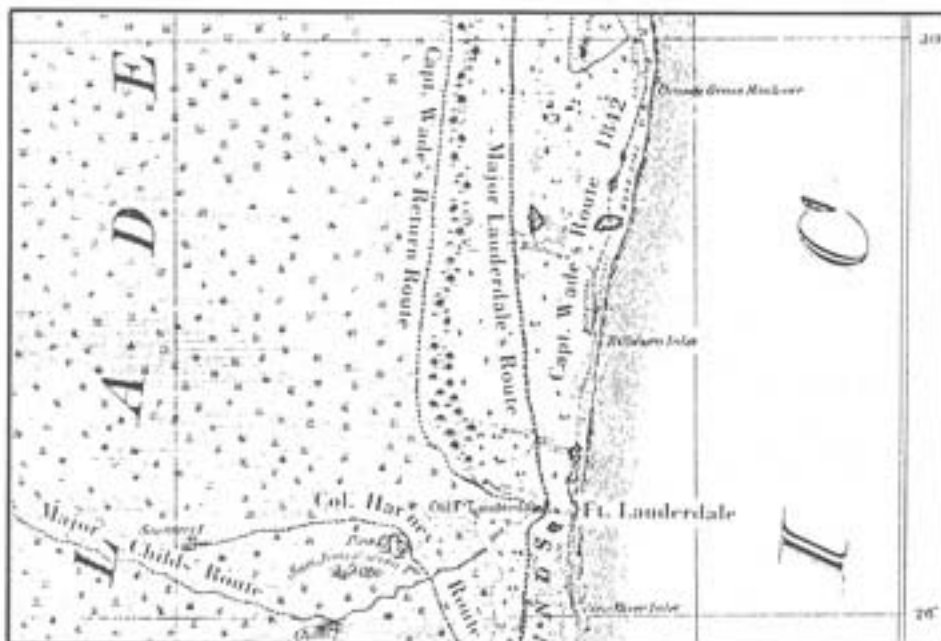
Three weeks after Bankhead's skirmish at Pine Island, United States Army Surgeon Jacob R. Motte sailed in a government vessel on New River. He found a fairy wonderland:

The river is separated from the Atlantic by only a narrow neck of land, about 10 miles long and 50 yards wide, its course being for that distance south and perfectly straight, parallel with the sea-beach.

Its waters were actually alive with fish of every description, immense numbers of which were seen swimming about the Steamer. We were struck also with the beautiful color of the bottom, which resembled a magnificent brussels carpet, the water toward the mouth of the river being so pellucid and clear that we could see the bottom at a depth of 20 feet . . . A vast number of shells of every description and of the most vivid hues were interspersed at the river bottom with all kinds of colors of pebbles, presenting at every movement the various arrangements of the kaleidoscope, which with every turn presents a new and if possible more beautiful combination. The river, the scenery, and in fact everything around appeared to wear a different aspect from the rest of the world.

Dr. Motte's fervent Indian-chasing at the moment prevented his catching some of the numerous fish, a pleasure not denied soldiers later stationed at Fort Lauderdale.¹⁸

Motte's friend, Major William Lauderdale of the Tennessee Volunteers, also made an interesting discovery in March 1838. Lauderdale found that a stream had its source in a swamp, and that several miles further it flowed into Dumbfounding Lake. The shallow clear lake was one mile in diameter. The narrow and deep Rio Ratones, known to Americans as Snake Creek, flowed from the southern end. The sub-soil rock ledge prevented the river from flowing eastward. Whereupon, it flowed southeast and emptied into Biscayne Bay. Recently formed and uncontained waterways flowed into sloughs and shallow lakes, re-emerged, tunneled through the soft topsoil, accept-



The importance of various bodies of water to the natural topography of the Broward County area is evident on the 1856 Ives Map, prepared by the army during the Third Seminole War.

ed accretions from numerous bights, and emptied into bays, lagoons, and the ocean.¹⁹

Lieutenant J. C. Ives was a United States Army topographer during the Third Seminole War (1853-1858). Secretary of War Jefferson Davis assigned him the task of reviewing the maps and correspondence emanating from the Second Seminole War. The objective was to revise the military map of south Florida. In 1856 Ives published his detailed map of south Florida. This guide was made more valuable by the *Memoir* which accompanied it. The *Memoir* concentrates in delineating the most feasible combination land and water route for the military from Fort Jupiter on the east coast to Fort Myers on the gulf. Ives recorded that Lake Worth was twenty miles in length, and that the Little Hillsboro River took its rise from a slough and was only seven feet wide at its source at the southern end of Lake Worth. Ives noted that after the Little Hillsboro emerged from Lake Boca Raton it became a stream fifty feet wide, was lined with mangroves, and increased in size to its mouth, five miles distant, where it became a quarter of a mile in width. Ives pointed out that a stream of these dimensions would confine its traffic to canoes and rowboats. This was particularly true of the Hillsboro, where the inlet permitted traffic that drew less than two feet. The *Memoir* combined Middle River and New River into New River Sound and depicted the sound as broadening to 300 yards before it narrowed at the inlet at present-day Hollywood. Ives insisted that, because of the abundance of water and swamps, the most practical method of travel from Lake Worth to Fort Dallas, on Biscayne Bay, must be by water. Much of that combination water/land route traversed Broward County?²⁰

Four men are known to have been domiciled in the area of present Broward County from the closing of the military establishment Fort Lauderdale in February 1842 until 1880. Only one has contributed to our knowledge of the area's waterways. Edward Basely, who survived the 1836 Cooley massacre, farmed along New River in the late 1870s, after which he disappeared from history. Washington Jenkins was keeper of the United States Life-Saving Station No. 4, established in 1876 at Birch State Park. His varied career was mainly in Miami and Key West. John J. "Pig" Brown floated around as another mysterious figure. After his election to the Florida Legislature in 1876, he disappeared from the New River area. The fourth man, however, did more than contribute to our knowledge of Broward County's waters through exploration. Charles Pierce also left a manuscript which noted the customs, lifestyles, biographies, and topography of southeast Florida. The 1880

census lists him as the only inhabitant living on New River. He died in the 1930s, but his namesake son contributed to the growth of county waterways during his long banking career in Fort Lauderdale.²¹

Besides Pierce, who also explored in the twentieth century, Dr. James A. Henshall and Ralph M. Munroe dominated county exploration during the early 1880s. They had a keen eye for observing the waterways, flora, and fauna. Henshall made two water excursions to south Florida from Cincinnati. But it was on his 1882 trip that he made his most thorough exploration and recorded his most striking observations about waterways. After Henshall and his companions sailed the *Rambler* on New River, he observed:

Rushing in and out with the tide at New River, fishes can be seen by the thousands, which snatch at anything, even a

Island, the scene of the military skirmish in 1838. Near where present-day State Road 84 crosses, Henshall discovered the source of the fork in a cypress slough. He noted "The 'sloughs' is a margin of tall grasses and shrubs of very luxuriant growth intersected by numerous small streams . . . Getting through this we finally emerged into the Everglades — seemingly a sea of waving green grasses, with innumerable islands of all sizes. But these grasses are all growing in water, clear and limpid, with channels a few feet wide, diverging and crossing in every direction . . ."²²

After he passed through the cypress belt, he went up some of the numerous small streams that flowed into the belt, and entered an enchanting aspect of the Everglades. It was "unique, there is nothing like it anywhere else." Straining for descriptive words, he recorded:

As far as the eye can reach stretches



By 1920, despite Everglades drainage and expanding settlement, parts of New River retained their natural appearance (photo courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

bit of rag tied to the hook and thrown to them by a strong handline. We took crevalle from ten to thirty pounds, always large ones here, never less than ten pounds. By anchoring a boat in mid-stream they can be speared or grained as they swim by, often pursued by sharks and porpoises. Mr. Jenkins takes them in this way up to forty pounds, and cures and smokes them.

Cut off from civilization and its supplies, Washington Jenkins supplemented his meager diet with fish drawn from the river, thus perpetuating a dietary tradition the Indians at Pine Island had followed for many years.²²

Indians attracted Henshall because of the mystery with which Americans had clothed them. He and his companions voyaged upstream on the south fork of New River in a sailboat-canoe to visit the Indians who were living on Pine

a broad, level expanse, clothed in the verdure of a peculiarly fresh and vivid green, a rich and intense color seen nowhere but here. The surface is dotted and diversified by thousands of islets and islands, of all shapes and sizes, from a few yards to many acres in extent, clothed with a tropical luxuriance of trees, shrubs and vines.

