

A HISTORY OF FLORIDA'S EAST COAST CANAL:

THE ATLANTIC INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY FROM JACKSONVILLE TO MIAMI

by

WILLIAM G. CRAWFORD, JR.

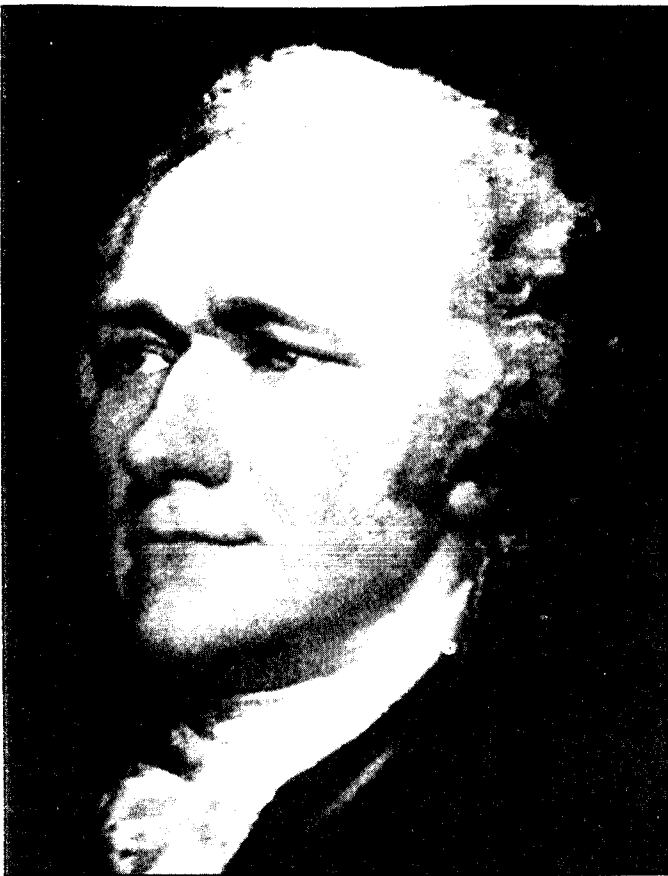
Early American Canal History

As early as 1791, Federalists like U. S. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton were advancing the idea that American economic development depended on the improvement of inland waterways and that the federal government ought to be responsible for the advancement of rivers and canals.¹ The federal government, they asserted, had "implied powers" to create a national bank, a corps of civil engineers, a lighthouse board, and other governmental agencies necessary to carry out the federal government's purposes.² As historian Todd Shallat has observed, the Federalists maintained that a peace-time army had authority to map waterways, to dredge harbors for the navy, to move troops through canals, to train officers in a national academy, and to use army experts to direct public works.³

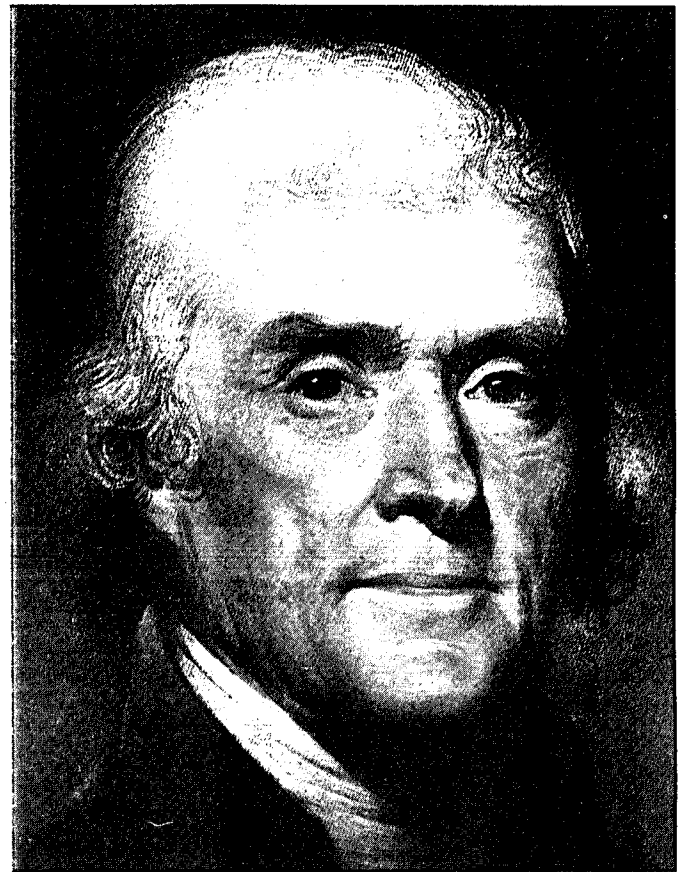
Although the Intracoastal Waterway is almost universally recognized as one of Broward County's — and the Florida east coast's — predominant physical features, the waterway's history has been sorely neglected. Printed accounts are often confusing and contradictory. This is not surprising when one considers the vast span of time and often complicated legal and real estate transactions involved in its development. Even contemporary accounts of the waterway's construction frequently proclaim its "completion," only to be followed by notices of further excavation.

In this article, author William G. Crawford, Jr., clearly and succinctly traces the evolution of the canal from private enterprise to today's Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. In the process, he places the waterway's origins in the context of the national canal movement of the early nineteenth century, the development of military engineering projects, and the inland waterways improvement associations of the early twentieth century. He also vividly describes the many colorful characters involved in its long history, including John Westcott, James Colee, Henry Flagler, Harry Kelsey, and Commodore A.H. Brook.

Mr. Crawford, a Broward County native and Fort Lauderdale attorney, serves as Chairman of the Historical Commission and is a trustee of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society. Several of his articles on Broward's legal, judicial, and land history have appeared in past issues of Broward Legacy.



Alexander Hamilton



Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson, however, argued that the federal government's powers were limited, lodging his famous objection to the federal government building even a postal road from Maine to Georgia: "I view it as a source of boundless patronage." The building of roads, Jefferson predicted, would become "a bottomless abyss of public money, a cash cow for the friends of Congress."⁴

Even before America's independence, local canal improvements were made in the digging of a canal from Ipswich Bay to Gloucester Bay, Massachusetts in 1643; the cutting of a canal across Cape Cod was proposed as early as 1676. In 1755, George Washington conducted a survey for the Dismal Swamp Canal, although the canal would not be cut until 1820.⁵

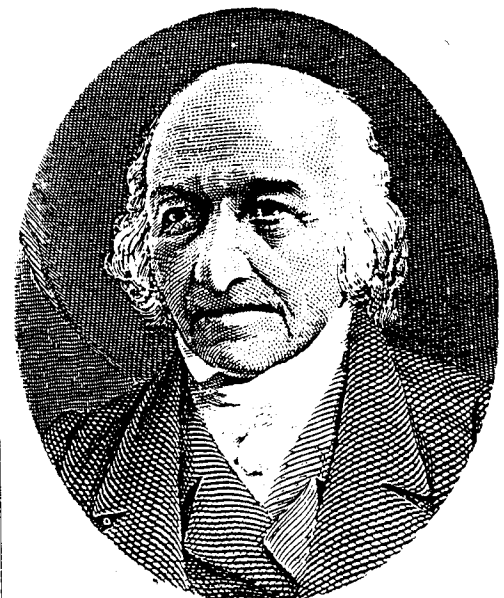
The Gallatin Report of 1808

Displaying a new tolerance for public improvements at the expense of the federal government, U. S. Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin, albeit a Jeffersonian, submitted in 1808 his comprehensive "Report on Roads and Canals," proposing a wide-

ranging plan for public improvements including roads and canals to be undertaken at federal expense. Perhaps anticipating the development of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Gallatin's report foresaw "an inland navigation, secure from storms and enemies, and which from Massachusetts to the southern extremity of Georgia, is principally, if not solely, interrupted by four necks of land." The Swiss-born secretary anticipated four "Great Canals along the Atlantic Seacoast": 1) the "Massachusetts" or Cape Cod Canal, 2) the "New Jersey" or Delaware and Raritan Canal, 3) the "Delaware and Chesapeake" canal, and 4) Virginia's "Chesapeake and Albemarle" or Dismal Swamp Canal, already begun between the Chesapeake River and Albemarle Sound.⁶

In 1815, Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky promoted his famous "American System" to challenge British trade on the Mississippi River, advocating a network of internal improvements. Two years later, South Carolina Representative John Calhoun pushed his progressive

Bonus Bill through Congress to shift proceeds from the Bank of the United States into a fund for internal improvements.⁷ Asserting with remarkable consistency that the federal government lacked the power to fund

Treasury Secretary
Albert Gallatin

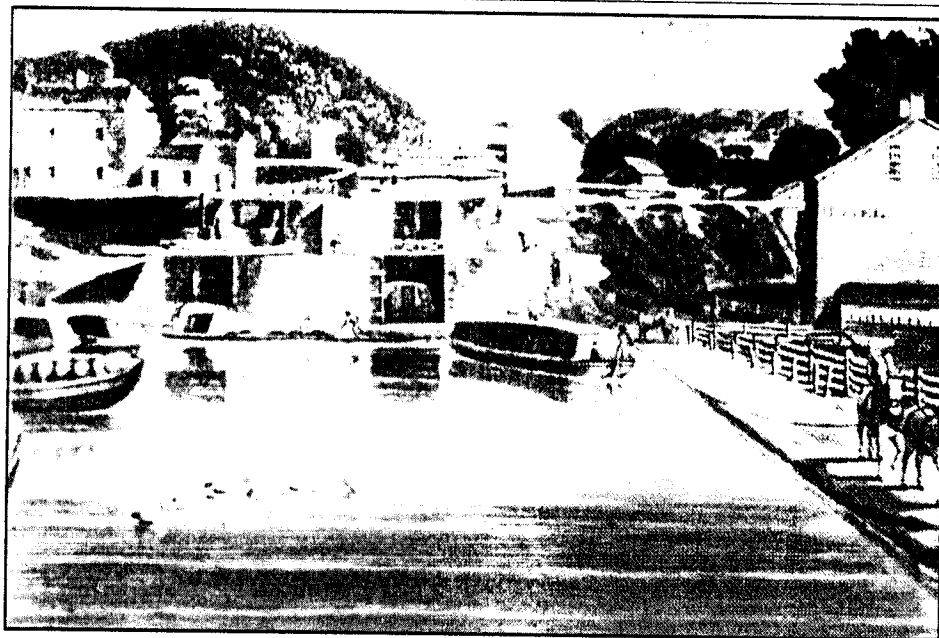
internal improvements unless the Constitution were amended, President James Madison in 1818 vetoed Calhoun's proposal offering federal monetary support for canal construction as his last act as president.⁸

Canal Fever Sweeps America: Early Canals in the Florida Territory and the Army Corps of Engineers

Early American policy began to call for the free use of the nation's rivers for the general welfare, and canals were thought to provide a cheap means of transportation. Canal fever would soon sweep nineteenth century America, and by the early 1800s, the Erie, the Chesapeake and Ohio, the Delaware and Raritan and other river canals would be developed in the Northeastern, Mid-western and Mid-Atlantic states.⁹

Fearing invasion in the years following the Revolutionary War, President George Washington launched a fort-building program with seven temporary engineers, all of whom were French, and Congress authorized a Corps of Artillerists and Engineers to build forts and other military fortifications.¹⁰ In 1802, at the urging of President Thomas Jefferson, Congress passed the Military Peace Establishment Act, creating the United States Military Academy. Emphasizing the civil work to be done by the military in peacetime, the law stated that "a corps of engineers . . . shall constitute a military academy."¹¹

In 1817, one of the early Army engineers, Major James Kearney, espoused a plan for a deep-water canal from Chesapeake Bay to Albemarle Sound, a precursor to the Intracoastal Waterway in Virginia.¹² The State of New York, twice denied federal assistance, raised \$7 million in revenues and bonds for the construction of the 363-mile Erie Canal from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, which would be completed in 1825.¹³ An 1824 federal law, the General Survey Act, authorized the president to employ engineers to survey the country and to plan internal improvements. To administer the act, President James Monroe created the Board of Engineers for Internal Im-



New York's Erie Canal was the most celebrated waterway of the early nineteenth century "Canal Era."

provement to survey the best routes for connecting the Potomac and Ohio rivers and Lake Erie.¹⁴

During the new era of internal improvements, Hamiltonians advocated direct aid to corporations involved in improving public transportation; Jeffersonians, though, feared a "copartnership of financiers" and the "executive branch." Congress, as Shallat has noted, would ultimately agree to share power with experts: "A board of engineers would study canals and a highway system. A topographical bureau would find ways to improve dangerous rivers. Light-house boards and a coast survey would resume the harbor investigations that aided the maritime trade."¹⁵ Between 1825 and 1830, Congress subscribed over one and a half million dollars to the stock of various canal construction companies. In addition to stock, to aid canal and river improvements, the federal government in 1824 began to grant lands to a number of states including Alabama, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, ultimately conveying under various acts more than four and a half million acres of public lands "specifically for the construction of canals."¹⁶

The Gadsden Report of 1824 and Early Canal Efforts in the Florida Territory

Presaging the development of Florida's Intracoastal Waterway, another Army engineer, James Gadsden, surveyed the east coast of the Florida territory to determine the feasibility of a military road south to Cape Florida. Gadsden's 1824 report discounted the road but urged a canal at the Haulover to join the Mosquito Lagoon and Indian River, an early link in Florida's future Intracoastal Waterway.¹⁷ The next year, John Quincy Adams' administration created the U.S. Board of Engineers for Internal Improvements. Two of the three Board members were Army engineers, and waterway surveying became the Board's primary focus.¹⁸

In northern Florida, in 1826, residents of St. Augustine, Matanzas, and Tomoka petitioned Congress to alter Gadsden's plan: 1) to make New Smyrna the southernmost end of a military road, 2) to build a road from the Georgia line to Tomoka, and 3) to use the remaining funds to cut a canal linking the Matanzas and Halifax rivers, another connection in Florida's future Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway system. Congress appro-

priated funds, however, only to dredge the waters between Georgia's Cumberland Sound and Florida's St. Johns River in May of 1828; the project would be completed by Gadsden in July, 1830.¹⁹

