
History Along The Hillsboro: The Topography, The Agriculture and The People

Part II

written and compiled by Kenneth J. Hughes

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As the second decade of the twentieth century began, the Hillsboro River region felt the impact of one of the most remarkable undertakings in Florida's history. In a further attempt to reclaim flooded Everglades lands, dredging was begun in 1911 on the Hillsboro Canal, forty-five miles to the west of the Atlantic Ocean. This enormous project received its initiative from Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward and his 1904 campaign promises to drain and reclaim the Everglades.

Ever since the publication of the Buckingham Smith report of 1848, which was based upon observations of army and navy officers in south Florida during the Second Seminole War, it was generally agreed that these lands could be drained and made productive. Therefore, under a federal act passed in 1850, "swamps and overflowed lands" became state property. In 1851, the Florida Legislature created the Internal Improvement Fund to manage those lands. The fund was managed by the governor and four

cabinet members who served as trustees. In 1903, the United States Department of Agriculture began its own drainage investigations, but when Broward began to fulfill his campaign pledge to drain the Everglades, they assisted with his project.

In his first message to the legislature, Governor Broward in 1905 stated that a canal from the St. Lucie River to Lake Okeechobee would lower the level of the lake by as much as six feet and that the reclaimed land would yield all the sugar necessary for consumption in the United States. These claims were based upon a few surveys that had been conducted by C. G. Elliott, drainage engineer for the United States Department of Agriculture. In response to Broward's recommendations, the legislature created the Board of Drainage Commissioners. This board was simply the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund acting as an executive committee to oversee the work of draining the Everglades. After the board made its decisions, it was left for the governor to execute the decisions.

In July 1906, J. O. Wright, one of the two supervisors of drainage engineering in the United States Department of Agriculture, volun-

teered to conduct an investigation and issue a report about the Florida Everglades. Wright visited Tallahassee in November and discussed the project with Governor Broward. After the meeting, Wright visited the western Everglades by way of Fort Myers and the eastern Everglades via Miami and Fort Lauderdale. The governor accompanied Wright on the excursion from Miami. Following the visit, the drainage commissioners attempted to finance dredging operations by levying a statewide tax of ten cents per acre. In late 1906, however, their "authority to make such a levy" was disclaimed by the courts. Therefore, in order to obtain the funds, the commissioners created the Everglades Drainage District.

The district encompassed almost 4,300,000 acres and spread over an enormous area that measured approximately fifty by 150 miles. Landowners within the district were taxed at the rate of five cents per acre. After the formation of this district, Wright sent a party of engineers to commence the survey. Shortly afterward, he joined the party and assisted with what was considered to be "the largest drainage project in the United States."

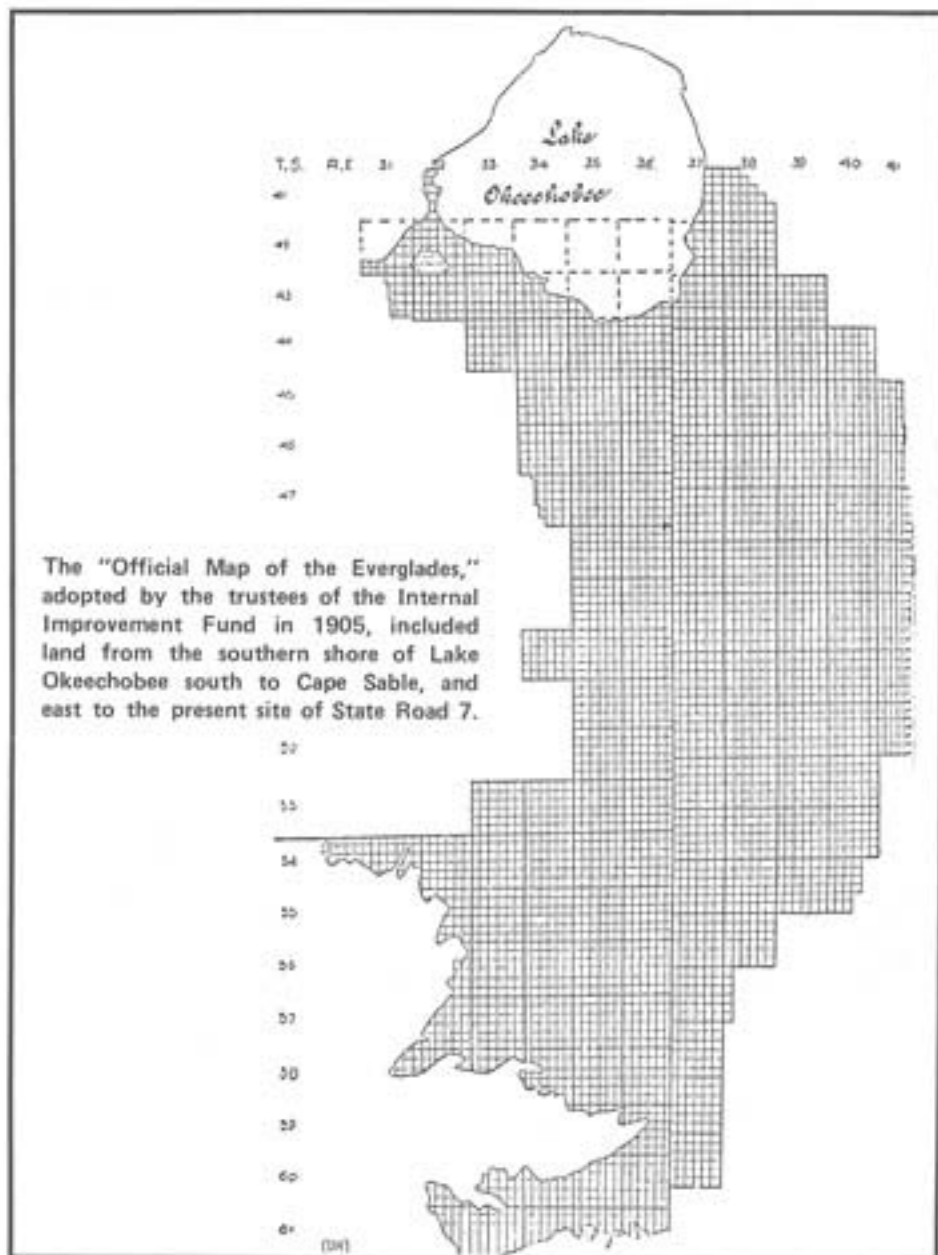
Excavation on the North New River Canal had begun on July 4,

1906, but work was proceeding slowly. Despite the creation of the drainage district, it soon became evident that tax revenues would not be sufficient to support the project. Because the state was nearly bankrupt, Governor Broward could not address it for funds. Fortunately, a private investor who had just completed a successful land project in the western part of the country was taking an interest in the Everglades drainage project. His name was Richard J. Bolles.

Although Bolles was not the first person to invest in reclaimed lands, he did approach the state with a new and interesting proposal. In December 1908, he offered to purchase one million dollars worth of flooded Everglades land at two dollars per acre if the state would dredge canals and lower the water table. In order to promote the drainage and land reclamation plan, Bolles promised additional funds to assist dredging operations. Other investors followed suit, and operations progressed.

Wright's survey party was in the field from December 1907 until May 1908. They explored every accessible part of the 'Glades, including the perimeter of Lake Okeechobee. In addition, they visited the Disston Sugar Plantation at Kissimmee, where sugar cane was growing on drained muck land. Following the survey, Wright returned to Washington, where he prepared his drainage report. Although other parties questioned the conclusions of Wright's investigation, Florida's new governor, Albert Waller Gilchrist, published an abstract of the report in 1909. Even with some revisions, this publication was considered too favorable toward the drainage program. United States Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson attempted to suppress it, but failed. Wright's findings were so well received by Florida drainage advocates and land companies that the entire report was printed two years later as a United States Senate document.

