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**“FLORIDA IS A BLESSED COUNTRY”:
LETTERS TO IOWA FROM
A FLORIDA SETTLER**

by PAT SONQUIST LANE

LETTERS from settlers have provided information and insights into the early history of our country. The letters here are about Gainesville and Charlotte Harbor, Florida, between 1885 and 1887, and were written by J. Albert Erickson, who had moved from north central Iowa to Florida in 1874.¹ Erickson's letters were sent to John A. Lindberg, editor of the *Dayton (Iowa) Review*, who published them.

“America letters” to family and friends who stayed behind, are given partial credit for the large emigration from Sweden to the United States after 1855. Many of the settlers purchased public lands in the Midwest, and by 1875 a large Swedish community existed in and around Dayton.

Erickson's observations of weather and crops, of land and marketing in Florida were those of a typical mid-western farmer. They were exact and broad in scope. He was interested in alternatives and the future. Erickson's English and spelling are not commendable, and although Lindberg earned a law degree from the University of Iowa, he acknowledged being a poor speller. His typesetters at the paper were often worse. No changes have been made, either in spelling or typesetting; the letters appear exactly as they did in the *Dayton Review*.

Using Lindberg's words, “We print today an interesting letter from J. A. Erickson, a former resident of Hardin township

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1. J. Albert Erickson's family is listed in the 1870 Iowa census: Webster County, Hardin Township, Post Office, Hook's point, p. 3. The Erickson family also appears in the 1880 Florida census, Alachua County, Supervisor's District 8, Enumeration District 7, page 108C in the volume, page 59, by enumerator W. H. Whitney (Room 400, National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

and now proprietor of The American House, Gainesville, Florida.”

Letters from Florida

Gainesville, Fla. Aug. 8th 1885

Ed. REVIEW: I will now fulfill my promise and write you a few lines about Florida. As I have been in this state about eleven years and have been nearly all through it I am pretty well acquainted with its characteristics.

The weather at present is very fine. It is cool and pleasant and seems more like fall. The thermometer has only been up to 90° yet this summer and it seldom gets to 100. We never have as warm weather here as in Iowa. The climate in Florida cannot be best[ed?] anywhere. That is my belief about it. We also have the most healthy state in this great country. There are places close to swamps here that are sickly, but we have plenty of lands away from the swamps. The soil here is not as good as in Iowa, though we have some that is very good. In the Gulf Hammock occasionally can be found some as good.² But these last are scarce and are taken up very fast. Florida is settling up as fast as any state. The principle crops with the farmers are cotton, corn, sugar cane, rice and potatoes. On pine lands corn does not do so well, and they plant only one grain in the hill which will average about 15 to 20 bu. per acre. Good Hammock will yield 40 to 50 per acre. Cane pays better I think.

Mr. J. Roberts whose farm is six miles west of town told me he planted last year one bushel Prolifio cotton seed from which he gathered 3,300 lbs. of seed cotton worth \$200. He also had ginned of the same cotton 1,378 lbs. which yielded 415 lbs. of lint and sold for \$103.75.

Sweet potatoes on cow penned land will average 400 to 500 bu. per acre. Irish potatoes about 125 bu., which we generally ship in Jany.³ Cabbages and in fact all kinds of vegetables grows well here, and we can always ship them very early and get the highest prices for them. The largest bunch of Bananas I have

2. Gulf Hammock refers here to a fertile area of land located on the Gulf near Cedar Key.

3. Cow-penned land referred to acreage formerly used for pasture. The manure greatly enriched the soil and made it good for the growing of vegetable crops.

seen here was brought in last winter to Cedar Keys from the Ten Thousand Islands and had 175 large lucious bananas to the bunch.⁴ John Furgeson has a fine grove on one of the island of about 20 acres. He says it pays nearly as well as an orange grove, as it takes only two years to get the trees or stalks to bearing, and it will take 6 to 10 years to get an orange tree to bear from the seed. Of course when an orange grove gets 10 years old it pays well if properly taken care of. Oranges commence to ripen in Oct., but the most are shipped in Nov. and Dec. We generally leave a few oranges on some trees for eating, and by so doing can have oranges in May. I have many times seen ripe and green oranges and blossoms on the same tree at the same time. We have plenty of vegetable all winter and some kind of fruit all the year. We have watermelons in April and they will last three months. Three years ago I cut watermelons on Christmas day which were raised at Clearwater Harbor.