During the period before statehood when Florida was administered by the federal government as a territory (1822-1845), the Florida territorial council chartered a number of private companies to undertake canal projects along the eastern coast of the Florida territory. In 1828, the council incorporated the Indian River Navigation Company:

*"... to open canals, connecting the waters of the river St. Johns with those of the Florida reef; Provided, that the said canal shall commence at the Pablo creek on the river St. Johns, and run to the North river, thence down the same to St. Augustine, thence to the river Matanzas, through the harbour of St. Augustine, and shall be of sufficient dimensions to admit of navigation for steam boats..."*²⁰

Three years later, in 1831, the Florida territorial council incorporated the Planters and Citizens' Canal Company to construct "a canal to connect the waters of the Matanzas and the Halifax rivers, in the counties of St. Johns and Mosquito..."²¹ In 1837, the council chartered the East and South Florida Canal Company.²² Other canal-building companies in the Florida territory were incorporated by the state council during the period, and organizers were authorized to raise money by various means including even a lottery. While many in number, these early canal construction efforts largely failed to produce lasting results.²³

On the national scene, a private toll lock canal was opened in 1829 between the Chesapeake and Delaware bays, and still another American president would espouse the benefits of federal aid to internal improvements.²⁴ But while President Andrew Jackson asserted in his first annual message to Congress: "Every member of the Union, in peace and in war, will be benefitted by the improvement of inland navigation and

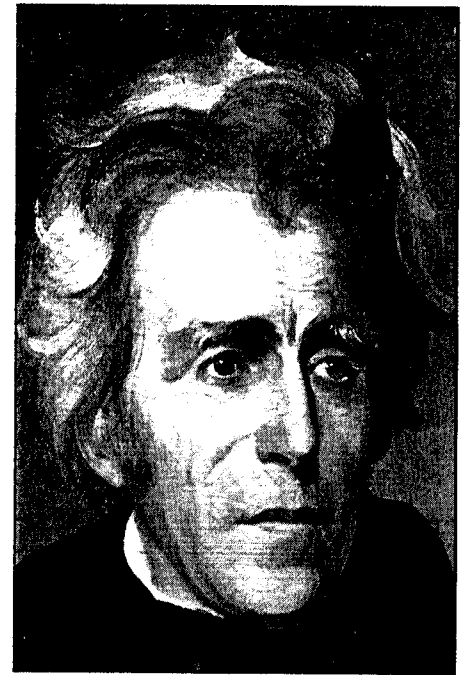
the construction of highways in the several States," he nonetheless renounced the power given him in the General Survey Act of 1824 to order surveys of proposed roads and canals.²⁵ The struggle between federalism and state's rights would persist even as it does today.

During the 1830s, a policy of public assistance to the railroads on a substantial scale began. Such assistance included the direct appropriation of public funds and the purchase of stock; however, the normal method of government support then was by grants of large tracts of land for right-of-way.²⁶ The experience of several states in internal improvement programs began to show "grave inadequacies" in the financing of private commercial enterprise through the use of tolls.²⁷

A year after the Second Seminole War ended, Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup emphasized the military importance of a Florida east coast inland waterway in his annual report of October 1843:

*"The difficulties which I experienced when directing the operations against the Seminoles in the campaign of 1837-8 in supplying the division of the Army operating south of the Haulover, on the Atlantic side of the Peninsula of Florida, enable me to speak with positive certainty as to the necessity of improving the inland communications from Saint Augustine to Key Biscayne."*²⁸

No action on the recommendation was taken because the war had ended and a civil need for the canal did not yet exist.²⁹ In 1844, Army engineer First Lieutenant Jacob Edward Blake made his famous survey of the Haulover between the Mosquito Lagoon and the Indian River, recommending the construction of a canal between the two bodies of water, a distance of 725 yards. The army engineer suggested that eight-inch-square, twelve-foot-long poles be driven twelve feet apart and that two-inch planks be riveted to strengthen the structure. The canal bottom should be covered with two-inch planks, he advised, to "render the



Andrew Jackson

whole free from liability to fill up & [make] the canal at all times passable." Congress appropriated \$1,500 to cut the canal, but the work would not begin until a decade later.³⁰

At the national level, public financing of railroad and other improvements was becoming increasingly difficult. By 1844, \$60 million worth of state bonds were in default, credit was not obtainable and state internal improvement programs had collapsed. A basic defect of the state programs, in the opinion of at least one author, was the tendency to charter companies as private monopolies.³¹ In Florida, plans for internal improvements of various kinds, including inland waterways, would continue nonetheless. In a letter to Florida Governor Thomas Brown in May of 1851, early Tampa Bay resident and state Board of Internal Improvements member John Darling supported a number of internal improvements at the state level, including an east coast canal:

"The removal of the Indians... The draining of the Everglades... The construction of a Canal, to connect the inland waters and form an Inland Water Communication from Cape Florida along the Atlantic Coast to St. Augustine... The clearing out of timber obstructions in



Army Engineer Horatio G. Wright, in a Civil War-era photograph.

Pease Creek so as to permit boats and rafts to float down the stream . . . and the construction of a Railroad from Tampa Bay to connect with the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad . . . are subjects interesting to the people of this section and as such I recommend them to this consideration of your Excellency and the Board of Internal improvements . . ."
[emphasis added.]³²

Lieutenant Horatio G. Wright Completes Haulover Cut

In 1854, just before the Third Seminole War, U. S. Army engineer Lieutenant Horatio G. Wright, chief engineer in Florida from 1852 until 1854, led the digging of a canal at the Haulover between the Mosquito Lagoon and the Indian River eight feet wide at the bottom (twelve feet wide at the surface) and two feet deep. Wright, who had graduated second in his military academy class, would be the first in a long line of West Point-trained engineers to lead the survey and construction of what would later become the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from Jacksonville to Miami, Florida.³³

After 1860, railroads became the

dominant factor in the transportation network.³⁴ During the Civil War, as a result of the Union blockade of the Florida coast, efforts to construct a continuous waterway were suspended. The Haulover canal grew congested and nearly impassable with sand and silt for lack of maintenance.³⁵ After the Civil War, to aid construction of an inland waterway on the east coast, state improvement fund trustees sold the Florida Canal and Inland Transportation Company 250,000 acres of state land at five cents per acre upon the condition that it complete a waterway from the Amelia River to the Jupiter Inlet, using the St. Johns River and other natural streams wherever possible. This particular effort failed.³⁶ In 1868, state legislation created five canal companies including the Southern Inland Navigation Company, headed by William Gleason.³⁷ In March of 1869, a memorial to Congress promoted by Governor Reed drew more attention to the State's need for inland waterways.³⁸

In 1874, army engineers began to cut a channel eleven feet deep and eighty feet wide between the St. Johns River and the Nassau Inlet, still another link in the future Intracoastal Waterway system.³⁹ An act of the Florida Legislature of February 19, 1874, provided for the incorporation of railroad and canal companies.⁴⁰ Five years later, the Legislature would amend the act to provide for the conveyance to these companies of the alternate sections of state lands on either side of their proposed railroads or canals for a distance of six miles upon completion of each six-mile section.⁴¹

Gillmore, Army Engineer in Florida, 1869 to 1884

By 1878, the Haulover admitted boats with beams of eleven feet but drawing only one and a half feet of water.⁴² Three years later, three steamboats were making the Indian River run from Titusville to Lake Worth, while other vessels made local runs up through the Mosquito Lagoon and the Halifax River to New Smyrna or south to Melbourne.⁴³ Brevet Major General Quincy Adams Gillmore, army engineer in Florida

from 1869 to 1884 and the writer of two textbooks on hydraulic and other cements and mortars, sent an assistant, J. Francis LeBaron, to survey the Haulover canal.⁴⁴ A West Pointer like Wright, Gillmore had graduated first in his class; during his tenure in Florida, army engineering projects would include the improving of the St. Johns River Bar, the Upper St. Johns River, and the Volusia Bar. The army engineer would also make examinations or surveys of the St. Augustine Harbor, the Mosquito Inlet, and canals from the St. Johns River through the Mosquito Lagoon and from the Indian River to the Jupiter Inlet and further south, to Lake Worth.⁴⁵

On March 8, 1881, the Florida Legislature by a special act incorporated the Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Company of Florida; directors of the firm included William S. Stokley, as President, and Hamilton Disston, as Treasurer; another director was Ingham Coryell. Initial capital for the enterprise was \$10,000. The company's prospectus showed a plan to reclaim certain lands lying south of Peace Creek containing more than eight million acres (more than a thousand square miles) by dredging canals



General Quincy Adams Gillmore

from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers. The company was to receive half of the lands it was able to reclaim as compensation for the work.⁴⁶

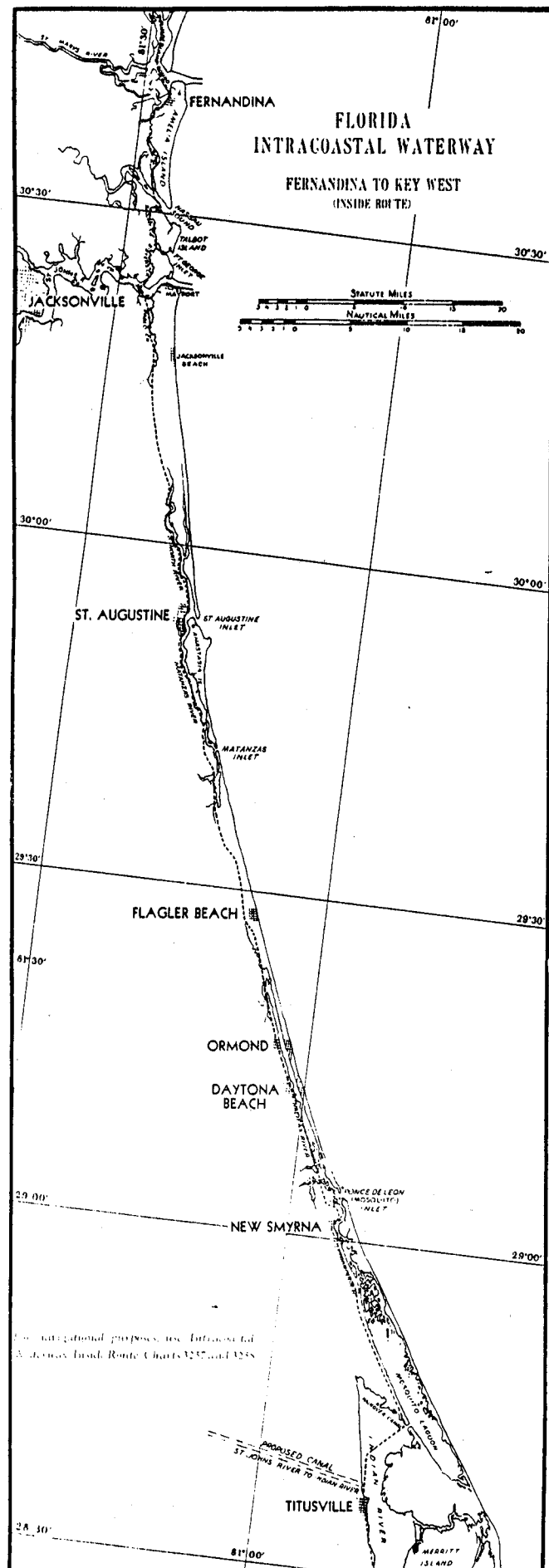
The Disston company also was incorporated to purchase the franchise of the old Atlantic Coast Steamboat, Canal and Improvement Company. The company prospectus indicated that the enterprise was intended to undertake the construction of a continuous waterway along the Florida east coast:

"... suitable for commodious light-draught steamboats, commencing at the St. John's River, extending then in a southerly direction, connecting Pablo Creek, San Diego, Mantanzas [sic], Halifax and Hillsboro' [sic] Rivers, Mosquito Lagoon, Indian River, St. Lucie Sound, Jupiter River and Lake Worth; thus affording nearly 330 miles of continuous navigable inland waters, lying adjacent to and generally parallel with the east coast of Florida, being separated from the ocean by peninsulas and extended narrow islands; these natural barriers guaranteeing a safe and continuous navigation throughout the entire year."⁴⁷

While the Okeechobee land company began dredging and actually reclaimed swamp land, the east coast canal part of the enterprise does not appear to have ever begun operations. A new company in St. Augustine, however, would take up the work the Disston company declined to pursue.

The Florida Coast Line Canal and Transportation Company

In May of 1881, St. Augustine residents Dr. John D. Westcott, Henry Gaillard, James M. Hallowses, and



Reprinted from the 1935 commemorative program announcing the completion of the Florida Intracoastal Waterway, this map shows such early canal milestones as the Haulover Cut, the Matanzas and Halifax Rivers, and Mosquito Lagoon.