Wright's report recommended the excavation of five canals in



order to drain the Everglades and lower the level of Lake Okeechobee. These would be the Miami, the Hillsboro, and the Gulf Coast canals, in addition to the North and South New River canals already under construction. Wright had determined that each canal would measure from fifty to seventy-five feet in width and from eight to twelve feet in depth, that each would be centered in a 200-foot right-of-way, and that each would be completed within three years of commencement. In addition to preventing lake flooding and controlling regional drainage, the

canals were intended to provide a means of transportation between Lake Okeechobee, outlying farms, and the coast.

Napoleon Bonaparte Broward did not live to witness the culmination of the Everglades drainage project. In 1910, a year after leaving office as governor, he died of a gallstone attack complicated by jaundice. Governor Gilchrist, however, maintained an active interest in the project, and continued to direct operations as chairman of the drainage commissioners and the Internal Improvement Fund.

As work on the canals progressed, expenses for excavation again exceeded proposed costs. By 1909, only fifteen miles of the North New River Canal had been excavated at a cost in excess of \$377,000. The drainage commissioners realized that the project was too enormous to be conducted from Tallahassee, and advertised for private contractors to complete the 235-mile canal system. Three companies submitted bids, each of which were lower than the cost projected by the state. The bid was awarded to the Furst-Clark Construction Company of Baltimore, Maryland, which agreed to dig the canals at the rates of eight and twenty cents per cubic yard for earth and for rock excavation, respectively. The contract included an agreement for leasing state-owned dredges, and the Gulf Coast Canal was eliminated from the contract.

To excavate the four remaining canals, Furst-Clark had to remove approximately 24,065,926 cubic yards of earth and rock. During the month of July, 1910, 150,000 cubic yards of material were excavated, and in August an additional 256,000 cubic yards were removed. Despite this progress, financial difficulties continued.

In accordance with the contract, Furst-Clark was required to construct canal locks which could control the drainage and level of Lake Okeechobee. To do this, the company required supplemental payments, explaining that excavation of the locks necessitated digging feeder canals, and that the eventual establishment of township corners and range lines required a new survey of the Everglades lands. In order to fund these supplements to the original contract, the drainage commissioners proposed a tax increase on land within the Everglades Drainage District. Naturally, the land companies who had purchased Everglades tracts opposed taxation. Several had, in fact, instituted suits against the state over the original drainage district tax of five cents per acre. In April 1910, these suits had been dismissed with the understanding that the five cent

per acre tax would remain in effect until 1912. The dismissal of the suits paved the way for a tax increase, however, and in 1911 Governor Gilchrist requested the legislature to raise the levy to ten cents per acre to cover supplemental payments to Furst-Clark.

In the meantime, the land companies were proceeding with plans to sell their vast holdings. Richard Bolles, for instance, sought customers on a nationwide basis, channeling sales through a new company he had founded, the Florida Fruit Lands Company. Each customer paid \$240 in monthly, ten dollar installments for land which, at that time, had not been surveyed. Because drainage operations had just begun, the buyers had no idea where their properties were located nor how many acres of land they were to receive. After the required number of land buyers had invested in Bolles' company, a convention was held in Fort Lauderdale in March of 1911. The local newspaper stated that "there, each purchaser's name was read, a slip of paper was drawn from a box on which was the legal description and acreage of the tract..."

Generally, parcels ranged in size from ten or twenty acres up to 640 acres if the tract was located on the edge of the Big Cypress Swamp. The most fortunate investors would own land along the canals but, if they received only ten acres, much of that area would be subject to the proposed 200-foot-wide canal easement. Bolles' customers did receive an additional bonus at the convention, as each was given a town lot in Progresso, just north of Fort Lauderdale. Many years later, these town lots would be assessed at a higher value than the reclaimed 'Glades lands.

Despite numerous adjustments, the drainage project continued to be plagued with delays. In a letter to the Board of Drainage Commissioners in May 1911, J. O. Wright, who had resigned his federal job to become chief drainage engineer for the State of Florida, asked for permission to move the dredge

Okeechobee from the South New River Canal to the outlet of the Hillsboro Canal. Wright noted some difficulties in finding an economical route for the Hillsboro Canal from the railroad bridge at Deerfield to the Everglades. He had selected three alternate routes, however, and was close to making his decision. Only two months earlier he had discovered that the dredges on the upper ends of the canals were working south from Lake Okeechobee with few problems, but at the lower ends, the contractors were experiencing a good deal of difficulty in excavating the rock.

Mechanical failures also persisted. In February 1912, the dredge *Miami* was brought from a repair shop in Miami and put to work on the lower end of the Hillsboro, behind the *Okeechobee*. By mid-October the dredge *Caloosahatchee* had completed muck excavation and was being refitted for rock excavation. Meanwhile, the Board of Drainage Commissioners decided to initiate an additional project north of the Hillsboro, and by December had received bids for the excavation of a proposed West Palm Beach Canal. One unsuccessful applicant for this job was the Hillsboro Dredging Company.

As these enormous operations were being conducted in the Everglades, work was nearing completion on the East Coast Canal. The state had contracted with the Florida East Coast Canal Company to open this inland water passage, which was intended to provide safe and efficient boat transportation from Jacksonville to Miami. Notably, the route of this canal was channelled through natural passages that had been visited by the early explorers. Among these natural waterways was the stream that flowed south from Lake Boca Raton, once known as the Little Hillsboro, and the estuary behind the beach ridge which flowed from the mouth of the Hillsboro River and southward below the Hillsboro Inlet. Subsequently, because of the difficulty encountered in altering and improving these natural streams, the East Coast Canal proj-



George B. Hills' party (top) surveyed "reclaimed lands" from West Palm Beach to the upper Hillsboro in 1913. The West Palm Beach Canal now follows their route. The Deerfield locks on the Hillsboro Canal (bottom) were completed in 1913, and still stand, adjacent to Lock Road in the Deer Creek development. (Bottom photo courtesy of Kenneth J. Hughes.)

ect required nearly three decades to complete. Although it would have a tremendous impact on Florida's southeast coast, as a source of both transportation and recreation, the East Coast Canal was overshadowed by the more dramatic work taking place in the Everglades.

In 1913, the water in some parts of the Everglades receded to such a level that the area could be surveyed. In addition to running a transit line, it was necessary to take levels and soundings of the bedrock in the area between the Atlantic Ocean and Lake Okeechobee. These would determine the accurate location and level of the lake. George B. Hills led the first surveying party into the reclaimed land. From West Palm Beach they headed due west to the Hillsboro Canal, and from there to the lake, taking two months to complete the crossing. Today, one needs less than an hour.

By September 1912, Wright had resigned his position as chief drainage engineer, and was succeeded by Fred C. Elliot. At this time, the state also employed Major John S. Sewell, formerly of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the renowned Ben Johnston, who had served as superintendent of lock construction on the Panama Canal. Both Sewell and Johnston proved to be assets to the state once work began on the locks.

By 1913, land sales had decreased, and the resulting loss of income threatened the drainage project. The Drainage Commission was authorized by the state legislature to issue a total of six million dollars in bonds to boost the program. It is not surprising that they failed to sell. Nevertheless, excavation continued on the Hillsboro Canal, and by December the dredging project northwest of Deer-

field was near completion. The dredge *Caloosahatchee* had advanced to Station #173 in the Hillsboro Canal and had discontinued dredging to the east. It then moved back three miles and began rock excavation. Only a 100-foot section, or plug, located about two miles west of Deerfield, remained at this time to separate the upper and lower sections of the dredged canal. While dredging was being completed in the upper part of the canal, the plug was retained in order to assure the most suitable water level for the operations.

At this time, Chief Drainage Engineer Elliot reported that . . . *the Everglades are drier than they have ever been known to be; and Lake Okeechobee, at elevation 17.2 feet above sea level, is larger than ever before known at this season.*

Elliot also stated that the lands bordering all the canals except the Hillsboro were dry for six to eight miles to the west. In addition, those lands, as well as the land six to eight miles below the lake, were in splendid condition for cultivation. He added that, because the canals were not completed, the rainy season would most likely inundate the Everglades. Regardless, many farmers from southeast Florida and from outside the state began planting crops along the canals. Summarizing his December 1913 report to the drainage commissioners, Elliot noted,

These people realize the uncertainty due to possible floods, but on account of the favorable soil conditions now prevailing in some sections of the glades, they believe that they are justified in taking chances.

