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THE PROPHETS AND PROFITS OF PLEASURE AN ANALYSIS OF FLORIDA’S DEVELOPMENT FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE TURN OF THE 20th CENTURY

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THE PROPHETS AND PROFITS OF PLEASURE
AN ANALYSIS OF FLORIDA’S DEVELOPMENT
FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE TURN OF THE 20th CENTURY

Dissertation

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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2014

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE PROPHETS AND PROFITS OF PLEASURE
AN ANALYSIS OF FLORIDA’S DEVELOPMENT
FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

This dissertation examines the emergence of Florida from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the twentieth century through the lenses of Jacksonville, Pensacola, Tampa, and Miami as they became the major economic and social centers within the state. Influenced by Union and Republican ideologies, early immigration tracts promised egalitarian land development rooted in the promise of citrus, diversified agriculture, real-estate, and the promise of tourism. As more northerners came to rely upon cheap black labor to make their dream a reality, the earlier narrative of egalitarianism began to lose ground to the demands for inexpensive labor. The need for quicker and faster conveyance for the new fruits and vegetables also required large land grants to entice railroads to the state, which in turn, threatened the subsistence lifestyle upon which many of the immigrants and farmers depended. As higher land prices pushed poor whites and African Americans deeper into the Florida frontier, unprecedented corporate and railroad land subsidies gobbled up much of the remaining unclaimed lands leading to unprecedented social, economic, and political turmoil across the state. As greater profits via shipping rates, agricultural production, and industrial output came to dominate the political economies of each of the cities, the earlier social and economic needs and desires of farmers and laborers that Republican and northern ideologues tried to protect increasingly lost ground to calls for a two tiered economic and social system that put the monetary needs of Florida’s white citizens, businesses, and corporations over those of its African American and ethnic populations resulting in statewide disenfranchisement, social segregation, and economic stratification that placed whites at the top of the economic ladder with African Americans largely relegated along the bottom rungs of the social and economic order. Although this outcome reflects a regional pattern that swept across much of the South, this work shows that for a brief period of 35 years, Florida offered a unique moment when the state and its cities moved to protect and encourage the individual desires of freedmen, poor whites, laborers and ethnic immigrants to promote and encourage growth, settlement, and development.
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For My Mother and Father
Whose Love and Encouragement Opened my Heart and Mind
And Allowed Me to See the World
Through the Kaleidoscope
Of Infinite Ideas and Possibilities
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Chapter One

Introduction: The Prophets of Pleasure!

At the close of the nineteenth century, Florida was still largely undeveloped and un-populated. Fewer than 200,000 people had been scattered across an area of about 60,000 square miles. While settlers were already beginning to till and cultivate the lands of the western United States most of Florida’s population clung tight to the coastal cities of Jacksonville, Pensacola, St. Augustine, and Key West. Due to years of fighting dating back to the Seminoles Wars and a lack of land transportation, only five-percent of Florida’s interior had been settled at the end of the Civil War. The largely unexplored and untouched wilderness would create a canvas upon which the dreams, hopes, and ambitions of thousands of settlers would reimagine, reconfigure, and reinvent the land, people, and societies upon and into which they settled.

This dissertation examines the emergence of Florida from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the twentieth century through the lenses of Jacksonville, Pensacola, Tampa, and Miami as they arose to become the major economic and social centers within the state. While a number of texts have examined Florida during this epoch and a significant cannon has been written on each of the cities, no work has attempted to bring together and synthesize the divergent and unique narratives of these four communities. This omission has largely left an incomplete and inadequate appreciation of the history of development and settlement in Florida from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century. Since this time period laid the economic, social, and cultural

1 Edward M. Cheney, *Florida: Its climate, soil, and productions; with a sketch of its history, natural features and social condition.* (Jacksonville: Florida Commissioner of Lands and Immigration, 1869), 14.  
framework for one of the largest mass migrations of people in American history, an understanding of Florida’s growth into the third largest state in the union has largely remained misunderstood and unfinished.