James L. Colee incorporated the Florida Coast Line Canal and Transportation Company, the first company in Florida to successfully dredge what was to become the Intracoastal Waterway. Dr. Westcott became the firm's first president; Colee, the firm's engineer. The legislature initially authorized the private canal company to dredge canals between the Matanzas and Halifax rivers and between the Mosquito and Indian rivers "for the improvement of the inland navigation of the eastern coast for steamers or other water craft drawing three feet of water or less." Subsequent legislation permitted the firm to dredge canals all the way to Biscayne Bay, and ultimately to Key West. To encourage canal development, the state legislature authorized state improvement fund trustees (the Florida Cabinet) to grant to the canal company 3,840 acres of state land for every mile of canal constructed and further gave the company the right to collect tolls.⁴⁸

Dr. John D. Westcott

Born in Bridgeton, New Jersey, in 1807, canal company president Dr. John Westcott had been educated

briefly at West Point in 1824 before departing for health reasons; he would later study medicine in Philadelphia. In 1831, young John Westcott relocated to north Florida, becoming a clerk upon his arrival for his brother James, then Secretary of the Florida Territory. Later, Westcott pursued a number of occupations, performing services at various times as a physician, surveyor, geologist, mineralogist, and chemist. For a time, the New Jersey native also delivered the mail in the primitive Florida wilderness. From 1853 until 1858, Westcott served as Surveyor General of the State of Florida. During the Civil War, he was Captain of the Florida Partisan Rangers Infantry, and later was promoted to the rank of Major. In 1879, Westcott served as a member of the Florida House of Representatives, and in 1885, he would serve as the oldest delegate to the Constitutional Convention.⁴⁹

Less than a year after the formation of the canal company, in a letter to his friend and Disston company director Colonel Ingham Coryell, Westcott emphasized the importance of the east coast canal to the devel-



John D. Westcott, photographed in his uniform as a Confederate major. Courtesy of Joe Knetsch)

opment of the southern part of the Florida peninsula:

"The Canal is an immediate necessity. All the Settlers South of here on the Coast, are clamorous for the work to be commenced at once. The Halifax country is now an important point to Secure, or other improvements may be made.' & So it is with the Indian River Country. The Shipments of fruit & vegetables are now large, & under the most adverse Circumstances, and so with their receipts of Merchandise." . . . "No man now can Settle on the coast water line, because what he produces is locked up, for want of quick & Certain transportation." . . . "The vegetable business will always be uncertain & sort of a lottery, as agreed, Nassau, & other WI [West Indies] ports, until a regular & Certain transportation is opened, as far South as Lake Worth. Then Settlers will go in there by the thousand, and Soon a million or more of crates [of vegetables] will be sent to market."⁵⁰

Then the majority stockholder in the canal company, Westcott himself performed some of the surveying work for the canal, saving the com-

Bridgeton, West New Jersey,
March 8th 1823.

Sir,

I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 27th ult. notifying that I had been appointed, by the President, a Cadet in the service of the United States; and of stating my acceptance of the appointment; and that I will repair to West-Point and report myself to the Superintendant of the Military Academy, as directed.

Very respectfully,
Your ob^t. Serv^t
John Westcott.

Westcott's letter acknowledging his appointment to West Point, 1823. (Courtesy of United States Military Academy at West Point Archives.)



George L. Bradley

pany considerable money. State specifications then required the company to dig a canal at least thirty feet wide and three feet deep, and Westcott estimated the cost of construction at \$60,000.⁵¹

Four years after its incorporation, in 1885, Westcott's canal company opened the cut between the Mosquito Lagoon and the Indian River. In May, state improvement fund trustees deeded the canal company 87,670 acres of public lands, in addition to 4,489 acres already conveyed, for the completion of twenty-six and a quarter miles of canal commencing at St. Augustine and extending to the southeast in St. Johns County.⁵²

**Bell Telephone Director
George L. Bradley Invests
In the Canal Company:
the New England Connection**

Also in 1885, canal promoters succeeded in interesting noted Civil War financier Jay Cooke to invest in the canal company, enabling construction between the Matanzas and Halifax rivers. A year later, Cooke enlisted George Lothrop Bradley, a director and treasurer of the American Bell Telephone Company. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1846, Bradley helped to organize the New England Telephone Company in 1876;

a year later, he organized the National Bell Telephone Company in New York City, becoming a millionaire in the rapidly developing telephone business.⁵³ Investing large sums of money in the securities of the canal company, Bradley soon became the Florida enterprise's largest stockholder.⁵⁴

In those early years, the canal company directed its efforts toward improving easier projects in the waterway south of the Matanzas and Halifax canal to obtain state land grants to continue acquiring capital.⁵⁵ Work continued rather "spasmodically" until 1888 when Bradley brought the project to the attention of George F. Miles, who was then involved in a syndicate of New England investors interested in the construction of a Cape Cod canal. Miles' wife was related to Bradley's wife, Helen. Both Bradley and Miles lived in Pomfret, Connecticut. Miles began a long association with the Florida east coast canal that would not end until the canal was completed and accepted by the State almost thirty years later.⁵⁶ John W. Denny of Boston would also succeed Westcott as president of the canal company upon the founder's death in 1888. A year later, the Florida legislature passed a law requiring the canal to be not less than fifty feet wide and not less than five feet deep for its entire distance.⁵⁷

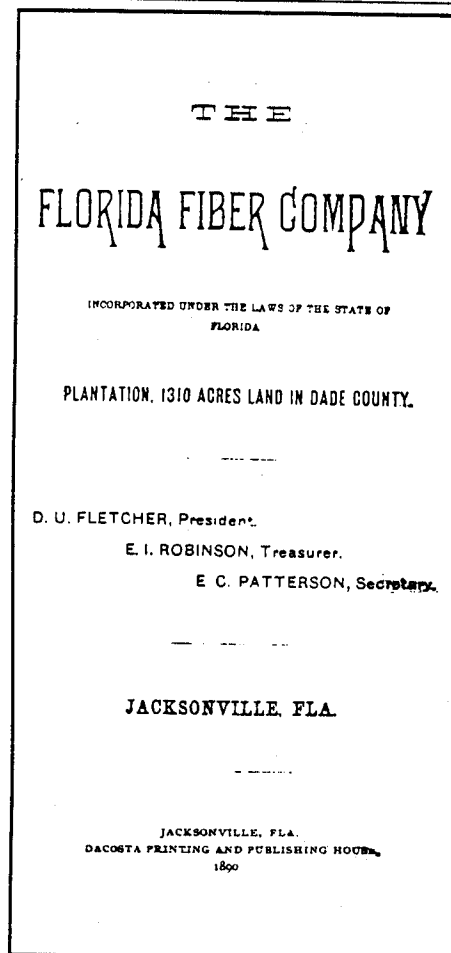
**State Trustees Deed Canal
Company Significant Broward
County Property Including
Florida Fiber Company Tract**

In September 1890, for dredging 134 miles of waterway from the west end of Haulover Cut to Jupiter, state improvement fund trustees deeded 345,972 acres of state lands along the Florida east coast to the canal company.⁵⁸ Significant Broward County land tracts, including the western and southern portions of what is now known as Deerfield Island Park (Capone Island) along the Intra-coastal Waterway, as well as large areas of other southeast Florida lands, would derive from this grant. In November, 1890, the canal company sold 1,310.30 acres of the grant in what was to become Broward

County to Jacksonville lawyer Duncan U. Fletcher for \$2,293.07 (\$1.75 an acre).⁵⁹ This tract of land in Townships 49 and 50 South, of Range 42 East, was deeded only a few months later to Fletcher's Florida Fiber Company, a Duval County firm organized to cultivate sisal hemp.⁶⁰ Persevering correspondence between E. C. Patterson, Secretary of the fiber concern, and state officials including agriculture commissioner E. B. Wombwell from May through July, 1890, indicate keen company interest in obtaining east coast land below Lake Worth, especially land along the New River.⁶¹ Ultimately, the fiber venture was only partially successful, and later the Jacksonville firm went out of business.⁶²

By 1891, the canal company had completed the cutting of the Haulover and Oak Hill canals; before that time, produce between the Indian and Halifax rivers could not be transported. Between 1891 and 1897 the first canal work would begin on the reach between Jupiter Inlet and Lake Worth. Development of the east coast canal was already improving prospects for shipping Indian River citrus fruits north of Rockledge:

"Since the establishment of the East Coast Transportation Company and making this [New Smyrna] the northern terminus of the route, the elegant new steamer J. W. Sweeney, arriving here every other day, makes it very lively for our town. A very large proportion of the Indian River oranges is shipped over this line, connecting here with the A. & W. railroad and the St. Johns River steamers. The scene this morning is no unusual one, six solid C. F. I. cars (refrigerated) being loaded at our wharf direct for New York, this being an average load of oranges that the Sweeney brings to our port three times a week. She is unloading two thousand boxes this morning [March 3rd]. This shows the great benefit that is derived in the cutting of the "Haulover" and the Oak Hill canals by the East Coast Canal Company. Prior to this work being done no business



Cover of the Florida Fiber Company's prospectus for their Middle River sisal plantation, 1890 (courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

*could be done between the Indian and Halifax Rivers. Now the largest steamer on the Indian River is making a daily trip between Rock Ledge and New Smyrna, and carrying a larger cargo than was ever carried between Titusville and Rock Ledge.*⁶³

In a contemporary news account, the Jacksonville *Times-Union* could not have been more laudatory in crediting the canal company's general manager George Miles for the success of the firm's dredging efforts:

"Too much credit cannot be given this canal company, and especially to Mr. George E. Miles, the contractor, for the benefits bestowed on commerce and travel by this work. God speed the day

when they will finish the work from this point to St. Augustine, which will open up the finest tourist route in the State — from St. Augustine to Lake Worth — and open up the whole East Coast to St. Augustine, giving us an outlet at that place both by water and rail. Then will spring up an immense orange, pine-apple and vegetable trade that has been kept down for the want of good transportation facilities."⁶⁴

By May, 1891, the *Juno Tropical Sun* was predicting that the continued dredging of the canal south to Biscayne Bay would open a route north for the new Biscayne Bay Manufacturing Company:

"It will open up a convenient route to Miami where the Biscayne Bay Manufacturing Company is about to commence operations in the canning business. There we can find a near market for many fruits and vegetables which will not bear shipment to northern markets."⁶⁵

In the years 1891 and 1892 the canal company sold large tracts of its state land grant along the east coast, including land in what is now Broward County, to two of the canal company's initial St. Augustine directors and investors, Henry Gaillard and James L. Colee. In June, 1891, the canal company sold 594.38 acres of land in what were then Brevard and Dade Counties to Colee, the firm's engineer and surveyor, for \$1,308.76.⁶⁶ Colee may have stayed at Frank Stranahan's tourist camp on New River in what is now known as Colee Hammock while surveying the route for the east coast canal in the late 1890s.⁶⁷ One year later, in July, 1892, the canal company sold 320 acres in what is now Broward County to Henry Gaillard for \$960.⁶⁸

Following a resolution passed January 4, 1892, the canal company sold 100,000 acres of land in what was then St. Johns, Brevard, and Dade counties for a dollar an acre to the Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast Land Company, an important Florida land development concern related to the canal company and comprised of New England inves-

tors.⁶⁹ Canal company investor and director George Bradley was also a director of this firm. Four months later, in May 1892, pursuant to various resolutions, the canal company sold 1,831.31 acres to Albert P. Sawyer, trustee, another principal in both companies for \$10,016.23. This transaction involved one of a number of trusts, perhaps the New River Land Trust, established for the benefit of Bradley's friends and associates. The deed conveying the property reflected approval of the canal company's executive committee, which included Bradley, John Denny and Samuel Maddox, the company's Washington, D. C., attorney.⁷⁰

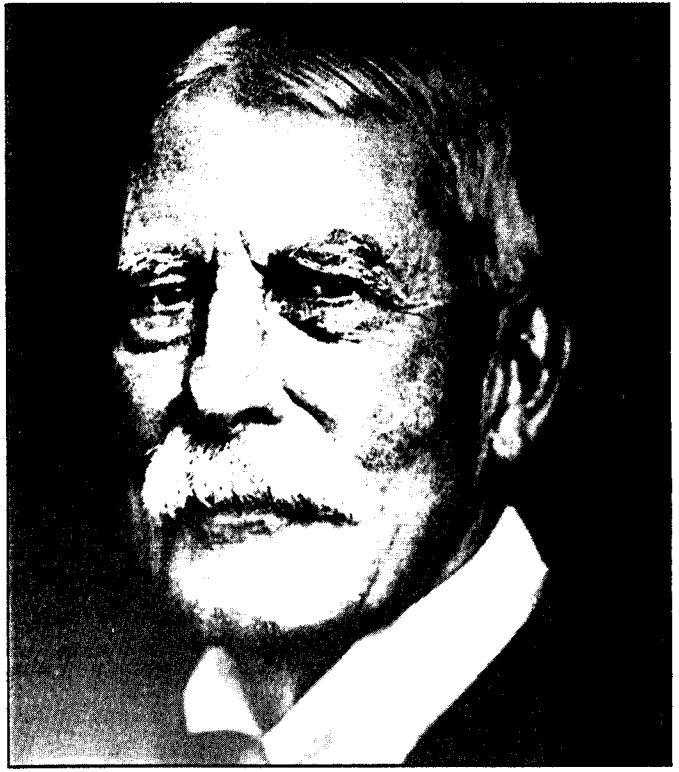
Henry Flagler Elected President of Canal Company

By the early 1890s, railroad magnate Henry Flagler had extended his railway to Rockledge and was considering projecting his railway further to the end of the Florida peninsula. What gave Flagler reason to pause, though, was the lack of available state lands in the southern peninsula for further railway construction; the state had reserved most if not all of the available land for the canal company and was not able to grant Flagler additional land in the southern peninsula for continued construction below Rockledge. In the latter part of 1892, Flagler devised a solution, boldly asserting in a letter to the canal company's attorney, Samuel Maddox, that Flagler's Florida East Coast railway could be extended south of Rockledge for a share of the canal company's land grant:

"Other roads constructed in Florida have received from 6,000 to 20,000 acres of land for each mile of road constructed. These grants have nearly, if not quite, exhausted the lands at the disposal of the state for such purposes. Your own canal has received from the state a grant of alternate sections within the six-mile limit along its route. Our railroad will practically follow the same course, and for this reason we are shut off from any possible subsidy at the hands of the state. We believe therefore that you can well afford to aid us in



James L. Colee
(courtesy of the St. Augustine Historical Society).