I have bought land at Charlotte Harbor and will go there in a few months. I will write you again soon. Thanks for your valuable paper. It is very interesting to me, as I know many of your people. Excuse bad spelling. Do you remember when I went to your school and spelled cake k-a-k-e.

I am respectfully yours,

J. A. Erickson

(Dayton Review, August 21, 1885)

Gainsville, Fla., Aug. 31st

Editor REVIEW: We still have fine weather here. Crops are looking splendidly, and cotton especially will yeild a very large crop. Our town is improving very fast. We are expecting another railroad from Green Cove Springs from the St. Johns river to the Suwanne river, and town property is going up in price.⁵ We have now three railroads in this place. We have 40 dry goods and grocery stores, 4 bakerys, 5 saw mills, 1 tin shop, 4 millinerys, 1 paint shop, 4 barber shops, 2 furniture stores, 1 State

4. Ten Thousand Islands are below Cape Romano and west of Big Cypress Swamp.

5. The Green Cove and Midland Railway ran ten miles from Green Cove Springs to Sharon. Then, leased by the Western Railway Company of Florida, an additional six and one-half miles of track was built from Sharon west. Poor's *Manual of Railroads*, 1887, 1888.

normal and Military school, a U.S. land office and the finest and best court houses in the state now nearly completed at a cost of over \$50,000. We have 1 bank, 1 large cotton factory, 1 foundry and machine shop, 4 white and 3 nigger churches, 1 female college and other good schools, and it will not be very long before we will have the State capital moved to this town. My father bought eight years ago two lots in East Gainesville for \$20.00 each, which are to-day worth \$1000.

I was at Cedar Keys some 6 months engaged in the fish and oyster trade. The fish are caught in seines, gill nets and with hook and line. The principal kinds are Mulletts, Red Bass, Sheep-heads and Trout. I have seen as many as 10,000 pulled out at one time with a large seine. Muttets [mulletts?] sells for 5 cents apiece while other fish sells at 5 cents a pound.

The oysters grow in 3 to 12 feet of water and are taken up in boats with tongs. It is very hard work; I have tried it myself and know whereof I speak. We go out in small sail boats, generally two or three in a boat, and as one man tongs them up the others with a small iron knock them apart and puts the large ones in the boat and the rest goes over into the water. This we call culling oysters. One boat can get from 8 to 10 bbls per day. The oysters are sold to shippers at 60 to 85 cents per bbl. They are then shipped in barrells in the shell at \$1.50 per bbls, or opened and sent in large cans at \$1.00 per gallon. I have bought and shipped a good many. I also kept hotel 2 years at Cedar Keys. Yes, fish and oysters are plentiful in Florida. There are also turtles here. I have seen turtles that weighed 630 lbs. I have seen schooners and steamers loaded down with fresh fish packed in ice, from Clear Water Harbor and Manatee unload at Cedar Key, but now we have a R. R. from Tampa so we can ship by rail.⁶

But of course there are bitters as well as sweets in this country too. In the way of farming we have a kind of bastard cane that cannot be killed on account of its roots and a kind of grass that is full of spurs that we call sand spurs, but not like those in Iowa. Still it is my opinion that if a young man wants to make a change Florida is the place for him. There is a fortune in Florida

6. Manatee, on the south bank of Manatee River, was Manatee County's first county seat.

lands if he will take the right step and get some while they are cheap.

In Manatee Co. you can buy land for \$2.50 to \$10.00 per acre, and set out a grove of 8 to 10 acres of nice orange trees and in ten years if you should want to sell you can get \$1000 per acre. Or you can do like Mr. Walter Whitehurst who lives near Yellow Bluff who sold \$4,800 worth of oranges from 6 acres of land without fertilizing, and his grove is only 12 years old.⁷ Of course it need not be expected that everybody who comes to this state will make a fortune the first year, you must have patience and go to work, or have money to hire it, and it will grow. There are a great many old settlers here that cannot be moved with money. There is no price on their property, money cannot buy it. This is the only country I have seen but what money would buy everything. The other day the Watulla and Hacienda groves Panasoffkee were sold for \$100,000.⁸ It is on a fine lake. Capitalists in Ocala bought it. If anyone should want to buy lands in Manatee or Hernando counties, I can sell some. Write and let me know. Choice water fronts for residences. Fruit lands for Pears, Peaches, Coconut, Japan Plums, Persimmons, Bananas, Guavas, Pineapple, Figs and other tropical fruit.