The prospects of a successful, productive harvest increased enthusiasm within the drainage district. In the meantime, the new administration of Governor Park Trammell was seeking plans for traffic control on the canals, and was in the process of setting toll charges. Consequently, Elliot addressed the Board of Drainage Commissioners and presented his recommendations regarding the appropri-

ate speeds at which boats should operate in the canals. The state also wanted to establish the navigational fees which would have to be levied in order to maintain the canals and locks and to pay the lock tenders' salaries.

Speed limits went into effect on January 1, 1914. Between the mouth and Milepost Ten five miles per hour was the maximum speed for a boat traveling up the Hillsboro, against the current; downriver, with the current, the maximum speed was six miles per hour. The limit from Milepost Ten to Lake Okeechobee was six miles per hour for upriver travel and seven miles per hour for downriver.

Various craft, including barges, were charged a rate that was determined by class and length. The tolls ranged from two to five cents per linear foot and were collected by the lock tenders. After the rates had been determined, the board included a special ruling that eased the toll expenses for those travelers who owned or operated property within the drainage district. Subsequently, the ruling stated that those who resided on or operated farms within the Everglades Drainage District would be charged a toll equal

to half the rate of class one vessels if they were utilizing the canal for purposes of transportation. That benefit was not extended to those craft which carried freight or passengers for profit.

During this period the town of Deerfield sought to expand and increase its agricultural district, yet the signs of a pioneering community remained. For example, Seminole Indians were a familiar sight. They hunted frogs and alligators along the canal and traded with the townspeople. Usually, the Indians camped along the Hillsboro near the site of the present-day Dixie Highway bridge.

The population of the settlement numbered less than 300 during these eventful years. Settlers included Blackwelder, Jenkins, and E. A. Thomas, Charles Arnold, J. C. Holley, John Saxon, Charles Smoak, John B. Thomas, and Young Tyn-dall. Other notable families were the Bracknells, G. E. Butlers, J. D. Butlers, the Gaskins, the Sweats, and the J. R. Horne family.

Joel and Ardena Horne and their two children came to Deerfield in 1903 from Polk County. Ardena recalls that the Hillsboro River was clear as glass, and occasionally

they would drink the water. The Horne family rented their first home. It was a one-room wooden house located west of the F.E.C. tracks along the present-day Hillsboro Beach Boulevard. Nearby and adjacent to the F.E.C. depot and the nine-foot wide Dixie trail was a small structure which served as the produce market. It was a time when the market was bustling with activity and a time when Deerfield's tomatoes were ranked among the finest in the state.

Another structure utilized for produce storage was located along the Intracoastal Waterway just south of the Hillsboro River. It also served as a fish packing house. Live-in employees were bunked in an upstairs dormitory. Later, this building served as a gambling casino, then it became the Riverview Restaurant. Though it was utilized in a different manner, the produce market at the F.E.C. tracks also served a variety of purposes, being used as a schoolhouse, a social center, and a church. Other church services were held in the home of M.A. Robinson and ministered by Reverend Sam Gibson. Each week, Reverend Gibson and his wife would drive down



Black settlers at Deerfield hold a baptism in the Hillsboro in the early 1910s. The Hillsboro was a popular baptism site for blacks throughout the surrounding region in the early twentieth century. (Photo courtesy of the Deerfield Beach Historical Society.)



Chief Drainage Engineer J. O. Wright (center, under sign) addresses a crowd in front of the F.E.C. railroad station at Deerfield during the dedication of the Hillsboro Canal in 1911.

from Delray Beach in an old Model-T automobile.

The Hillsboro became a canal in 1911 upon the completion of dredging to the railroad. This event was dedicated in Deerfield on December 14. Three years later, a telephone line connected Deerfield with Delray Beach. Although the dawn of modern conveniences was at hand, the community retained its quaint atmosphere. Even in the 1910s horse-drawn wagons still carried the produce to the railroad depot. Picnics were events relished by many townspeople. Every Wednesday during the summers the stores would close at noontime. Picnickers would then row across the Intracoastal and congregate on the beach.

Underneath the slowpaced atmosphere that characterized Deerfield and other south Florida communities, land sales revived as the canals neared completion. In the aftermath of the successful land auction sponsored by his Florida Fruit Lands Company, Richard Bolles organized the Okeechobee Fruit Lands Company which sold property on the lakefront and in the Big Cypress Swamp. Vance W. Helm of the Everglades Land Sales Company sold large holdings along the South New River Canal. In the same locale and along the North

New River Canal, R. P. Davie and Associates of Colorado had bought and sold 27,500 acres, and the Davie Realty Company had bought and sold 80,000 acres. Bryant and Greenwood organized several large land promotions, including the Palm Beach Farms Company and two tracts in Fort Lauderdale. Both the Florida Reclaimed Land Company and the Holland and Butterworth Company sold land along the Hillsboro Canal, and Holland and Butterworth established a town there called Glade Crest.

Land settlement did not necessarily parallel land sales, and the year 1913 was far from a boom year for Glade Crest, which sat eight miles down the canal from Lake Okeechobee. Glade Crest was the first settlement on the upper part of the canal and the second, after Okeelanta on the Miami Canal, in the lake region. The first settlers, Mr. and Mrs. Slade, arrived in November 1913, and soon were followed by J. W. Bissell. But growth was slow. By January 1914, only twenty people were living at Glade Crest. They camped along the canal bank since the reclaimed sawgrass prairie had not yet been surveyed.

During the fall of 1914 Cleveland W. Horne and his surveying crew ran a line from the coast to

Glade Crest. They subdivided Section Twenty into ten-acre tracts while battling sawgrass fires and one water moccasin snakebite. The injury incurred from that mishap was treated with turpentine, and the victim survived. Turpentine happened to be the only medicine in their camp. After the surveying had been completed, the land was sold in five and ten-acre tracts, "sight unseen."

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Elsasser, their four children, and Mrs. Elsasser's sister, Maud Wingfield, moved to Glade Crest in 1914. Miss Wingfield was a Kansas farm girl who had moved in with her sister's family in Miami in order to live near the water. Once Maud and the Elsassers arrived at the new settlement, they discovered that their "canal-front" property actually was situated three quarters of a mile from the canal, and that the water table was two inches below the surface. Nevertheless, for one year these settlers fought the sawgrass and plowed the land.

During the winter of 1915, Glade Crest became the home of seven new families, in addition to a Mrs. Chisolm. Later, a Mr. Shields and his son operated a mercantile business in the town. It was not surprising to the public that people were drawn to the sawgrass Everglades. In fact, when Mr. and Mrs. Slade visited Fort Lauderdale during the spring of 1915 and spoke to a newspaper representative, they commented about the activity in their new town, stating that "they were perfectly satisfied and expected many Canadians in the winter." However, other settlers, like the Elsassers, met with disappointment in the 'Glades.

A. P. Yerke and Dr. Thomas Will inspected the Everglades region in February 1915. Yerke was with the Office of Farm Management, a subsidiary of the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. During an eight-day trip on the canals, they saw the Okeelanta-Fruitcrest District, the North New River Canal, the Township Line Canal, Lake Okeechobee, and the upper Hillsboro Canal. Will commented on how "... the region

not long since almost empty is manifesting increasing activity."

The purpose of Yerke's visit was to evaluate the use of agricultural equipment in breaking up the soil. Two new tractors impressed him. One was the Crum Pulverizer, invented and manufactured by an Everglades investor. It was tested first in Davie and then put to use in the upper 'Glades. The other machine was the Buckeye Tractor and Pulverizer. Holland and Butterworth operated this piece of farm equipment at Glade Crest. It measured twenty feet abeam and weighed 20,000 pounds. The Buckeye could plow a swath six feet wide and, on a daily basis, could clear from five to seven acres.