Henry M. Flagler

*this undertaking by dividing with us your land grant. If you cannot do this we should receive at the least 1,500 acres for each mile of road which we shall construct south of Rockledge, not, however, to exceed 104 miles.*⁷¹

The canal company's general manager, George Miles, urged approval of Flagler's proposal, emphasizing the benefit of the proposed railway extension to the canal company's south Florida land grant, especially to the lands "in the extreme southern part of the State." Taking Miles' advice, the canal firm's directors approved the plan.⁷² By March of the next year, 1893, the *Titusville Advocate*, reacting to Flagler's proposed extension, would be touting the value of the canal company's property in what was to become Broward County to prospective settlers:

"The land along New River and both forks of Middle River are either government or canal company lands. The latter may be had at reasonable prices, ranging from \$2.50 to \$10 per acre. Of course the fronts on New River Sound are held at much

higher figures; but if our judgment is worth anything as to the future of this locality high prices are well warranted, and present figures will double or treble within the next few years — for whatever settlement is made in the extensive territory traversed by New River and Middle River with its two forks, must do its trading at some point at or near the mouth of New River." [emphasis added.]⁷³

In 1892, in a transaction negotiated by Miles, Henry Flagler invested \$100,000 in the firm in exchange for debenture bonds and a promissory note. Flagler also became president in 1893, although he did not own a large amount of stock.⁷⁴ A year after Flagler's proposal, in 1893, federal and state legislation allowed the federal government to take over maintenance of the 138-mile Indian River channel between Titusville and Jupiter. In exchange for the federal government's assumption of responsibility for maintaining that canal, the canal company waived the right to collect tolls in that channel. By that time the company had built two

dredge boats to dig canals below Palm Beach; one machine started a cut south from Lake Worth, the other began to work north from Biscayne Bay.⁷⁵ By April, 1893, there were rumors in what was then Dade County that Flagler would extend his railroad into the area, raising real estate prices to anywhere "from \$150 to \$1,000 per acre."⁷⁶ A year later, the canal company apparently faced financial difficulty, a local news account reporting an "[a]ttempt made to carry away the canal dredges of Rittenhouse & Moore, near Juno, which had been levied on."⁷⁷ By September, 1893, the dredge *Biscayne*, cutting in the canal south, was making 450 feet a day.⁷⁸ On October 13, 1894, the canal company completed the canal between New and Hillsboro rivers. On the New River, it was reported, "[s]ail craft of considerable size easily ascend, bringing supplies to the camp or to the dredge, cutting north from the inlet, but now completed up and beyond Hillsboro Inlet."⁷⁹ The portion of the canal from Fort Lauderdale into Lake Worth would be completed in May, 1895.⁸⁰

In 1895, the canal company

granted the Flagler railway 102,917 acres of its state land grant for extending the railway from Fort Pierce to West Palm Beach; two years later, the company would grant the railway an additional 94,000 acres for the further extension of the railway. The canal company grants included lands extending all the way to Biscayne Bay. Ultimately the canal company would grant Flagler a quarter of a million acres of its state land grant to encourage the building of the railroad into the southern part of the Florida peninsula and to repay loans made to the firms.⁸¹

While by January, 1895, the Indian River Steamboat Company had reported the establishment of an office on the Palm Beach side of Lake Worth,⁸² just three months later, the company had laid up its boats "indefinitely."⁸³ Meanwhile, in March, a "new dredge" was reported to have been put on the canal work.⁸⁴ The completion of Flagler's railway, along with the failure of the canal company to dredge the cut between Jupiter and Lake Worth, apparently sounded the death knell for the Indian River Steamboat Company:

"The completion of the East Coast Railway to the Lake in 1894 and the incomplete portion of the canal between Jupiter and Lake Worth made travel so light on the river that the Indian River Steamboat Company gave up business. Their line of road [railroad], the Jupiter & Lake Worth, between the river and Lake, eight miles in length, was also suspended. In the spring of 1896 it was sold to the highest bidder at public sale. The purchasers have torn (or will) it up and shipped it away; thus while the country gained one line, it let another go down, leaving the county seat accessible either by very poor country road, or by sail boat from West Palm Beach."⁸⁵

Apparently undeterred, the canal company maintained publicly that the Jupiter-Lake Worth cut would be made quickly, thus creating an uninterrupted waterway down the Florida east coast:

"The unfinished portion of the

canal alluded to is to be cut through at once, so the canal management have stated. As this will open up the River, Lake and Bay, making a continuous inside passage from Titusville to Key West, it will not be long before boats will be running the entire distance."⁸⁶

The Special Joint Committee Report of 1895

In May, 1895, a special joint committee of the Florida House and Senate investigated the status of canal construction. While reporting that much canal work had been accomplished, the committee noted a number of deficiencies and recommended that no further land grants be made for construction of a hundred and two miles from mile 24 to mile 126 until a cut had been made through "the divide separating Matanzas River on the north and Halifax River on the south." The committee did, however, recommend an extension of time for completion of the canal work. The group further reported that no work had been done north of Lake Worth since its last report. In describing the history of construction, the committee stated:

"In 1890 the work of deepening Indian River was completed according to the State's specifications, and the canals were inspected and accepted by the engineer of the board of trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund. In 1893 about forty miles of canals were cut between Lake Worth and Biscayne. At Sewall's Point we found one-fourth mile of shallow water averaging about four feet, said to be caused by washing the same through the inlet from the ocean. At Juno your committee found about a mile of work unfinished, which opens the canal into Lake Worth, or will do so when completed. The Company had a dredge at work, and also had about seventy-five men removing the top of the earth in front of the dredge. When this is completed the Company will have about 300 miles of waterway open to navigation, leaving only one

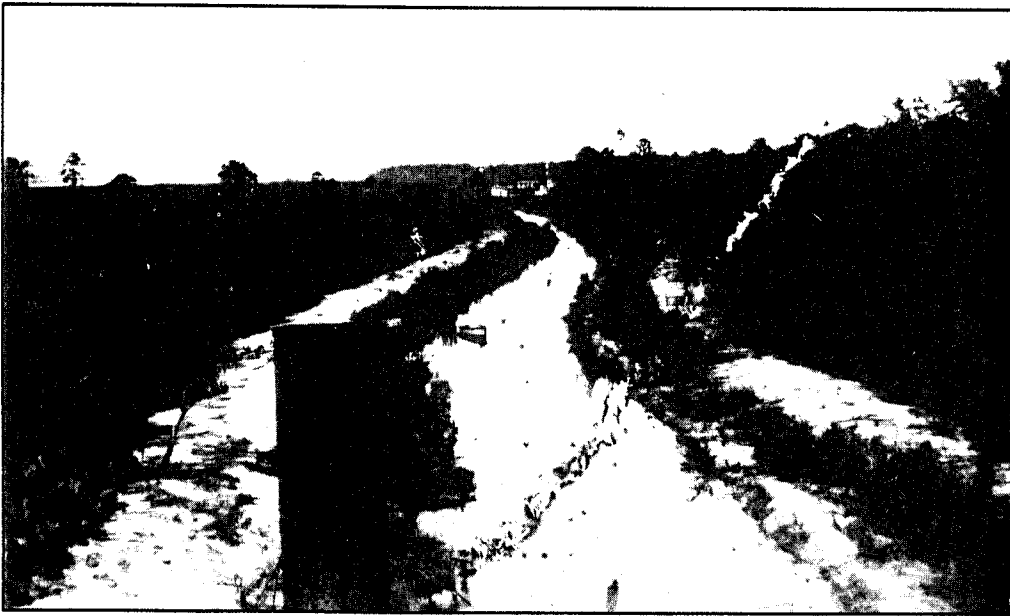
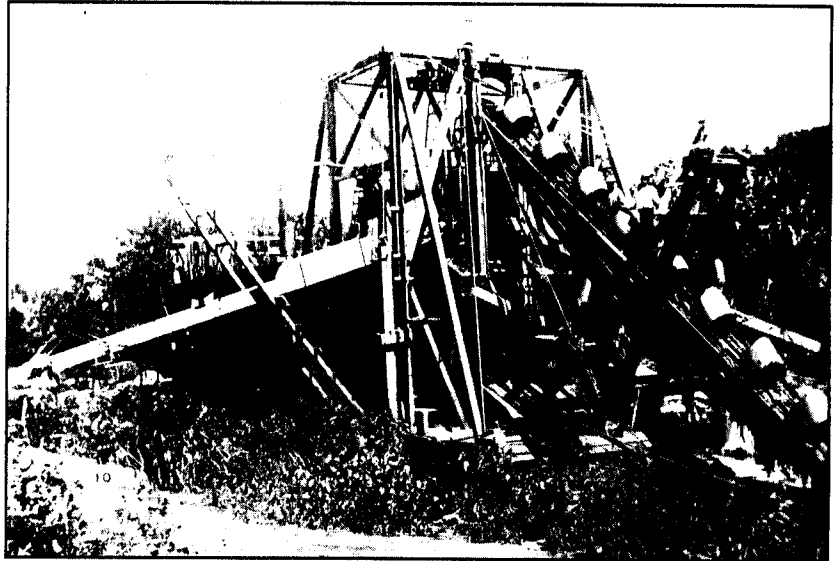
section to be completed, viz., between Ormond and St. Augustine. The work which your committee inspected south of Lake Worth is very thorough. Miles of solid rock and earth have been removed in opening the canal. At least thirty miles of these canals were cut through solid rock and muck beds."⁸⁷

On May 18, 1895, the canal company completed the canal between New River and Lake Worth when dredges operating from both ends of that section of the work met.⁸⁸ On June 8, Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway engineers began the survey for the extension of the railway to Miami.⁸⁹ In July, West Palm Beach resident A. L. Knowlton resigned his commission as justice of the peace to go to New River to survey the site for the Flagler railway's new town of Fort Lauderdale; Knowlton would complete the project just five months later in January, 1896.⁹⁰ In August, 1895, the canal company's dredges would begin the cut in the lower portion of the canal.⁹¹ Echoing claims made in support of efforts to drain the Everglades, an 1896-1897 West Palm Beach directory of businesses in what was then Dade County heralded the agricultural benefits that would derive from the canal company's dredging activities: "A large amount of additional muck will be reclaimed when the canal has finally been cut through into Lake Worth."⁹² By 1896 the canal company had completed the dredging of canals forty miles long between Lake Worth and Fort Lauderdale in today's Broward County, which the company had begun to dredge in 1893.⁹³

Flagler, Miles, and the Boston Land Company

At George Miles' suggestion, the well-connected Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast land company in 1896 gave Flagler a half interest in the firm's planned communities in the south Florida area, including the communities of Modello (Dania) and Hallandale, for assuring rail transportation into the area.⁹⁴ Miles also succeeded Flagler as president then, just as the Standard Oil magnate's interest in the canal company began

Ladder dredge at work on the stretch of canal between the Matanzas and Halifax Rivers, 1890s (courtesy of the St. Augustine Historical Society).



View of the Matanzas-Halifax canal looking north toward the Matanzas River from the top of the dredge (courtesy of the St. Augustine Historical Society).

Another view of the dredge at work on the Matanzas-Halifax canal. These rare photos are among the very few in existence showing nineteenth century construction of the East Coast Canal (courtesy of the St. Augustine Historical Society).

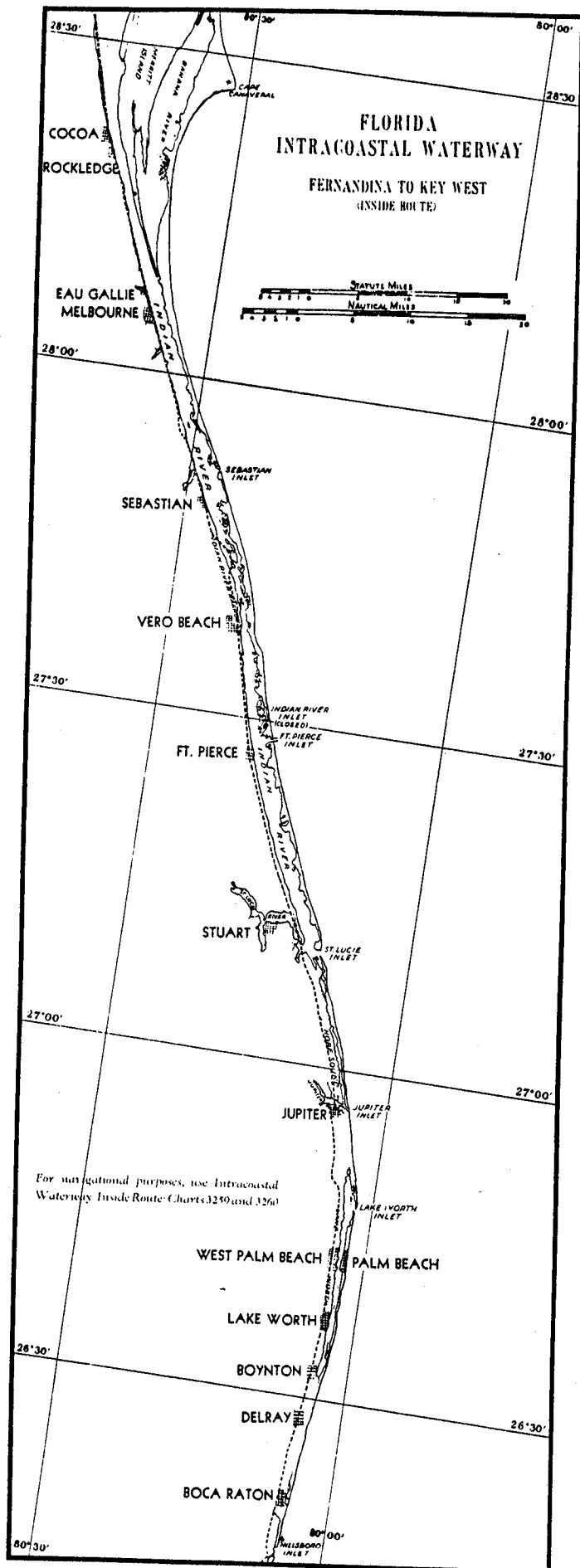


to wane; his Florida East Coast Railway had reached the settlements of Deerfield, Fort Lauderdale, and finally Miami. The same year, the canal company deeded Flagler nearly 25,000 acres for an investment of \$185,137 in the company.⁹⁵ The canal company's conveyance would vest in Flagler ownership of numerous land tracts in Broward County, including the western and southern portions of what is now known as Deerfield Island Park on the Intracoastal Waterway in northern Broward County. Flagler would acquire ultimately nearly a fourth of the canal company's state land grant as a result of the railroad magnate's investments in the company and the projection of his railway south to Miami. At the April, 1896, canal company meeting, Flagler tendered his resignation as a director of the canal company.⁹⁶ Two years later, in 1898, Miles would persuade Flagler to accept canal company lands in southern Dade County at the rate of \$6.00 an acre in exchange for the land baron's remaining interest in the canal company.⁹⁷