Respectfully,

Albert Erickson

(*Dayton Review*, September 18, 1885)

On October 2, 1885, 4,000,000 acres of selected Florida lands were advertised in the *Dayton Review*. Ads for lands in Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, and Minnesota appeared in earlier issues. People were beginning to investigate, and a few left the Dayton community to locate elsewhere. Lindberg frequently boosted the advantages of the Dayton area and expressed dismay and anxiety over the departure of friends and fellow residents. He had willingly edited and printed the first two Erickson letters from Florida. However, Erickson's enthusiasm for Florida was as strong as Lindberg's loyalties to Iowa. The letters

7. Allen Morris, *Florida Place Names* (Coral Gables, 1974), 118. Yellow Bluff, above Dunedin, is now known as Ozona.

8. Panasoffkee is a lake south of Ocala. There is also a town east of Homosassa with that name.

became a dilemma which he "tolerates" until August 4, 1887, and terminated finally on May 31, 1888.

Charlott Harbor, Fla., Oct. 10, 1885

I arrived here on the 8 inst and I like this country very much although it is not settled up very much [about two inches of newspaper type are damaged and illegible] . . . on the south bank of Charlott Harbor. It is most beautifully located and lots of [?] acre are selling for \$100.00, [with a] steamboat wharf on the property. My place is just two miles up the river. I have been very busy hauling lumber. I have lots of work to do but as it is raining today I have time to write to you. If some of you Iowa men with money would come down here and build a small Hotel, say with 25 rooms it would pay better than any thing I know of. I have been in that business for over 4 years, but it takes more money than I have to build a house large enough for a Hotel. This is the most beautiful place of the kind that I have seen. So many pretty streams of water and, Game is plentiful. Mr. W. F. Smallwood killed 15 deer here in one week. We never go out for a deer hunt unless we get one to five, and plenty of wild turkeys and quails. I never saw the like all over the woods. Ducks and wild gees are plenty in the winter. They come here by many thousands in Nov. Come and judge for yourself.. There would be no use for me to tell you any thing about the fish. But I do not think that there could be more any where in the U.S., and it is very stranae that although this beautiful land of sunshige and of Flowers and of health and prospec-ticted wealth was the earliest discovered it still seems to have been left until of late years. And I can say this that I have not seen any snow since I saw it in Swede bend in Nov. 1874. But I saw enough cold weather while I was there to never forget it again. Oh, Iowa is to cold, Florida suits me best in every respect, and if I was to leave Fla., I would do like others come back again.

On my way here to Charlott Harbor I stopped at Palmasala on the Manatee river 4 days and I saw Mr. John Williams, Allen Whitted and John Bass.⁹ They all used to live up in Iowa close

9. Palmasola lies a few miles west of Manatee on the south side of the Manatee River. John Williams, William Whitehead, Allen [Elbridge] Whitehead, and John Bass are listed in the 1870 Iowa census for Mineral Ridge post office

to Mineral Ridge. Mr. Williams has been sawyer at Warners mill for 4 years, but is now in the fishing business. He has a very nice orange grove. In fact all of them have valuable places. Bill Whitted went to Ala and died. John Bass told me that he was offered \$4000.00 for his place on the Caracata Bay.¹⁰ He raises sugar cane and makes plenty sugar and syrup. He sold from 2 acres last year, so he told me, \$460.00 worth of syrup and \$180.00 of sugar. So the Iowa boys seems to get along very well.

Mr. J. N. Young just now came in with 3 fine turkeys so we are going to have a nice dinner today. If any of my Iowa friends will come to see me you shall have the same, for we have plenty of game here.

As the Rail Road is coming to this place a small store would pay better than any thing I know of, and a newspaper would do well here if started in time. I do wish that Mr. P. A. Swanson would come here and start a store here is a good opening for any one with a small capital.¹¹

Along the rivers and borders of lakes the land is very productive. A large portion of the country is given up to stock raising which is a leading and profitable business. Over 200,000 head subsists at no cost what-ever except gathering to mark and brand or for sale and delivery at Key West, Cuba, and other Islands which affords a constant and good market. There is a long Wharf here where the steamers and schooners come and the cattle are loaded for shipments. With kind regards I am very respectfully yours.

Albert Erickson

(*Dayton Review*, November 6, 1855)

Charlotte Harbor, Fla., June 16, 1886

Editor REVIEW: I will again say a few words through your valuable paper. I have been down south on the Islands for a week and I must say that I was more than pleased with them; so much so that I bought me about 80 acres on the LaAcosta Island in township 44 south, range 21 east, on the Gulf of

(town of Ridgeport), Dodge Township, Boone County, Iowa. On June 12, 1885, *Dayton Review* reported that, "James Bass will go to Florida and other places south next week." His return to Iowa was noted on January 22, 1886.

