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THE EVERGLADES BEFORE RECLAMATION

by J. E. DOVELL

Within our own generation a scientist who always weighed his words could say of the Everglades:

Of the few as yet but very imperfectly explored regions in the United States, the largest perhaps is the southernmost part of Florida below the 26th degree of northern latitude. This is particularly true of the central and western portions of this region, which inland are an unmapped wilderness of everglades and cypress swamps, and off-shore a maze of low mangrove "keys" or islands, mostly unnamed and uncharted, with channels, "rivers" and "bays" about them which are known only to a few of the trappers and hunters who have lived a greater part of their life in that region. ¹

This was Ales Hrdlicka of the Smithsonian Institution, the author of a definitive study of anthropology in Florida written about 1920 ; and it is not far from the truth today.

After crossing the lower Everglades in 1897, Hugh L. Willoughby commented :

It may seem strange, in our day of Arctic and African exploration, for the general public to learn that in our very midst, as it were, in one of our Atlantic Coast States, we have a tract of land one hundred and thirty miles long and seventy miles wide that is as much unknown to the white man as the heart of Africa. ²

These words ably describe the veil of obscurity which

NOTE. This account of the Everglades and their early history is one result of the author's extensive research into all available sources. The full story of the Everglades including reclamation is the subject of an unpublished dissertation by the author which was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina. *Ed.*

1. Ales Hrdlicka, *The Anthropology of Florida* (Deland: The Florida State Historical Society, 1922), 5.
2. Hugh L. Willoughby, *Across the Everglades* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1898), 13.

covered the interior of Florida below the twenty-seventh parallel from its discovery to the twentieth century. It seems almost incredible that Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades should be the objects of exploring expeditions as late as 1897. The military records of the Seminole wars, and even the Thomas Buckingham Smith report of 1848, failed in large measure to dispel the mythical fancies popularly and naturally ascribed to the region.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Everglades of Florida occupy an irregularly marked shallow slough thirty-five to fifty miles wide and a hundred miles in length—an area of approximately four thousand square miles, all south of the twenty-seventh parallel of latitude with the exception of a small strip bordering the shores of Lake Okeechobee.³

Bounded on the east by a coastal fringe of sand dunes and on the west by the Ocaloocoochee Slough and the Big Cypress Swamp; the Everglades extend to the southern and southwestern coast, where salt water marshes and mangrove swamps form the southern border.⁴ The line of demarcation between the glades and adjoining areas is extremely irregular: the actual boundary between the Everglades and the contiguous prairie is where the sedges are met by grasses, cypress, salt marsh or mangroves. The soil of all is of organic origin.

This whole area constitutes the third or downstream

3. Samuel Sanford, "The Topography and Geology of Southern Florida," Florida Geological Survey, *Second Annual Report* (1909), 189; C. Wythe Cooke and Stuart Mossom, "The Geology of Florida," Florida Geological Survey, *Twentieth Annual Report* (1928), 43; E. H. Sellards, "Geologic Sections Across the Everglades," Florida Geological Survey, *Twelfth Annual Report* (1919), 67-68; J. C. Stephens and C. C. Schrontz, "The Principal Characteristics of the Kissimmee-Everglades Watershed," The Soil Science Society of Florida, *Proceedings*, IV-A (1942), 14, 24; Garald G. Parker and C. Wythe Cooke, *Late Cenozoic Geology of Southern Florida, With A Discussion of the Ground Water*, Geological Bulletin No. 27 (Tallahassee : Florida Geological Survey, 1944), 46-53 ; John H. Davis, Jr., *The Natural Features of Southern Florida, Especially the Vegetation and the Everglades*, Geological Bulletin No. 25 (Tallahassee : Florida Geological Survey, 1944), 240-294.

4. Parker and Cooke, *Geology of Southern Florida*, 46.

unit of the watershed of the interior of the Florida peninsula below the twenty-eighth parallel. The first or tributary section of this drainage area, the Kissimmee-Okeechobee Everglades watershed, comprises some five thousand square miles.⁵ The drainage elements of the first area are the Kissimmee river and numerous smaller streams. The second or middle unit of this watershed is Lake Okeechobee, a shallow body of fresh water of seven hundred and twenty square miles whose surface elevation was often twenty-two feet above sea level, but now by drainage it is regulated between fourteen and eighteen feet. The total area of the three units approaches ten thousand square miles. Formerly, under natural conditions, the outflow of the waters of the first two units passed onto the third unit.⁶

GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

"Taken as a whole," wrote Samuel Sanford, "the topography of the [southern] Florida mainland has all the aspects of infancy. Drainage is defective, sloughs, shallow ponds and lakes abound."⁷ These infantile aspects are due, insofar as the Everglades are concerned, to the gradient of one-tenth of a foot per mile over the hundred miles from the southern shore of Okeechobee to the Gulf. This vast basin has been the scene of the growth and slow decay of vegetation in an area of low elevation enjoying a warm climate and heavy rainfall.⁸

Scientific interest in the geology of the Everglades began after the middle of the nineteenth century. The first Florida state geologist, E. H. Sellards, brought together the geological investigations of the peninsula prior to 1908 in a section of his first report. He states that in 1825 James Pierce visited "Central Florida"

5. Stephens and Schrontz, "Characteristics of the Kissimmee-Everglades Watershed," *loc. cit.*, 14.

6. Cook and Mossom, "The Geology of Florida," *loc. cit.*, 43-44.

7. Sanford, "Topography and Geology of Southern Florida," *loc. cit.*, 179.

8. John H. Davis, Jr., *The Peat Deposits of Florida: Their Occurrence, Development, and Uses*, *Geological Bulletin* No. 30 (Tallahassee: Florida Geological Survey, 1946), 17-18.

and described its great savannahs, one of which, seen by Colonel James Gadsden, was a hundred miles in circumference, but, "The existence of a large permanent lake located by maps in the southern part of the peninsula is doubted."⁹ As late as 1838 Henry Whiting was inclined to doubt the existence of both the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee.¹⁰ But the publication of Thomas Buckingham Smith's documentary report on the Everglades in 1848 established the existence and general location of both.

Smith believed the geology of the southern portion of Florida to be similar to that of the sea-coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. "Oolitic lime-rock, filled with the shells and corals of species that still exist, forms the great geological feature of the country."¹¹ He found the rock floor to be porous and susceptible of easy excavation; exposure to air hardened the rock and made it useful for building purposes.¹²

In 1851 Michael Toumey examined the limestone at the falls of the Miami river leading into the Everglades. These rocks, he found, were identical with living shells in the surrounding waters. He regarded the glades as resting on a basin of what he termed Miami limestone, clearly distinguished from the Tertiary limestone at Tampa bay.¹³ Because of their accessibility the fossil bearing beds of the Gulf coast and the Caloosahatchee river aroused the interest of geologists before 1900. But the investigations of early workers were restricted to the seacoasts and river banks.¹⁴

Had the mass of data now at hand for geologists been

9. E. H. Sellards, "Geological Investigations in Florida Previous to the Organization of the Present Geological Survey," *First Annual Report of the Florida Geological Survey* (1908), 56.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Thomas Buckingham Smith, "Report of Buckingham Smith, Esquire, on His Reconnaissance of the Everglades, 1848," *Senate Documents, The Reports of the Committees, Number 242, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 15*. Hereinafter cited as "Smith Report."

12. *Ibid.*

13. Sellards, "Geological Investigations in Florida," *loc. cit.*, 58-59.

14. Garald G. Parker, "Notes on the Geology and Ground Water of the Everglades in Southern Florida," *The Soil Science Society of Florida, Proceedings, IV-A* (1942), 53.

available to Louis Agassiz in 1851, or to Joseph Le Conte in 1878, they would never have proposed their theory that the southern half of the peninsula was of coral growth.¹⁵

Angelo Heilprin, exploring the Caloosahatchee and Lake Okeechobee in 1886 found no evidence to support a coralline theory of growth of Florida; he decided that the growth had been through accessions of organic and inorganic material in the usual methods of sedimentation and upheaval.¹⁶ Matson and Clapp expressed the belief that the deposition of the Pliocene rocks began with an encroachment of the sea which extended beyond the latitude of Lake Okeechobee. Following the deposition of the Pliocene the land emerged to a probable greater height than at present, and "It was during this period that the major features of the present topography were produced".¹⁷

ORIGIN OF THE EVERGLADES

The gently sloping basin of the Everglades was originally Pliocene sea bottom, and Lake Okeechobee ". . . is an original hollow in the Pliocene sea floor."¹⁸ This floor was subject to erosion, solution, and a series of depositions. Later the younger deposits were also subject to erosion and solution, and still later partly covered by sand. "The sea withdrew leaving a large area that became occupied by fresh water marshes and lakes in which solution and erosion were at first dominant, then deposition of . . . marl commenced. In Recent times deposition became dominant, and beds of fresh water marl with peat and muck were laid down. This association of principally organic soils is 8 feet thick near Lake Okeechobee."

15. *Ibid.*

16. Angelo Heilprin, *Explorations on the West Coast of Florida and in the Okeechobee Wilderness* (Philadelphia: Wagner Free Institute of Science, 1887), 65.

17. George C. Matson and Frederick C. Clapp, "A Preliminary Report of the Geology of Florida with Special Reference to Stratigraphy," Florida Geological Survey, *Second Annual Report* (1909), 167. See also Garald G. Parker and Nevin D. Hoy, "Additional Notes on the Geology and Ground Waters of Southern Florida," The Soil Society of Florida, *Proceedings*, V-A (1943), 37-55.