By bringing together the historical narratives of Jacksonville, Pensacola, Tampa, and Miami, this work sheds new light on the evolution of Florida from a largely unsettled swamp filled with scattered Indians, cattlemen, and farmers into a landscape of assorted aspirations that sought to remake Florida into a wide array of visionary possibilities that ranged from a rural agrarian paradises rooted in the promise of citrus, cattle, tropical fruits, and tobacco to a radiant health resort and tourist haven. Each city and its boosters inspired its own vision of what Florida could be, and its leaders followed different routes to achieve their respective desires be they health spa, cattle, citrus, timber, snapper, cigars, tourism, or a combination of any and all, rousing different sequences of promotion, settlement, and development. Settlement and development served as the two driving forces that helped to populate the state. Profit served as the underlying impetus that first attracted many new settlers, but a belief in the “common good” also functioned as an added inducement. As the drive for ever greater profits demanded cheaper labor and increased production, the belief in the “common good” slowly gave way to profit seeking with each city producing its own collection of winners and losers along the way. Because Jacksonville, Pensacola, Tampa, and Miami experienced and created their own unique visions of Florida, the emergence of each city serves as its own chapter with the leading players, social, political, and economic developments throughout the state contributing to the narrative and discussion of how each place evolved and changed.
The emergence of Jacksonville comprises the opening chapter and commences with immigration and settlement plans conceived by Union sympathizers in the Florida tax board to sell off deserted lands with outstanding unpaid taxes to northern farmers and Union soldiers in hopes of switching Florida from a Southern state to one economically and politically aligned with the Union. Although these efforts largely failed, they laid the groundwork from which the New England Immigration Society and Harriet Beecher Stowe would promote and attempt to spur a wave of Northern migration into Florida during Reconstruction and the later part of the 19th century. The chapter focuses heavily upon the land policies of the state and the social influences that urged differing visitors, tourists, entrepreneurs, and settlers to spur the growth of a state whose population had largely remained stagnant.

Although rooted in the Civil War, the story of Jacksonville encompasses the birth of Gilded Age tourism, settlement, and development within Florida. As with each of the cities, significant focus is placed upon labor and the unique racial, social, and class dynamics that developed in Jacksonville. Along with land, the want of cheap labor served as one of the chief driving forces behind development, immigration, and promotional strategies. The dynamic interplay between immigration, growth, development, and tourism, and the racial, social, cultural, and political developments that they sparked largely serves as the foundation from which the narratives of each city are built. The year 1905 generally serves as the concluding date for the story of development of each city, as the earlier narrative rooted in commonweal succumbs to the varied pressures of profits, cheap labor, and race with the passage of Jim Crow laws and the rise of anti-immigrant

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groups that largely undercut and stifled the earlier dialogue of development rooted in principles of democracy, hard work, and self-sufficiency.

While the story of Jacksonville’s population principally follows the traditional New South model of a black working class with a largely white middle class, the immigration strategies pushed by the cities of Tampa and Miami created their own unique labor models in which Cubans, Italians, Bahamians, and Spaniards forged their own distinctive subcultures and labor dynamics. Tampa grew into the most heterogeneous city within the South, and its Latin cigar workers established one of the most active labor movements within the region. At the same time, Miami served as the second largest center of black immigration in the nation forging a unique international labor market. Immigration was spurred by the emergence of a thriving diversified economy. The rise of an assortment of varied winter truck crops and the growth of tourism fostered a much more vibrant economy for Florida than existed within most of its Southern neighbors. The only real obstacle for settlement within the state, like much of the South, remained heat and humidity, and these conditions would spur each of the cities to implement a wide array of immigration, growth, and developmental strategies whose legacies largely remain within each community to this day. These stories and narratives serve as the backbone of this work.