10. Caracata Bay is likely a misspelling for Sarasota Bay.

11. P. A. Swanson was a merchant in Stratford, Iowa.

Mexico.¹² This island is seven miles long and some over a mile wide, and I was suprised to see so many different kinds of wild and tame fruits there. In the past two weeks there have been ten new settlers who have located there, so there are no more vacant lands to be had as more than half of the Island is reserved by the United States. A good many people will settle on some of this land and may get it some time, if the U.S. don't want to make use of it. There were 3 homesteads and the rest were State and U. S. lands. This is an outside Island and has a very beautiful beach, deep water and pretty shells. There are three long shell mounds on this Island. The longest is about 100 yards wide and 400 long and 30 feet high and must have been built by the natives many hundred years ago. We had plenty of clams and oysters and killed 2 deer and 4 coons. We had plenty turtle eggs while we stayed on the Island. We are expecting a rail road to this place (Charlotte Harbor) within 8 months and then this will be one of the grandest Winter Resorts in the United States. What can be nicer than the fresh pure breeze from the Gulf of Mexico and how nice and pleasant is not the bath in the surf. O! it is fine. I enjoyed myself while I was there and I shall go back there in Oct. and have a nice house built for the winter. Mr. W. B. Spearing has a fine nursery all ready on the Island. I shall mention some of the fruits; The French Bannana Dwarf, the many sotorta, this fruit is very sweet and juicy, the sapadila, cocoa plumb and mastick plumbs, ground apple and borch apple, the [?] grape, the Spanish paupa, the sugar apple, many apple, limes, lemmons, oranges, grape fruits, coconuts, mangos, gartus, alligator pear, the tropic fig, the 7 year apple, the honey mas grape, dates, coffee plants, and many other smaller fruits.

Well, I have sold my home-stead now for \$10,000.00 dollars for which I only payed \$2000.00 in May. A company in Louisville bought it and are laying it out in town lots, and its name is Louisville, Fla.¹³ The weather is very fine at present time. Will write more next time.

(*Dayton Review*, July 2, 1886)

Respectfully yours,
J. A. Erickson

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12. La Costa Island or Lacosta Island is an island on the south side of the entrance to Charlotte Harbor, now Cayo Costa Island.
 13. Louisville may have been a temporary name for an area, but it does not appear among old, local place-names, and there is no vestige of the name on geological survey maps (U.S. Department of Interior, Punta Gorda, Cleveland, and Fort Ogden, Florida, sections).

Charlotte Harbor, Fla., Dec. 13, 1886

Editor REVIEW: As I have been silent for some time I will again make my appearance in the columns of the REVIEW. I have been away for 5 months and spent the summer very pleasantly, but am now home again; and much building and improvement has been done since I was here. We have the nicest weather that can be had in any part of the United States at this time of the year. We had a nice watermelon the other day and have one vine on which they will be ripe for Christmas. Cabbages heading, turnips, rutabagas, onions, tomatoes half grown and we are eating new Irish potatoes, and catch all the fish that we can use and plenty game such as deer, turkeys, squirrels, quails and ducks and geese. The harbor is full. I am sure that I saw more ducks Friday than I ever saw blackbirds in Iowa in the spring. This is the place for sportsmen. Plenty of Hotels and Boarding houses and plenty of good things to eat. Board can be had from \$4.00 to \$10.00 per week. At the big hotels you may have to pay more. Oranges are fine and sweet now and plentiful. They are worth here now from \$1.50 to \$2.25 per crate. Bananas are worth 75¢ to \$1.00 per bunch, good lemons \$1.50 per 100, limes 50¢, sweet potatoes 50¢ per bushel, corn 90¢, oats 70¢, shipped hay \$1.50 per 100, lumber in the rough \$8.00 to \$10.50, dressed \$13.00 to \$18.00. We have 3 saw mills on the harbor and one large saw mill at Arcadia, 20 miles north from here on the R. R. It is owned by a Swede Co. from Ill. That town is growing very fast. I heard the other day that they expect to start a newspaper there and they also expect to get the court house as this county is to be divided soon. To you all who are not so immersed in business to such an extent that you cannot leave, Florida offers good investments for your money. The best climate we have, the most progressive state in the union. Our state is filling up with the brain of the union. We command the highest prices for our fruits and vegetables because we can plant at the season when you are bound up in ice and snow. Yes a good many of you are sitting at the fire now, and can scarcely leave the house long enough to look after your stock, while here I am in my shirt-sleeves and slippers. I very seldom wear my coat. We are not troubled with storms, cyclones, tidal waves and intensely cold blizzards, which have swept over the land in almost all other localities not to mention the terrible earthquakes that have al-