18. Parker and Cooke, *Late Cenozoic Geology of Southern Florida*, 51.

chobee but gradually thins out in all directions to the margins of the Everglades. The accumulation of peat and muck is still continuing in certain untouched areas of the Everglades where each year's growth of plants dies and sinks below the surface of the shallow water and is incorporated in the organic mass below."¹⁹

SOIL DEPOSITS OF THE EVERGLADES

The Everglades almost everywhere have a rocky bottom on which are soil deposits ". . . the result of slow vegetative decay . . . and would continue to build up on a surface having even steeper gradient than that now existing" under natural conditions.²⁰ Much of this deposit has come from saw-grass. The northern and eastern sections of the Everglades are nearly devoid of trees, being covered with saw-grass (*Mariscus jamaicensis*), "which is not a grass but a large sedge with short sharp spines on the edges of its leaves. . . ." ²¹ The saw-grass covers most of the glades although bushes and trees of myrtle, willow and bay often appear in sporadic clumps or little islands. On the eastern and western edges many islands or hammocks appear in close proximity to the mainland. These hammocks consist of a dense growth of broad leaved trees and shrubs and appear as true islands during periods of high water.²²

A rank growth of herbaceous vegetation has occupied this large trough through the center of southern Florida, and from its decay and settlement has built up the ground level at the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee to fourteen feet above bed rock. This thickness of the cumulative soils at the southern shore gradually thins.

19. *Ibid.*, 49-50. See also Davis, *Natural Features of Southern Florida*, 244-248.

20. Parker, "Notes on the Geology and Ground Water of the Everglades," *loc. cit.*, 52.

21. Davis, *Peat Deposits of Florida*, 88.

22. John K. Small, *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania: The Science Press Company, 1929), 14; M. H. Gallatin and J. R. Henderson, "Progress Report on the Soil Survey of the Everglades," *The Soil Science Society of Florida, Proceedings*, V-A (1943), 95-104.

out to a feather edge at the sides of the Everglades.²³ An examination of thirty-five samples of soils taken from Lake Okeechobee showed an exceedingly high nitrogen content with comparatively small quantities of potash and phosphate.²⁴

A survey of the Everglades soils from the rock rim at the head of the north branch of New river at Ft. Lauderdale to Lake Okeechobee covering a strip five miles in width was made in 1915 by the United States Department of Agriculture.²⁵ The survey located three classes of soils. Along the lake shore for a width of one to two miles, the material was found to be black and well decomposed, and averaged sixty per cent ash content. Because of the growth of the custard apple tree on this type of soil, it has been called the custard apple muck.²⁶ "The best land in the Everglades is where the custard apple grows."²⁷ South of this is a belt of less decomposed material with a smaller percentage of mineral matter which is called peaty muck. Known as "willow and elder land," it is a transition strip between the lake border soils and the Everglades peat at its rear.²⁸ This peat averages up to ninety-three per cent combustible, and comprises sixty per cent of the area mapped.²⁹ The agriculturally important types of *soils* determined to 1943 are: custard apple muck, 25,000 acres; peaty muck, 30,000 acres; everglades peat, 350,000 acres; and

23. Sanford, "Topography and Geology of Southern Florida," *loc. cit.*, 190-191; Charles Torrey Simpson, *In Lower Florida Wilds* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), 119.

24. Rufus E. Rose, "Analyses of Everglades Soils," Florida Department of Agriculture, *Florida Quarterly Bulletin*, XXXIII (January, 1913), 11.

25. Mark Baldwin, H. W. Hawker, and Carl F. Miller, *Soil Survey of the Fort Lauderdale Area, Florida* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), 1-4.

26. *Ibid.*, 16.

27. John C. Gifford, *The Tropical Subsistence Homestead* (Coral Gables: University of Miami, 1934), 89.

28. Charles B. Evans and Robert V. Allison, "The Soils of the Everglades in Relation to Reclamation and Conservation Operations," The Soil Science Society of Florida, *Proceedings*, IV-A (1942), 43.

29. Baldwin, Hawker, and Miller, *Soil Survey*, 35.

everglades peat over sand, 130,000 acres.³⁰ Between 1940 and 1943, 5,800 of the 7,000 square miles in the general Everglades region had been surveyed and mapped by the United States Soil Conservation Service. The information obtained indicated that some 435,000 acres of the land examined was "suitable for long time use for crop production."³¹

FLORA AND FAUNA

The Everglades are situated in a semitropical climate where the average yearly rainfall varies from sixty inches at Miami to fifty inches at Okeechobee.³² The yearly variation is considerable, the distribution within the year producing wet and dry seasons. Temperatures vary from the summer high of 98° F. to winter temperatures far below freezing under conditions of very low water in the open glades.³³ "The region is . . . remarkable for the fact that it is a meeting place for many temperate and tropical types of plants and animals."³⁴

The ecologist has divided the *vegetation* of the whole Everglades region into six broad types, with the general areas covered by them as follows: (1) custard apple and willow-elderberry zone along the eastern and southern shores of Lake Okeechobee-140,000 acres ; (2) saw-grass marsh plains of the northern and central glades-1,000,000 acres; (3) saw-grass and wax myrtle or bayberry thicket areas, along the sides of the central plain-240,000 acres ; (4) slough and tree-island areas south and east of Lake Okeechobee-775,000 acres; (5) mixed marshes and wet prairies east and west of the central plain at the southern end of the glades-300,000 acres;

30. M. H. Gallatin and J. R. Henderson, "Progress Report on the Soil Survey of the Everglades," The Soil Science Society of Florida, *Proceedings*, V-A (1943), 97-100.

31. *Ibid.*, 104. See also Davis, *Natural Features of Southern Florida*, 261 *et passim.*, and *Peat Deposits of Florida*, 116-129.

32. Stephens and Schrontz, "Characteristics of the Kissimmee-Everglades Watershed," *loc. cit.*, 24.

33. Robert V. Allison, "The Soil and Water Conservation Problem in the Everglades," The Soil Science Society of Florida, *Proceedings*, I (1939), 38.

34. Wallace Edwin Safford, "Natural History of Paradise Key and the Nearby Everglades of Florida," *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution* (1917), 377.

and (6) bordering prairies with scattered hammocks and strands of trees along the borders of the Everglades-145,000 acres.³⁵

A majority of the plants in this great partially submerged bog stem from aquatic families. Covering the larger part of the Everglades, the saw-grass has been the prominent growth which has impressed every traveler in the area. In the sloughs, on the islands, and along the borders of the Everglades where not crowded out by the saw-grass are found hundreds of other grasses, plants, shrubs, and trees. Among the latter, the royal palm is noteworthy for its clean, gray, and smooth trunk, crowned by ten or twelve shining and deep, dark green leaves rising as high as a hundred and twenty feet above the earth. Describing the royal palms on Paradise Key, Charles Torrey Simpson wrote:

Viewed from a distance of half a mile or more this forest is one of the most beautiful my eyes have rested on. The whole forms a superb emerald island decorated with splendid palms which everywhere cut the skyline with unsurpassed effect and it is set in a sea of green everglades.³⁶

The animal life of the region of the Everglades is equally as varied as the plant life. Safford wrote that "the insect fauna alone must certainly include thousands of species. . . ." ³⁷ Simpson commented that one hundred twenty-eight species of birds had been sighted on or near Paradise Key and a considerable variety of small mammals, fish and frogs.³⁸ Of great interest to naturalists, the shell life of the Everglades includes many specimens of crustacea and gastropoda. The tree snails found on the trees of the islands are among the most attractive of

35. John H. Davis, Jr., "Vegetation of the Everglades and Conservation from the Point of View of the Plant Ecologist," The Soil Science Society of Florida, *Proceedings*, V-A (1943), 105. See also Davis, *Natural Features of Southern Florida*, 244-272 and *Peat Deposits of Florida*, 105-112.

36. Simpson, *Out of Doors in Florida*, 241. See also Safford, "Everglades Natural History," *loc. cit.*, 275, *et passim*.

37. Safford, "Everglades Natural History," *loc. cit.*, 390.

38. Simpson, *Out of Doors in Florida*, 241.

their species, with their shells of varying and beautiful colors.³⁹

Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades have been near perfect homes for fish, especially in times of high water. Without doubt, the most interesting species of fish in the region is the predatory alligator gar.⁴⁰ The black or big-mouthed bass is found throughout the region. Mud-fish, catfish, shiners, kill fish, sunfish, bream, and numerous minnows are seen in the lakes, pools, and sloughs.⁴¹

Perhaps the family of the fauna which most quickly comes to mind at the mention of the Everglades is the reptiles the largest of which are the alligators. "These huge animals are not at all dangerous, but will flee at the sight of a man and will not show fight unless brought to bay."⁴² The Everglades are well supplied with a great variety of snakes. The cottonmouth or water moccasin, which is very poisonous, is the most unpopular and predominant of the snake population. Rattlesnakes, garter, water, black racer, gopher, coachwhip, and green tree snakes are additional members of the family encountered in the glades.⁴³

Virtually all of the birds which frequent the states of the eastern seaboard are found in or near the Everglades at some time of the year. The roseate spoonbill and the flamingo have almost disappeared and the parakeets are gone, but the snowy egret and the white ibis are present in large flocks throughout the area.

There are few mammals. Deer graze in open spots and an occasional wildcat will make his home on one of the islands. Opossum and raccoon thrive along the borders and sometimes on the islands. Perhaps the mammal best adapted to the glades is the Florida otter, whose trails Willoughby saw by the thousands.⁴⁴

39. *Ibid.*, 243.