By examining the history of the economic development of Florida, this dissertation rests upon the scholarship and research of a wide array of academics and writers whose insights and arguments have opened windows through which to view and understand the motivations, movements, and driving forces that compelled people’s actions during this era. The topic also situates this work within a number of ongoing
historical debates and discussions rooted in economic and social theory. As a uniquely southern state with an ever-growing Northern population, the story of Florida’s development is embedded in arguments over the colonial expansion of the northern market economy, the narrative of the New South, southern industrialization, and the southern racialization of labor and work. Like the scholarship of all contemporary southern historians who delve into economic history since the Civil War, this work stands and is firmly rooted in C. Vann Woodward’s *Origins of the New South*. Woodward’s examination of the failures of Reconstruction at the behest of Northern capitalists who abandoned radicalism for the promise of an expansive colonial economy offers an unparalleled understanding of the unique social, political, and economic dynamics that emerged within the boom and bust cycles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries throughout the South.

Woodward’s understanding of the new political, social, and economic order that emerged to wipe away the vestiges of the old planter oligarchy proves to be no truer than in Florida. There, the banking and commercial centers of Jacksonville and Pensacola shifted political and economic power away from the old cotton belt of the state, while northern capital spurred development and settlement that would create new economic, political, and social dynamics, as railroads, northern entrepreneurs, and businesses maneuvered to create regions that their companies and influence could dominate economically and politically. After the war, much of Florida’s resources, like those in the rest of the South, were exported to Northern markets in the form of raw materials through Northern businesses that siphoned off much needed capital throughout the state. In particular, the vast stretches of virgin pine immediately surrounding Jacksonville and
Pensacola were felled by men from the cutover forests of Michigan and the Midwest who moved south for steady work. These companies supplied sawmills owned mostly by Northern businessmen who sought to liberate and extract the wealth that southerners had so long neglected. With most of the profits flowing outside of the state, Floridians, like their neighbors, were largely forced to rely upon northern capital to spur growth and development. Combined with corrupt carpetbag rule that directed federal subsidies for use as political clout, it would be the Depression of 1873, as Woodward suggests, that “forced many of the economic carpetbaggers to retreat, and in their exodus, they left the states that they turned over to the redeemers impoverished or bankrupt.”

The situation described by Woodward placed Florida and much of the South in economic peril. Combined with a largely insolvent treasury, Florida also found itself in the unfortunate position of being forced to pay interest upon the bonds of the bankrupt and uncompleted Florida Railroad that had been issued with the backing of lands from the state’s Internal Improvement Funds without stipulating mileage completion. With a lawsuit demanding immediate payment of interests on the bonds with the threat of freezing all public land grants in the state and placing the I.I.F. in receivership, the Florida legislature was forced to make a deal that would both bail out the treasury and push Florida down a new path of economic development. While the state continued to sell lands through receivership in order to pay interest on the bonds, the sales were unable to meet the debts, which resulted in compound interest and more legal fees. By 1881, the state owed more than a million dollars with an interest payment of $70,000 a year. With

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the election of a new governor, William D. Bloxham, the Florida legislature decided that it needed to relieve itself of its financial burden because internal improvements within the state had come to a complete standstill.

During this same year, Philadelphian Hamilton Disston had been induced to come to Florida by Henry S. Sanford, who had taken advantage of cheap lands and established a large orange plantation and real estate venture along the St. Johns River, surrounding the town that now bears his name. Looking to invest in the area, Disston had signed a contract for the drainage of swamp and overflowed lands in the Everglades with the promise of receiving half of all lands when the job was completed. However, after discovering that a court decree would prohibit the land grants, Disston threatened to pull out of the contract. Fearing the loss of other business investors should Disston withdraw, Governor Bloxham negotiated an agreement with Disston to purchase four million acres of swamp lands for 25 cents an acre with the promise of the original drainage contract that pledged half of all submerged and overflow lands that he drained. From the deal, Disston became the largest landowner that the country had ever seen, and the state was freed to move forward with railroad promotion and internal improvements by offering some of the most lucrative land grants throughout the country. With the end of the economic depression in 1879, much of the capital that was making its way south would find its way to Florida.