Although difficult to access, Pine Island beckoned the doctor and his companions.²⁴

They sailed through intricate and narrow channels and took short cuts by plowing through masses of lily-pads, deer-tongue, and lotus, as smoke from Indian fires guided them. They hastened toward the island. Numerous Seminole craft approached eastward, as if to inspect the new arrivals. The doctor tied up at the island, met the Seminoles, conversed with them in broken English

and learned something of their customs during his two day visit with Chiefs Little Tommy and Little Tiger and their tribe. The Seminoles informed him that the depth of the Everglades ranged from four to six feet during the rainy season but that the water level fell considerably in the winter. Thus, the Indians lived on Pine Island and other islands one portion of the year and migrated to higher, coastal areas during the other time. Henshall's topographical descriptions are among the first and most penetrating of the Davie area.²⁵

During the 1880s and 1890s, transplanted New Englander Ralph M. Munroe and his fellow fun-loving companions of Coconut Grove habitually spent one or two months each year camping along the Hillsboro and New Rivers. They studied the large mounds located between the two rivers and concluded that they were the location of an Indian civilization in the remote past. Munroe's observant eye noted what apparently had escaped the eyes of all previous explorers: a small canal had been cut during the Indian wars between Hillsboro and New rivers. South Floridians had witnessed and heard tales of treasure ship wrecks. At one of the inlets, and aware of the treasure ship wreck tales, Munroe and friends tried to salvage what appeared to be an immense quantity of coins. A lack of adequate tools, and the action of the roaring surf, forced them to abandon their treasure hunting.²⁶

Unlike his predecessors, except for Munroe, Charles Pierce's productive years in south Florida continued into the twentieth century. After coming to Lake Worth from the midwest in 1872 at the age of eight, Pierce had traversed Broward more than any other man by the time Henry M. Flagler extended his railroad to Miami in 1896. That was also the year when Pierce ended his long, informative, and interesting account of rugged, pioneer life in south Florida. No area seems to have escaped the sole of his foot or the paddle of his oar. With a descriptive flair, he brought the primitive, but exotic, existence of pioneering to life. In a beguiling manner, he described Cypress Creek as it existed in 1885 during his plume hunt with Guy Bradley. Bradley's father had succeeded Washington Jenkins in 1883 as life-saving station keeper.²⁷

Because of their ubiquity and utility, Pierce became a nomad of the waterways. It was not uncommon for him to canoe from Lake Worth to Biscayne Bay overland during the wet season. One of his trips was to save the lives of the starving and sick Bradley family. He canoed down New River Sound, on the west side of the life-saving station, and turned west up New River in order to secure supplies and medicine at the Biscayne Bay settlement. He guided his canoe through shallow

Everglades water from the south fork of New River to Snake Creek. The settlers at Biscayne Bay met his needs. His round trip travel time was less than five days.²⁸

Inland, between the ridge which separated the Atlantic Ocean and the pine ridge where Major William Lauderdale had cut his military trail from Fort Jupiter to New River in 1838, there existed a series of waterways, lagoons, and swampy morasses which were useless for sustained commercial transportation. The waterways were winding, shallow, and unconnected. A few navigators commonly utilized haulovers to navigate between bodies of water. Gadsden had noticed these unconnected channels in his 1825 survey and recorded: "The channels are in the chain of inlets and lakes which have been noticed as extending with but partial interruptions the whole length of the coast from St. Augustine to Cape Florida." Gadsden averred that, with inconsiderable labor, an inland waterway could be cut from St. Augustine to New River. Floridians cherished this unfulfilled dream for generations.²⁹

But as settlement grew along Florida's northern coast, the clamor for an inland waterway the length of the state persisted. Bold entrepreneurs proclaimed the advantages but lacked the resources to build such an inland river. In 1879 the state came to the rescue when it chartered the Florida East Coast Canal and Transportation Company, a company subsequently rechartered. More importantly, however, the state granted a monopoly to the canal company and vast acreage for every navigable mile completed. The charter called for the construction of a canal from St. Augustine to Key West by connecting the morasses, lakes, and lagoons. By digging and cutting 110 miles of channels, the company would own a 525-mile waterway. In turn, the east coast would be opened for more rapid settlement. With commercial utilization in view, the charter required the company to complete a canal eighty feet wide and five feet deep at low tide. The company could collect tolls of ten cents per boat foot at specified locations, one of which was Dania.³⁰

As a private capital venture, canal construction progressed slowly. And canal ownership/control changed hands several times. Among the various owners or controllers of the East Coast Canal were the Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast Land Company, the Henry M. Flagler interests, and the General Hospital of Massachusetts. Financially, the most lucrative returns resulting from the canal construction were the sale of hundreds of thousands of acres of land, many of them in the Everglades, which the State of Florida granted.³¹

Canal construction required that workmen have their supplies shipped south-

ward to locations along the advancing canal and that they live on the mainland work site. Tarpon Bend, just off New River Sound, was a worker settlement. The name of canal engineer James I. Colee, of St. Augustine, was given to the camp site, later platted as a subdivision. Subsequent settlers, confusing the name Colee with Cooley, erroneously thought that this location was where the Cooley family had been massacred by the Indians in 1836. The true location of the massacre was near the forks of New River where the military Fort Lauderdale was situated in 1838. The haphazard method of canal construction delayed completion and resulted in a shoddy product. The canal was seldom more than fifty feet wide and four feet deep. Bank erosion forced constant repairs. In 1911 the canal, such as it was, finally was completed from Jacksonville to Biscayne Bay. Maintenance proved intolerable to the ownership, and receipts were wretchedly low. After the United States Army Corps of Engineers assumed control in 1929, the East Coast Canal became known as the Intracoastal Waterway.³²

Conflict at the inlets between the ocean and fresh waters wrought havoc as pioneers moved into the southern coastal areas after 1890. Byrd King, son of Edwin T. and Susan King, arrived in the nascent Fort Lauderdale settlement on the first train in February 1896. He later recalled that, in 1899, New River Inlet closed during a gale and heavy rains. The tarpaper and log shanties of the twenty or so settler families were inundated by the water which backed up from the inlet's closing. The settlers, led by Edwin T. King, Frank R. Oliver, William L. Bracknell, Frank Stranahan, and Captain William C. Valentine, commandeered every available shovel, scoop, and mule. By canoe and by overland trails, they hastened to the inlet. There they used dynamite and mule-operated scoops to open the inlet, whereupon the settlers returned to their water-soaked shanties.³³

When Napoleon Bonaparte Broward ran for governor in 1904, he put forth as his top priority the drainage, reclamation, and settlement of the Everglades. Never bashful, and often daring, Broward trumpeted the claim that the Everglades contained the richest soil in the world and that its conquest could supply, among other things, all the sugar cane needed by the United States. Thus, the need to import sugar would be eliminated. With the reclaimed Everglades serving as the "bread basket" of the United States, all Floridians would profit, and some would grow rich. Accustomed to giving graphic illustrations in order to make his point, Broward boldly asserted that everyone knew that "water ran down hill." He realized that the center of the

Everglades was twenty-one feet above sea level. Broward averred that a series of public drainage canals, augmented by private lateral ditches, would remove and control Everglades flooding and simultaneously prevent what had occurred at Fort Lauderdale in 1899.³⁴

After his victory in a hard fought, dazzling campaign, Broward cajoled a reluctant Florida Legislature to pass legislation authorizing and governing the drainage and reclamation of the Everglades. Large in physical stature and animated by tremendous instinctual energy, Broward took personal charge of the Everglades program. From his home city of Jacksonville he had materials shipped to New River. He journeyed to Chicago and purchased engines for dredges. He came to New River. There he supervised much of the construction of the *Everglades* and *Okeechobee* dredges across the river from Philemon N. Bryan's New River Inn, presently the Discovery Center. On July 4, 1906, operations started westward on New River's north fork. Governor Broward placed localite Reed Asa Bryan, Sr., in charge of dredging.³⁵

Although explorers, hunters, farmers, and land speculators had grappled with the rugged Everglades, and while compensated writers had publicized it nationally, the swamp's boundaries had never been delineated. In order to determine the area to be drained and reclaimed, as well as to ascertain the revenue which might accrue from drainage taxes, the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund approved a precise and official Everglades map on June 14, 1907. The vast area, approximately 4,300,000 acres, represented waste, swamp, and submerged lands unfit for human occupation and settlement. The map revealed that the Everglades came closest to the ocean just north of the sources of New River and Snake Creek. The vast morass comprising the Everglades extended eastward, approximately along the western edge of present-day Route 441. The Everglades and its environs absorbed most of present-day Broward County. It left little arable area for immediate settlement within the county.³⁶

The taming of the Everglades was only one of the elements with which settlers had to cope. Bridges provided the only method of making local north and south travel possible in a growing agricultural economy. The earliest spans were simple. Sharpened tree trunks were driven into the beds of the small streams, and rough-hewn planks were set in place. Edwin T. King constructed such a bridge over Snake Creek during January 1900 at \$2.50 per lineal foot.