40. Simpson, *In Lower Florida Wilds*, 128.

41. Safford, "Everglades Natural History," *loc. cit.*, 411.

42. Zane Grey, *Tales of Southern Rivers* (New York: Grosset and Dunlop, 1937), 75-76.

43. Safford, "Everglades Natural History," *loc. cit.*, 416-418.

44. Willoughby, *Across the Everglades*, 160.

THE ARRIVAL OF MAN

The Aborigines

The seasonally inundated shores of Lake Okeechobee, the grassy waters of the Everglades, the swampy isolation of the Ocaloacoochee Slough and the Big Cypress, and the tidal flooded islands of the mangrove coast could never have been habitations for a large population; but ancient campsites have been found on a number of Everglades islands. Diggings in a series of deposits at the fork of New river several miles west of Ft. Lauderdale revealed pottery of a primitive nature.⁴⁵ On Long Key, in the Everglades, a refuse deposit two hundred feet in diameter gave up numerous potshreds which bore shell-cut workings on marine shells. The inhabitants of the region used terrapin shells extensively as well as alligator, fish, and bird bones in their primitive handicraft.⁴⁶

Excavations in mounds near Opa Locka and Golden Glade unearthed a large variety of shells, beads, pottery, and other artifacts which indicated two distinct Indian cultures, one on top of the other.⁴⁷ These investigations definitely proved that an earlier race inhabited these village sites than the Tequestas or other Indians discovered in South Florida by the Spanish explorers.

Between Ft. Thompson, at the head of navigation on the Caloosahatchee river, and Lake Okeechobee Ales Hrdlicka could find nothing of importance in the way of Indian remains, nor could he locate anything in the vicinity of the lake itself.⁴⁸

A report on the location of ". . . a great plan of earthworks elaborately laid out in embankments and mounds, covering an area a mile square" at the very edge of the Everglades near the shores of Lake Okeechobee and the present town of Belle Glade was made in 1931.⁴⁹ The

45. Mark Raymond Harrington, "Archaeology of the Everglades Region," *American Anthropologist*, XI (January-March, 1909), 139-142.

46. *Ibid.*, 142.

47. Florida State Archaeological Survey, *Second Biennial Report to the State Board of Conservation* (1936), Part IV, 145.

48. Hrdlicka, *Anthropology of Florida*, 52.

49. Matthew W. Stirling, "Explorer Finds First Traces of Unknown Everglades Tribe," *Science News Letter*, XIX (May 23, 1931), 325.

central figure of the earth works consisted of a flat-topped rectangle thirty feet by two hundred and fifty feet, with earthen embankments enclosing a court at the front of the figure. A semi-circular bank, partially enclosing the rectangle and embankments, extended further forward. Matthew W. Stirling, chief of the Bureau of American Ethnology, found these Everglades constructions the nearest approach to the famous Fort Ancient earthworks in Ohio of any in North America. Excavations on a small scale disclosed potsherds identifying the locality with an aboriginal inhabitation long before that of the Seminoles.⁵⁰

In 1921 an idol carved to represent a human figure in a squatting position was found on the northern shore of the lake and lends additional strength to the theory that a race antedating presently known aboriginal tribes lived in the area.⁵¹ J. Walter Fewkes, then Chief of the Bureau of American Ethnology, pointed out that this object possessed a remarkable similarity to a wooden idol found some years previously in Cuba ; both were approximately the same size, both had been cut from *lignum vitae*, and both had weathered to an identical color. Fewkes, comparing this artifact with others found on Key Marco and near Ft. Myers, regarded it as typical of a culture unrecorded in the past but opening a new phase of archaeological research in Florida.⁵²

Early Explorers

The first white men to reach Florida discovered an area peopled by sedentary Indians. There exists no authentic evidence as to the origin, arrival, or blood relation of these aborigines, though they were found to have had some contact with other continental tribes and with Cuba.⁵³ Daniel B. Brinton, one of the earliest anthro-

50. *Ibid.*

51. Jesse Walter Fewkes, "Aboriginal Wooden Objects from Southern Florida," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, LXXX (March, 1928), Number 9, 1-2.

52. *Ibid.*

53. James Mooney, "Calusa," *Handbook of American Indians*, Part I, *Bulletin* 30, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1912, 195-196.

pologists to give serious study to Florida, divided Florida, as occupied by the Indians in the sixteenth century, into several districts. Two of these covered most of the Everglades: from Cape Canaveral to the tip of the peninsula on the east coast lay Tequesta; and the west coast area, at least as far as Tampa bay and into the interior around Lake Okeechobee, was inhabited by the Caloosa or Carlos.⁵⁴ The name Caloosa, defying interpretation, appears in the early French and Spanish records as Calos, Carlos, and Caluca; in the English records as Caloosa, Carloosa, and Charlotte. The name survives today in Caloosa village, Caloosahatchee river and Charlotte Harbor.⁵⁵

Scattered reports give a picture of the Calos as a savage and wily band of Indians and

. . . they were noted among the tribes for their golden wealth which they had accumulated from numerous wrecks cast away upon the keys in passage from the south and . . . they were regarded as veritable pirates, plundering and killing without mercy the crews of all vessels, excepting the Spanish, so unfortunate as to be stranded in their neighborhood.⁵⁶

In the period from 1521 to 1565, Spanish attempts at colonization in Florida ended in dismal failure. France, sunk in a slough of "decadence and civil war, from which Huguenot leader Coligny dreamed of rescuing her "by snatching treasure and colonies" from Spain, sent out several expeditions in the 1560's.⁵⁷ The French Protestants turned to the Florida coast when Jean Ribaut attempted to plant, a colony on the St. Johns river in 1564. This colony was short lived, being destroyed by the Spaniard Pedro Menendez de Aviles in 1565. This is

54. Daniel Garrison Brinton, *Notes on the Floridian Peninsula, Its Literary History, Indian Tribes and Antiquities* (Philadelphia: Josephin Sabin, 1859), 112.

55. John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors*, *Bulletin* 73, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1922, 29-30.

56. Mooney, "Calusa," *loc. cit.*, 195.

57. Kathryn T. Abbey, *Florida, Land of Change* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 26-27.

important to us because the settlement was twice visited by Rene de Laudonniere, who was accompanied by the artist, Jacques Le Moyne.⁵⁸ From the artist's narrative, published with his drawings, it is possible to glean something of Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades in the sixteenth century.

During the time of Laudonniere's second visit to the Florida colony stories were heard of white men living with some of the Indian tribes. The French offered rewards to the Indians who would bring such persons to them, and as a result two Spaniards were brought into the French village. When questioned as to how they arrived in Florida, they related that they had been wrecked on the Florida reefs and had fallen into the hands of the Calos.⁵⁹

According to these men, the village of the chief of the Calos lay on a river beyond the Cape of Florida. One of them told how he had acted as a courier to the chief and had been sent several times on a five day journey from Calos to a chief named Oathkaqua on the east coast.

Midway on this journey there is, in a great fresh-water lake called Sarrope, an island about five miles across, abounding in many kinds of fruit, and especially in dates growing on palm trees, in which there is a great trade. There is a still greater one in a certain root of which flour is made, of so good a quality that the most excellent bread is made of it, and furnished to all the country for miles round.⁶⁰

On his crude map of Florida Le Moyne placed the territory of Calos at the southern end of the peninsula, a little to the west of the southernmost cape, the country of Oathkaqua at Cape Canaveral, and Sarrope lake nearer the Atlantic than the Gulf. Buckingham Smith

58. Jacques Le Moyne, *Narrative of Le Moyne, An Artist Who Accompanied Laudonniere* (Boston: J. R. Osgood and Company, 1875), 1-11.

59. *Ibid.*, 10-11.

60. *Ibid.*, 11.

held that the lake was Okeechobee and the island was situated in it.⁶¹

A series of canoe routes . . . began in the Ten Thousand Islands and extended northward through the Big Cypress probably along the Fakahatchee Swamp route. One branch route led from this swamp to Lake Trafford. . . . Another branch route went up the Okaloacoochee Slough to the Caloosahatchee River, then into Lake Okeechobee, and from it up to the Kissimmee River, or by the Allapattah marsh and other low areas north of it into the St. Johns River.⁶²

In 1566, the Spanish adelantado Menendez directed Francisco de Reynoso to erect a fort for the protection of Spanish interests in the country of the Calos, and to discover a waterway to "Lake Miami" through which communication by water might be established from the Atlantic to the Gulf by way of the St. Johns river.⁶³ The Calos were ". . . masters of a large district of country, as far as a town they call Guacata, on the Lake of Mayaimi, which is called Mayaimi because it is very large."⁶⁴

Escalante Fontaneda, born of Spanish parents in the service of the King of Spain in Peru, was on his way to the fatherland when the ship on which he was taking

61. David O. True (ed.), *Memoir of Do. d'Escalante Fontaneda Respecting Florida Written in Spain, about the year 1575, Translated from the Spanish with Notes by Buckingham Smith, Washington, 1854* (Coral Gables: Glades House, 1945), Notes 15S, 15Sw, 42-43. See also Woodbury Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements Within the Present Limits of the United States, 1513-1561* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), 63.

62. Davis, *Natural Features of Southern Florida*, 21. See also Jeannette Thurber Connor, *Pedro Menendez de Aviles* (De Land: Florida State Historical Society, 1923), 205-206, 219, for an account of the route south from the St. Johns river.

63. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, 263, 276.

64. True, *Fontaneda*, 13. "This name, of which Miami is a variant, may be a compound of Choctaw *Maiha*, 'wide' and *Mih*, 'it is so.' By *Laguna de Mayaimi* Fontaneda meant what is now called *Lake Okeechobee*. Aviles on his expedition up the St. Johns River in 1566, called this lake *Maymi*." William A. Read, *Florida Place Names of Indian Origin and Seminole Personal Names. Louisiana State University Studies*, Number 11 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1934), 17-18.

passage went afoul on the Florida reefs.⁶⁵ His *Memoir*, written about 1575, is one of the few records concerning the Everglades prior to 1700.