Unlike many other investors throughout the South during the eighties, Florida’s financiers would readily establish homes and interests in the region. What Florida came to offer that other states did not possess was sunshine, health, class, and prestige. Two

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7 Woodward, Origins, 112.
men in particular, Henry Flagler and Henry Plant, would take advantage of Florida’s image as a health sanatorium and resort to reimagine travel and tourism for the American public by fostering a new culture of sun worshipers and snow birds who not only traveled to Florida for recuperation from their illnesses but built winter homes in which their wealth and prestige would be displayed through architecture and time spent in leisure and play. Dotting the coasts and bodies of water throughout the state with pleasure palaces and winter resorts, a flood of new money would pour into Florida, putting laborers to work, creating new markets, and encouraging new business ventures.

Yet for many older Floridians whose livelihoods and lifestyles depended upon the availability of cheap open lands, the new wealth came at a cost, and beginning with the Disston contract, a steady tide of agrarian and labor unrest and anger would erupt throughout the eighties and nineties and well into the beginning of the twentieth century. The Disston contract in particular threatened to displace squatters and ranchers in the Everglades who had made their homes and fortunes upon the open spaces that fed their families and their cattle. These same ranchers were also angry that they were not offered lands for as little as .25 cents an acre. It was not uncommon for range wars to erupt between the ranchers and railroads, and with the drainage of swamps and overflowed lands, many ranchers quickly found that the railroads brought the encroachment of civilization to their doorsteps. In turn, the large public domain acreage that had brought many of the poor and hard scrabble farmers along with the business farmer to Florida for the promise of wealth through market and orange farming felt exposed by the railroads because the enormous land subsidies quickly dissipated the remaining public lands, threatening their lifestyle for future generations. Exorbitant railroad rates also pushed
many of the farmers to organize against the railroads, push for a railroad commission, and form cooperative business ventures. These frustrations laid the foundations for Populist demands for a permanent open range within the countryside, the return of public lands in the Everglades, an independent railroad commission, and the establishment of farming cooperatives.

Despite all the conflict that would erupt in the last half of the 19th and the early 20th century, Florida saw an explosion of new economic development that in many cases was readily encouraged by the same forces that feared its expansion. As historian Edward Ayers has suggested in The Promise of the New South, “trains steadily pushed their way into the corners of the South, their cars stacked with boxes. No matter its contents, each box carried an implicit message: this is the new way of the world.”8 Historian T.J. Jackson Lears evoked a similar sentiment believing that “advertisements reconfigured dreams of abundance to fit the modern world of goods.”9 The revolution in consumer goods that would occur in the eighties and nineties would alter the fundamental values of thrift and living within one’s means. Immigration pamphlets that had encouraged immigrants to live off the land in the sixties and seventies, now scorned poor farmers who subsisted on diets of sweet potatoes and cornbread and promised to sweep the wretches from the face of the map. As Woodward contends, “Northern visitors could not reconcile the poverty of the South with the national faith in opportunity and boundless progress.”10 For new and more affluent settlers in the state, the presence of poor whites and shiftless blacks who would not work for a wage and pursue the promise of goods

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“became the standard means of rationalizing the poverty of an exploited region.”

While many of these farmers simply chose not to participate in the market and to live a subsistence lifestyle, many more staked their livelihoods on the promise of oranges in groves that had yet to mature or raised cattle for Cuba whose biannual sale necessitated strict budgets and living off the land to get them through the lean times of the year.

Many of Florida’s settlers had readily invested in what historian Mark Howard Long calls “The Gospel of Prosperity.” Long contends that with a faith in Manifest Destiny these settlers readily moved to sweep away the Florida frontier for the promise of progress and the prosperity implied therein. Although the lack of wealth and stately homes suggested that modernity had passed by many Floridians and southerners, the goods and new people that made their way into the lives of its agrarian inhabitants suggests that a real revolution of goods was sweepings its way through the South. With the promise and ease of attaining new technology and staples, the wants of an older generation were quickly becoming the needs of the new. Whether in the city or country, Floridians new and old discovered and frequently wanted what the market could bring.