At the same time, Dade County commissioners renewed Frank Stranahan's contract to maintain a ferry across New River for \$300 per year. Construction

of the first bridge over New River, for the first county rock road which ran from Miami to West Palm Beach, began in August 1904. The Converse Bridge Company of Chattanooga, Tennessee, was awarded the contract to build a bridge similar to the one that they had completed over the Miami River.³⁷

Converse agreed to construct the 185 foot long and twelve foot wide draw-bridge for \$6,640 at Andrews Road. Workmen completed the bridge late in December 1904. On New Year's Eve, Dr. Thomas S. Kennedy, Philemon N. Bryan, William H. Marshall, Edwin T. King, Frank Stranahan, Joseph G. Farrow, and Mack W. Marshall certified to the Dade County Board of Commissioners that the bridge had been completed according to specifications. Thus, the widest and swiftest river between the Hillsboro River and Snake Creek was spanned. Its completion heralded a new era of economic progress and travel for south Florida farmers and travelers.³⁸

The first of many troublesome New River bridges stood intact for only eighteen months before river currents, churned by rampaging Everglades' water, toppled the pride and joy of Fort Lauderdale. The Board of County Commissioners pleaded with and then threatened the Converse Bridge Company to recover the fallen bridge and re-erect it. Converse refused to do so without compensation. During the year when the bridge remained inoperable, Frank Stranahan resumed his ferry service. He conveyed people, carts, wagons, and animals.

Forced to rebuild the bridge themselves, the county commissioners contracted with Captain S. W. Skinner of Fort Lauderdale to raise and re-erect the bridge for \$5,200. Thus, the renamed Andrews Avenue regained its position as the chief north-south artery for commercial Fort Lauderdale. Newspapers proudly dubbed the new twelve foot wide county road the "Appian Way."³⁹

As the dredging for the North and South New River Canals progressed westward from Fort Lauderdale into the Everglades, the state offered the drained land for sale. But, until 1910, no one had attempted to live inland west of Fort Lauderdale. Although farms and citrus groves extended to Route 441, they were along the river and canal banks. In March, land entrepreneur Don Farnsworth of Chicago offered to construct free bungalows on the North New River Canal on any twenty acres of land purchased from him. The McCrimmon Company of Miami constructed and delivered them to property sites near Lock No. 1, but land purchasers had to erect them. Thus, Davie's first settlers secured free bungalows for \$160, ten percent of the total land purchase price.⁴⁰

Construction of canals constantly lag-

ged behind projections. But, in August 1912, the state finally opened the North New River Canal to boat traffic from Fort Lauderdale to Lake Okeechobee. Hamilton M. Forman, a transplanted Illinois lawyer, was the first lockkeeper at Lock No. 1 near the growing Davie settlement. This diverse community was composed of former Panama Canal Zonians, Canadians, and northerners. Shallow draft canal boats transported passengers, household goods, fertilizer, and seeds to the lake region and returned with vegetables, fish, and livestock. Already burgeoning because the March 1911 land lottery had brought hundreds of permanent settlers to farm the reclaimed Everglades land, frontier town Fort Lauderdale became the center of the Lake Okeechobee canal traffic. Passengers, vegetables, supplies, and farming implements filled its docks. Erstwhile educator-lawyer William Munrow Heiney, who founded the *Fort Lauderdale Herald* in 1910, promoted the Everglades-coast axis. The *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* later emblazoned on its front page the accurate slogan "Fort Lauderdale, Gateway to the Everglades." In 1913 Heiney also promoted the first attempt to form a new county from Dade and Palm Beach Counties. Despite the suggestion to name the proposed county Everglades County, the attempt failed.⁴¹

After the opening of the North New River Canal, traffic to the Gulf Coast began on a large scale. In late 1912 shallow-draft steamboats made the round trip from Fort Myers to Miami up the Caloosahatchee River, through Lake Okeechobee, south along the North New River Canal to Fort Lauderdale, and then down either the Atlantic or East Coast Canal to the "Magic City." The three-day round trip excursion cost twelve dollars. Because Fort Lauderdale furnished so many nautical innovators, it was only natural that Fort Lauderdale's Captain Felix A. Forbes inaugurated this cross-state voyage.⁴²

Drainage and reclamation of the Everglades continued at a slower pace after Governor Broward left office in early January 1909. The trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund exercised strict control of canal cutting and the consequent sale of reclaimed state land. The trustees planned for and began to implement the construction of canals other than the North and South New River waterways. These major canals differed in size and length. They included the Miami, West Palm Beach, Hillsboro, and St. Lucie canals. Minor canals, not connected with Lake Okeechobee, were not neglected because they were less costly and permitted the drainage of rich farm lands near the coast. There, surplus water was drained directly into the ocean or the Bay of Biscayne. In



As the result of a thriving trade with the Lake Okeechobee region, Fort Lauderdale's riverfront (above), and particularly Brickell Avenue (left), formed the commercial center of the city at the time these photos were taken in 1918.

May 1911, while the Miami Canal was under construction, Chief Drainage Engineer F. C. Elliot called for the relocation of the dredges *Everglades* and *Okeechobee* to the Hillsboro River for canal construction. After the Broward County portion of this canal was completed in December 1914, working farmers could move approximately ten miles further inland.⁴³

Minor canal construction began with the enlargement and deepening of Cypress Creek in Pompano and of Snake and Snapper creeks near Hallandale. These drainage canals varied from six to ten miles in length and required no locks to prevent salt water intrusion. The contract went to the Miami Construction Company. The rates were ten cents per cubic yard for earth excavation and twenty-five cents per cubic yard for rock excavation. The benefits gained from the completion of Cypress Creek Canal in the fall of 1914 were typical. "Currie's Megaphone," published in the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, hailed this canal as a "wonderful advantage" since it ran right through Pompano. "Hundreds of acres," continued the "Megaphone," "of the best vegetable land contiguous to the town have been made permanently serviceable by reason of this canal and last season was a 'howling' success to all the farmers in that community." That developer George E. Currie owned an immense tract along the newly completed canal doubtlessly justifies his glowing praise.⁴⁴

More than the hard-pressed farmers, whose backbreaking workday in the fields began at daybreak and ended with darkness, land speculators hailed the benefits

of the new canals. At the end of December 1914, speculator C. C. Ausherman, who had come to Fort Lauderdale from Baltimore in 1911, took a trip up the Hillsboro Canal to scout the newly opened territory. He was accompanied by George E. Crim, J. M. Templeton, and J. H. Searing. One dam, due to be blasted away within a month, held the water back. Miles of land were still covered with water from recent rains. But nineteen miles west of Deerfield they struck dry land near the center of Range 41. The elevation was fourteen feet. Ausherman's exotic speculations about the future of this wilderness are typical of those of land speculators and visionaries before and since:

Also, with a depth of much of about 8 feet and rich enough to grow anything adapted to this latitude — I can see in the near future all this region dotted over with beautiful homes, occupied by happy families, enjoying the finest climate in the world, surrounded with flowers and blossoming fruit trees and richly cultivated fields of prolific crops of all kinds, herds of cattle and other farm animals and flocks of domestic birds, fine roads running in all directions and autos spinning across the landscape, the whole scene presenting a picture of contentment and prosperity unsurpassed anywhere on the globe! Who can gainsay this prediction!

If one adds fine fishing to this description, it is no wonder that the land speculators, who were immune to the back-breaking labor of clearing and tilling the soil against all kinds of natural enemies, did a thriving business!⁴⁵

According to legend, Broward County, created in 1915, owes its corporate existence to the threat of the area's citizens to become either "wet" or "dry" with regard to the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. While interesting, such legends fail to gauge the canons of convenience and local self-determination inherent in Americans. In reality, county-seats, as centers of government and commerce, were hubs from which important matters were initiated and resolved. Davie, hustling and growing, became a proponent of local self-government because of the distance and inadequate transportation to Miami, the county-seat of Dade County. It was easier to travel by boat from Davie to Fort Lauderdale, the anticipated seat of the new county. Fort Lauderdale residents, a fierce and proud genre, raised their hackles at the very mention of Miami. They did not want to spend a day or more transacting legal, political, and commercial affairs in their rival to the south. Pompano residents easily figured that eight miles to Fort Lauderdale was better than thirty-four to West Palm Beach, the county-seat of Palm Beach County, in which both Pompano and Deerfield were located. Essential matters conducted nearer to home meant that their procedures were more responsible to local input by the majority who had the most to gain or lose.⁴⁶

Broward County became a reality on October 1, 1915, when Palm Beach County surrendered its area south of the Hillsboro waterway to Commercial Boulevard, and Dade County gave up its ownership of the land south of the boulevard to Snake Creek Canal. Thus, artificial waterways figured prominently in determining the northern and southern boundaries of Broward County. In selecting the name Broward, the people did not sur-

render their heritage of the Everglades. Rather, they memorialized their impending utilization of the swamp which had been their greatest asset and their most formidable enemy.⁴⁷