Fontaneda described the locale of the present day Miami and nearby south Florida as

. . . a place of the Indians called Tequesta, situate on the bank of a river which extends into the country the distance of fifteen leagues, and issues from another lake of fresh water, which is said . . . to be an arm of the Lake of Mayaimi. On this lake, which lies in the midst of the country, are many towns, of thirty or forty inhabitants each. . . . They have bread of roots, which is their common food the greater part of the year; and because of the lake, which rises in some seasons so high that the roots cannot be reached in consequence of the water, they are for sometime without eating this bread. Fish is plenty and very good. . . . but when there is hunting, either deer or birds, they prefer to eat meat or fowl. I will also mention that in the rivers of fresh water are infinite quantities of eels, very savory, and enormous trout. . . . The Indians also eat lagartos (alligators), and snakes, and animals like rats, which live in the lake, freshwater tortoises, and many more disgusting reptiles.⁶⁶

Fontaneda commented that these Indians occupied a very rocky and a very marshy country; the latter cannot be mistaken for other than the glades. The lands of Florida, Fontaneda wrote, were abundant in pasturage and he recommended the Spanish government make stock-farms for the breeding of cattle, but he was not certain they were fit for settlement or the planting of sugar cane, although he had seen stalks of cane which had been set out and had begun to grow.⁶⁷

References to the Everglades during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are vague. The Spaniards estab-

65. True, *Fontaneda*, 19.

66. *Ibid.*, 13.

67. *Ibid.*, 21.

lished missions at Tequesta on the Miami river and on the Caloosahatchee river on the west coast, but these did not prosper. Buckingham Smith refers to the traffic of the Indians of southern Florida at the turn of the seventeenth century, and quotes Barcia as saying that "the traffic with Cuba in the month of March 1698 was worth \$17,000,"⁶⁸ which would indicate a considerable population and a thriving trade.

The pressure on the Caloosas from other tribes coming down from the north grew severe during the eighteenth century and after a protracted struggle for their homes, they were driven onto the keys and finally to Cuba.⁶⁹

Under the provisions of the Treaty of Paris of 1763 Florida became a British colony and with this change of sovereignty several descriptive volumes came off the London press relating to this newest acquisition. In William Roberts' *An Account of the First Discovery and Natural History of Florida*, published in 1763, reference is made to the "*Laguna del Espiritu Santo* . . . situated between the islands, extending from north to south about 27 leagues . . . near eight leagues wide."⁷⁰ In Thomas Jeffreys' map accompanying this work this lake is represented as having communications with the bays on the south and west, and Roberts adds, "at the end of it [the peninsula] . . . are two shoals and six islands, called *Cayos del Espiritu Santo*: this large lake is as yet but little known."⁷¹

In his *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, Bernard Romans, a Dutch surveyor employed by the British colonial government, mentions the Okeechobee-Everglades area, but was not sure that the big lake existed. He related a conversation held with a Spanish pilot who had been a captive of the Florida savages.⁷² The Spaniard spoke of a lake, wrote Romans,

68. "Smith Report," 20.

69. *Ibid.*, 19-20; James Mooney, "Calusa," *loc. cit.*, 196.

70. William Roberts, *An Account of the First Discovery and Natural History of Florida With a Particular Detail of the Several Expeditions and Descents Made On that Coast* (London: T. Jeffreys, 1763), 18.

71. *Ibid.*

72. Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (New York: R. Aitken, 1776), 285.

"Mayacco, seventy-five miles in circumference by his account. . . . The man told me that he had formerly been taken by savages, and by them carried a prisoner in a canoe. . . to their settlements on the banks of the lake." ⁷³

About the same time William Stork, describing the Shark river section behind the Cape of Florida and the sea coast eastward wrote that it consisted

. . . of swamps and highlands, the latter not exceeding 28,000 acres, in coarse reddish land, containing much moisture, whose luxurious plants are the pomegranate, the arboreous grape vine, the Chicasau plumb, the opunita spice trees, and a variety of unknown shrubs ; the soil is as rich as dung, producing mangrove 50 and 60 feet high. . . . ⁷⁴

A POSSESSION OF THE UNITED STATES

The best accounts of the Everglades prior to the Seminole wars are found in Charles Vignoles' *Observations Upon the Floridas* in 1823, and John D. Williams' *Territory of Florida* some years later. Vignoles made a lengthy trip around the peninsula and into the interior of the state. He wrote:

The Glade, or as it is emphatically termed, the *Never Glade*, ⁷⁵ appears to occupy almost the whole interior from about the parallel of Jupiter inlet to Cape Florida, thence round to Cape Sable to which point it approaches very near, and northwardly as far as the Delaware river discharging into Chatham bay: its general appearance is a flat sandy surface mixed in with large stones and rocks, with from six inches to two feet of water lying upon it in which is a growth of saw and other grasses, so thick as to

73. *Ibid.*

74. William Stork, *A Description of East Florida with a Journal Kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia, Botanist to His Majesty, for the Floridas, Upon a Journey from St. Augustine up the River St. Johns as far as the Lakes* (London: W. Nicoll, 1769), 12

75. Undoubtedly a typographical error as on pp. 52-53 the term Ever Glade is used, as are Great Glade and Eternal Glade on pp. 49 and 53.

impede the passage of boats where there is no current.⁷⁶

Vignoles saw a number of islands and promontories in the glades, many of which were covered with hammock growth mixed with some pine and cabbage palm. These he believed capable of cultivation but they were located in such inaccessible positions as to repel most efforts at penetration. Vignoles felt that the Everglade morass had been exaggerated by the Indians, Negroes, and refugee whites and that a sectional survey would have shown rich pieces of land in detached spots.⁷⁷

Williams visited the lower east coast in 1828 and observing the Miami river, wrote: "The Miame River is a small stream that issues out of the glades and enters Sandwich Gulf behind Cape Florida. . . . The height of the glades above the tide has not been ascertained."⁷⁸ Local inhabitants told Williams that they reckoned the altitude to be all of forty feet, but Williams thought twenty feet was more nearly correct.

The fall of the Rattones, New, Hillsboro, St. Lucie, Miami, Shark, Delaware, Caloosahatchee, and other rivers emptying out of the glades led Williams to speculate on the possibilities and results of deepening the channels of the rivers which drained the central area between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. He describes the area as follows:

On reaching the level of the glades, a vast grass meadow is expanded, apparently as boundless as the ocean ; you then pass on the winding lagoons from six to twelve miles westwardly and the grass, by degrees disappears and you are left in an unexplored grassy lake to which you can discover no bounds. . . . The grassy border of this lake is usually covered with water during the winter season, not

76. Charles Vignoles, *Observations Upon the Floridas* (New York: Bliss and White; 1823), 50.

77. *Ibid.*, 53, 83.

78. John Lee Williams, *The Territory of Florida or Sketches of the Civil and Natural History of the Country, the Climate, and the Indian Tribes from the First Discovery to the Present Time* (New York: A. T. Goodrich, 1837), 50.

so deep, however, as to hide the grass which is very thick and tall. During the summer, the ground is often dry and hard for ten miles beyond the timbered land. This tract is at all times stocked with wild game, and would afford a superior range for cattle.⁷⁹

Reflecting, in the 1830's, upon the future development of the Everglades, he anticipated much of what has actually taken place. He said:

Could it be drained by deepening the natural outlets? Would it not open to cultivation immense tracts of rich vegetable soil? Could the waterpower, obtained by draining, be improved to any useful purpose? Would such draining render the country unhealthy? . . . Many queries like these passed through our minds. They can only be solved by a thorough examination of the whole country. Could the waters be lowered ten feet, it would probably drain six hundred thousand acres ; should this prove to be a rich soil, as would seem probable, what a field it would open for tropical productions! What facilities for commerce!⁸⁰

After studying old maps of the interior of the peninsula which depicted the principal rivers connecting the coasts on both sides and talking with native Indians working in the Spanish fisheries on Charlotte Harbor, Williams came to the conclusion that the area had never been explored. "Not one of the writers who have described this country, since the change of flags, has been able to obtain any certain intelligence relating to this part of the peninsula."⁸¹

What was general knowledge about the Everglades in 1840, together with the opinion of Colonel William Wyatt, prominent Floridian, is contained in an extended letter from him on the subject, published first in the *National Intelligencer* and reprinted in *The News*, of St.

79. *Ibid.*, 151.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*, 61.

Augustine, April 16, 1841. He had seen a part of the region and ascended two of the outlets of the "lakes near the center of the Everglades which connect with one another," and described the rich soil and the native productions : the cotton plant, hemp, vanilla, coontie, and the prickly pear. Like everyone, he was all for drainage, which could be very easily carried out he was certain by deepening the outlets and confining the lakes to their beds.

THE SEMINOLE WAR

The Seminole Indian War in Florida was but a part of the general movement in the United States in the nineteenth century to push the Indian farther west, though here it was southward. Here, as in some other sections, it was the most difficult problem of the era, for the Indians were determined to remain on their lands.

Much of the good land of the state was occupied by the red men, so when settlement began it was inevitable that attempts would be made to remove the natives, a practice which had prevailed elsewhere since earliest colonial days. Various treaties were wrung from the Indians by more or less devious and dubious means, first to push them southwards, then to the West.⁸² Grant Foreman, an authority on the Indians, wrote: "In the dishonorable record of our dealings with the Indians there is perhaps no blacker chapter than that relating to the Seminole people."⁸³

Many of the Indians refused to migrate and retreated to the fastnesses of the Everglades, where at length they had to be followed by the armed forces of the United States.⁸⁴ The resulting war was a series of raids, ambushes, guerilla warfare, and few pitched battles; but

82. John Titcomb Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (New York : D. Appleton Company, 1848), 24-28.

83. Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), 321.

84. William A. Croffut, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field: Diary of Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U. S. A.* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 320.

one of the most important of these was fought on the northern shore of Lake Okeechobee on Christmas Day 1837.