With a steady flow of immigration and traffic that followed the railroads, Florida’s “Crackers” and southern inhabitants quickly learned to survive off a tourist trade that demanded wild meats, natural fancies such as shells and bird plumes, and local guides to

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help them experience the authentic Florida and its native population.\textsuperscript{14} The loose change of the wealthy was quickly becoming the capital of Florida’s agrarian and working classes. With a steady flow of new and wealthy settlers in the state, older pioneers found that their land had become their most valuable commodity. Many readily sold nascent orange groves or pine lands with the promise of easy profits and cheaper plots on the frontiers of Florida’s wilderness. Along with a new consumer lifestyle, Florida’s railroads spurred a burgeoning real-estate market that readily fostered diversified farming in order to increase the movement of freight along its rail lines. In every way, Florida began to adopt what historian Paul M. Gaston calls the “Lexicon of the New South.”\textsuperscript{15}

Gaston’s terminology seems apt for Florida boosters though they rarely used the term “New South,” never discussed “The Lost Cause,” and failed to mention its great proponents by name. Yet, the state’s boosters readily implemented many of the ideas that New South advocates fostered. On the other hand, Mark Howard Long’s description of the “New Colonialism” also seems appropriate to describe Florida’s development as being symbolic of the larger colonial age. Long contends that Florida, like the Western frontier, was the staging ground for what would become America’s larger colonial ambitions.\textsuperscript{16} Because of the state’s distinct position, Florida offers a unique space in

\textsuperscript{14} In Florida, the term Cracker has historically referred to two distinct ethnic/cultural groups that have called the state home. The first group I refer to as Cracker Cowboys, and they were large-scale cattle ranchers across the state though predominantly in central and south Florida. For these individuals, the term Cracker was a sign of pride and referenced the sound of the long whips that the ranchers and cowboys carried with them. They were considered the original white settlers. The second group of Crackers refers to the poor southern white immigrants that moved into the region following the Seminole Wars. Although the term was largely descriptive, it increasingly grew into a racial epithet by the 1880s. Both definitions continue to hold their meanings, and the use of the term Cracker largely depends on the context. Throughout the work, I try to use the term Cracker or Cracker Cowboy when referring to the cattlemen of the state, but I generally use poor white or southern Cracker in reference to poor southern whites.


which the dialectic between the “New South” and the “New Colonialism” readily played out in the actions and language of Florida’s promoters from the end of the Civil War, to the Spanish American War, and the opening of the Panama Canal. Florida would not only be the staging ground but also the platform from which the reach of American economic expansion would move to blanket the Western Hemisphere in particular Latin America. Thus, whether it was J.D. Debrow’s push for industrial development, Daniel Harvey Hill’s faith in diversified and scientific farming, or simply the thrust of Northern businessmen through the expanding market, Florida’s farmers and businessmen readily adapted the new terminology of the market and implemented its ideas in hopes of pushing the state and its people into greater economic parity with the rest of the nation.

These changes in policy and strategy would largely allow Florida to escape many of the harsh realities of what historian James C. Cobb calls the persistent underdevelopment of the South. Although Florida would continue to be a tributary for the larger Northern economy, the combination of the tourism industry and diversified farming allowed the state to move beyond the ups and downs of the cotton market that haunted most of the lower South. Unlike many of its southern neighbors, though, Florida was troubled by persistent labor shortages, which allowed both blacks and whites to demand higher wages than were garnered in neighboring states. Immigration and labor thus emerged as the leading preoccupation of the state’s leaders. When most of its strategies fostering the immigration of European and Chinese labor failed, Florida and its leaders pushed a two-tiered society that largely depended upon the toil of an underpaid black populace.

Southern historian Gavin Wright calls this the unique labor system of the South, though it should be noted that American colonial expansion across the map would follow a similar model for economic growth and development, which hinged upon low wages. Wright’s suggestion that wages throughout the region were largely stifled by extended family ties, lack of mobility, an over extended Northern labor market, and intimidation offers a more precise understanding of the local economic situation.¹⁸ Many states initiated what historian Johnathon Weiner calls the Prussian Road of Development, in which legal and violent coercion were used to restrict labor movement and force workers into contracts. Florida’s businessmen, in particular the railroads and turpentine industry, benefited heavily from the state’s prison system by hiring convicts to serve their sentences while laboring for private employees.¹⁹ While these policies stifled wages throughout the state, Florida also readily encouraged black immigration in order to make up for labor shortages and offered cheap and free lands for settlement. In turn, these inducements helped foster a strong black community that refused to sign labor contracts, worked for daily wages, and readily shifted between farming and wage earning in order to support and bolster family incomes.