In July, 1896, a small portion of the canal work north of Lake Worth finally had begun after considerable delay:

"At this writing, (July 29, 1896) the last contract completing the East Coast Canal has been let, and the work commenced. This is a small portion of the north end of Lake Worth, some 900 feet . . . During all this time this little portion, the only barrier between continuous navigation from the Lake to Ormond, on the Halifax, has been allowed to stand. The effect has been to utterly destroy

As this map from a 1935 Intracoastal Waterway program illustrates, much of the canal from Cape Canaveral to the Hillsboro Inlet incorporated natural waterways, including the Indian River, Hobe Sound, Lake Worth, and the Hillsboro River.



steamboat traffic on the Indian River, and the dismantling of the railroad from Jupiter to Juno, some eight miles, and the prospects of settlement of the section through which it ran, for the reason that the boats could not compete with the East Coast Railway and make transfers at each end of the track."⁹⁸

The canal company assured the residents of what was then Dade County that the canal would be completed and that Flagler no longer had any financial involvement in the company:

*"Assurance is now given by the general manager that work will be rushed through to early completion; and, that there will not only be a line of steamers put on and run year around, but that settlers along the line of the canal will be favored in every possible way. The railroad having no interest in the enterprise, as before, the section will thus be favored with a water competing line and the old time business life of the river restored and increased."*⁹⁹

By 1897, the canal company had disposed of hundreds of thousands of acres of state land by selling some of the land to raise cash for continued operations and by conveying other parcels for Flagler's projection of the railway into south Florida:

- 100,000 acres had been sold to the Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast Land Company for \$1 an acre to finance canal work.
- 102,000 acres had been granted to Flagler's railway as a subsidy.
- 94,000 had been conveyed as an additional subsidy to the railway.
- 82,000 acres had been sold to others to finance canal work.

The company still owned 97,000 acres, but the land was not marketable without drainage.¹⁰⁰

Toward the end of the 1890s, during the Spanish American War, the U. S. Army used the privately-owned east coast canal to move military material behind the protection of the chain of barrier islands lying along

Florida's Atlantic coast; in fact, the American military floated three mortar carriages down the coastal waterway from Titusville to Key West for the war effort in Cuba.¹⁰¹ Because the canal company's dredging had encountered persistent financial difficulties, Miles obtained extensions from the state legislature to complete canal work in the years 1893 and 1897; later, he would obtain further extensions in 1899 and 1903.¹⁰² In 1899, Miles announced his resignation as president of the canal company. Miles' successor, Bell Telephone director George Bradley, would serve as president until his death in 1906.¹⁰³

River Improvements "Without Further Dilly-Dallying and Delay"

In the early 1900s, no fewer than nine citizens' groups around the country, including the Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association spearheaded by J. Hampton Moore of Philadelphia and the National Rivers and Harbors Congress, rallied to lobby Congress for inland waterway improvements.¹⁰⁴ In December, 1907, 1,970 delegates representing 463 cities in thirty-three states attended the National Rivers and Harbors Congress to establish the group's policy for promoting the improvement of the nation's inland waterways.¹⁰⁵ At the group's first annual convention, the Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association's committee on resolutions, meeting in Baltimore in November, 1908, recommended extension of several inland waterway routes and surveying "along the Florida Coast preliminary to further development."¹⁰⁶ The impetus for the movement appeared to be the railroad industry's perceived monopoly over transportation and a need for transportation greater than the railroads were able to meet.¹⁰⁷

Federal legislation would soon authorize a preliminary survey of a waterway from the "upper Atlantic states to Key West."¹⁰⁸ And on December 8, 1908, in a Special Message to the House and Senate on Inland Waterways, President Theodore Roosevelt demanded immediate action on waterway improvements:



Theodore Roosevelt

*"Until the work of river improvement is undertaken in a modern way, it cannot have results that will meet the needs of a modern Nation. These needs should be met without further dilly-dallying and delay. The essential thing is that the work should go forward under the best possible plan and with the least possible delay. The time for playing with our waterways is past. The Country demands results."*¹⁰⁹

In Florida, by 1903 the canal company had finished dredging the waterway between Ormond on the Halifax River and Miami, a distance of "about three hundred miles." Dredges were continuing work on the Matanzas-Halifax canal, connecting St. Augustine, on the Matanzas, with Ormond. The projected canal would be fourteen miles long and involve the excavation of "1.6 million cubic yards of material."¹¹⁰ From Lake Worth, the distance along the inland waterway was then described in a popular magazine as "more than thirty miles . . . leading to the Hillsborough river," and then "forty miles to New river, twelve miles carrying us to Snake creek and Biscayne Bay, down which we float twenty miles to Miami, from which point

steamship lines are now in operation to Nassau, B.I., Havana and Key West."¹¹¹

According to the same 1903 magazine article, the canal company's dredging work in the south Florida peninsula had been difficult indeed:

*"Down Lake Worth pass Riviera, Lake Worth village, Palm Beach, Lantana, Hypoluxo, and Boynton begins a cut 15 miles passing one or two small lakes connecting with the Hillsborough river. The latter had to be dredged for five miles and connected to it with New River sound is a cut nine miles long. Another cut nine miles long was then made to Silver Lake, which was dredged and then a cut through solid earth and rock one mile long into Dumbfoundling bay. Below this considerable dredging, rounding of sharp corners and several small cuts into Biscayne Bay to reach Miami. No small undertaking to cut fifty feet wide and six feet deep through sand, earth and rock for eight or nine miles, and the company made several."*¹¹²

Although significant work had been accomplished, the canal company would continue its dredging activities for at least nine more years.

Canal Company Sues State Trustees for Land Grant

The early 1900s also brought an onslaught of litigation over land grants to the railroad and canal companies promised by the state in legislation originating in the late 1870s. In June, 1904, the canal company filed a lawsuit in Tallahassee against the state improvement fund trustees to prevent the conveying of the canal company's reserved state lands to others. During the pendency of the suit, the Leon County Circuit Court temporarily enjoined the state trustees from disposing of reserved state lands to anyone other than the canal company. A year and a half later, during the administration of Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, on December 1, 1906, the parties settled, the canal company

agreeing to pay \$50,000 for the state's conveyance of 200,000 acres. The canal company then transferred to Bion Barnett as trustee 100,000 acres to be sold for construction of a canal from St. Augustine to Jacksonville. The trustees also deposited two deeds in escrow with Barnett, each representing 117,000 acres for the construction of the canal. The first escrow deed was to be delivered to the canal company 1) when the canal between the Matanzas and Halifax rivers was completed, and 2) when one-half of the work between the St. Augustine and St. Johns rivers was done. The second escrow deed was to be turned over when the St. Augustine to St. Johns River canal was finished.¹¹³

In his narrative describing the tumultuous events of the 1904-06 period, George Miles recalled that in 1905 the canal company applied to the state legislature to extend the time for the completion of the canal for its land grant, even though Miles believed that the canal company "had earned all of the reserved lands before the time limit." The bill passed both houses of the legislature "by large majorities but it was vetoed by Governor Broward," even though Broward himself had pushed for approval of the legislation, according to Miles. Persuaded that he could not press litigation relating to the railroad grants consistently without vetoing the bill, Broward killed the measure; but he assured Miles that the canal company would lose no lands as a result of the action. And in fact, under the 1906 agreement with the Broward administration, the canal company would ultimately obtain the balance of its land grant.¹¹⁴

Canal Company Agrees to Sell Land to J. M. Barrs, Legal Advisor to Former Governor Broward

Three years after the agreement with the Broward administration, the state trustees, in January, 1910, approved the canal company's sale to John Murdock Barrs of "a large part of said lands" covered by escrow deeds in Palm Beach and Dade Counties embracing "about one hundred and fifty thousand acres" upon condition

that Barrs drain and reclaim the land. Six months earlier, in July, 1909, Barrs, a long-time legal advisor to Napoleon Bonaparte Broward (Florida's governor from 1905 until 1909), informed the state trustees that he had agreed to purchase the property for \$2.65 an acre in May. According to the canal company, Florida East Coast Railway Vice-President J. E. Ingraham encouraged Barrs to make the purchase. Barrs later contracted for the sale of the same property to George O. Butler and G. D. Bryant.¹¹⁵

One of the canal company's deeds in escrow with Barnett, known as the Second Escrow Deed, representing a conveyance of the land to Barrs, was delivered to the canal company on December 28, 1910.¹¹⁶ By that time, the canal company had opened the last link in the Florida East Coast Canal to traffic between St. Augustine and Jacksonville, although the entire canal had not yet been accepted by the State. The First Escrow Deed would remain in trust until December, 1912, pending the completion of the cut between the Matanzas and Halifax rivers.

Flagler's Railway Sues Canal Company Twice: First in Palm Beach County, Then in St. Johns County

The canal company's proposed land transfer to Barrs in 1910 apparently caused the Florida East Coast Railway to sue both the state improvement fund trustees (the Florida Cabinet) and the canal company. In a lawsuit filed in Palm Beach County in October, the Flagler railway claimed additional state land for the extension of the railway line south to Miami under several agreements with the canal company beginning with the 1892 arrangement. The West Palm Beach litigation sought an additional 1,500 acres of state land for every mile of railway constructed for the railway's extension between Palm Beach and Biscayne Bay.¹¹⁷ Two years later, in December 1912, during the pendency of the West Palm Beach proceedings, the railway instituted another action against the canal company for the same relief requested in the first suit, but this time

Chancery
No. 59

IN
Circuit Court.

Florida East Coast
Railway Co.

Plaintiff —

Albert A. Gilchrist
et al. Trustees of the
Internal Improvement Fund
of Florida

Defendant —

Action for *Bill for Discovery*
& Other Relief

Docket *Chancery* Page *25*

William H. Dewhurst

Attorney — for Plaintiff —

Attorney — for Defendant —

THE ST. JOHN COUNTY, FLORIDA, COURT

The F.E.C. Railway's Palm Beach County lawsuit against the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and the canal company, 1910.

the litigation was filed in the St. Johns County Circuit Court in St. Augustine.¹¹⁸ Five months later, in May, 1913, St. Augustine Judge George Cooper Gibbs disqualified himself from hearing the case on potential bias-and-prejudice grounds, transferring the case to Putnam County. The St. Johns County judge's father, George W. Gibbs, it appeared, was then Assistant Treasurer and "the principal executive officer" of the canal company. The judge's order stated that the judge himself had been employed by the canal company in St. Augustine "in the year 1894 and for a number of years thereafter and during considerable

portions of the time when the transactions involved in said suit are alleged in the Bill of Complaint therein to have occurred."¹¹⁹

The Palm Beach County case meanwhile dragged on until the parties reached a settlement and the suit was dismissed in January, 1913.¹²⁰ The second suit, still active in Putnam County, was dismissed seven months later in August, 1913.¹²¹ Both suits were apparently settled when the canal company agreed to convey an additional 20,002 acres of land lying within Dade, Orange and Brevard counties to Flagler's railway company.¹²²

At the national level, in 1911, a special board of United States Engineers had already reported favorably on a proposed continuous federally-maintained waterway first from Beaufort, North Carolina, to the St. Johns River, and then to Key West, Florida, considering two alternative routes.¹²³ The "Swan" and "Cherokee," double-decker freight and passenger steamers, suspended service between Jacksonville and Miami because of the shoaling up of the east coast canal in several places.¹²⁴ In 1912, the State of Florida would make its last land grant to the canal company; the state granted in all a total of 1,030,128 acres of public land to the privately-owned canal company for the construction of 268 miles of waterway.¹²⁵

State Trustees Approve Tolls on East Coast Canal

At the meeting of the state improvement fund trustees on December 12, 1913, the canal company submitted a schedule of tolls for approval by the trustees. Approving the schedule, the trustees noted the acquiescence in the proposed charges by George Miles, who while connected with the canal company was also "president of one line of steamboats running on the canal," and by A. W. Corbett, of St. Augustine, Florida, described as "president of another line of steamboats running on the canal." Noting the substantial business already created by the waterway improvements, the state trustees also recognized the loss in

tolls experienced by the canal company: "There is a large amount of commerce and traffic now using the canal, consisting of freight boats, passenger boats, yachts, etc., and the Canal Company is sustaining heavy loss by not collecting tolls thereon."¹²⁶

At the trustees' meeting of January 26, 1914, the trustees heard complaints about the tolls from the "Florida East Coast Canal Association, Board of Trade of West Palm Beach, W.O.W. Camp No. 141, of Titusville, T. Gapeheart and Dr. Walker Lincoln of Cocoa and H. S. Williams of Rockledge." The canal company responded to the complaints by agreeing to suspend the collection of tolls at the Dania chain: "As the toll chain near Dania is not producing any net revenue the Canal Company will discontinue the use of the chain until further progress has been made in work on canal...." Since there would then be no chains south of Haulover and all of the protests were "south of Haulover," the trustees approved the tolls north of the Haulover.¹²⁷

A year later, the trustees authorized the canal company to restore the "three tolls South of the Haulover," but rescinded the action within four days after hearing protests from the Miami Board of Trade. The trustees further recommended that by legislative enactment the trustees be relieved of the duty to approve tolls and that such authority be vested in the Railroad Commission.¹²⁸

The Florida East Coast Canal in Broward County in the Early 1900s

A 1916 federal government handbook on the inland waterway described Fort Lauderdale as a "small produce-shipping station on the railroad," advising boaters that the town offered "[p]rovisions, gasoline and fresh water" and "a repair shop for power boats and a marine railway of 30 tons capacity."¹²⁹ Another special federal board reviewing the waterway as a potential federal project issued an unfavorable report in 1916 based upon the relatively small east coast population to be served by the proposed improvement.¹³⁰