Colonel Zachary Taylor had moved out from Ft. Brooke on Tampa bay the previous week with eight hundred regular troops, one hundred eighty Missouri volunteers, and seventy Delaware Indians. The Seminoles were well concealed in a dense hammock surrounded by a swamp which separated them

. . . from the enemy, three quarters of a mile in breadth [*sic*], being totally impassible for horse, and nearly so for foot, covered with, a thick growth of saw-grass five feet high, and knee deep in mud and water, which extended to the left as far as the eye could reach, and to the right to a part of the swamp and hammock we had just crossed, through which ran a deep creek.

The soldiers were obliged to proceed on foot through this swamp to a disastrous engagement with the Indians who had skillfully planned the setting for it. The loss of the attacking force was twenty-six killed and 112 wounded, a large portion of whom were officers. The bodies of ten Indians were found and it was learned that four others had been killed.⁸⁵

Taylor and his men succeeded in routing the Seminoles, who fled to the deeper recesses and more isolated spots of south Florida.

In the years from Dade's massacre in December 1835, to the cessation of hostilities in August 1842, the Indians were gradually hunted down; the majority of them were sent to the western lands; the remainder escaped into the area south of Okeechobee and the Caloosahatchee. General Thomas S. Jesup wrote the Secretary of War in February 1838 of the foolishness of seeking to transfer Indians from one wilderness to another, from lands not required for agricultural purposes, "when they were

85. *New York Observer*, January 20, 1838, quoted in Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 356-357.

not in the way of the white inhabitants, and when the greater portion of this country was an unexplored wilderness, of the interior of which we are as ignorant as of the interior of China." ⁸⁶

Criticism of the army's conduct of the long drawnout Florida war spread from the local to the national arena. To 1838 it was estimated that the loss of men was as high as three thousand, and the cost as high as \$30,000,000, all to subdue two thousand Indians who had held out against an army four or five times their number. ⁸⁷ But those who criticised were not aware of the circumstances, as General Jesup pointed out:

I, and my predecessors in command, ⁸⁸ were not only required to fight, beat and drive the enemy before us, but to go into an unexplored wilderness and catch them. Neither Wayne, Harrison, nor Jackson, was required to do this; and unless the objects to be accomplished be the same, there can be no just comparison as to the results. ⁸⁹

The general knew whereof he wrote, for in early 1838 he led an expedition from the head of navigation on the St. Johns river to Jupiter Inlet, engaging the Indians in the Loxahatchee swamp at the eastern edge of the Everglades. One of his servicemen wrote:

All I can say is that it is a most hideous region, in which nothing but serpents and frogs exist. The Indians themselves say that they cannot live here after March. While you are freezing we are melting with the heat, which equals that of July in New York. ⁹⁰

86. Sprague, *Florida War*, 201; see also Joshua Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida* (Columbus : Foster and Company, 1858), 182-183.

87. Frederick Marryat, *A Diary in America, With Remarks on its Institutions* (Philadelphia : T. K. and P. G. Collins, 1840), 289-290.

88. The list of army commanders is long and imposing. It is as follows: Edmond P. Gaines, Duncan Clinch, Winfield Scott, Richard Keith Call, Thomas S. Jesup, Zachary Taylor, Alexander Macomb, Walker Armistead, and William J. Worth.

89. Sprague, *Florida War*, 196.

90. Theodore F. Rodenbough, *From Everglade to Canon with the Second Dragoons, an Authentic Account of Service in Florida, Mexico, Virginia, and the Indian Country, including the Personal Recollections of Prominent Officers* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1875), 30.

Jesup reported he had taken 1,955 Indians, while 33 escaped and 35 were killed between September 1837 and May 1838.⁹¹ By that time the Seminoles had been driven to the glades and swamps of southern Florida, and the remaining four years of the war were fought largely in this remote region.⁹²

In 1839 it was hoped and announced that the war was virtually over, but when on July 23 Colonel Harney with a detail of thirty-two was attacked at Charlotte Harbor on the Caloosahatchee river and eighteen men were killed and six captured, the war was renewed with vigor.⁹³ By April 1840 the army had five thousand officers and men at the various forts in south Florida of whom almost six hundred were on the sick list.⁹⁴

It was determined to follow the Indian to his fastnesses, and this policy, though it took several years, was the most successful one. The most noteworthy of the expeditions into the Everglades was that of Colonel Harney in December 1840, when he made a crossing through the lower glades to Shark river on the Gulf. There is a day-by-day detailed account of the expedition, evidently written on the spot, in the *St. Augustine News* of January 8, 1841; of which the editor says :

A passage across the Peninsula! . . . the *grass-water* connecting with the Gulf and the Atlantic. The numerous islands which dot the *grass-water* hitherto affording a secure retreat to the murderous savages are now positively known, as they have been long conjectured, susceptible of examination. . . . These abodes are no longer inaccessible to the white man.

And the diarist records:

15th Dec. We reached the head of the river which

91. Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 363.

92. Charles H. Coe, *Red Patriots: The Story of the Seminoles* (Cincinnati: Editor Publishing Company, 1898), 35-40. See also Sprague, *Florida War*, 99-100; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 373; Rodenbough, *Everglade to Canon*, 36.

93. Sprague, *Florida War*, 243, 277.

94. *Ibid.*, 261.

the Indians call Poncha [Shark] and hailed it with three cheers. . . . We have now accomplished what has never been done by white man.

Leaving Ft. Dallas at the mouth of the Miami river on December 4, 1840, Colonel Harney with ninety men had entered the Everglades at the headwaters of that river and followed a southwest course. They travelled in canoes, making every effort at silence, pitching camp every night on the nearby islands, and looking all the while for recent Indian signs. On the fourth day out they reached Cochickehadjó's island in the southwestern glades, where they captured eight Indians, two of whom were warriors. These latter Harney summarily disposed of by hanging—he was not to be denied revenge for the Caloosahatchee massacre of his command the previous year. Then he surprised a small group of Indians on Chikikai's island, shot one warrior and captured two others and a number of squaws and children.⁹⁵ Later he hanged nine warriors, and killed an equal number in the skirmishes. Reaching Shark river the party went down to the Gulf and from thence to Indian Key, Ft. Dallas, and Ft. Pierce.

A second trip made by Harney and a detachment in January 1841 was important because of its further disclosures of the nature of the Seminoles and their habitat. Leaving Ft. Dallas on New Year's Day with four large canoes and fifty men, the party went up little Miami river to the edge of the glades. "We then moved forward swiftly and noiselessly, at one time following the course of serpentine channels opening out occasionally into beautiful lagoons, at another forcing our way through barriers of saw-grass."⁹⁶

After paddling several hours the party moved up on Chitto-Tustenuggee island, some twenty acres in extent with soil two feet deep and very rich. The center of the island was cleared, with the circumference protected by a wide fringe of live oak, wild fig, and mangrove trees. The Indians had located two towns, two dancing grounds,

95. Rodenbough, *Everglade to Canon*, 507.

96. *The News*, St. Augustine, Fla., April 2, 1841.

and a council lodge there in former times. All were now overrun with pumpkin, squash, and melon vines, occasional lima beans, and Cuban tobacco. Signs showed that the natives had been gone at least two weeks.⁹⁷ On a nearby island the soldiers found patches of green corn and sugar cane in addition to the usual vegetable vines.

After spending several days in scouring the islands along the eastern edge of the glades north from the Miami headwaters, the party reached a small island on which they flushed a group of four warriors, five squaws and two children. Three of the warriors were shot on the spot, and three squaws and a child taken, "the other [child was] drowned by its mother to prevent its cries leading to her detection."⁹⁸ Harney and his command reached the headwaters of New river at sunset on January 10 and were at Ft. Lauderdale by midnight.

By 1841 the Seminole War was being actively fought on Lake Okeechobee and in the Everglades. In a report to the Secretary of the Navy Lieutenant John T. McLaughlin, commanding the Florida Naval expedition, recited the part played by his command of ninety seamen from the barges *Ostego* and *Wave* and the schooner *Flirt*. The naval unit had cooperated with Colonel Harney in the latter's January trip.⁹⁹ Leaving Harney near the headwaters of New river, the McLaughlin command skirted the eastern edge of the Everglades on a southwest course, searching all the islands for Indians and arriving at the Gulf of Mexico through Harney river on January 19.

A joint expedition of the army, navy, and marines moved in October 1841 from Ft. Dallas, crossed the lower glades to the pine woods near the west coast, and thence to Punta Rassa. Leaving Ft. Myers on November 2, the expedition moved up the Caloosahatchee and into Lake Okeechobee and from there to the Loxahatchee and the east coast. The armed force saw a half

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Senate Documents*, Number 242, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 106-108.

dozen Indians on the whole trip but was not able to effect a single capture.¹⁰⁰

As illustrative of the peculiarity of the service to which these various corp were subjected, there was, at one time to be seen, in the Everglades the dragoon in water from three to four feet deep, the sailor and marine wading in the mud in the midst of the cypress, and the soldiers, infantry and artillery on the land, in the water, and in boats. . . . Here was no distinction of corps, no jealousies, but a laudable rivalry in concerting means to punish a foe who had so effectively eluded all efforts. Comforts and conveniences were totally disregarded, even subsistence was reduced to the lowest extremity. Night after night, officers and men were compelled to sleep in their canoes, others in damp bogs, and in the morning cook their breakfast over a fire built on a pile of sand in the prow of a boat, or kindled around a cypress stump.¹⁰¹

Lieutenant McLaughlin was able to report in April 1842 that "every portion of the Ever Glades and water courses of the interior, from Lake Tohopekaliga south, have been visited . . . and examined and large fields and settlements broken up and destroyed."¹⁰² One of the detachments had, with the exception of twenty days, been employed without intermission in their canoes since the previous October. The ships *Flirt* and *Wave* put in the Hillsboro river in May 1842 and gave chase to two Indians to the head of Snake creek, where Indian fields of sugar cane, corn, and bananas were in cultivation. The command was divided into two scouting parties: one entered the country between the Miami and the New

100. Sprague, *Florida War*, 333-335; *Senate Documents*, Number 242, 109-112.

101. Sprague, *Florida War*, 354.

102. *Senate Documents*, Number 242, 116. A day by day account of a sixty day expedition into the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee, the Kissimmee River, and Lake Tohopekaliga is found in George Henry Preble, "A Canoe Expedition into the Everglades in 1842." *Tequesta: The Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida*, V (1946), 30-51, reprinted from *United Service, A Quarterly Review of Military and Naval Affairs* (April, 1883), 358-376.

rivers, and the other went into the glades. The second scout, composed of marines, was compelled to return to the post, before completing their mission, for want of water.