Will spied another useful piece of agricultural machinery, the "iron mule," along the Hillsboro Canal. It was a small tractor engine that could draw two fourteen-inch sulky plows and could plant potatoes. Using this machine, one man and a boy could break up and plant a field in a single trip. Where tractors were not available, horses were substituted. Due to the composition of the soil, the horses had to be fitted with muck shoes which had steel plates that clamped to the horses' hooves. Will stated that "With these shoes, horses can be used in almost any upper part of the glade." The doctor also noticed that horses were not the only farm animals on the upper Hillsboro. "Mr. Reed from Canada has five fine, full-blood, Poland-China hogs."

The increasing number of activities along the Hillsboro was added to, in part, by soil surveyors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These surveyors had been working for two months, "making a comprehensive soil survey of the Glades," to pave the way for sugar cane experiments. Of the soil survey team, the local newspaper reported, "They were profoundly impressed with the vastness and fertility of the region."

At about that same time, Charles H. Baker was promoting the construction of the Palm Beach-Everglades Railroad, of which he was president. The railroad was intend-

ed to follow the new Palm Beach and Township Line canals to within one mile of Fruitcrest. Baker, financier C. B. Lewis, and a large party of distinguished guests journeyed by water to the upper Hillsboro. There, at Glade Crest and in other parts of the Everglades, settlers were petitioning for the establishment of a permanent government experimental station and for some roads.

When Richard Bolles began selling his first tracts of land, it had been almost impossible to visit the properties. However, once the canals were opened to the lake, it was a common sales practice to show visitors and potential customers through the reclaimed lands by boat. *The Queen Of The Everglades*, captained by Charles Murray of Fort Lauderdale, made two round-trips per week to the lake. Each passenger was charged five dollars for the excursion along the North New River Canal to survey Bolles' land and to stay in his hotel at Ritta.

Other passengers were transported from Deerfield to the lake on a three-day excursion aboard Captain Wood's craft, *The Bonnie*. Although Wood's route was shorter than that along the North New River, it was not a popular one. The locks on the lower Hillsboro Canal were six miles west of Deerfield and, between them and the town, the water was shoaled. Therefore, not only did potential customers on the Hillsboro excursion have to begin and end their journeys in the sparsely settled town of Deerfield, but as Lawrence Will, son of Dr. Thomas Will, described, they had to travel six miles over "rutted, sandy road through the piney woods." Nevertheless, those excursions did entice many visitors to purchase reclaimed land.

Progress in the reclaimed land areas assumed several forms. Some agricultural innovations were being made at Glade Crest, although not all the results were so satisfactory as various reports had indicated. In addition, a post office already had been established when Will and Yerke visited. This branch office was presided over by Olive J.

Bissell. She was succeeded by Ezia E. Bissell, who became the first postmaster. But not even this additional convenience could prevent many of the residents from becoming discouraged by the realities of building a future in the sawgrass Everglades.

In the spring of 1915, the seventy-two people who were camped at the settlement faced great difficulty in preparing the soil for crops. Most settlers attempted to combat the sawgrass manually, only clearing about one seventh of an acre during a full day's work. Carl Elsasser did utilize the Bates Steel Mule, which was capable of accomplishing some work when it was not bogged down or disabled by mechanical problems. Holland and Butterworth eventually won the battle against the sawgrass with the Crum Pulverizer and the Buckeye tractors.

Although Holland and Butterworth alleviated the difficulty of clearing the sawgrass, other problems persisted and plagued the settlers. Claims had been made to the effect that four people could live off one acre of land and that the land could produce four crops annually. The latter claim could not even be substantiated because frost killed many gardens.

In their sales brochures, the land companies had quoted from a government report that "frost was not a hazard to even the tenderest of vegetation." Yet, during his first winter in Glade Crest, Herman Herndon counted fifteen damaging frosts and freezes. All attempts to save the crops had failed. In addition, a preposterous claim had been made that there were no mosquitos in the district. Everyone had much to learn about the terrible hardships in the sawgrass Everglades.

When the farmers did succeed and did grow crops on the rich muck lands, more often than not those plants would mature and die due to the absence of nitrogen in the soil. Yet, potatoes did thrive. It was discovered that when the potato crop had been sprayed with lime and copper sulfates to protect the plants from blight, the farmer's next crop, planted on that same

≡≡≡ A ≡≡≡ 3 Days' Cruise in the 'Glades.

\$5 Pays all Expenses

To visit Lake Okeechobee and the principal places of interest in the Upper 'Glades District, including our settlement, located on the Hillsboro Canal, near Lake Okeechobee. Our customers are cultivating the land right NOW, and a splendid settlement is already established.

☛ This is the highest part of the 'Glades south of the Lake, that part which the Randolph committee says was not overflowed last year, almost the wettest season on record. This is the only tract of land in the Upper 'Glades being sold under a contract which guarantees prompt, adequate and definite improvements without any expense to the buyer.

☛ We will show you the prettiest and richest land on earth, located AT THE HEAD OF DRAINAGE, ALREADY DRY, and producing incredible growth of trees, vegetables, grasses, etc. This is something that WILL FINANCE YOUR FUTURE, not something for you to finance.

☛ The Hillsboro Canal is much the largest and 15 miles shorter from sea to lake than any other, and our trips are not tiresome; every minute is interesting and instructive.

☛ Our Boat leaves Deerfield every Saturday morning about 7:30, and returns Monday. Special trips by arrangement. Call or write.

Holland & Butterworth Comp'y.
Burdine Building, MIAMI.

N. B. If more convenient, call on our representatives, L. A. Holland, Hotel Gilbert, Fort Lauderdale; or H. T. Grewell & Co., 106 E. 2 N. Olive St., West Palm Beach.

field, would yield a productive harvest. In effect, the copper sulfates provided the nitrogen which was essential for agricultural purposes in the muck lands. Many years would pass before this chemical would be tested and utilized as a fertilizer.

Meanwhile, the newspapers boasted that J. W. Bissell of Glade Crest had sold some Irish potatoes at a price that ranged from one dollar to \$1.25 per hamper, and that his land had yielded 150 bushels per acre.

Even as late as 1914, dredges were operating in the eastern part of the Hillsboro Canal; at the Boynton Beach Canal; and at Lateral Number 6, below Lake Osborne. One south Florida newspaper reported that "many visitors from the northern states manifest great interest in the drainage operations, and several parties had visited the various dredge sites . . ." In mid-January 1914, 500 pounds of dynamite demolished the plug of land that separated the Hillsboro and the Range Line canals, draining rich land west of Lake Worth. As soon as the waters receded, land owners started small truck farms along the Range Line Canal, north of the Hillsboro. However, conditions were not the same throughout the Everglades Drainage District, and discouraged farmers at Glade Crest eventually realized that they were fighting a losing battle. In October 1915, seven families left the settlement for the town of Moore Haven on the west side of the lake. Among them were the Elsasser family and Maud Wingfield. Miss Wingfield eventually relocated to the south shore of Lake Okeechobee, and opened a store.

In an effort to save the settlement, Lank Holland joined his brother John at Glade Crest. He promoted various activities and experimented with raising a herd of cattle on the muck land. These efforts were unsuccessful. On March 15, 1917, the town's post office permanently closed its doors. In 1920 a flood forced most of the remaining settlers to leave, and one year later, the settlement was abandoned.

Holland and Butterworth Company, developers of Glade Crest, took potential buyers on three-day excursions from Deerfield to Lake Okeechobee. (Photo courtesy of Kenneth J. Hughes.)

Although many landowners were discouraged about the condition and location of their reclaimed properties, there was a continuous stream of uninformed investors, and new communities emerged overnight. Unfortunately, most of the new residents who did have farming experience did not know how to utilize the reclaimed land. In the main, those "paper townsites" flourished on the dreams of the investors and by the labor of the settlers, but their chief product was failure.