most ruined cities and neighborhoods and yet we are passed and untouched by them. Florida is a blessed country and should be profoundly thankful for the manifold mercies we enjoy. Thousands of homes with health and prosperity. Come to Florida if you would live long in the land, make fortunes quickly, and have time to enjoy it a long term before haveing your will probated. There are good chances for you all. If you don't come soon you will wish you had.

Very respectfully,
J. A. Erickson

(*Dayton Review*, December 23, 1886)

Charlotte Harbor, May 5th, '87

Ed. REVIEW: I am still here enjoying the fresh breeze from the Gulf of Mexico. We are having nice weather and rain plenty. Crops are fine, some of the corn is large enough for roasting ears, and cotton is looking well to be so young. I will have ripe watermelons within three weeks. The orange trees are loaded so we have a good prospect for a big crop. Fishing and hunting have been splendid, and all those have made money. My neighbor, Mr. Dave Yeoman, in company with a northern gentlemen, on one week's hunt killed seven deer and ninety-six alligators, for which they received 50¢ apiece for the alligator skins on an average. I caught 2 small alligators a few weeks ago with hook and line while fishing. They were about 18 inches long. Live alligators that size are worth from \$3.00 to \$5.00. I have seen some as large as 12 feet but those would be hard to hold with a line as they are very strong.

Building and improvements are still going on, but not as brisk as a few months ago, but we are now sure of 2 more railroads to Charlotte Harbor. One is from Plant City to Naples, by the way of Pine Level.¹⁴ The survey has actually commenced and the work of construction will soon follow. This will open up the best country in Florida and my place will be where this road will cross the Florida Southern. This is the Florida Railway and Navigation Co. and the other road to Charlotte Harbor, Boya [Boca] Grande and Ft. Myers R. R.¹⁵ So I think there will be

14. This railway was not built. Pine Level was north of Charlotte Harbor, west of Arcadia.

15. Poor's *Manual of Railroads*, 1882, 1887, 1888, and 1900, have no listing of a Boca Grande and Fort Myers Railway Company.

great attractions to this newly opened and fertile section next fall, as Charlotte Harbor has several advantages over any other place in the state. I confidently expect to see it rapidly become the rival of Jacksonville and St. Augustine as a health and pleasure resort and the public will not be slow to show appreciation of its many attractions and advantages.

The Florida Southern R. R. Co. will have a two hundred room Hotel finished and ready for the early fall, and will in self interest make this the most important point on their whole line. The South Florida road will soon extend its line from Bartow to Boca Granda Bay on the west side of the Harbor where that company will use their powerful influence and long purse to the rapid development of this point. The latter company will have 25 ft. of water on the north side of the entrance, and the former can reach about 18 feet on the south side in full view of the Government light house. Then the sportsmen may enjoy the finest hunting grounds on the continent, and the world affords no better fishing than is found on this great bay.

Oysters, clams, crabs and all the other kinds of meat obtained from the sea are here inexhaustable. The beaches of the Islands are strewn with beautiful shells and there is scarcely a day in the year when a sea bath may not be enjoyed. The tourist will soon be able to make quick trips from this point to Mexico and Central America and the West Indies in fine ocean steamers so tourists can obtain more winter comfort and pleasure than are to be found at any other place in Florida. Being the termini of 4 railroads, having the only good harbor on the coast and enjoying a superior climate, I predict that Charlotte Harbor will become the greatest winter resort in America. But here is room plenty and all who will come are welcome.

Respectfully Yours,
J. Albert Erickson

(Dayton Review, May 19, 1887)

Charlotte Harbor, Fla. July 26th '87

Ed. REVIEW: Again I will endeavor to say few words in your valuable paper. Since I wrote last the county has been divided, so this beautiful Charlotte Harbor is now in DeSoto Co.¹⁶ It was done by the present Legislative and the location of

16. DeSoto County was established May 19, 1887. Arcadia became its county seat.

the court House is creating quite a stir among the people. The choice will be between Arcadia and Ft. Ogden and the contest is getting hotter and hotter every day. I hope and trust that Ft. Ogden will de the lucky town.