The new county's official population of 4,763 inhabitants occupied 1,220 square miles. It boasted three waterways, the Hillsboro, and the North and South New River canals, to Lake Okechobee. It became the entrepot for the vast, booming inland region. The official Everglades dominated the county's topography and geography. Its watery wilderness covered approximately eighty percent of Broward County's entire area and exercised a disturbing control over the rest of the region. The county possessed additional swamp and submerged lands which presented as many obstacles to settlement. Between the Atlantic and the coastal settlements lay an almost impenetrable mangrove swamp. The beach properties were almost worthless because they were not suitable for farming and because they were inaccessible for convenient recreational use. But the ocean and ocean-front property increased in value in 1916 when the county awarded contracts for bridges from Fort Lauderdale, Pompano, and Hallandale to the beaches. They were completed in 1917. The construction of drainage canals several years later created a potential gold mine out of properties located just west of New River Sound that were naturally more than worthless. But, for the present, the proper utilization of the Atlantic Ocean, the county's most valuable waterway, was hindered.⁴⁸

On January 29, 1915, Colonel George G. Mathews, who had founded the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* in 1911, boasted in his paper that Fort Lauderdale was the primary source of entry for the inland empire extending west and north-west to Lake Okechobee. He reported that, on January 25, the *Queen of the Glades* had returned from the lake. Her decks were jammed with land seekers from the North. Four days later the boat returned to the lake up North New River Canal and carried an equally large and enthusiastic group who were searching for land in which to invest their savings.

These potential settlers included men from as far north as New York City and Chicago. Later that year, the colonel expatiated upon the conversion of Broward County from a place looked upon as a "worthless marsh" to a place which had produced the City of Fort Lauderdale, from a few scattered settlers to a population of 4,000. The official town population was 1,870. An observant reading of both the *Fort Lauderdale Herald* and the *Sentinel* of that period of emergence, however, reveals that while these papers ground out egregious accounts of population figures, drainage benefits,

housing gains, cultural activities, and commercial prosperity, they also trumpeted the great possibilities of the county to those who saw further than its present condition. By these and similar gross intellectual ventures, these newspapers were among the greatest contributors to the development of the land and the waterways. They were the first to alert their northern and western readers to Broward County's potential of becoming one of America's winter recreation and playground center, particularly its sportfishing and yachting center.⁴⁹

The formation of Broward County stimulated improvements as the drainage and reclamation of the Everglades continued in 1915. A new drawbridge replaced the antiquated 1904 New River Andrews Avenue bridge. In this way it was determined that Andrews Avenue, rather than Brickell Avenue, would become the center of Fort Lauderdale's main activities, although this was deferred until the early 1920s. Drained, arable land found ready purchasers as steamboats and high-powered motorboats carried thousands of eager, potential purchasers through western Broward and on up to the lake. Allegedly shrewd investors did not farm the land to its potential, but held it for the day when Broward County would really bloom. As the unwary and shrewd traveled into the Everglades, they listened to high-spieled sales pitches.⁵⁰

On December 17, 1915, the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* hailed a development in Davie as being the first step in the building of a greater Broward County. Although unincorporated, Davie residents had formed themselves into a special bond district and floated a \$105,000 bond issue to build a "loop" road to connect Davie with Fort Lauderdale and Dania and to build roads within their own settlement and to and from their farms. Thus, they garnered the honor of becoming the first county community to bond itself for road construction. Until both the county and communities could build a sufficient tax base for road and bridge construction, waterways determined the method and location of much of the agricultural industry, transportation, and travel. Likewise, to a large extent, the waterways determined where and how people would live.

Literary and historical artifacts of the county demonstrate, in no uncertain terms, that the county has never lacked for boosters who grounded their predictions in observable facts, and hence, tended to be conservative in their estimates. On the other hand, hordes of speculators and visionaries trumpeted the potentialities inherent in every acre of land, whether or not it was readily accessible to waterways. But in all instances waterways, or the lack of them,

gave or withheld value to land.⁵¹

Even before the bridges to the beaches were completed, visionaries waxed enthusiastic over the possibilities of men cutting artificial waterways to open up the beach area, attract tourists, and create quick wealth. Most of the visionaries wanted to gratify their egos as empire builders. One bevy of dynamic visionaries was composed of farmers. An exception was Colonel Mathews, in whose *Sentinel* office they gathered on Tuesday, September 12, 1916. There they discussed in a "bull session" the possibilities inherent in creating artificial waterways to reclaim the mangrove swamp between Sospiro Canal and New River Sound, better known as the East Coast Canal. The discussants were remarkable men for such a stupendous enterprise. Each had educated himself in the school of hard knocks. They farmed their own or rented land, or in some other way drew their main sustenance from agricultural pursuits. Even the professional men in the community of 1,870 inhabitants, such as doctors, lawyers, and civil engineers, joined their humbler brethren who toiled as storekeepers, commercial agents, and real estate operators, in some sort of agricultural enterprise to make ends meet and to advance their fortunes. None of the enthusiasts could claim any experience in waterway construction for residential and recreational purposes, but these dreamers sought an outlet for their tremendous urge to create and to become wealthy in the process.⁵²

Editor-owner Mathews reported on their dream in which a paradise would be created from a hades:



Colonel George G. Mathews, editor and publisher of the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, was a leading proponent of reclamation of both the Everglades and the coastal marshes.

There is no place on the east coast of Florida that presents the possibilities for a paradise on earth that is offered by the land along New River.

A visionary group, dreamers if you are pleased to call the group, were gathered in the Sentinel office last Tuesday discussing the tidelands lying between Fort Lauderdale and the bay. The idea of these "dreamers" is that by dredging out canals and cross canals 30 to 100 feet wide through these flats, the sill and debris from the canals being used to raise the level of the rest of the land several feet, they will have builded numerous small islands surrounded by the fresh running waters of New River.

These little islands of every conceivable shape and size would not be merely on the bay front but would be literally surrounded by waters of the bay and river with the tides of the Atlantic rising and falling in the streets of this modern Venice, the winter resort of the wealthy of the nation.

This remarkable dream and projection of man's will against nature is all the more astonishing when measured against the backgrounds and financial resources of the dreamers.⁵³

Mathews, however, continued his report with even more details of the resort community which would arise from the miasmatic, fetid swamp which cut off Fort Lauderdale from New River Sound, or what the dreamers called "the bay," and the Atlantic beach:

Look, if you have a vision with these dreamers into the future, see these enchanted canals whose banks are a continuous mass of fragrant flowers and tropical foliage winding in and out among the islets, with high arched concrete bridges at every street crossing. With gondolas, motor boats and launches everywhere, with automobile roads from isle to isle and to the mainland, the business section of our city on the one side, on the other across the bay to Las-Olas-By-The-Sea and her attractive bathing beaches.

No, this is not a wild dream, it is a vision.

D. C. Alexander, principal owner of Las-Olas-By-The-Sea, and co-adventurers Tom M. Bryan, S. P. Snyder, M. A. Hortt, R. E. Dye, and Charles G. Rodes, Sr., joined their enthusiasm to Mathews'. For years they upheld the prospect of conquering and developing the swampy morass which blocked realistic access to and enjoyment of the Atlantic beach.⁵⁴

Although the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund continued to expand Everglades drainage, their pace was too slow for energetic Broward Countians. Led by William H. Marshall and Colonel Mathews, they organized a grass roots movement known as "Back to Broward," in order to realize the dream of the former governor to quickly drain the

Everglades. In furtherance of this movement, Broward Countians elected Marshall their first state representative. Through his untiring and sometimes exasperating efforts, the Florida Legislature created the Napoleon B. Broward Drainage District in May 1917. Most of its territory lay in Broward County, with some in Palm Beach and Dade Counties. The district trustees, chaired by county commissioner Alexander B. Lowe, were empowered to lay and collect taxes on 580,000 of Broward County's 780,000 acres, seventy percent of the county's total acreage. The district trustees levied a tax of twenty-five cents per acre at its first meeting on June 13, 1917. Thus, Broward Countians assumed the job of draining the Everglades and of providing some means of flood control.⁵⁵

Despite the fine drainage provided by the South New River Canal, the area south and east of this canal to Dania suffered from seasonal floods. Some damaged farmers unsuccessfully sued the state for redress. In order to alleviate this damaging situation and to open virgin land for settlement, the state began the construction of the Dania Cut-Off Canal on June 8, 1917. It would tie in with the South New River Canal, empty into the East Coast Canal at Dania, and relieve flooding in Fort Lauderdale proper by diverting New River water into the East Coast Canal. While farmers hoped for an early completion of the Dania Cut-Off Canal, their hopes were not realized. By March 8, 1918, the construction of the canal had proceeded only to the western edge of Dixie Highway, now Federal Highway. Still, the canal had less than one-half of a mile to go.⁵⁶