Disgruntled land owners and the United States government eventually came down hard on the land companies, and a "war against the Everglades" erupted. In defense of their actions, the land companies claimed that they had been promised complete land reclamation within ten years by the state. The companies also maintained that their claim, "frost was not a hazard to agriculture," was only a statement that had been issued by the United States Weather Bureau.

In effect, the land companies claimed that any improper selling techniques that they might have used resulted only from misrepresentations by the State of Florida and the United States Department of Agriculture. Understandably, this defense was groundless because the government's work was experimental and everyone's knowledge of the Everglades was limited. Some land companies did urge customers to wait until total reclamation was attained. Then again, as Lawrence Will indicated, ". . . too many ambitious salesmen had diverged considerably from the truth . . ."

Many land sellers, including Richard Bolles, were indicted for "selling land by the gallon." Some were convicted but never sent to prison. Charges against Bolles were dismissed, but the government dogged him until his death in 1917. Many landowners had allowed their payments to lapse, and those who held the deeds stopped paying taxes. Difficulties experienced by several new communities, such as Glade Crest, discouraged large numbers of investors. Despite indictments, de-

faults, and the Drainage Commission's failure to market their six million dollars worth of bonds, the state proceeded in 1915 with plans to excavate the St. Lucie Canal, as originally suggested by the late Governor Broward. Only then did the bonds begin to sell. As a result, reclamation became a reality.

The completion of the canals and the settling of the 'Glades were leading factors in the move to form a new county in southeast Florida. Proponents of the new county wanted its northern boundary to follow the Hillsboro Canal to Lake Okeechobee, but legislators from Palm Beach County, in which this land was located, blocked their efforts. When the new county — appropriately named Broward after the late governor — was established in 1915, its northern border followed the Hillsboro for less than ten miles, and then continued due west. Deerfield thus was taken into Broward County, but the upper Hillsboro region remained in Palm Beach County.

That same year, 1915, the Dixie Highway was completed through the eastern portion of Broward County, allowing convenient access to Deerfield and towns further south by automobiles from the north. The construction of a bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway at Deerfield in 1917 furthered the growth of the young county by opening coastal areas to expansion. These areas, once regarded as worthless because they could not be cultivated, and used only by picnickers, soon became popular recreational spots, frequented by bathers and sport fishermen. Unfortunately, during that same year, a freeze had crippled Deerfield's tomato crop and discouraged plans to build a processing plant. As a result, Deerfield residents increasingly looked to the east. The Woman's Club was organized in 1919, and was presided over by Mrs. George Emory Butler, Jr. Their first project resulted in the construction of a pavilion on the beach. By 1920, the increasing population of Deerfield had created a demand for a larger school to accommodate the children.

The 1920s brought an unprecedented tourist and real estate boom to Florida's southeast coast. Deerfield, still primarily an agricultural town, was not affected to the extent of nearby resort communities such as Boca Raton and Fort Lauderdale, but it did profit from the region's general prosperity. In fact, the convenience of electricity became available to the townspeople in 1924, and one year later the first library was established in the home of Mrs. Lee Craig. The land boom peaked in 1925, and that year Deerfield was incorporated. J. D. Butler is generally credited with leading several townspeople to seek state action for incorporation since the neighboring town of Boca Raton was expanding rapidly and threatened to take in the Deerfield area. Butler had come to Deerfield in 1900, and prospered in agriculture. Mayor George Emory Butler, Jr. and the city council presided over an area that extended south from the river to the Hillsboro Lighthouse. Mr. J. B. Wiles, who moved to Deerfield in 1925, remembered this era vividly. He referred to 1925 as "the year of the tin-can tourist epidemic." This name was applied because the town did not have restaurants or motels. The tourists slept in tents in city-sponsored camps, and obtained their meals from tin cans. The following year brought both disaster and progress. The Seaboard Air Line Railroad reached Deerfield at the end of 1926, but not before a September hurricane had eroded the beach, devastated much of the town, and put an end to the Florida land boom.

At the other end of the canal, settlers disregarded the hardships that others had endured at Glade Crest, and strived to establish a flourishing agricultural community at Lake Okeechobee. Their Hillsboro Canal Settlement was plowed from custard apple ridges and from the drained portion of the lake bottom.

A Canadian hockey player named Orrin W. Manning and two of his friends were among the first settlers on the Hillsboro near Lake Oke-



During the boom years of the 1920s, Deerfield remained primarily an agricultural town, and vegetable shipping was a big business.

chobee. Manning, Burr Gaylord, and George Fish purchased land on the south side of the canal, about two miles from the lake, for forty dollars per acre. In January 1915, the three pioneers erected a small shack and planted a garden. Their initial prospects for a successful harvest were good, but frost eventually killed that dream. Subsequently, they abandoned their farm.

One year later, in the fall of 1916, William G. Clark and his wife purchased twenty-three acres west of the Manning property. Like the first settlers, they suffered hardships. Yet, the Clark family remained. Soon after their arrival, Myles F. Myers and William H. Badger came. While Myers settled to the east, Badger settled on the north side of the canal. By this time Orrin Manning had returned.

About one mile to the west of these farms, Hans Stein and Ben Buxton settled on the south side of the canal. Stein originally had farmed the lake bottom, but he moved down the canal, nearer to the locks, when he was hired to be the first lock tender on the upper Hillsboro.

J. R. Leatherman purchased the

west half of Section Thirty, which was north of the farms operated by Stein and Buxton. In 1919 Leatherman built a two-story house on the canal and began to promote a town which, later on, would be called Chosen. That same year, Paul Johns established a residence in a shack at the locks.

Although there were only nineteen men in the area, the children of the settlement's three families were in need of a schoolhouse. At the request of those families, the Palm Beach County School Board provided the lumber, and the settlers supplied the labor. Soon afterwards, the children, toting their drinking water and lunches, followed the muck trails that led to the schoolhouse. In 1921 a second school was established one mile up the canal, closer to the locks, to serve the children who lived in that area. Walter R. Hooker was their first teacher.

The first church services on the upper Hillsboro were held in the spring of 1919 at Clark's residence. The children attended Sunday school classes, which were supervised by Walter Greer. J. R. Leatherman was the first minister. Eventually, he was replaced by

Reverend E. L. Housley. Reverend and Mrs. Housley had been missionaries in the Philippines, and Lawrence Will claimed that, "when those jungles began to get too civilized they came here to the Everglades." When church membership increased, a more permanent house of worship was erected on the canal's bank.

In 1916 Howard Stowe had set up a store on Torry Island, at the southeastern part of Lake Okechobee, across from McLaughlin's Fish Camp. Beginning in March of 1917, he opened a post office from that establishment. At first the business flourished; however, the lake's waters continued to recede. That phenomenon, which had begun with the opening of the canals, made it impossible for boats to travel up the canal to reach Stowe's business. Consequently, Stowe received the necessary permit from the War Department to construct a bulkhead and establish a man-made island south of Torry Island. Thus he was able to re-establish his business near the intersecting channels of the Hillsboro and the North New River canals.

At the new location Stowe hired Fred Himmelreich to assist with

the increasing business. The post office retained the name of Torry Island, although it then was located one-half mile away from that isolated land mass. After Himmelreich moved away, Stowe employed William Badger. On July 20, 1918, Badger was appointed postmaster. He held that position for many years, long after the actual store was closed.

In time, poor health prevented Stowe from managing the business so he sold out to the Fort Lauderdale Mercantile Company. The new manager was Dewey M. Hutchins, who maintained successful business relations with the trappers and the farmers. In fact, business was so good that Hutchins established a branch of the Fort Lauderdale State Bank right within the store.

Hutchins, too, needed an assistant, so Herbert Giebert transferred from the mercantile company's main store in Fort Lauderdale to the Lake Okeechobee location. There he courted and married a girl from Glade Crest, ten miles down the canal.

Soon Hutchins learned that J. R. Leatherman was attempting to establish a post office in Chosen, and assumed that, if Leatherman was successful, he eventually would open a store as well. Any outlet would compete with Hutchins' operation for business from the mainland customers, who outnumbered those at the lake.