We have also a new paper which made its appearance for the first time this month The name is the Charlotte Harbor Beacon, published at Traline, Fla.¹⁷ It is a hansome seven column weekly paper published all at home by R. S. Hanna and J. F. Marsh. I think it is a very good paper and just what we need in our new country; for a town with out a newspaper will never be of any consequences as the papers will build up the town and surrounded country. This time of the year is called the rainy season but we have had but very little this month. Last year it rained 40 days in July and August. The Thermometer registered 92 degrees three days this week. That is as warm as Fla. ever gets here. But still the nights are very cool and pleasant. I understand by good responsible men that all of the 240 rooms in Hotel Punta Gorda are engaged for the winter months and that much more room will be needed to accomodate all the tourists which will come to Charlotte Harbor the comming season. So this begins to look as though we might have a big boom but new Hotels are continually going up all along Charlotte Harbor so no one shall be allowed to go begging for lodging. Come and spend one winter with us and you will never regret it. I am busy getting land ready for an early fall garden. Fresh vegetables all the winter is something good. I have lots of fun by shooting white curlues of an eveings as they come in very large flocks going to there rookeries I killed two at one time and three at an another time. Those birds are nearly the size of chickens and are equally as good— Two schooners and 2 sharpies and several sail boats passed here going up Peace River and Capt Hull of steam boat shipman made the first trip that ever was made up Peace River to Fort Meade a distance of 150 miles.¹⁸ By spending some five Thousand dollars on this River it would be of great value to this country and I hope that it will convince the people

17. Trabue, Florida, can be the only possible "Traline" in Erickson's letter as the place of publication for the new paper called the *Charlotte Harbor Beacon*. The handwritten name could be transposed. Trabue is on the south bank of the Peace River, east of Punta Gorda.

18. Fort Meade is fifty to sixty miles (not 150, which may be a mistake on Lindberg's part) north of Charlotte Harbor on the Peace River.

of the usefulness as well as the known beauty of Peace River. Since I commenced writing it has set in for a big rain and we are all thankful it is needed. With kind regards I am Respectfully yours— J. A. Erickson.

(*Dayton Review*, August 4, 1887)

This was the last letter Lindberg printed from Erickson in Florida. On Thursday, October 13, 1887, there are two relevant items: "A Florida letter is laid over till next week," and "C. G. Seashore has some lilac bushes just blooming out, and strawberry plants budding. Ah, Florida and California, go and hide yourselves in the deep, deep sea." "Letters from Florida" did not appear in the paper again. On Thursday, May 31, 1888, however, the *Dayton Review* among its front page local items notes that "J. A. Erickson writes from Gainesville Fla. that peaches, oranges watermelons etc. are ripe. Peaches are ripe here and dry too, but we just planted our watermelons."

The Erickson letters are a young man's descriptions of late nineteenth-century Florida which express great optimism over growth and progress in the state, including the expansion of its railroad system.¹⁹ On April 12, 1891, James Albert Erickson married Sarah Jane Yelvington, daughter of the Aaron Yelvingtons who came from Georgia as one of the oldest pioneer families in DeLand. The Ericksons also lived permanently in DeLand, Volusia County, Florida, as noted in the 1900 and 1910 census records and in city directories of 1907 and 1924. The 1907 directory associates Erickson with a store selling pianos, music and harness goods. The three Erickson children were Emma (b. 1892), John S. (b. 1895), and Vivian (b. 1901).

James Albert Erickson and John A. Lindberg remained loyal to Florida and Iowa to the end. Erickson participated in the development of his state, and Lindberg was directly involved in

19. In 1886 the Granville map makers were equally over enthusiastic. It is customary for mapmakers to indicate sure projections of railroads and highways, but on the 1886 Granville map optimism outstrips reality. Other contemporary maps do not show railroad lines which have not even been projected as "completed." In 1886 the railroad systems in Florida were being converted from their various gauges to a standard width of four feet, eight and one-half inches, similar to other tracks throughout the century. It meant a better flow of traffic and the ability of Florida lines to run out of the state. See John F. Stover, *The Railroads of the South 1865-1900: A Study in Finance and Control* (Chapel Hill, 1955), 194-95.

shaping his community. Both lived long enough to see many of their young dreams become a reality. John A. Lindberg is buried in the Dayton Cemetery, Dayton, Iowa, and James Albert Erickson is buried in Oakdale Cemetery, DeLand, Florida. Both died in 1928.