Unlike Fort Lauderdale residents, Danians early had drained and farmed the marsh land which cut their community off from the East Coast Canal. They formed their own drainage district east of Dixie Highway and levied taxes. By 1918 they had dug twenty-five miles of ditches, with roadbeds constructed on each ditch bank, thereby reclaiming 3,000 of the 6,000 acres of the rich soil on which they grew tomatoes. That vegetable made Dania famous as the winter capital for tomato raising. Danians also dug a canal from the East Coast Canal into the center of town for the dual purposes of providing additional drainage for the East Marsh and of allowing boats to transport the lush tomatoes.⁵⁷

Less than eight years after Fort Lauderdale incorporated in March 1911, canal boat travel and agricultural commerce had transformed the town into the metropolis for the immediate hinterland and the Lake Okeechobee region. In the last week of December 1918, no less than a dozen heavily-laden canal boats arrived with their agricultural produce for shipment by rail to the north

and west. Carl P. Weidling of the *Fort Lauderdale Herald* meandered over from his Wall Street newspaper office to the teeming and bustling New River dock, surveyed the frenzied activity, and reported his findings to an eager public. The Tiffin, Ohio, native, who had arrived in Dania in 1912, expressed the sentiments of Fort Lauderdale when he wrote, "When you see the amount of shipping done here and the great activity of the boatmen, one cannot help but be impressed with the future of that country and its gateway, Fort Lauderdale," "that country" being the area along the canals to Lake Okeechobee. The *Liberty*, named as a result of World War I, impressed Weidling with its valuable cargo. This shallow-draft boat had brought in 400 crates of vegetables. More impressively, the crew of the adjacent *Ajax* hurriedly unloaded its 600-crate cargo in anticipation of an early return to the lake. The luscious cargoes of the lake boats included tomatoes, beans, potatoes, okra, eggs, and pepper.⁵⁸

The Napoleon B. Broward Drainage District found itself handicapped by the inadequate methods it inherited from the state. Consequently, incessant clamors arose locally to draw a plan which would hasten the project. When the district directors had collected enough taxes to hire their own consultant-planner, they did so with a vengeance reminiscent of Governor Broward's bold schemes. The directors hired the Ishan Randolph Company of Chicago, internationally-recognized drainage and water control experts. In mid-January 1919, Mr. Randolph and his technical entourage arrived in Fort Lauderdale, ready to work. He and the directors envisioned an expanded district which would be the world's largest drainage project. In a day of heightened expectations, this move was applauded by an enthusiastic Broward County populace.⁵⁹

Not only did local farmers and absentee land speculators have a high estimate of their destiny and national significance, but local businessmen and the scant winter visitor population shared the same enthusiasm. In February 1919, the *Fort Lauderdale Herald* boasted "Without a doubt Fort Lauderdale is the biggest shipping point of winter vegetables in the states." When the newspaper recognized that Miami might dispute this claim, it alluded to the natural rivalry between the two cities. Certainly, Fort Lauderdale boosters might have disputed Miami's claim with ample justification because the city shipped not only for itself but for the entire Everglades hinterland northward through the lake region. A *Herald* representative visited the local docks to substantiate the newspaper's claim. After an inspection of each shipment, he found that they were ticketed to forty-eight

cities ranging from Boston, Chicago, Denver, and Salt Lake City to Los Angeles. The dozen different types of produce headed northward and westward in refrigerated railway cars ranged from okra, stringbeans, tomatoes, and several kinds of potatoes to cabbage. All these fresh vegetables, consumed in frigid climates, acted as so many publicity flyers to lure people to the pleasures of balmy south Florida.⁶⁰

Boat builders and operators rushed to join and boost the booming hinterland commerce that clogged Fort Lauderdale's docks. Local financial institutions and other financial backers participated. On May 16, 1919, the Palm Boat Company launched the canal boat *Sago* under the aegis of the owner, Captain N. R. Fitzhugh. He immediately prepared for her maiden voyage to Okeelanta, South Bay, and Torrey Island, all located in the lake hinterland. Innovative Captain Fitzhugh incorporated some new features in the construction of this sixty-four foot long, eighteen foot wide beamed vessel. He built the wheel under the hull instead of having it project from the stern. This combination freight and passenger craft had an expanse which drew only twenty-four inches of water instead of the thirty inches normal for boats of this size and tonnage. While still in the planning stage, Captain Fitzhugh added staterooms on the upper deck for whites and on the lower deck for blacks. The total passenger capacity would be 200. Long needed, the double twin-screw propelled craft appealed to Broward Countians as it assumed the flagstaff position in the Palm Boat Company line.⁶¹

Long serviceable as Fort Lauderdale's only public dock, the commercial dock located next to the railway track was inadequate. It could not accommodate the increasing private yacht traffic engendered by the influx of postwar tourists, many of them anxious to invest in local properties. Unusual interest was aroused when plans were announced in 1918 for the construction of Broward County's first modern hotel. From the day construction began until the Broward Hotel opened in November 1919, Fort Lauderdale's city fathers eyed the hotel as a means to lure and to keep tourists. Whereupon, property owners voted sixty-five to fourteen for a bond issue to build a nine-hole golf course which would boost tourism for both the hotel and the city. In conjunction with the Broward Hotel, which attracted yachtsmen, the City of Fort Lauderdale built the first concrete seawall in the county in 1919, without first securing a clearance from the United States Corps of Engineers. City fathers awarded John Olsson the contract for the seawall and contiguous dock for \$1,150 and \$2,090, respectively. His speech heavily tinged with his native accent, the Swedish contractor, who had

erected the 958-foot trestle across the East Coast Canal in 1917 to provide access to the new Las Olas Boulevard drawbridge, carried the sobriquet "Hurry up John" because of his intense method of construction. The yachtsmen's attractive seawall-dock extended from the northeast corner of the Andrews Avenue bridge eastward to the alley which ran behind the Broward Hotel. From the bridge, the dock gradually receded to twenty feet in width at the east end. Awarded the contract in August, the dynamic Olsson completed his work in October, in time for the opening of the tourist season which lasted through March. Auxiliary to these tourist facilities, local anglers voluntarily placed depth and informational markers in the East Coast Canal or New River Sound as direction and safety features.⁶²

As long as waterborne commercial transportation offered minimum competition, Henry M. Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway Company charged farmers and merchants high rates. Water transportation measurably increased after 1911, when the East Coast Canal from Jacksonville to Miami was completed, but Flagler's rates skyrocketed. The increase was fueled, in part, by the immense sums which he had expended to construct his railway to Key West. This venture was not so profitable in light of construction expenditures. Despite intense protests, railway users fought a losing battle against the rates of this solitary railway in southeast Florida. In the belief that a public harbor would successfully cater to transportation lines that would lower freight costs, Broward Countians opted for the construction of a harbor on the west side of the East Coast Canal at Fort Lauderdale.⁶³

The first step in this venture necessitated the closing of New River Inlet at Hollywood, where Joseph W. Young had purchased most of the land, and the opening of a new inlet at Bay Mabel through which the East Coast Canal channel ran. On January 4, 1922, the Board of County Commissioners authorized a \$700,000 bond issue, \$100,000 of which was to be expended for the initiation of a public harbor. The bond proposal for the harbor improvement called for cutting a ten foot deep inlet across the bar opposite New River's entrance to the East Coast Canal; building jetties; and dredging a basin in the canal. All would give Fort Lauderdale the initial facilities for a modern harbor which would cater to both yachtsmen and commercial interests. Late in March 1922 county voters approved the \$700,000 bond issue, most of which went for the construction of roads and bridges, by a whopping majority of 328 to thirty-one. Fort Lauderdale voters were 282 for and three against the bond issue. Only in Hallandale did the voters disapprove, and that was by a seven to eleven ballot. The opening of New River Inlet in

1923 brought to the forefront the long-standing advocacy that Bay Mabel be utilized not only as a provincial seaport but that it be upgraded to a world seaport by the construction of slips and warehouses.⁶⁴