The fatigue and privation undergone by this detachment was so great that private Kingsbury fell in his trail and died from sheer exhaustion.

The waters of the Everglades had fallen so low that it was necessary to track the boats at all times; and at some to make ways of the boats' seats for miles and miles to slide them over.¹⁰³

President Tyler in a message to Congress on May 10, 1842 announced that he had authorized the commanding general in Florida to declare the hostilities at an end when it was deemed expedient. Tyler estimated there were two hundred forty Indians left in Florida, of whom only eighty were capable of bearing arms.¹⁰⁴ In order to relieve the federal government of further expense for protection, the president suggested certain inducements to settlers in the form of land, arms, and subsistence to families settling the Florida frontiers.

Among the significant results of the Seminole War were the removal of the majority of the Indians to the western lands and the consequent opening of the peninsula of Florida to white settlement. The reports brought back by the men in the armed services regarding the hitherto unknown lands and waters of south Florida served, in some measure, to acquaint the public at large with the territory. Army troops had garrisoned forts over the peninsula and military roads had been blazed throughout the territory. Naval and marine units had cruised the inshore waters and carried out expeditions.

103. Sprague, *Florida War*, 389. Preble wrote that after a sixty day canoe trip he was "on the sick-list, foot badly inflamed and legs ulcerated; poisoned by the saw-grass of the Everglades and exposure to the mud, through which we dragged our canoes, and the effects of the sun." "A Canoe Expedition into the Everglades in 1842," *loc. cit.*, 49.

104. James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, 10 vols., and Sup. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897) IV, 155.

through the inland waterways.¹⁰⁵ Engineers had mapped and charted the area and all of the "exploring" soldiers and sailors had observed the fertile islands of the Everglades. They found many of the islands were covered with a very rich soil and had been intensively cultivated by the Indians, producing crops of corn, beans, sugar cane, pumpkins, squash, melons, bananas, and tobacco.¹⁰⁶ Many of the men who fought in the Everglades remained in the state and undoubtedly remembered the primitive homes and gardens on the little islands.

EARLY FEDERAL AND STATE EFFORTS TOWARD RECLAMATION

Action to Secure Title to the Everglades

The people of the territory of Florida recognized the need for government financed internal improvements some years before attaining statehood. In the St. Joseph constitution adopted by the convention which assembled in 1838, Article XI, Section 2, it was stated that a liberal system of internal improvements was essential to the development of the resources of Florida and should be encouraged by the government of the state.

The attention of the citizens of Florida was directed toward the Everglades, even before the territory became a state. On December 30, 1842, Florida's territorial delegate to Congress, David Levy, offered the following resolution and it was adopted:

Resolved, that the Secretary of War be directed to place before this House such information as can be obtained in relation to the practicability and probable expense of draining the everglades of Florida.¹⁰⁷

On January 7, 1843, the Secretary's reply to the resolution was referred to the Committee on Territories. The reply contained a report by the colonel of the corps of

105. Joseph C. Ives, *Memoir to Accompany a Military Map of the Peninsula of Florida South of Tampa Bay* (New York: M. B. Wynkoop, 1856), 1-42.

106. Rodenbough, *Everglade to Canon*, 507-508; Sprague, *Florida War*, 389.

107. *Congressional Globe*, 27 Congress, 3 Session, XII, 102.

topographical engineers that there was no information in the department on the matter of Everglades drainage, ". . . and all that has come to my knowledge is speculation, supposition, reasoning from supposed facts, verbally communicated by officers and others who have been in that region of country."¹⁰⁸

The state was only ten months old when the legislature passed a resolution concerning certain land which had hitherto been considered valueless in consequence of its being covered by water at stated periods of the year, adding that it was

. . . reported by respectable sources that the Everglades . . . at a comparatively small expense, can be entirely reclaimed, thus opening to the habitation of man an immense and hitherto unexplored domain perhaps not surpassed in fertility and every natural advantage by any other on the globe.¹⁰⁹

This resolution of 1845 was pushed into the Congressional arena by Florida's senator James D. Westcott, Jr., in 1847, when he wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Treasury noting the repeated demands made to the state legislature and its resolutions on the matter, and asking that an agent be sent to make a reconnaissance and to submit reports as to the practicability of draining the Everglades, such reports to be laid before Congress at the next session.¹¹⁰ He asserted that it would not be a chimerical idea to anticipate a channel from the Gulf of Mexico through the Everglades to the Atlantic Ocean for the use of small coasting vessels in the navigable waters of that part of the peninsula.

The Buckingham Smith Report

Secretary Walker did not delay in taking action on Westcott's request to secure information on the Everglades. On June 18, 1847, Walker sent a letter of instruc-

108. *Home Documents*, Number 43, 27 Congress, 3 Session, 2-3.

109. *Senate Documents*, Number 35, 29 Congress, 1 Session, 1-2; *Acts and Resolutions of the First General Assembly of the State of Florida, Adjourned Session, 1845*, 151.

110. *Senate Documents*, Number 242, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 66-69.

tion, detailing certain services to be performed, to Buckingham Smith of St. Augustine.¹¹¹ The letter directed Smith to examine the land offices at Tallahassee, Newnansville, and St. Augustine, in the capacity of auditor, and serve as an agent in ". . . the procurement of authentic information in relation to what are generally called the 'Ever Glades' on the peninsula of Florida."¹¹² In the letter to Smith, Walker cited the representations which had been made to the treasury department that there were several million acres of public lands that could be reclaimed at a comparatively small expense and that great advantages would result from such a measure. "It is represented that these lands can be drained by two or three small canals from the lake into the rivers opposite to it, emptying into the Gulf of Mexico and into the straits of Florida."¹¹³ Walker further urged Smith to obtain information in writing from citizens acquainted with the subject.

Among bills submitted to the first session of the thirtieth Congress in 1848 was one introduced by Senator Westcott which would have given Florida all wet lands, lakes, and watercourses south of Township 36 South.¹¹⁴ The Westcott bill was, in part, the result of an 1848 resolution which had been passed in the Florida legislature asking the federal government to cede large tracts of public lands south of Lake Okeechobee to the state so that they might be drained and made valuable for the cultiva-

111. Thomas Buckingham Smith (1810-1871), lawyer, politician and antiquarian, was born on Cumberland Island, Georgia. He moved with his family to St. Augustine, Florida, during the second period of Spanish rule. He graduated from Harvard law school in 1836. In 1839 he was secretary to Robert R. Reid, governor of Florida, and in 1841-43, a member of the territorial legislative council. He later entered the diplomatic service of the United States and was stationed at different times in Spain and Mexico. While in Spain he did much research in the national archives, from the results of which he published narratives of various documents concerning the history of Florida. James Alexander Robertson, "Thomas Buckingham Smith," *Dictionary of American Biography*, Dumas Malone (ed.), 20 vols., Index and Supplement (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937-194-), 402-403.

112. "Smith Report," 71.

113. *Ibid.*

114. *Ibid.*, 7-8.

tion of tropical produce.¹¹⁵ The grant was asked for on the condition that the state drain the lands and apply the proceeds, after defraying the expense of draining, to the purposes of public education.

By resolution of August 9, 1848, the United States Senate, then considering the Westcott bill, requested the Secretary of the Treasury to communicate to that body any information in his department relative to reclaiming the Everglades or of the expediency of ceding them to Florida for that purpose.¹¹⁶ Walker responded with the report made by Buckingham Smith and accompanying documents. He also called attention to Smith's estimate that \$500,000 would be necessary for the drainage and to the divided opinions on the probable worth of these lands after their reclamation; he concluded that "The test of experience can alone solve the doubt."¹¹⁷

The report on the Everglades by Buckingham Smith as submitted to the Senate in 1848 represents the first authentic publication on the area and remains today a monument to the resourcefulness and ability of the man who gathered the material. The fact that the Everglades received their surplus waters from the overflow of Lake Okeechobee, which in turn received most of its water from the Kissimmee river, was probably known, but Smith was the first to publicize it. He estimated the average elevation of the glades to be twelve feet above sea level, and that they were covered with water in the fall of the year to a depth of six feet.¹¹⁸

Smith advanced the idea that by cutting the rim of the Everglades on the east and west coasts at the heads of the various streams that received their initial waters at low places in the rim some four or five feet of water might be drained off the area. It was his belief that the land so reclaimed would be made profitable for the cultivation of coffee, sugar, rice, corn, cotton, and tobacco. The soil deposit under the water he found to be exceed-

115. *Laws of the State of Florida, Passed at the Third Session of the General Assembly of the State, 1847, 80-91.*

116. *Senate Journal, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 551.*

117. *Senate Documents, Number 242, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 3-4.*

118. "Smith Report," 16-17.

ingly light when dry, and an impalpable powder when broken.