The Florida Supreme Court held a year later that while the canal company was obligated to maintain the canal and the state could force the firm to comply with dredging requirements or risk losing the canal, the state was obligated to point out specific areas of shoaling. When the state started a suit to require work at a designated location, it appeared the canal company would send in a dredge and clean it up before the court had time to act; in the meantime new shoals would develop.¹³¹ Also in 1917, Florida legislator P. A. Vans Agnews of Winter Park filed a bill in Tallahassee to turn over control of the inland waterway to the federal government; however, World War I prevented the legislature from taking action on the proposal.¹³² Three years later a new rivers and harbors act, passed by Congress in 1920, authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to make a preliminary study of the feasibility of a federal takeover of Florida's privately-owned east coast canal.¹³³

Toll Chain Across the Florida East Coast Canal at Hallandale

By 1921 the privately-owned canal company maintained chains across the east coast canal between Jacksonville and Biscayne Bay to collect tolls from marine traffic plying the waterway at six different points: 1) from Pablo Creek down through dredged canals to the North River; 2) three miles north of Mt. Oswald in Smith's or Halifax Creek; 3) south from Mosquito Lagoon to a short canal three-eighths of a mile long leading to the Indian River, known as "the Haulover"; 4) at Juno at the southern entrance of a canal leading from Lake Worth; 5) at the draw bridge opposite Boynton along the canal leading south from Lake Worth; and finally, in Broward County, 6) south of the Dania cut-off canal one-fourth of a mile east of a Lagoon to "Hallandale Chain No. 6."¹³⁴

The canal company stretched its toll chains taut just below the surface of the water, preventing passage until the required tolls were paid. In the early 1920s published toll rates on the canal were comparable to

those initially established by the state improvement fund trustees in 1913:

"Barges and Lighters in tow, 8 cents per foot through each chain and 5% on freight; 8 cents per foot on tug through each chain. Total 16c per foot and 5% on freight through each chain. Empty, 5c through each chain. Tugs towing empty lighters 5c per foot through each chain. Total empty: 10c per foot through each chain."

"Freight and passenger boats: 5c per foot through each chain and 5% on Gross Rates from freight and passengers."

"Pleasure Boats and House Boats: 10c per foot through each chain. 8c per foot through each chain. Launches (40) foot and under not engaged in business."

"Fish Boats, 3c per foot through each chain."¹³⁵

Tolls for passage through the six chains generated revenue during 1920 of \$8,173.06 for the North River Chain; \$1,151.91, Smith's Creek Chain; \$1,174.76, Haulover Chain; \$2,027.15, Juno Chain; \$2,021.54, Boynton Chain; and, \$4,367.85 for the Hallandale chain in Broward County. The annual cost to operate the Broward chain alone was \$600; together the chains generated revenue of \$19,016.27 against the cost of operating them of \$15,159.87. Nevertheless, the canal produced a deficit in operations of \$19,000 a year, considering the cost of continually dredging the waterway to maintain the state-required minimum depth.¹³⁶

Freight business in 1922, including an oil company's boat plying the waters of the east coast canal, totalled just \$34,744.82; passenger business generated a meager \$2,643.99. Among the vessels passing through the various canals of the waterway were 1,514 yachts, 2,190 launches, 1,061 freight and passenger boats, 123 tugs, 12 dredges, 1,586 fishing boats, 237 barges, totalling 6,723 water craft for the year.¹³⁷ A June, 1922, Fort Lauderdale newspaper account reported the landing in Hollywood of a barge load of palm, coconut, and assorted other trees brought

from "Biscayne Key" through the inland waterway.¹³⁸

An early inland waterway traveler's book described the distance between Hillsboro Inlet to New River as "about 10 miles"; the canal itself was characterized as "narrow" and having "not less than four feet of water."¹³⁹ The canal company was then required to maintain the east coast canal to a depth of five feet or risk losing the canal. Under provisions of the law by which lands were granted to the canal company, the State of Florida had power to require the canal company to maintain adopted dimensions and some attempts were made to enforce the provisions of the law. Maintenance work in the years to follow would be carried on by the canal company under pressure by the Florida legislature.

West Palm Beach Hearing Conducted by Army Engineer Major Lemen

Under the 1920 federal Rivers and Harbors Act, the Army Corps of Engineers conducted public hearings on the possibility of a federal takeover of the east coast canal in four different east coast Florida towns and cities in 1922: Titusville on May 16, West Palm Beach on May 17, Daytona on June 26, and Sanford on June 27. Army engineer Major William C. Lemen conducted the hearings to obtain information for a report of a preliminary examination of an intracoastal waterway from Jacksonville to Miami; the federal government was expected to spend \$10 million on improving the inland waterway. Lemen desired information on the "most suitable location for the route and whether it would be better for the federal government to buy the east coast canal or dig a canal paralleling" it.¹⁴⁰

A notable group of fifty attended the West Palm Beach session, including Fred C. Elliott, the state drainage engineer, and a Fort Lauderdale delegation that included chamber secretary P. H. Thomson, Captain George J. Pilkington of the Pilkington Yacht basin, W. C. Kyle, D. T. Hart, and Commodore A. H. Brook.¹⁴¹ A former New York outdoor advertising executive, the British-born Brook had



Major William C. Leman

come to Fort Lauderdale just a few years before to become the city's biggest promoter. Short in stature and displaying a large blond mustache, Avylen Harcourt Brook would become a driving force in the creation of the Florida Inland Navigation District, established in 1927 to turn the privately-owned Florida east coast canal over to the federal government.

After the passing of Charles Burgman in 1932, Brook would serve as the district's chairman until 1945. In Broward County, the 17th Street Causeway, which spans the Intracoastal Waterway in Fort Lauderdale, was officially named the Brook Memorial Causeway in honor of Brook's work to enhance the waterway for the benefit of the public. In addition to his work on the Intracoastal Waterway in Florida, Brook was vice president of the Waterway League of America, a director of the Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association, and a member of the National Rivers and Harbors Congress. He received his title of commodore from the Jamaica Bay Yacht Club on Long Island. He was also one of the promoters of the Cape Cod Canal.¹⁴²

At the time of the West Palm Beach hearing, the canal company was contending that the tolls were insufficient to maintain the canal and

that it had no other resources. Congressman Joe Sears spoke ardently to the group on the advantages of a federal takeover in further developing and maintaining the waterway:

"When we have a canal that will handle goods, garden stuff and lumber as well as stone, direct from south of St. Lucie County to Miami and then have it transported directly to the north, millions of dollars will be saved and thousands of people will migrate to the Southern part of Florida to not only go into business, but to start into farming!"

"I want to see a canal at least 150 feet wide and 8 feet deep so that we can handle every dollar's worth of business that can be produced."¹⁴³

Commodore Brook also favored federalizing the waterway, pointing out to the audience that it cost more to send goods by rail from Jacksonville to Fort Lauderdale than it did the further distance to Miami. The rate from Jacksonville to Fort Lauderdale, he noted, was \$1.49 per hundred versus \$1.04 per hundred to Miami (first class rates) and ninety-four cents per hundred for second class to Miami against \$1.33 to Fort Lauderdale. "Is it any wonder that we want a canal?" Brook asked the waterway gathering.¹⁴⁴

While the east coast canal hearings were being held in the first half of 1922, the canal company was making attempts to sell the private waterway to the federal government. Canal company attorney Frank Swan in a June 14, 1922 letter to Major Lemen proposed the sale of the wa-



Commodore A.H. Brook

(courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

terway to the United States for \$1.2 million, \$800,000 less than the price quoted to a special board of army engineers six years earlier.¹⁴⁵

**Colonel Gilbert Youngberg
Appointed Chief Army
Engineer For Florida District**

August, 1922, became a pivotal month in the history of the waterway when the U.S. Army appointed Colonel Gilbert A. Youngberg to succeed Major Lemen as Engineer of the Florida (Jacksonville) District of the Corps of Engineers. Like Fort Lauderdale's Commodore Brook, Youngberg would become a major factor in the birth of the modern Intracoastal Waterway system in Florida. Born on February 12, 1875, in Minnesota of Swedish immigrant parents, Youngberg had graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1900, and would enjoy a distinguished career as an army engineer, serving in a variety of posts. Beginning in 1927, Youngberg would serve as the Florida Inland Navigation District's first chief engineer and director of right-of-way procurement for more than thirty years, marking the beginning of a long tradition at the waterway district of employing former Army engineers in various leadership positions.

Like the army engineers that had preceded him in the days of the Florida Territory of the 1820s, Youngberg had graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point and was a member of the military's civil engineering corps. Youngberg graduated from the Army War College in the fall of 1910 and was later appointed head of the department of practical military engineering at the U.S. Military Academy, holding the title of instructor (with Youngberg's lobbying efforts Congress elevated his rank to professor). In 1914, Youngberg served as engineer of the Charleston, South Carolina, district, in charge of fortifications, and river and harbor improvements in South Carolina and western North Carolina.

During World War I, Lieutenant Colonel Gilbert Youngberg served as executive officer in the office of the Chief Engineer at the headquarters

of the American Expeditionary Forces in France. He became deputy assistant chief of staff in the supply section of the General Staff. He was recommended for the rank of Brigadier General, but Congress did not act because of the cessation of hostilities. Later, Youngberg would author a book entitled, "History of Engineer Troops, U. S. Army," and an article for the Encyclopedia Britannica entitled, "Military Engineer, U. S. Army." Youngberg was one of the founders of the Society of Military Engineers in 1920, and its president when he became District Engineer of the Florida peninsula. As District Engineer, Youngberg would be placed in charge of numerous projects including extensive improvements in the St. Johns River, Tampa Harbor, and Miami Harbor, and less extensive waterway improvements throughout the State of Florida.¹⁴⁶

While the hearings conducted by Youngberg's predecessor, William Lemen, were well attended, little evidence of the amount of freight expected to be moved by the proposed waterway improvements was presented. Youngberg favored the project in a report forwarded to Washington, however, a few weeks later, the report was returned to elicit additional facts. Youngberg then began to gather more data to justify the federal government's involvement in the Florida east coast waterway. And the chambers of commerce along the east coast would soon band together to support the canal and to compile the statistics necessary for federal intervention.¹⁴⁷

**Rhode Island Trust Company
Forecloses on East Coast Canal**

Meanwhile, in early 1923, seventeen years after canal investor George Bradley's death, the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company, as trustee under Bradley's will, began foreclosure proceedings against the canal company in St. Augustine for failing to pay anything on the numerous bonds the company had issued years before to finance canal construction. With accrued interest of \$437,423.31, the debt totalled \$937,423.31. Canal company prop-



Colonel Gilbert A. Youngberg

erty subject to the suit embraced not only the waterway itself but also former state lands owned by the canal company, including fifteen acres in what was to become the town of Deerfield and another seven acres in the southeastern part of the town of Fort Lauderdale.¹⁴⁸

The litigation appeared friendly; perhaps it had been designed to clear title to the waterway in the trust company administering Bradley's will. The suit was filed *on behalf of* the trust company and *against* the canal company by Cooper & Cooper, the Jacksonville law firm that had represented the canal company in almost all of its litigation throughout the years. In fact, one would be hard pressed to find any litigation in which that law firm had not represented the canal company.¹⁴⁹ As one might expect, no response to the suit was filed by the canal company, and a default was entered against the firm for its failure to respond.¹⁵⁰

Meanwhile, conditions along the Florida east coast canal continued to deteriorate. On March 12, 1923, President Warren Harding, while sailing south on the houseboat *Pioneer* on the East Coast Canal, became stuck on a sandbar south of Hillsboro Lighthouse; the president disembarked, and later played golf at the Lauderdale golf club. Two years be-

fore, Harding played golf at the Lauderdale links after a dredge stuck in the waterway impeded the vessel in which the president had been cruising, Fort Lauderdale's Commodore Brook rescuing the presidential party at that time. The day after becoming stuck in the waterway at the Hillsboro Lighthouse in 1923, Harding's boat became stuck again in New River Sound; this last time the president played golf farther south — at the Hollywood golf club.¹⁵¹

In the summer of 1923, the St. Johns County Circuit Court entered a decree of foreclosure in the Rhode Island trust company's lawsuit and ordered a sale of the canal company's property to satisfy the bonded debt; two months later, the canal company lands were sold to the trust company and assigned to the Florida Canal and Transportation Company, a new canal company whose stock was controlled by the trust.¹⁵²

Burgman Sparks Revival of East Coast Chamber Association

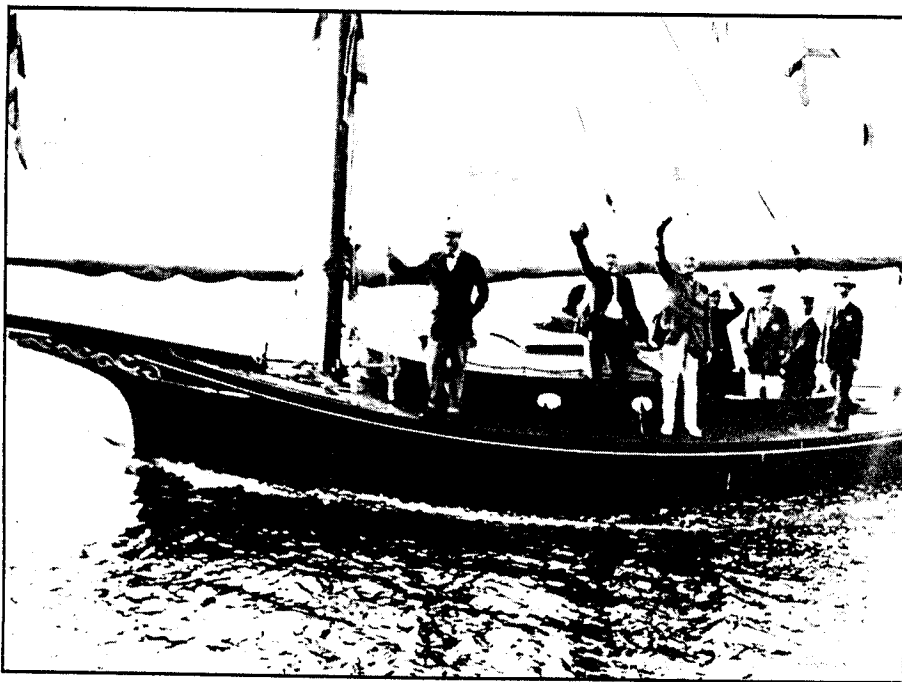
In October, 1923, Charles F. Burgman, president of the Daytona