There was potential for still more competition. The major part of the Hillsboro Canal Settlement, situated one mile downriver from Leatherman's community and even further from Hutchins' store, also wanted its own post office.

In order to thwart any future competitors, Hutchins conferred with his supervisors in Fort Lauderdale and received permission to establish a branch store on the Hillsboro Canal. Thus, the industrious proprietor opened a post office and store on the north side of the canal. It was close to the heart of the settlement, near William Badger's house. Hutchins kept a rowboat at the new store in order to accommodate the residents who lived on either side of the canal

and needed to ferry themselves across the Hillsboro. In addition, Hutchins received permission to deliver the mail between his two establishments.

In 1920, heavy rains enlarged the surface area of the lake and, thus, destroyed many lakefront farms. The loss of those customers forced the stores to close their doors. Badger then received official notice that the Torry Island post office would close permanently. Consequently, both sections of the Hillsboro Canal Settlement sought a new name so that they could have the post office.

Leatherman's community selected the name Chosen from the Biblical quotation "for this was the Chosen place. . ." In the main part of the settlement, Myles Myers suggested the name of Belle Glade. "After all," he said, "this is the Belle of the whole darn 'Glades." Because the two sections of the settlement could not compromise on which would have the post office, two branches were opened one mile apart on April 1, 1921.

By this time, Chosen was beginning to show signs of growth. In 1920 the first Lutheran services ever held at the lake were ministered in that town. That same year Isaac West and Walter Hooker arrived, and in 1921 opened a store. West became Chosen's first postmaster. He held that position until the post office was closed in 1956. Just down the Hillsboro, the Belle Glade post office operated in the old bank-store on the canal. Like Chosen, Belle Glade was becoming a leading agricultural community.

In 1922 another rainy season inundated the Everglades. During the next two dry seasons, in 1924 and 1925, fires beset the area. Although nature had the upper hand in controlling the fate of the drainage district, some hearty souls continued to fight the elements.

Back in 1921, the Florida State Legislature had approved the establishment of an agricultural experiment station three miles east of Belle Glade. Horticulturists from the University of Florida began testing the Everglades muck land

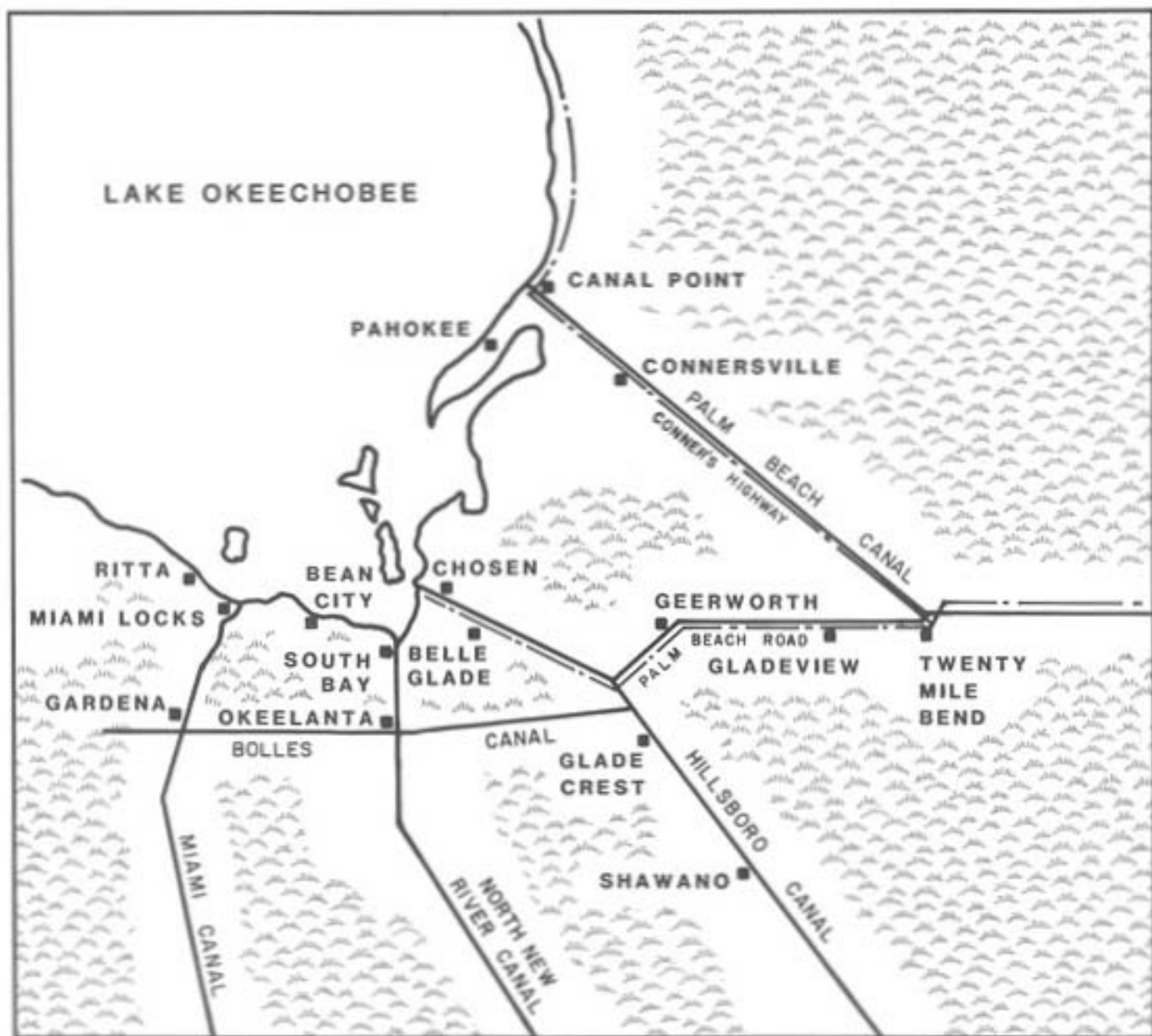
in order to assess its capabilities. The agriculture scientists raised vegetables, sugar cane, rice, pasture grasses, and cattle at the station, which was referred to as the Hillsboro Plantation. Dr. Robert V. Allison, a state employee from Gainesville, came to the station in 1926. Allison's soil experiments were geared toward eliminating copper deficiencies. Ten thousand acres of fields were planted under varied conditions for testing. In 1927 the university also planted a peanut crop which succumbed to deficiencies in the soil. The station endured hurricane and drought and, in time, Allison's efforts resulted in the present-day use of copper sulfates by the agricultural industry.

While the station continued with its agricultural experiments, another venture was under way fourteen miles down the canal. Brown Paper Company of New Hampshire started as a ten thousand dollar sawmill operation within their state and expanded into a ten million dollar business after their research department discovered that the injection of hydrogen gas into peanut oil would produce a superior cooking oil. This new product was highly marketable.

While on vacation in Miami, an executive of Brown Paper Company went along on a land company's sales excursion to Lake Okeechobee. At Belle Glade he learned that Mahlon C. Eggleston had raised 15,000 pounds of peanuts on a ten acre field. Soon afterward, Brown Paper Company purchased 72,000 acres about four miles down the canal from Glade Crest. The company planned to invest several million dollars in the establishment of a peanut farm.

In 1924 Brown Paper's operations began at Shawano Plantation. William Lord was appointed general manager, and Eggleston, who was knowledgeable about peanut farming, was hired as the first field superintendent. Dr. H. P. Vannah, research chemist, worked cooperatively with Dr. Allison who directed operations at the university's experimental station.

Specialized equipment and innovative techniques contributed to



Map of the reclaimed lands south and east of Lake Okeechobee. Many of the "paper townsites" established along the canals in

the 1910s had ended in failure. (Map courtesy of Kenneth J. Hughes.)

the uniqueness of the plantation. Shawano built and used its own planters, cultivators, waterworks, and an electric plant, which provided a lifeline to civilization. It was an enormous operation. Refrigerated barges transported its produce down the Hillsboro, and a barn sheltered its herd of Guernsey cattle.