Since 1912 the North New River Canal had been the principal artery between the lake region and Broward County; and it had little competition so long as no roads or railways connected the seacoast with that region. For two reasons, however, this canal presented troublesome obstacles for passenger and commercial navigation. The upper twenty-three miles were never excavated below the top of the bedrock; thus, this section constituted a portion that was shallower than the lower portion. Additionally, constant silting further reduced the normal four to five feet depth of the canal, and this also hindered proper drainage. In order to overcome these difficulties, boatmen continually sought means to lessen their boat drafts. For some years Captain John Ziegler's *Liberty I* required twenty-six inches to navigate with a full cargo. As the canal's silting took its toll, in March 1922 he constructed *Liberty II* for commerce in the lake region. This sixty-four and a half by sixteen foot craft, powered by a fifteen horsepower Fairbanks crude-oil-burning engine, drew only seven inches when launched. She could carry 2,000 crates of lake potatoes with only a thirteen inch draft and, when fully loaded, could navigate waters deep enough to float any rowboat. Although Captain Ziegler and other innovative boatmen gloried in their accomplishments, they were unaware that the days of commercial navigation on the canal were numbered. In September 1924 this canal closed its waters beyond Lock No. 1 to all commercial navigation. The difficulties of maintaining a feasible depth and the introduction of roads and railways to the lake region contributed to this situation.⁶⁵

West Virginian Charles G. Rodes, Sr., who came to Fort Lauderdale from Melbourne in 1907 at the urging of his brother-in-law William C. "Bill" Kyle, was influenced by the 1916 dreamers who envisioned the conversion of the mangrove swamp lands between Fort Lauderdale and the East Coast Canal into a modern Venice of America. Rodes owned swamp land east of Sospiro Canal and south of Las Olas Boulevard. As the United States grew wealthier, the number of winter tourists gradually increased. In the early 1920s Rodes began to build canals on a small scale. As his land sales increased, so did his canal construction. The one fed on the other. By the beginning of 1925 Rodes had completed his canal construction. On January 22 he launched an intensive effort to sell all the vacant lots and the few homes which he had constructed in his subdivision, Venice. The

rich and famous bought lots and homes. The national attention which Venice brought astounded Broward Countians. It can be said that Rodes' development, together with the construction projects launched by Tom M. Bryan, Thomas N. Stilwell, and William F. Morang, brought the Florida Boom of the 1920s to Fort Lauderdale. In the summer of 1925 Rodes sold his interest in Venice to the Cape Cod Realty Company of Massachusetts for the currently amazing amount of \$240,000. With part of the proceeds he hired two railway coaches, attached them to special trains, and took more than fifty of his relatives on an all-expense-paid forty day holiday trip to California and Mexico. This was an outstanding accomplishment for farmer and feed store operator Rodes who, for a time, lessened his real estate operations to enjoy his newly-acquired wealth.⁶⁶

An entrepreneur more remarkable than Rodes and Bryan had already begun his Fort Lauderdale career before Rodes' peaked. Former Bostonian William F. Morang began in 1924 with the development of Rio Vista, the first of his enormous projects. They all involved the construction of artificial waterways, causeways, and bridges. If no subliminal desire to beautify Fort Lauderdale *per se* motivated Rodes, the same was true for Morang. Their motivation sprang from the profit motive. After they purchased, for a relative pittance, immense tracts of watery wastelands unfit for human habitation, the construction of artificial waterways for reclamation provided huge profits. In addition it met the inordinate demands of northern tourists who were anxious to take advantage of the state's low tax rate, its lenient inheritance tax system, and its leisurely lifestyle. At Rio Vista Morang enlarged and extended westward the bight which he called Tarpon Canal. It drained into New River at Tarpon Bend. Morang also began the development of Lauderdale Isles, south of Rio Vista, and the area east of Sospiro Canal and north of Las Olas Boulevard. The latter area made him the northern neighbor of Rodes' Venice development.⁶⁷

Necessity forced Morang to dig canals and to use the spoilage for access routes, bridges, and home construction. His Olympian plan called for the construction of a causeway and drawbridge across New River Sound to connect Lauderdale Isles and his Las Olas Boulevard land. Sketches of huge hotels contemplated for the cousin developments appeared in his newspaper advertisements. It was anticipated that the accomplishment of his projects would convert Fort Lauderdale into a major, national tourist center. He built the drawbridge, but not the causeway, before the Boom crashed and left him virtually penniless. In his Las Olas development he dug a series of canals



Frank Marshall's dredge begins the development of C.G. Rodes' "Venice," the first island subdivision in Broward County, 1925 (above). Charles G. Rodes, Jr. (left), son of the Venice developer, came to Fort Lauderdale in 1907 at the age of four. During the 1920s, he, like his father, prospered in the real estate business.

whose bridges connected the spoiled-raised islands with the boulevard. But the crash left them undeveloped, and for years they remained telling monuments of the ambitious plans spawned by the Boom. In addition to these planned projects, Morang contemplated a series of marinas in both developments as a magnet to attract northern tourists and men with capital who would invest on a large scale.⁶⁸

Entrepreneurs Rodes and Morang found a fellow visionary in Thomas N. Stilwell, a transplanted Hoosier from Anderson, Indiana. Bolstered with capital from northern sources, Stilwell and his associates purchased worthless mangrove swampland from M.A. Hortt and R. E. Dye, east of Rodes' Venice. The *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* on November 19, 1920, in an article titled "Proof That Dreams Come True," detailed how Stilwell and his associates in the New River Development Company had begun on February 7 of that year to salvage useless swampland. They eventually brought in dredges from as far away as Jacksonville to recover subdivisions which Stilwell dubbed Idylwyld and Riviera. In

some instances, palatial homes which faced waterways attracted the very wealthy; but investors of all hues moved into homes far superior to those in the main section of Fort Lauderdale. Lavish newspaper and magazine advertisements, combined with high pressure salesmanship, enticed the famous and wealthy to invest in reclaimed lands east and south of downtown Fort Lauderdale. Bumper plates proudly proclaiming "Fort Lauderdale: Venice of America," began to appear. In the reclamation process, Stilwell and his associates, particularly M. A. Hortt and R. E. Dye, reaped huge profits.⁶⁹

Unlike Rodes, who retrenched his operations after the sale of Venice, Stilwell, Hortt, and Dye expanded their wheeling and dealing by diversifying their investments. This was particularly true of Stilwell. Unlike Morang and others, the crash of the Boom did not render him penniless. In the process Stilwell became a public benefactor. Until 1923, Broward Countians who were seriously ill or injured had to be transported to Miami for hospital treatment. Stilwell remedied that situation by fi-

nancing a hospital in Fort Lauderdale. He turned its operation over to his son-in-law, Dr. Scott Edwards, who named the hospital for himself. Stilwell later purchased and operated the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, an unprofitable venture which he sold to Governor Robert H. Gore in 1929 for \$67,000. Unlike the fly-by-nighters who developed for profit only, Rodes, Stilwell, Hott, Dye, and many other smaller developers made their home in the county and continued to develop and to contribute to their communities throughout the crash and Great Depression. Thus, they revealed their strength of character during adversity.⁷⁰

If Rodes, Morang, Stilwell, and their fellow developers appeared to the public as bold, daring entrepreneurs, native Washingtonian Joseph Wesley Young dwarfed them not only in the extent of his manifold enterprises but also as the charismatic developer of an entire city. When Young began to develop Hollywood from scratch in 1921, he mostly purchased land that did not need drainage. But his holdings did include the mangrove swamp area that abutted the Atlantic Ocean. While Young did dig some residential waterways, he concentrated on constructing his city on relatively high, dry land.⁷¹

As a visionary and builder, Young takes his place with such great Florida

developers as George Merrick of Coral Gables, Carl Fisher of Miami Beach, and Addison Mizner of Boca Raton. Unlike those developers of entire cities whose operations stopped at their city limits, Young planned to become not only the prime developer of Broward County but the chief architect of south Florida development, including the Everglades. To these ends Young set out to build a world seaport in Bay Mabel through which the narrow and unpredictable channel of the underutilized East Coast Canal ran. This shallow lake was formed by spillage of ocean water across the narrow spit of land which separated the ocean from the mangrove swamp to the west, and from the swamp itself. The name Bay Mabel appears to have been of comparatively recent derivation. Early maps and pioneer settlers like William Cooley neither recorded nor mentioned it. It appears to have entered the public records when Arthur Williams purchased land in its vicinity and recorded his purchases in 1885. The shallow lake, a mixture of salt and fresh water, averaged a bare three and one half feet in depth. Nevertheless, it covered upwards of 4,000 acres. Young purchased the worthless lake for a nominal sum. His chief engineer, Frank C. Dickey, determined that it could be dredged near the north end. The expenditure of \$15,000,000, stated Dickey, would convert Bay Mabel into a first class, international seaport.⁷²

Coming to south Florida from Indianapolis, Indiana, Young envisioned a magnificent future. His seaport would become the commercial entrepot to service all south Florida, although he realized that mammoth ports did not thrive, or even ordinarily survive, on one-way trade. To counter this deficiency, Young envisioned an accelerated drainage and reclamation program to develop the Everglades. He purchased land near Davie for sale to small farmers, and offered to build a tram to deliver produce to Port Bay Mabel. He reasoned human occupation would furnish agricultural products for consumption at home and abroad. In order to prepare for and sustain the domestication of the Everglades, Young's engineers drafted plans for a vocational school in Hollywood that would accommodate 600 students. That figure was ten times the annual number of high school graduates in Broward County.⁷³