The Ever Glades are entirely below the region of frost, and the meteorological and barometrical statistics . . . prove that the climate is as favorable to the cultivation of tropical fruits as that of any country between the twenty-eighth and twenty-fourth parallels.¹¹⁹

Smith concluded his report with the following statement:

The Ever Glades are now suitable only for the haunt of noxious vermin or the resort of pestilent reptiles. The statesman whose exertions shall cause the millions of acres they contain, now worse than worthless, to teem with the products of agricultural industry; that man who thus adds to the resources of his country . . . will merit a high place in public favor, not only with his own generation, but with posterity. He will have created a State!¹²⁰

With his report Smith submitted a number of letters, some of which may be noted. From Colonel R. Butler, surveyor general of Florida, came the dictum that the Everglades could not be surveyed until drained. He advised the granting of the area to the state of Florida, since the Everglades were in the interior of the state and were without navigable rivers, and their reclamation by the federal government would conflict with the sovereignty of the state. He advocated the grant to the state of one moiety, conditioned that the state cause the glades to be drained within a given period; thus the United States would realize for survey and sale the other moiety and there would be opened "a large fertile surface for the habitation of man, cultivating sugar and tropical fruits extensively thereon."¹²¹

General Thomas S. Jesup wrote Westcott,

119. *Ibid.*, 31.

120. *Ibid.*, 34.

121. *Executive Documents*, Number 2, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 155.

The swamps are generally peat swamps, which if drained, would soon be converted into olive, lime and orange plantations and would be cultivated by a numerous white population, which would be interposed between the sugar plantations, cultivated by slaves and free blacks of the West Indies. This in a military point of view would be highly important, and add greatly to the strength of the south.¹²²

General W. S. Harney, who doubtless had seen as much or more of Everglades than any one else, wrote Buckingham Smith that canals from Lake Okeechobee to both the Caloosahatchee and the Loxahatchee should be dug, as well as canals into the Ratonnes, Little, Arch Creek, Miami, and Shark rivers. He further advocated that the two chief canals should be ten to fifteen miles long, thirty feet wide and five to fifteen feet deep. "No person can say with positive certainty what the soil of the Everglades when drained would or would not produce; but it is my opinion it would be the best sugar land in the south and also excellent for rice and corn."¹²³

One of the correspondents from whom Smith sought information regarding the Everglades was Stephen Russell Mallory, Collector of Customs at Key West. Mallory had lived in Key West since his childhood and had fought in the Seminole War.¹²⁴ Mallory, later to become a United States Senator and Confederate Secretary of the Navy, had closely observed that particular part of the state in question. He wrote:

My own impression is that large tracts of the Glades are fully as low as the adjoining sea, and can never be drained; that some lands around the margins may be reclaimed by drainage or dyking, but that it will be found wholly out of the question to drain all the Ever Glades. As the country now is, healthy and mild, with its good lands in small parcels, with water at hand anywhere for irrigation,

122. "Smith Report," 43.

123. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

124. Kathleen Bruce, "Stephen Russell Mallory," *Dictionary of American Biography*, XII, 224-226.

I think it offers inducements to small capitalists, men with from one to ten hands, to go there and raise fruits. Fruit will grow well there.¹²⁵

Captain John T. Sprague, whose volume on the Seminole War appeared in 1848 and remains today a definitive study, was astounded at any proposal to drain the Everglades. He informed Smith that he had

. . . never supposed the country would excite an inquiry, other than as a hiding place for Indians, and had it occurred to me that so great an undertaking, one so utterly impracticable, as draining the Ever Glades was to be discussed, I should not have destroyed the scratch of a pen [notes used in composing his book] upon a subject so fruitful, and which cannot be understood but by those who have waded the water belly deep and examined carefully the western coast by land and by water.¹²⁶

THE SWAMP AND OVERFLOWED LAND GRANT ACT

Senator Westcott introduced his bill seeking the cession to Florida of all lands, lakes, and watercourses south of Okeechobee on August 1, 1848. The bill was read twice and referred to the Committee on Public Lands.¹²⁷ This Committee made a report on the Everglades bill on August 12 in which it was agreed that if the proposed improvements were carried out, the United States would benefit, at no expenditure, in the bottom lands of the Kissimmee river and its tributaries which were then valueless by reason of their annual overflowed condition. The bill was reported without amendment and its passage was recommended.¹²⁸ The Smith report and accompanying documents were submitted at the same time. On a motion by Senator Westcott, the Senate ordered five thousand copies of the report and documents printed

125. "Smith Report," 55.

126. *Ibid.*, 58-59.

127. *Congressional Globe*, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 723, 1025.

128. *Senate Documents*, Number 242, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 2.

for the use of the Senate.¹²⁹ Westcott had the large number of copies printed, it was reported, "for distribution . . . where it may be of service."¹³⁰

Westcott procured "extra copies" of this *Senate Document, The Report of the Committees*, Number 242, 30 Congress, 1 Session, which was a report of the Committee on Public Lands and has been referred to above.¹³¹ He added some letters and several tables relating to the Florida mails. His object, he wrote, was to obtain a "favorable opinion as to . . . the grant of the Ever Glades to Florida, to have them drained, and the encouragement of the cultivation of exotics" upon the reclaimed lands as well as to "attract attention to other suggestions contained in these papers."¹³²

With respect to the draining of the Ever Glades, he deems it due to others to say that the project is not an original "hobby" of his. If any credit is due for the earliest suggestions of its practicability and expediency, Gen. Gadsden, of S. C., Col. J. P. Baldwin, of South Florida, Col. J. G. Gamble, of Tallahassee, Gen. Mercer, of Va., and Col. W. Wyatt, of Manatee, are the best entitled to it. They were its advocates when he was skeptical. Convinced by full investigation they were right and that he was wrong, he has yielded his judgment to theirs.¹³³

On December 20, 1848, Senator Westcott moved that the Senate proceed to consider his bill, and stated that in the Commissioner of Lands' report, the area was classed as follows:¹³⁴

Swamps 4,300,000 acres ; overflow 1,000,000 acres,
pine barren 1,000,000 acres; sand barren 1,500,000
acres ; total 7,800,000 acres.

Senator David L. Yulee declared that he had not been

129. *Senate Journal*, 30 Congress, 1 Session, 580-581.

130. *Senate Documents*, Number 89, 62 Congress, 1 Session, 5.

131. James D. Westcott, Jr., *Ever Glades of the Peninsula of Florida* (Tallahassee : n. p., 1848), cover.

132. *Ibid.*

133. *Ibid.*

134. *Congressional Globe*, 30 Congress, 2 Session, 69-70.

consulted in relation to the bill and found it so objectionable that he doubted that he would give it his vote. A similar measure was proposed, Yulee continued, in relation to the wet lands of the state of Arkansas, and it was his opinion that the latter measure would grant all of the swamp and overflowed lands to the states within the limits of which they happened to be located.¹³⁵ It was reported that Yulee "excited general astonishment" in opposing the Westcott bill and that the differences of opinion of the Florida senators were enough to prevent its passage.¹³⁶

On January 9, 1849, the Senate Committee of the Florida legislature on Internal Improvements, to whom had been referred so much of a message of the governor as related to drainage, made a report. The committee expressed belief that from all opinion available, there appeared to be little doubt that the Everglades could be drained. This drainage would render the region valuable, but the committee favored the introduction of private enterprise, and could not consent to involve the state in the expense, especially when there was some uncertainty of the success of the undertaking.¹³⁷

The act which gave the Everglades area to the state of Florida, ". . . to enable the State of Arkansas and other States to reclaim the swamp and overflowed lands within their limits," was signed by President Fillmore on September 28, 1850.¹³⁸ Its only provision was that the proceeds of the sale of any of the lands so granted should be applied exclusively to the purposes of reclaiming the swamp and overflowed lands.

CREATION OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

The Florida legislature, in session in January 1851 accepted the grant from the nation. The legislature

135. *Ibid.*, 69, 87, 120.

136. *Florida Sentinel* (Tallahassee), January 9, 1849.

137. *Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the General Assembly of Florida*, 4 Session, 1848, 11.

138. 9 *United States Statutes at Large*, 519-520. The grant was received with some misgivings at Tallahassee as the editor of the *Florida Sentinel* questioned the value of the Everglades, even if capable of being drained. *Florida Sentinel*, September 17, 1850.

created and constituted a Board of Internal Improvement for the state, the ex-officio members of which included the governor, attorney-general, treasurer, comptroller, and the register of public lands. The elective members included one member from each of the judicial districts of the state, to be elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.¹³⁹ At the 1855 session of the legislature an act was passed by the legislature creating a new Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida.

The new act consolidated the land grants made to Florida in 1845 with those secured under the swamp and overflowed lands act of 1850, together with all proceeds that had accrued from their sale, in a separate classification from other state lands.¹⁴⁰ All lands, and funds arising from the sale of such lands which were a part of this fund, were irrevocably vested in the same five state officers as had served on the 1851 board. In addition to making stipulations in regard to sale, transfer, or investment of proceeds from lands sold out of this fund, the act provided for aid to railroads, canals, or other works of an internal improvement nature. The trustees were given power to fix prices of these lands and to make such arrangements for the drainage of the swamp and overflowed lands as in their judgment appeared most advantageous to the Internal Improvement Fund.

In the decade before the Civil War the main concern for internal improvements in Florida was the development of overland transportation, with waterways and harbors assuming a secondary position, and land reclamation purely incidental. The reason for this is found in the fact that the settlement of the state had extended only to a little below Ocala, whereas the largest part of the swamp lands were south of that point.

After the Seminole War, Indian troubles, while existent, were negligible, and the small remnant of red men remaining in Florida took to swamp and glade for habita-

139. *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, Passed at its Fifth Session, 1851*, 93.