Chamber of Commerce, convened a meeting of the old Florida East Coast Chamber of Commerce at Daytona to focus on issues concerning the cities and towns lying along the east coast of Florida, including the deteriorating condition of the east coast canal. Four years later, Burgman would become the first chairman of the Florida Inland Navigation District. Fifty delegates representing ten local chambers attended the Daytona meeting; from that meeting emerged the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the East Coast of Florida. Miami pioneer E. G. Sewell would become the president of a nucleus of five east coast chambers of commerce comprising the new association, which convened the next month in Miami with ten chambers represented.¹⁵³

Eight years earlier, fourteen east coast and central Florida counties combined to form the Florida East Coast Chamber of Commerce. The early organization was "[c]omposed of Civic, Commercial, Industrial and Horticultural Organizations in the Counties of Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Clay, Putnam, Volusia, Orange, Brevard, Osceola, St. Lucie, Palm Beach, Broward, Dade and Monroe

of the State of Florida." Dues were \$1 per quarter in advance, or \$4 per year for each county. Each county had one vote. The association was formed ostensibly "for the purpose of promoting closer co-operation among the several communities entitled to membership, on all civic, commercial, industrial and agricultural matters of common interest to the several counties of the east coast of Florida." In addition to a standing committee on "Waterways," there were standing committees on "Finance," "Agriculture," "Publicity," "Roads," "Drainage," "Transportation," "Legislative" and "Credentials."¹⁵⁴

At the newly-reorganized chamber association's quarterly meeting held at Melbourne in October 1924, with a hundred and fifty members representing twenty chambers attending, Gilbert Youngberg, Chief Engineer of the Army Engineers at Jacksonville, delivered an important paper entitled "Water Transportation and the Intracoastal Waterway from Jacksonville to Miami." The association voted to print a thousand copies of the paper for distribution in the east coast counties and to engage Major J. M. Braxton and Colonel Earl Wheeler to make an economic study of the waterway at a cost of \$8,000. Braxton's report would later become part of an historic waterway docu-



President-elect Warren G. Harding "rescued" by Commodore Brook's yacht *Klyo* after encountering a blockage in the canal channel, January 28, 1921. Brook and Harding are at center, waving their caps (courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).



Everest G. Sewell, first president of the reorganized Associated Chambers of Commerce of the East Coast of Florida.

CONSTITUTION

AND

BY-LAWS

OF

THE
FLORIDA EAST COAST
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

Composed of Civic, Commercial, Industrial
and Horticultural Organizations in the
Counties of Nassau, Duval, St. Johns,
Clay, Putnam, Volusia, Orange,
Brevard, Osceola, St. Lucie,
Palm Beach, Broward,
Dade and Monroe
of the State of
Florida

1915-16

**Constitution and By-Laws of the
original Florida East Coast
Chamber of Commerce (1915-
1916).**

ment known as U. S. House of Rep-
resentatives Document No. 586.¹⁵⁵

**West Palm Beach Developer
Harry Kelsey Purchases New
Canal Company Stock**

On November 14, 1925, a month after the chamber association's Melbourne meeting, the Rhode Island trust company sold all of its stock in the new canal company to West Palm Beach real estate developer Harry S. Kelsey. Kelsey undertook to make significant improvements in the waterway, expending a considerable sum in the process. His plan was to use the private canal to transport construction materials to West Palm Beach where he was involved in extensive real estate subdivision work. The collapse of the Florida land boom, however, cut short Kelsey's canal work, and Kelsey would not be able to maintain the waterway. And consequently, state

legislative efforts seeking a forfeiture of the canal for the canal company's failure to maintain the canal's state-required depth would begin anew.¹⁵⁶

East Coast

**Chamber Association Meets at
Hollywood Beach Hotel**

The east coast chamber association held its November 1926 meeting at the Hollywood Beach Hotel, just a few months after the devastating 1926 Hurricane. Daytona Beach Chamber of Commerce president (and soon to be Florida governor) Dave Sholtz was elected once again as president of the association. Two hundred and fifty delegates representing thirty-three east coast chambers with a combined membership of over 15,000 attended the meeting. A key subject of the conference was "Shall the agitation for government ownership of the Florida East Coast Canal be abandoned?"¹⁵⁷

Brevard County Judge John O. Shares of the Eau Gallie chamber, who would later become a member of the first board of commissioners of the Florida Inland Navigation District, gave a persuasive speech favor-

ing government ownership of the canal. Shares argued that Florida Governor John W. Martin had been ignoring the canal company's failure to maintain the waterway as required by state law. Declaring that he was amazed at the indifference displayed by Governor Martin in ignoring the canal, Shares said that some method should be taken to break the "voters trust" existing in the state, so that public officials would heed east coast demands and needs. Shares pointed out that there were fewer boats on the inland waterway than there were twenty-five years before, and that "the rich men of the world and the commerce of the section should be using the canal instead of having it lay idle, choked so that no boat not equipped with 'balloon tires' could come through."¹⁵⁸

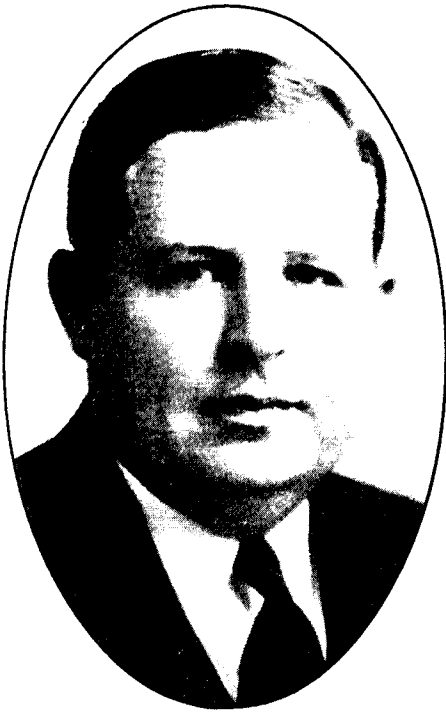
A November 1926 *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* account described the deplorable state in which the private canal had been maintained:

"[T]he canal is now practically impassable in many places for boats drawing more than two feet of water because of the caving in



Harry A. Kelsey

(courtesy of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County.)



Daytona Beach Chamber of Commerce President and future Governor David Sholtz.

*of the shoulders and the filling in of many sections, especially the northern end of Biscayne Bay and in sections of Lake Worth entrances and exits and in the canal proper between Fort Lauderdale and Miami.*¹⁵⁹

Former association president Charles Burgman stated at the Hollywood meeting that the "canal owners have forfeited their right of ownership" in the canal. The east coast, Burgman argued, should require the state to take over the canal so that the state can turn it over to the federal government for proper maintenance. Burgman urged the association to carry the matter into the courts, if necessary, "but by all means to bring about public ownership of the waterway." Palm Beach attorney Mark Wilcox, representing canal owner Harry S. Kelsey who had purchased the canal only a year before, asked that Kelsey be given more time to do what he could to maintain the canal. The chamber association responded to Wilcox, who would later become a United States congressman, by deciding to appoint a committee to confer with Kelsey about the canal



The Hollywood Beach Hotel, site of the east coast chamber association meeting, 1926. Note sand piles, broken pilings and beach debris from the 1926 hurricane.

work and to report at the January convention at Flagler City.¹⁶⁰

Broward County in the Twenties

In 1926, Youngberg supplemented his report to the U. S Engineers with additional data collected from the newly-reorganized Associated Chambers of Commerce of the East Coast of Florida. Youngberg reported that a boat operating on the canal between Jacksonville and West Palm Beach, the *Cocoa*, made a round-trip in about twelve days. The actual running time for the trip was about 115 hours, or nearly five days; the remainder of time was spent waiting for high tides at various bars and shoals. The freight rates for the *Cocoa* were about thirty percent lower than the existing railroad rates.¹⁶¹

Youngberg's study also reported on the development of Broward County. The town of Fort Lauderdale, he recorded, "with several large beach developments, is growing very fast, and is a popular winter residential community. It is almost impossible at the present time to get satisfactory deliveries by rail on building materials in this community." Youngberg



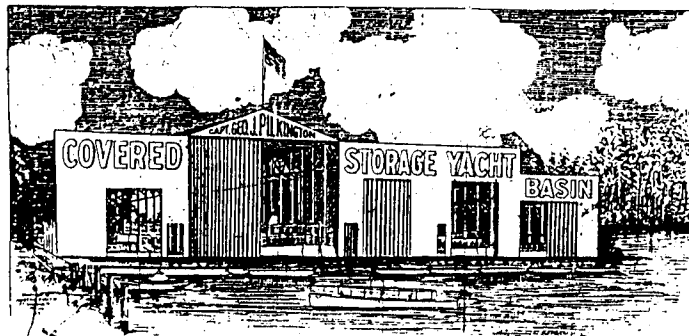
J. Mark Wilcox, Kelsey attorney, later U.S. Congressman

also pointed out that the Pilkington yacht storage basin, located on New River, stored ninety-nine pleasure yachts drawing up to six feet of water in the year 1923-24. Estimating that during 1924 approximately 350 yachts were using the basin there, Pilkington reported that the company was building two dry docks.¹⁶²

In the southern part of Broward County, Youngberg pointed to the "[n]ew development known as Hollywood, owned and operated by the Hollywood Land & Water Co." The town, begun in 1920, "started with a tract of 2,500 acres and now embraces 10,000 acres, with 5 1/2 miles of ocean-front." Youngberg estimated the "fixed population" of Hollywood in 1922 at 68; in 1923, 400; and in 1924, 768, with a winter population for the season 1923-1924 of approximately 2,500. Youngberg also reported the Hollywood company's intention to develop a private commercial harbor in Lake Mabel, between Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood, now known as Port Everglades.¹⁶³

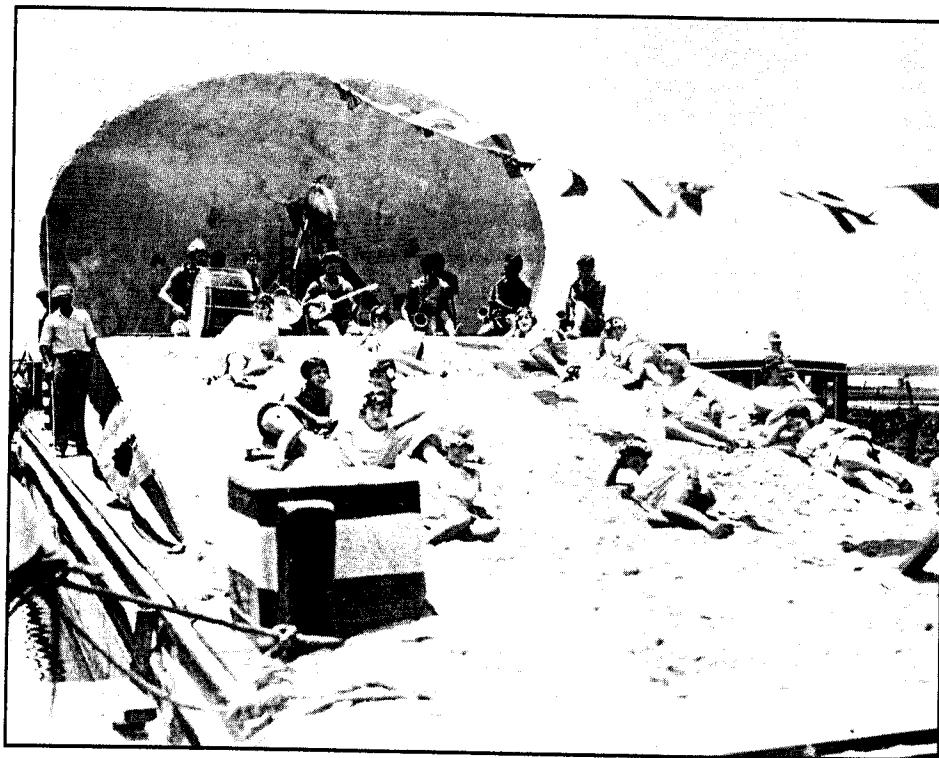
In December 1926, U.S. Secretary of War Dwight W. Davis transmitted Youngberg's engineering report to Congress along with the recommendations of the Chief of Engineers, Youngberg's boss. The Chief of Engineers recommended the construction of a continuous intracoastal waterway eight feet deep and seventy-five feet wide, rejecting Youngberg's recommendation that the waterway be constructed to a width of a hundred feet. The projected cost of the waterway improvements was \$4,221,000, with annual maintenance costs of \$125,000. In January 1927, Congress appropriated the funds for the widening of the canal to seventy-five feet at the bottom and a depth of eight feet at mean low water and for annual maintenance.¹⁶⁴