The engineer's estimate of a \$15,000,000 price tag, and the subsequent necessity to employ 1,500 men for the long-term construction of Port Bay Mabel, now Port Everglades, failed to deter the exuberant Young. Ebullient but not egregious at this stage in his career, Young grabbed for the best when he hired General G. W. Goethals, engineer of the Panama Canal, as window-dressing for his project. This act was made all the more remarkable because



Principal figures in the creation of Hollywood included developer Joseph W. Young, and engineers Frank C. Dickey and

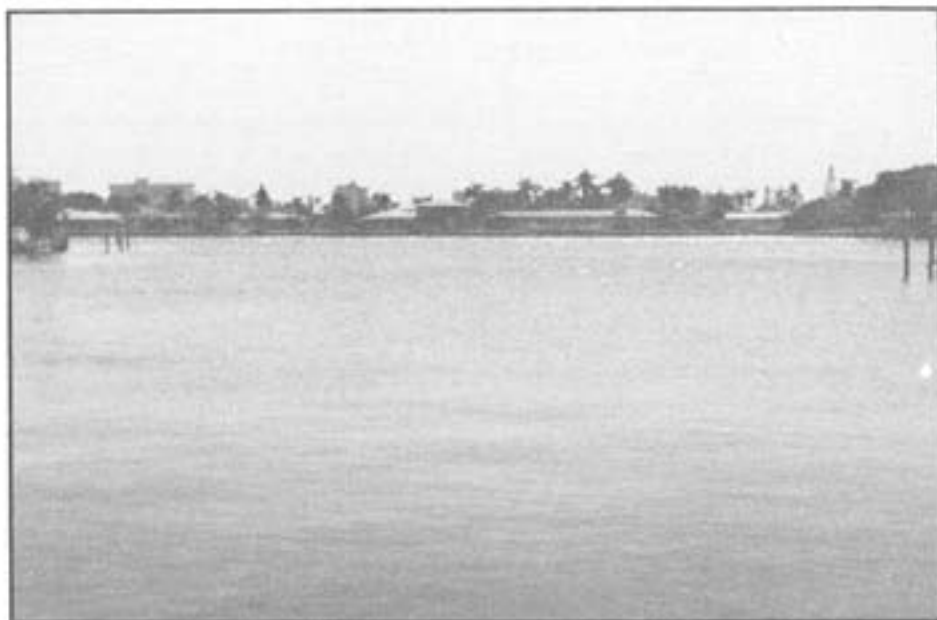
General George W. Goethals. Goethals had been chief engineer on the Panama Canal.

he was then creating an entire city out of the wilderness. In addition, Young personally supervised the operation of his own electric plant and published a quality newspaper and a colorful magazine. If the placement of General Goethals on his payroll might not have convinced investors of the soundness and quality of his international port, Young purchased an entire quarry in Maine and chartered six ships to transport the jetty rock. Huge quantities of rock were needed for the two jetties, one mile long and 1,000 feet apart, which would extend into the ocean and provide a harbor entrance.⁷⁴

Young's mammoth water project was based on the figures submitted to him by Dickey, in whom he had placed great faith. Dickey personally conducted tests which revealed that rock would be reached at a twelve foot depth. Dredge spoilage would convert worthless mangrove swamps into land suitable for warehouses, offices, road and railways, and storage facilities. Dickey planned a turning basin that would measure 1,500 feet by 2,000 feet and a channel entrance 300 feet wide. Because the harbor would be thirty feet in depth, engineers asserted that the world's largest ships, carrying their wealth-producing cargoes, could enter and depart with ease. By the first week in April 1925, Young had his mind-boggling seaport project well under construction. Despite the ephemeral nature of his connection with the finished project, which was completed by the cities of Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood, Young gave Broward Countians a vision of what could be done with downright pernicious waterways when courage and foresight were employed.⁷⁵

Enticed by the huge waterway developments and stimulated by the primal urge for a better lifestyle, large migrations of northerners and midwesterners added their energies and cultural traits to Broward County. Up to that time the area had been dominated by native Americans from the South and from Kansas, by Swedes from New York, and by Danes from Wisconsin and Chicago.

The brief Boom period witnessed the rise of a cosmopolitan, heterogenous population. The official state census, conducted in February 1925, revealed that Broward County had grown to a population of 14,242 from a 1920 count of 5,135, and that the first phase of the Boom had begun. During the same five year period, the incorporated communities showed a corresponding but uneven growth: Fort Lauderdale rose from 2,065 to 5,625; Pompano from 636 to 1,750; and Dania from 762 to 1,473. Although Davie, Hollywood, Oakland Park (Floranada), and Deerfield incorporated later in the year, it was too late for inclusion in the early census. These migrations gave Broward County a character



The first settlers of Pompano congregated around Lettuce Lake, a natural body of water at the mouth of Cypress Creek. By the late 1920s, the lake was renamed Lake Santa Barbara.

as much northern as it was southern and differentiated the area from the startlingly southern character of north Florida. Then, and for two generations thereafter, the dominant forces in Florida politics were the "pork chop" policies of the northern section of the state.⁷⁶

Waterway projects' progress in eastern Broward County and the Napoleon B. Broward Drainage District, centered in the central and western sections, continually engrossed more county land. By February 1925, 679,670 acres of the county's total acreage of 780,000 had been included in the drainage district, thus revealing the enormous extent to which the control and use of water dominated Broward Countians. This eighty-seven percent of the county's land was taxed for water utilization by the district directors. The rates ranged from eighty-two cents per acre for those district areas which had profited the most from water control to ten cents per acre for the 138,880 acres that had profited the least. As a consequence, taxes for the district rose to \$265,829. No matter how water and waterways figured in the total picture of Broward County development in 1925, whether for drainage and reclamation of farmlands or for waterways as an inducement for luxury and commercial accommodations, water still remained the most important single element during the Boom. The climax of the Boom would come at the end of 1925.⁷⁷

Building upon the dock and seawall constructed by John Olsson in 1919, Fort Lauderdale steadily increased facilities for the burgeoning yacht and pleasure boat trade which made the city a focal point for water activities. Yachting activities focused on the Anglers Club located

in Rodes' Venice. To impose order on the water traffic, the City of Fort Lauderdale appointed A. J. Garten as its first dockmaster in 1923. Garten had his hands full in the first full winter season of 1924-25 when more than 1,200 boats of all classifications arrived. At low tide, New River Inlet could accommodate boats of twelve-foot draft, while the river's depth varied from twelve to 100 feet. The river docks were 140 feet apart, and the city granted water and dockage rights free of charge. Up the river, Captain George J. Pilkington operated a yacht basin where he stored between 200 to 300 yachts during the summer. In amazement, Fort Lauderdale's residents watched the largest yacht dock. Despite its 211-ton displacement, which resulted from its 120 by twenty-three foot hull, J. S. Phipps of New York easily maneuvered the *Seminole* into position. The arrival of Phipps' yacht raised hopes for a continual growth in attracting wealthy men who would invest in Broward County.⁷⁸

With multitudes of newcomers pouring into Fort Lauderdale's waterfront developments, the city fathers directed Dockmaster Garten to make a meticulous survey of the waterways within the city limits in order to determine their extent and navigability. Garten's survey revealed that boats could navigate forty miles of various types of streams. Only waterways actually in use or under construction found a place in his carefully checked and revised figures. To a *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* reporter who accosted him on the subject, Garten asserted that the additional miles contemplated by reputable developers would add considerable mileage after completion. Garten's July 1925 survey is remarkable in light of the

restricted city limits of Fort Lauderdale at that time, limits that would be greatly extended within a year?¹⁹

As the 1925 Boom continued its rollicking pace in transforming the lifestyle and topography of Broward County, waterways received more public attention. A 100-acre development in Pompano, known as Genessee Isles, came on the market. The promoters broadcast that the development would feature the latest in waterfront living. A combination of exotic, waterfront scenery, fine waterfront homes, and commercial ventures brought excursion boat operators into prominence. Among the most extolled excursions were those of H. Kester and C. A. Gould. In July they began their excursions along New River to Davie in their eighty-passenger cabin houseboat *Esmonds*. At night, excursions were made to Fort Bay Mabel to see Young's construction. *Esmonds* anchored there for a half hour before making the return trip to Fort Lauderdale, where she anchored at 10:30 p.m. Throughout the excursion, the delighted passengers were entertained by an imported orchestra.²⁰