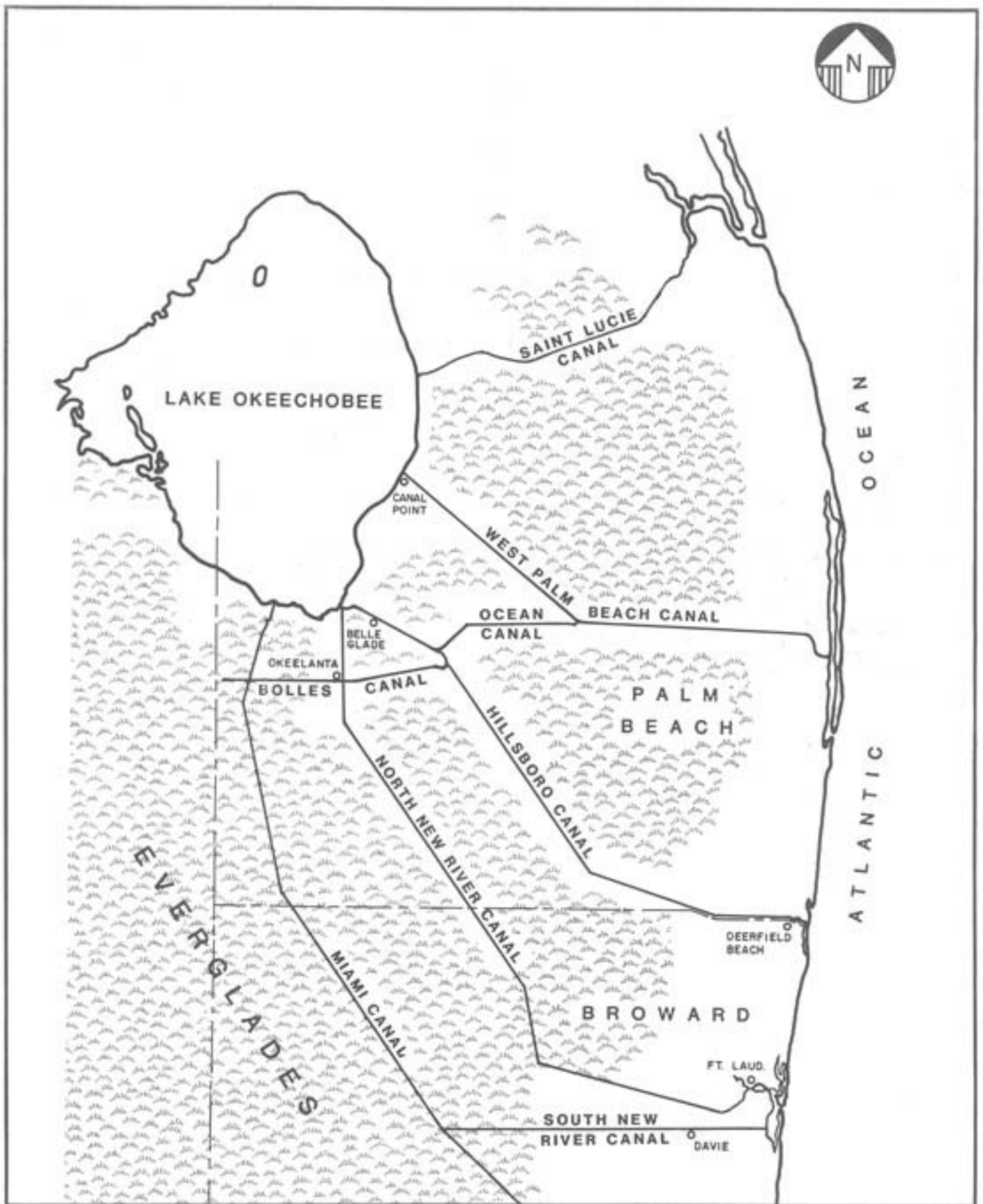
Although Shawano Plantation was established as a peanut farm, experiments were conducted on many other agricultural products.

In March 1929, for example, only 3,000 acres, representing less than five percent of the plantation's total acreage, were planted. Two-hundred acres were cultivated for sugar cane, 1,500 for peanuts, and the remainder for potatoes and other vegetables.

Shawano Plantation might have succeeded as a leading agricultural producer in south Florida if the economy had not collapsed. Unfortunately, Brown Paper Company folded during the 1929 stock mar-

ket crash, and the farm was sold to foreign interests. Two years later, the plantation was disbanded.

Previously, in 1924, the Fort Lauderdale firm of Bryan and Holloway had constructed a road from Twenty Mile Bend, at the junction of the West Palm Beach and Ocean canals, west to Belle Glade. Six months later, the Connors Highway, which followed the West Palm Beach Canal, opened. This road ran from the bend to the east side of the lake. In time, canal



Map of the major canals from Lake Okeechobee to the east coast. In 1921 the town of Belle Glade was established on the upper Hillsboro Canal. The City of Deerfield (later Deerfield

Beach) was incorporated in 1925. (Map courtesy of Kenneth J. Hughes.)

boats became obsolete for hauling freight.

In the meantime, Charles Riedell came to Belle Glade. He was an optimist who saw a future in that tiny agricultural community. Except for its small business district, which was comprised of two stores, a hotel, and one gas station, Belle Glade was a tent town in 1927 and 1928. That soon changed. At the end of the Bryan and Holloway road, Riedell platted a twenty-acre townsite on which he constructed a two-story building in which he relocated the post office. Soon after, on April 10, 1928, the town was incorporated, and Walter Greer became the first mayor.

In 1926, Belle Glade, along with many other lake communities, was warned that an impending hurricane would flood the district. The ensuing storm did most of its damage along the Atlantic coast and on the west side of the lake, where the dike at Moore Haven was washed away, killing more than 300 people. Although this hurricane marked the collapse of the Florida land boom, Governor John W. Martin proposed a twenty million dollar bond issue to continue the Everglades reclamation and maintenance project. Meanwhile, settlers along the lake repaired the damage and resumed their activities. Unfortunately, little had been done when a second killer storm swept through only five months after Belle Glade was incorporated.

This 1928 storm unleashed its fury along the coast, where it destroyed property in Deerfield. It then turned westward, and struck the agricultural district which encompassed Lake Okeechobee. Water spilled over the lake's southeast dike, washed away a fortune in agricultural products and achievements, and claimed more than 2,300 lives. Many victims had sought shelter in their homes. Some survivors had huddled aboard an anchored craft. Belle Glade, Chosen, and many other communities were virtually wiped off the map. The Belle Glade bridge across the Hillsboro Canal was destroyed. The experimental station, east of town, was inundated.



The University of Florida's agricultural experiment station near Belle Glade has developed scientific techniques for farming reclaimed lands since the early 1920s. (Photo courtesy of Kenneth J. Hughes.)

After the hurricane, the townspeople cremated and buried their dead and rebuilt their properties. In time, Belle Glade evolved into a fine city set amidst a sea of sugar cane fields, and Chosen was annexed. By the spring of 1928, the estimated population of Belle Glade exceeded 16,000. Although Belle Glade is now the kind of city that optimists such as Charles Riedell had envisioned, recovery there, and in many other south Florida communities after the hurricane, was not instantaneous.

The extensive damage to the agricultural district in 1928, coming only two years after the disastrous 1926 storm and the collapse of the land boom, plunged south Florida deeper into economic depression. Although the town of Deerfield survived the hurricane, financial security was lost the following

year when the banks failed. The 1930s were a period of struggle. It was also an era of Prohibition, when the Hillsboro Canal served as an unloading site for rumrunners, and when federal agents were occasionally successful in capturing the illegal contraband. In the latter part of that decade the agricultural marketplace moved to Pompano and, consequently, the train seldom stopped at the Deerfield station. On August 22, 1939, the name of the town was changed to Deerfield Beach in an attempt to attract tourists. During those hard times, many of the town's 1,800 residents survived by working on such projects as the construction of William L. Kester's beach cottages and the maintenance of Federal Highway U.S. 1. The only other major source of employment in the area was the Boca Raton Hotel. Many city of-

ficials and policemen worked without pay, and real estate values dropped so low that many people abandoned their homes and properties. Even a newspaper called *The Deerfield News* went bankrupt after less than two years of publication. In effect, the people were drawn together by the common cause of poverty.