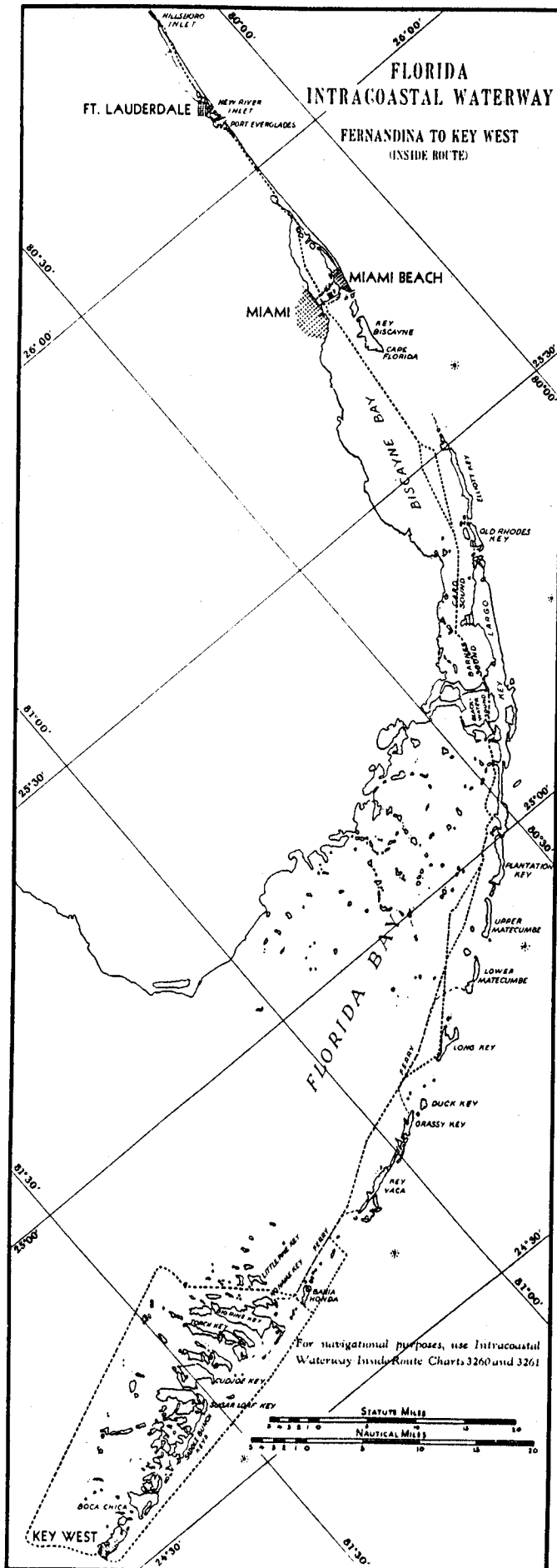
LARGEST COVERED Storage Yacht Basin — IN — FLORIDA



STORAGE BASIN ON NEW RIVER, FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA.

Above is a 1923 advertisement for Captain George J. Pilkington's yacht storage basin. Pilkington attended the 1922 Army Corps of Engineers hearing exploring federal acquisition of the East Coast Canal. Below, "King Neptune's barge," with bathing beauties and Dave Sherwood's orchestra, takes part in Hollywood's 1925 Decoration Day boat parade on the canal.





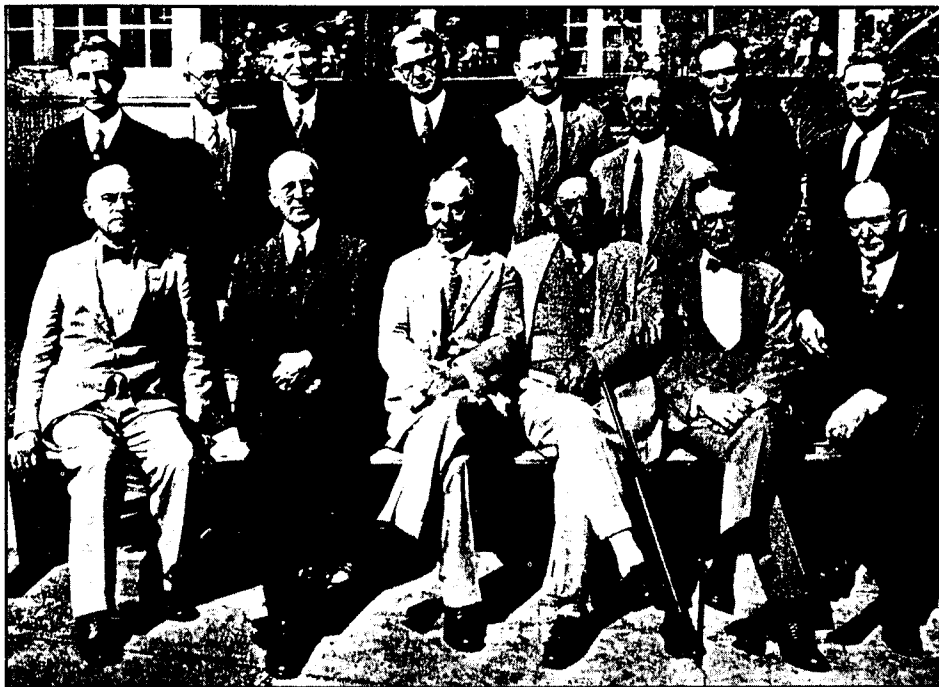
The Creation of the Florida Inland Navigation District

With the appropriation made, former chamber president and Daytona Beach attorney Dave Sholtz began to prepare a carefully crafted draft of a bill to create what would become the Florida Inland Navigation District for consideration by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the East Coast of Florida. After comments on a preliminary draft were received from east coast members of the state House and Senate, the United States Attorney General, Florida's attorney general and New York bond counsel, a revised bill passed both houses of the Florida Legislature and was signed into law by Governor John W. Martin in 1927.¹⁶⁵

At the first meeting of the navigation district held in Eau Gallie on August 29, 1927, former Volusia County Commissioner and president of the Daytona Chamber of Commerce Charles Burgman was elected chairman. Other officers elected were Colonel Frank B. Shutts, an attorney and owner and editor of the *Miami Herald*, as vice-chairman; D. H. Conkling, owner and editor of the *Palm Beach Post* and Commodore of the Palm Beach Yacht Club, as secretary; and Frank H. Owen, chairman of the Jacksonville public utilities commission, as treasurer.¹⁶⁶

In addition to Broward County's Commodore Brook, other board members appointed to the first commission were A. M. Taylor, a state senator from St. Johns County and president of the Peoples Bank in St. Augustine; Dana Fuqua, a Flagler County real estate developer; John O. Shares, a former Brevard County judge, president of the Brevard County Chamber of Commerce, and president of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the Florida East Coast; A. W. Young, an Indian River

The canal's path through Broward County to Miami and the subsequent channel through the Keys are traced in this map from the 1935 Intracoastal Waterway program.



First board of Commissioners of the Florida Inland Navigation District, 1928. Seated (left to right): John O. Shares, Frank H. Owen, Chairman Charles F. Burgman, A.W. Young, canal owner Harry S. Kelsey, A.M. Taylor. Standing (left to right): F.G. McMullen, Kelsey's attorney Bert Winters, D.H. Conkling, Frank B. Shutts, D.F. Fuquay, A.H. Brook, board attorney A. A. Green, Stanley Kitching.

County state senator, real estate developer, and executive secretary of the Everglades Drainage and Control Boards; and F. G. McMullen, president of the St. Lucie County Bank and chairman of the Fort Pierce Inlet Commission.¹⁶⁷

The waterway board engaged Colonel Youngberg as chief engineer and director of procurement of right-of-way to take charge of the surveys of the right-of-way and to ascertain a fair price for the acquisition of the Florida East Coast Canal. Youngberg divided up the District surveys into natural geographic reaches; his appraisal board ultimately assessed the value of the canal property at \$1,151,000. The navigation district, however, would later purchase the privately-owned waterway for only \$725,000.¹⁶⁸

Broward Voters Approve Waterway Bond Issue by 17-to-1 Margin, Canal Becomes "Intracoastal Waterway from Jacksonville to Miami"

To finance the purchase of the waterway and the necessary right-of-way, the navigation district called

an election to be held on June 26, 1928, in the eleven east coast counties comprising the district for approval of a \$1,887,000, four-percent bond issue. Fort Lauderdale's Commodore Brook and local contractor J. B. Fraser, later an assistant director of procurement of right-of-way in Broward County under Youngberg, were among those who actively worked for passage of the bond issue in Broward County. Local canal committees conducted an intensive county-wide educational campaign in an effort to acquaint Broward County voters with the advantages of the district's purchase of the Florida East Coast canal for turn-over to the federal government.¹⁶⁹

Brook and Dr. Thomas E. Will, chairman of the South Florida Development League and an authority on Broward county's back country, appeared before a mass meeting of citizens at the Oakland Park school auditorium. Brook outlined the expenses and itemized the benefits of the waterway, stating that improvement of the canal would reduce the cost of living by reducing freight costs and would increase business at Port

CANAL BOND ISSUE PASSES ELECTION ON EAST COAST

Majority In The Eleven Counties For Project Is Four To One

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., June 27. (AP)—A bond issue of \$1,887,000 for improvement of the Florida East Coast Canal today appeared assured. Although only about one-seventh of the qualified voters in the 11 coast counties affected went to the polls, the majority in favor of the project was about four to one on the face of early returns.

Funds derived from the issue were intended for use of the Florida Inland Navigation District in obtaining right-of-way for the canal.

The proposition decided by the voters yesterday included a plan to turn over the properties so purchased to the federal government, which will in turn expend \$4,221,000 to enlarge the canal to a depth of eight feet at average low water and a width of 75 feet at the bottom from Jacksonville to Miami. Government expenditure of \$125,000 annually for maintenance also is provided.

Broward county, with a vote of almost 17 to one, endorsed the bond issue of \$1,887,000 for the purchase of the East Coast canal properties. The total vote in the county was 1782 for; 127 against. Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce had one of the largest majorities for the

Article from the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, June 27, 1928.

Everglades and the use of the waterway by private yachts. Dr. Will added that an improved inland waterway would ease the transporting of farm goods and the import of farm necessities.¹⁷⁰ Conceding that a chief objection to the bond issue was "hard times," Dr. Will argued in another public speech supporting the issue that Broward County voters would pay the least and gain the most if the issue passed.¹⁷¹

On June 28, 1928, the bond election was held in the eleven east coast

counties comprising the Florida Inland Navigation District. The bond issue passed in all of the counties by a combined four-to-one margin. The vote in Broward was 1,907 for passage and 128 against — a 17-to-1 margin. The town of Hollywood voted unanimously for passage, casting all of its 297 votes for the bond issue.¹⁷²

Using the bond's proceeds, the waterway district purchased the privately-owned Florida East Coast Canal, and on December 5, 1929, the Army Corps of Engineers advised the Florida Inland Navigation District that the Attorney General of the United States had certified that title to the waterway was vested in the United States.¹⁷³ The toll chains of the old private canal were dropped and the canal became a free public navigable waterway of the United

States. By an act of Congress the official name for the waterway became the "Intracoastal Waterway from Jacksonville, Florida, to Miami, Florida."¹⁷⁴

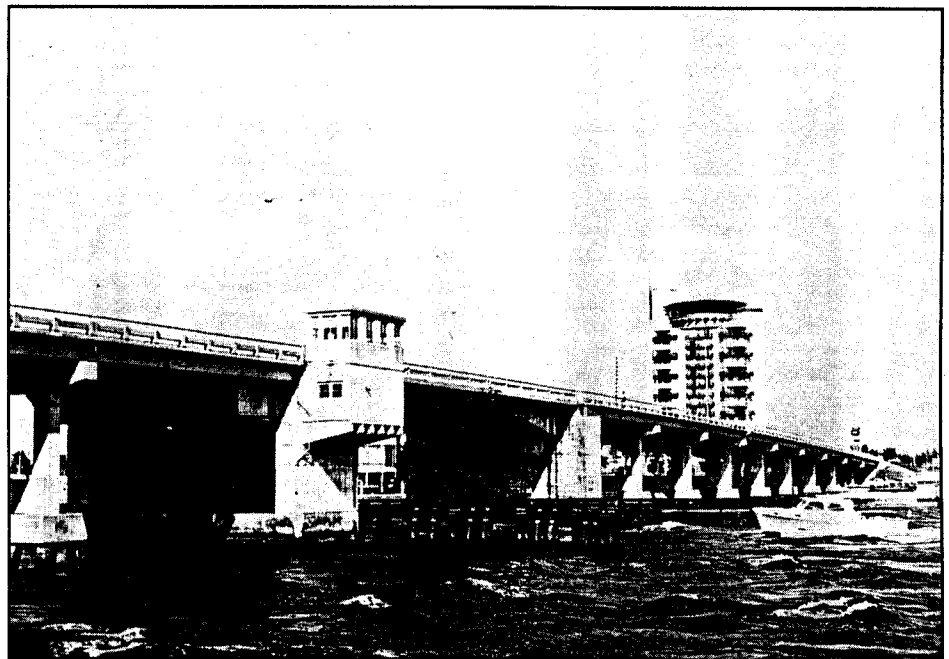
In the years to follow, the Army Corps of Engineers would continue to play a significant role in the development of the waterway, carrying on in the tradition of Gadsden, Wright, and Gillmore. During the thirty-year period ending in 1912, the privately-owned Florida Coast Line Canal and Transportation Company constructed 268 miles of canals along the Florida east coast, earning more than a million acres of state land in the process. Railroad magnate Henry Flagler, though, would end up with a quarter of the canal company's land grant as a result of the extension of his east coast railway to Miami in the

late 1890s.

At the turn of the century, renewed interest in the nation's inland waterways led to the formation of a plethora of citizens groups to lobby Congress for waterway improvements, including the Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association and the National Rivers and Harbors Congress. In Florida, the revitalization in 1923 of the old Florida East Coast Chamber of Commerce in Daytona Beach resulted in the creation of the Florida Inland Navigation District and the purchase of the privately-owned east coast tollway in 1929 for turnover to the federal government and conversion to a public waterway, culminating a history of federal involvement in the waterway that had begun more than a hundred years before.



Dr. Thomas E. Will (courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).



The Brook Memorial Causeway Bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway at Southeast 17th Street, Fort Lauderdale, honoring Commodore A. H. Brook, F.I.N.D. board member and leading force in the federal acquisition of the waterway.