Early in November 1925 a new era of water transportation opened in Broward County when two heavily-laden ships, loaded with building material, arrived from Jacksonville via the East Coast Canal. The Florida East Coast Railway's imposition of a freight embargo for south Florida several months earlier was responsible for this phenomenon. The railway had sent only emergency cargo. So many building materials had been sent on short notice that consignees could not unload the cars fast enough because of a labor shortage. Unloaded southbound cars were stacked up from West Palm Beach to Miami. As a result, developers, particularly Young at Fort Bay Mabel and Hollywood, immediately increased their use of waterborne transportation. At the Fort Lauderdale docks, the sight of large boats unloading their cargoes aroused the expectation that waterborne transportation would surmount the hampering effects of the railway embargo, no matter how long it lasted. The use of the municipal docks as a base for the distribution of construction material to various parts of the county, and the impact that this event had on the usual rounds of frenzied activity, had a salutary effect upon developers and builders. It demonstrated to them the extraordinary possibilities of Broward County as a strategic entrepot for south Florida, blessed as it was with both the Atlantic Ocean and the East Coast Canal at its doors.²¹

The Boom in Broward County reached its zenith on a note of optimism as 1925 ended. To a rabidly expectant citizenry the Boom seemed, at its beginning, to have no end in sight. The Boom and the September 1926 hurricane, which determined the Boom's denouement, indelibly

fixed themselves in the citizenry's memory. For two generations afterwards, Boom and hurricane survivors compared everything to the wonderful, magic events of that "era of Whimsical nonsense" when it was glorious to be alive and participating. Stories of extravagance during the Boom, of wild speculation in which fortunes were won and lost in a matter of months, and of unparalleled population expansion in a county unprepared to cope with a population explosion persisted until it became a hallmark of a citizen's comprehension of current matters, whether or not he had been in the county during the Boom.²²

In no domain have legends surrounding the Boom, both during and afterwards, been given more lofty proliferation than in the area of population. Incoming migrants lived anywhere they could, due to housing shortages. Vacant lots, railway stations, house trailers, and migrant camps provided shelters. As a consequence of the confusion and shortages, appalled citizens estimated the population to be much greater than it actually was. To set the citizens' mind at rest, Fort Lauderdale city fathers ordered that a census be conducted at public expense. Reverend W. R. Burton, erstwhile minister of the First Christian Church, agreed to undertake the census for \$5,000. Additionally, the city fathers hoped that the figures would be large enough to lower the interest rate on the huge bond issue which was being floated to ease the rising needs of the population. Burton hired thirteen canvassers and completed the census during the first week of December 1925. While the results were startling, they were less spectacular than most observers expected. Burton reported the exact population of the city to be 15,915; 12,428 of whom were whites and

3,487 of whom were blacks. No one was counted who had not lived in the city less than a self-attested period of three months. Otherwise, Burton estimated that the count would have reached 18,000. While the population figure did not reach the expectations of the most sanguine, it did represent a whopping 300 percent increase from February to November 1925. The city's building department figures for 1925, however, increased even more dramatically percentage-wise than did the population. They skyrocketed 900 percent over 1924: from \$978,380 to \$8,169,809. The month of December established a new record at \$1,718,030.²³

When Young experienced financial problems in building Fort Bay Mabel, the cities of Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood entered into a Tripartite Agreement with Young whereby each entity would contribute its third toward the completion of the harbor. Despite Young's inability to shoulder his share of the burden, Fort Bay Mabel opened with unusual fanfare on February 22, 1928. Its skimpy facilities for handling cargoes hardly qualified it as a world seaport. With the formal opening of the port, however, the foundations of Broward County's waterways were vitally completed. Later enormous additions have, for the most part, followed modifications of the basic features for which Broward Countians worked a quarter of a century.²⁴

Never did a visionary possess so much imagination with so few means at his disposal to accomplish them as did Dr. Thomas E. Will. He lived alternately in the Lake Okeechobee region and at Fort Lauderdale. This former college president, who became the Everglades' most rabid booster for two generations, expressed his vision in a speech before the



House where Dr. Thomas E. Will lived in the late 1920s, located on Southwest 6th Avenue between Southwest 2nd Street and Southwest 3rd Street, Fort Lauderdale.

South Florida Development League in Fort Lauderdale in July 1928, after the crash of the Boom had ushered in a depression of serious magnitude. The speech pointed to the immense prosperity in store for south Florida in the symbiosis of Everglades, agriculture, and waterways. Will believed that there should be a marriage of waterway construction and utilization through the constructive use of a drained and reclaimed Everglades.⁸⁵

"South Florida," eloquently exclaimed the impassioned Will, "is strategically located for world commerce, being near the crossing of the 80th meridian and the 25th parallel. It faces eastward toward the Mediterranean and Europe; to the southeast lies eastern South America; to the west, through the Panama Canal, world gateway, western South America and the Orient can be reached." "Thus," he asserted, "we stand at the hub, the geographical focus of future commerce and culture." When Will spoke in 1928, the depression subsequent to the Boom had already decimated the population and industry to which south Florida had become accustomed. Some pessimists laid the blame for the crash on the frenzied tourist and development trades which had neglected the time-honored agricultural industry. Because of the crash, many erstwhile real estate big-timers and their entourages were forced to farm

in order to make ends meet. The general mood of the populace was anything but upbeat.⁸⁶

Will capitalized on the return to farming and, although his speech contained a criticism of Boom excesses, his main theme was that of marrying the tourist-development trade to the Boom-neglected agricultural industry. He felt that south Florida must become a center for agricultural production, and that those accompanying transportation and irrigation needs would be bolstered by the utilization of current and future waterways. Will also believed that cultivation of the drained Everglades, and the proper use of emanating waterways, would furnish a sure foundation for south Florida prosperity. Some considered Will to be a fanatic on the Everglades and waterways issues; others thought him to be an apostle of the future. Before and after his 1928 speech, he harangued any audience, whether he cornered them in front of the Sweet Building or on an Andrews Avenue street corner.⁸⁷

It is evident that, prior to the days of the earliest explorers and settlers and through the great Florida Land Boom of the mid-1920s, water surrounded Broward County on the east and inundated it on the west, paradoxically posing the greatest obstacles and the highest possibilities for man. For the majority of this

era, only a three to five mile stretch of pine barrens afforded its tenuous protection against the ravages of floods. The construction of artificial waterways combined with the improvement of natural streams. Gradually, agriculture flourished as the populace drew its wealth directly from the soil.

This wealth, and the consequent ease and leisure which it produced, provided a spiraling lifestyle and stimulated a heavy growth in population as migrants arrived to enjoy the same privilege. Waterway construction and utilization accompanied this growth and effected an integrated economy and culture. Wealth and population formed the base for the emergence of a tourist and retirement industry which blossomed in the 1920s and faded during the Great Depression. But it revived on a broader and more intensive scale after World War II. Consequently, it can be maintained that natural and artificial waterways for flood protection, commerce, sporting, tourism, retirement, and recreation are the bases for Broward County's development and prosperity. Agriculture, which formed the original base for wealth and recreation, which languished or flourished by the adequacy of water and waterways, has been pushed into the background. It is almost non-existent in comparison with the other industries.

FOOTNOTES

Note Bene. Sources repeated are shortened. Common abbreviations are: *The Weekly Miami Metropolis*, WMM; Broward County Historical Commission, BCHC; Broward Legacy, BL; Oral History Interview, OHI; Fort Lauderdale Sentinel, FLS; and Fort Lauderdale Daily News, FLDN.

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PROOF THAT DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Reprinted from the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Friday, November 19, 1920, page 2.

When Las Olas Boulevard was built a few years ago connecting Ft. Lauderdale with Las Olas Beach it was cut through the heart of a vast jungle, a swamp of mud and an almost impenetrable growth of buttonwood and mangrove, an ugly blot on the surface of nature.

Even before that time a Sentinel Reporter taking a trip through the tiny islands and mangrove keys adjoining this swamp in Lake Mabel and the mouth of New River lit his pipe and wrote a dream of the time when the energy,

courage, money and vision of man would combine to create here a place of wondrous beauty, a modern Tropical Venice.

Last Saturday the same reporter, in company with R. E. Dye, who has charge of the development since last June, revisited the scene of his early pipe dream and was amazed at what in a few short months had been accomplished toward making the land of dreams a land of reality.

The start toward this realization was only made last January when the real

estate firm of Hortic and Dye purchased these waste tracts of land from the various owners and in February the organization which was to undertake this work, which is the biggest development ever undertaken in Broward County, was formed. The stockholders are Thomas N. Stilwell, William H. Morsches, R. D. Kaufman and Ernest Hill, all of Anderson, Indiana, and M. A. Hortic and R. E. Dye of this city. The company was incorporated as the New River Development Company, with William H. Morsches,