Northwest of Deerfield Beach, financial hardships played an important role in the future development of the drainage district. The Okeechobee Flood Control District was created by the state legislature in 1929 so that the area could be maintained with cooperation from the Army Corps of Engineers. In order to minimize the possibility of future disasters, the federal government passed the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1930. In effect, the secretary of war authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to improve the channels of the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers and to construct a thirty-one foot high dike at Lake Okeechobee, near the flood-prone areas.

Congress authorized ten million dollars for these improvements and requested an additional twenty percent from private sources. By the year 1929, the reclamation project had expended eighteen million dollars, and the state owed a bonded debt of \$10,500,000, which was difficult to pay during the Depression. Even after the 1928 hurricane, however, properties within the district were assessed at \$106,000,000, and the population numbered 48,000. So, eventually, Congress did spend twenty million dollars for improvements to the thirty-four to thirty-eight foot high Herbert Hoover Dike which, to this day, has withstood several severe storms.

The State of Florida could not meet its commitments within the drainage district until 1942. Then Governor Spessard L. Holland and the legislature negotiated a Reconstruction Financing Corporation refunding bond. At this time, the state's deficit for the reclamation project was in excess of sixteen million dollars. The Army Corps of Engineers had been maintaining the

flood control district since 1935.

The freezes of 1935 and 1937 caused a great deal of damage to the agricultural district. In an attempt to minimize future damage, the water tables were lowered. But in the late 1940s it was discovered that fresh-water wells in such coastal communities as Deerfield Beach had suffered salt water intrusion. This problem led to the placement of numerous salinity barriers in the existing canals.

In 1947 south Florida suffered from severe flooding following a hurricane. Water inundated eleven counties and covered five million acres of land. The Army Corps of Engineers' response to this event was the creation of a comprehensive water control plan, which was submitted to Congress on April 26, 1948. After the plan was approved, Lake Okeechobee was utilized as a reservoir where excess water could be stored for purposes of irrigation. Subsequently, three water conservation areas were created to control the water level and to protect the aquifer. The Hillsboro Canal today serves as a divider between water conservation areas No. 1 and No. 2A.

In 1949 the Florida Legislature created the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District. Its purpose was to function as a local sponsor of federally-funded projects. This new organization eventually controlled the Okeechobee Flood Control District and the Everglades Drainage District. By 1952 the cost of maintenance and improvements within the drainage district exceeded \$32,000,000. This was quite an expenditure for a project that, back in 1910, had cost the state only eight cents per cubic yard for earth excavation.

After decades of expending funds to control the water table and to reclaim land, the state and the corps did have some success. Whenever the water level in the lake had to be lowered, most of the water was diverted through the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers. Canals such as the Hillsboro did drain some water into the ocean, but only in marginal quantities. The water that left the lake through the

Hillsboro Canal usually crossed into the West Palm Beach Canal via the Ocean Canal. Otherwise, the water drained onto cultivated areas. When this occurred, the Miami Canal sometimes drained back into the lake.

During the 1940s, not much water was allowed to flow from the canals and across the Everglades. Consequently, the uncultivated marshlands were dependent on rainfall in order to thrive. After the water tables were lowered, fire destroyed much of the rich soil. The University of Florida Experimental Station conducted many studies which revealed, among other things, that during the first ten years after reclamation the soil had subsided one and a half feet, and subsidence had continued at the rate of one inch per year since. In order to lessen this threat, it was determined that cultivated lands would require more water during the dry season.

Despite the fires and the subsidence, drainage has benefited the agricultural areas along the Hillsboro and has effected the cultivation of many fertile but otherwise useless acres of land. And although much of the reclaimed land could not be populated, a percentage did retain some value for agricultural purposes. As early as 1905, the Everglades land, which totaled about 2,750,000 acres, both in and out of the district, had an estimated value of \$5,391,000. By 1929 the finest cleared land could be purchased at prices that ranged from sixty-eight to ninety-two dollars per acre. Most acreage exceeded fifty dollars, and some choice property did sell for \$300 per acre. In contrast, flooded marshlands sold for only a few dollars per acre.

When one considers these varying prices, it is not surprising that in 1941 the lands were taxed at rates that ranged from \$1.25 to \$1.50 per acre. Of the 4,370,000 acres of land in the drainage district, which reached from the Everglades proper to the Kissimmee area, no more than 100,000 acres were farmed during the period up to the 1940s, and probably no more than eighty percent of this

area ever was farmed at any one time.

During the 1940s, John H. Davis, Jr., Ph.D., studied the natural features of southern Florida in general, and of the Hillsboro Canal in particular. It was his opinion that only 600,000 acres, which represented less than one fourth the acreage of the entire region, could be used for agricultural purposes. After Davis had observed the low Hillsboro Lake area, which created a pond between that canal and the Atlantic coast, he concluded that, although the fish population died out during the dry season, the greater part of that slough and "tree-island area" should be set aside as a reservoir and wildlife preserve.

As a result of the passage of the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969, the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District was requested to restore lakes and marshes and to establish environmental and water quality controls. This new act also mandated caution in future decisions regarding water management in order to ascertain that there would be no harmful impact on the environment and on human lives. Growing concern about the environment also prompted the Governor's Conference on Water Management, which resulted in the recommendation that a state-wide comprehensive water use plan be implemented.

Consequently, the Water Resources Act was passed in 1972. This act broadened the authority of Florida's five water management districts. In 1976 the state legislature changed the name of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District to the South Florida Water Management District. The present functions of the district are to manage water and related land resources and to oversee the operation of private drainage districts, nineteen of which are located in Broward County. The district also promotes conservation, the development of recreational resources, health, safety, and general welfare. Nearly fifty percent of the original Everglades has been preserved in its natural state. These lands, which

encompass 1,337 square miles, are utilized as water storage areas. Nearly 579,533 acres out of 669,231 in the agricultural areas south of Lake Okeechobee and along the Hillsboro Canal are now in production. The Water Management District thus controls the drainage which many early settlers labored to conquer, and also regulates land use within its boundaries, a vital need in an era of unprecedented population growth.

During World War II the population of southern Palm Beach County and northern Broward County increased when the Boca Army Airfield was established just north of Deerfield Beach. Military personnel created demands on housing and numerous other services. Although the townspeople of Deerfield Beach still were experiencing the after-effects of the Depression, they cooperated with the war effort. A submarine watch tower, erected on Deerfield's beach, was manned by volunteer citizens on an around-the-clock basis. These lookouts had witnessed the sinking of many ships along the Florida coast. Jack Nelson was in charge of anti-submarine operations.

After the war, tourism boosted south Florida's economy, and Deerfield Beach no longer had to rely on the agricultural market as a measure of its prosperity. Nevertheless, homage is still paid to its pioneer farmers at an annual celebration called "Cracker Day." This event takes place at "Pioneer Park," on land donated by W. L. Kester. Deerfield Beach today is a successful, expanding Gold Coast city with a population that exceeds 42,000. Its urbanized area stretches along the coast from Boca Raton to Pompano Beach, and is moving westward. Golfing communities and industrial parks are situated near the river that the Spanish explorers considered part of the Rio Seco. Interstate 95 crosses that same estuary, referred to at various times in its past as the Shark-tail or the Potomac River.

It was here in the wilderness that some Seminoles found food and shelter, that the young United States Army sought to capture the

Indians, and that early settlers tilled the banks. Although the country was rugged, many settlers adapted. Today's cities of Deerfield Beach and Belle Glade are the proud results of the efforts and persistence of those early pioneers. Because of their enthusiasm, we are able to witness an ever-expanding and rich history along the Hillsboro.

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