140. *Laws of Florida*, Chapter 610, 1855.

tion. But in 1851 Governor Thomas Brown requested the Secretary of War to remove the Indians from the Everglades, for

. . . the most interesting and valuable part of our state . . . is cut off from any benefit to the citizens and sealed to the knowledge of the world, to be used as a hunting ground for a few roving savages.¹⁴¹

Despite the threat of occasional Indian forays, gradual settlement took place along the coasts and in the interior of Florida, and was accompanied by military operations of surveying and exploring the southern part of the state. Military posts at Ft. Brooke on Tampa bay, at Ft. Myers on the Caloosahatchee, at Ft. Lauderdale on the New, and at Ft. Dallas on the Miami river gave protection to the pioneers on this southernmost frontier. The War Department maintained garrison forces at these posts, and at the same time employed the soldiers in surveying operations.

THE LAST SEMINOLE WAR

In 1854, a detachment of eleven men under Lt. George L. Hartsuff was ordered to survey a part of the swamp region southeast of Ft. Myers and to make topographical reports.¹⁴² The Hartsuff command was ambushed and four of its number were killed. This incident renewed actual warfare with the Seminoles. Most of the action was of a desultory nature, resulting in the capture and shipment of a majority of the remaining Seminoles to join their brethren west of the Mississippi river. Opinions differed as to the federal government's policy of attempting to rid South Florida of the red men by offering rewards for the capture of the elusive Seminoles. Prices on cap-

141. *Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of Florida, 1851, 27.*

142. Francis C. M. Bogges, *A Veteran of Four Wars* (Arcadia: The Champion Press, 1900), 43; Andrew P. Canova, *Life and Adventure In South Florida*, (Tampa : Tribune Printing Company, 1885), 5; Thomas A. Gonzales (ed.), *The Caloosahatchee: Miscellaneous Writings Concerning the History of the Caloosahatchee River and the City of Fort Myers, Florida* (Estero: Koreshan Unity Press, 1932), 32.

tured Indians ran from \$500 for warriors, \$250 for squaws to \$100 for children. One of the soldiers who took part in the campaign felt that there was ". . . something remarkable about moving the Seminole Indians from the Everglades, as they are not suitable for the white man. The Indians want them and should be allowed to remain."¹⁴³

Economic activity in southern Florida before the Civil War was limited in the main to the cattle industry. During the ante-bellum period many families settled in the Manatee-Caloosahatchee river valleys, and devoted their efforts to cattle grazing. "Until the rebellion of the slave States, south Florida supplied the Havana market with beef at the rate of one thousand head per month; besides considerable quantities were shipped to the Bahamas, Key West and Tortugas."¹⁴⁴ In the drier months of the year the cattle could be kept on the flats bordering the Everglades, where the lush grass added pounds to the beeves that were shipped to the Cuban markets from the docks along these two rivers.¹⁴⁵

The conflict between the states from 1861 to 1865 put a temporary end to all plans for internal improvements in the southern end of the state. But with the end of the war, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund received many proposals to ditch and drain land in or near the Everglades. On April 6, 1866, William H. Gleason addressed the Board in regard to draining certain portions of the Florida wet lands. The Board approved Gleason's proposition and offered to sell him tracts of 640 acres at \$40 each for every 50,000 cubic feet of ditch or drain excavated.¹⁴⁶

In the same year the Trustees contracted with Silas L.

143. Bogges, *A Veteran of Four Wars*, 63. Rerick, *op. cit.*, I, 228.

144. L. D. Stickney, "Tropical Florida," *Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1861 on Agriculture, Senate Documents, Executive Documents*, Number 39, 37 Congress, 2 Session, 404.

145. Lillie B. McDuffee, *The Lures of Manatee* (Nashville: Marshall Bruce and Company, 1933), 197-200; Gonzales, *The Caloosahatchee*, 28-30; James A. Henshall, *Camping and Cruising in Florida* (Cincinnati: Robert Clark and Company, 1884), 198-199.

146. *Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida*, I, 276-277.

Niblack and others to drain and reclaim lands adjacent to the Caloosahatchee and Kissimmee rivers as well as Lake Okeechobee and any or all tributary areas. The contractors were to receive one-half of all such lands reclaimed if the work were begun within one year and completed in seven years.¹⁴⁷

These various proposals relating to the drainage and reclamation of the state's swamp and overflowed lands came to naught. The Trustees of the Improvement Fund employed agents to promote their land sales, who in the years from 1872 to 1880 traveled over the United States and Europe in search of buyers with little success.¹⁴⁸

From 1875 to 1880, the Trustees received several offers to purchase large tracts of the wet lands at prices as high as twenty-eight cents an acre on a part cash, part credit basis; but they were forced to reply that they could sell land for cash only as it was impossible to secure the consent of their creditors (who had placed the Fund in receivership in 1870) to make contract sales.¹⁴⁹ In 1881, Hamilton Disston, of Philadelphia, and his associates drew up articles of agreement with Governor William D. Bloxham and his board which provided for the drainage and reclamation of all swamp and overflowed lands south of Township 23 East and east of Peace creek.¹⁵⁰ But it was discovered that under the court decree which had put the Fund into receivership no binding agreement of this nature could be signed by the Trustees. Then Bloxham induced Disston to purchase outright 4,000,000 acres for \$1,000,000, a deal which enabled the state officials to pay off their debts and to assume an independent position

147. *Ibid.*, 361-364.

148. *Report of the Joint Commission Created by the Legislature of 1907*, (Chapter, 5632, Session Laws of 1906) *to Investigate the Acts and Doings of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund*, 37.

149. *Minutes of the Internal Improvement Fund*, II, 67-68. In 1875 the Trustees fixed the prices of wet lands at twenty-eight cents an acre in blocks of 100,000 acres, and twenty-five cents an acre for blocks of 2,000,000 to 5,000,000 acres. *Ibid.*, 91.

150. Rufus E. Rose, *The Swamp and Overflowed Lands of Florida: The Disston Contract and Sale*. (Tallahassee: T. J. Appleyard, 1916), 90-94. *Minutes of the Internal Improvement Fund*, II, 433, 473, 480, 503.

with regard to further land disposition, and to proceed with the Disston drainage contract.¹⁵¹

Thus, in a small way, drainage and reclamation began, the long story of which is told elsewhere.¹⁵²

LATER EXPLORATIONS

Several books were published in Florida in the following years after some of the more remote portions of the state were partially explored. In 1878, Maurice Thompson published a manual of archery in which he included several chapters of adventures in Florida. In the winter of 1868, Thompson and four companions spent five weeks on a trip across country from the St. Johns to the Kissimmee and into Lake Okeechobee, ". . . formerly called Mayaco, or Macaco," which "has slept in a sort of poetical fog of mystery."¹⁵³ Thompson noted that "during the stay of the United States troops in the Seminole country" the region had been crossed and recrossed by the soldiers ". . . but it so happened that no one connected with the army cared to publish any very satisfactory account. . . ." ¹⁵⁴

The explorers cruised along the southern shore, near the "grass marshes of the southern end of the lake, beyond which the everglades stretch away to the chain of little lakes whence a number of streams creep down to the coast."¹⁵⁵

F. A. Ober, in his description of Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades, noted that the region was as little known as it had been a hundred years previously. Ober pointed out that

151. Rose, *Swamp and Overflowed Lands*, 3-4.

152. Vide, J. E. Dovell, "A Brief History of the Florida Everglades," in *Proceedings, The Soil Science Society of Florida*, IV-A, 1942, 132-161; also "The Everglades-Florida's Frontier," Bureau of Economic and Business Research, College of Business Administration, University of Florida, *Economic Leaflets*, vol. VII, nos. 5 & 6, 1947.

153. Maurice Thompson, *The Witchery of Archery: A Complete Manual of Archery*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1878), 100.

154. *Ibid.*, 104.

155. *Ibid.*, 118.

Fabulous stories of beautiful islands, picturesque ruins, and pirate haunted glens, have been much in vogue with writers upon Lake Okeechobee, and to lift the veil that has so long hung over it, and narrate the plain facts, is to deprive them of a seemingly inexhaustible fund of romance. I must confess that it pains me to do so, but fidelity to truth compels me to write of the lake as it is, not as it should be. The beautiful groves of tropical fruits, the monkeys, spiders of gigantic size and ancient ruins are among the things that are NOT.¹⁵⁶

The south shore of the big lake he found was an unbroken marsh, deeply indented with sloughs or blind creeks. Ober decided that the surplus water drained from the south end, but he could find no discernible streams.

Another traveler entered the Everglades in the late 1870's from the Miami river. James A. Henshall, dispelling what he called the popular supposition about the Everglades, wrote that

. . . the Everglades is not an impenetrable swamp, exhaling an atmosphere of poisonous gases and deadly miasma, but a charming, shallow lake of great extent, with pure and limpid waters from a few inches to several-feet in depth, which grow curious water grasses and beautiful aquatic plants; while thousands of small islands, from a few rods to a hundred acres in extent, rise from the clear waters, clothed with never-ending verdure and flowers; while cypress and crab-wood, sweet-bay and palmetto, cocoa-plum, water and live oaks, grow in tropical profusion, and rear aloft their emerald banners, from which depend garlands and festoons of innumerable vines and air plants, gorgeous with blooms of every hue, and exhaling the sweetest of fragrance.¹⁵⁷

156. Fred Beverly [F. A. Ober] *Camp Life in Florida: A Handbook for Sportsmen and Settlers*, Charles Hallock (compiler) (New York: Field and Stream Publishing Company, 1876), 246-247. For a description of the Caloosahatchee valley and the marshes above Ft. Thompson, see Chares J. Kenworthy, *ibid.*, 298-299.

157. James A. Henshall, *Camping and Cruising in Florida*, 106.