Whereas most areas of the South saw a great exodus of both blacks and whites to the West and North during the later part of the 19th and early 20th century because of lack of opportunity, Florida saw an unparalleled increase of both black and white migrants who sought to make their lives anew in the state. As Edward Ayer’s points out, southern states saw a net loss of 537,000 blacks and 1,243,000 whites between 1880 and 1910,

first to Texas and Louisiana then later to California. Florida and Oklahoma were the two states that saw a continuous increase in populations. At the close of Reconstruction, Florida moved swiftly to capture and sway southern migrants in a more tropical direction.

One of Florida’s draws, especially to black immigration, was that Florida had significantly higher land ownership rates than most other states among both blacks and whites throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Florida had also traditionally been seen as Zion to many escaped and run away slaves who sought freedom, and at the close of the Civil War, the imagery of Florida as a “Negro New Jerusalem” spurred African American immigration from neighboring southern states. Many poor whites saw in Florida’s vast stretches not only cheap land but also the promise of a new beginning from the social, political, and economic baggage of their pasts. Ayers suggests that “high rates of white land owning and black land owning tended to coincide, because those wishing to own land among both races had the best luck where unimproved land remained available.” With nearly 60,000 square miles of mostly unsettled and undeveloped lands, Florida’s promise of cheap property seemed inexhaustible.

The one significant obstacle to immigration to Florida was the notorious southern heat and the sweltering Florida humidity along with its mythic mosquitoes, alligators, and

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20 Ayers, Promise of the New South, 24.
22 Ayers, Promise, 197.
23 Long, Cultivating a New Order, 24. Long notes that the Christian recorder of 1872 described Florida as “destined to become the Negro’s New Jerusalem. Here the oppressed colored people of Georgia and intelligent and well-to-do colored men of the North must come and pitch their tents.” There were nearly 9,000 African American landowners in Florida in 1870 and the state quickly became a popular destination for African Americans searching for an alternative to the stunted vision of emancipation in the Black belt further north. Florida became known as a “land of plenty” among African Americans in search of better options. Of the nearly four thousand black families who filed for homestead under the Southern Homestead Act, about three thousand were in the state of Florida.
24 Ayers, Promise of the New South, 196.
snakes. With much of the state’s wealth tied in real-estate, economic survival for most new Floridians depended upon a steady stream of new customers willing to purchase their own parcel of Florida property. In order to encourage settlement, Florida boosters cultivated the promise of a lifestyle rooted in a faith that the sun and the subtropics would provide health, wealth, status, and happiness. From the state, railroads, steamboats, banks, hotel owners, cities, land developers, and speculators came a steady profusion of literature that sought to paint Florida as not only a good place to visit but also a great place invest money for new businesses and an even more wonderful place to call home.

With a barrage of statistics, scientific studies, and medical reports, these works portrayed Florida as the healthiest state in the Union and actively sought not only to encourage visitors to come for recuperation but also to establish homes where the sun promised health and a tropical bounty of fruits and vegetables. Many of these promotional tracts were designed and written so as to encourage settlement by not only farmers but also businessmen and their families. As historians Blaine Brownell and David Goldfield have suggested “without a heavy dose of boosterism a town would surely sink into the backwater of American civilization.”26 The promotion of Florida during this era became a mantra that echoed its way across the country through newspapers, books, pamphlets, orange crate labels, souvenir spoons, and song titles. As one writer noted, “Florida is the best lied about state in the Union. The glib pen of the advertising agent, in his glowing descriptions of the terrestrial Eden, whereof, through his kind offices, you may become the happy possessor of a share”27

What largely fueled the flames of Florida’s settlement was the great personal unease, restlessness, and apprehension that swept its way through all tiers of American society with the spread of the industrial and market revolution. As historian Jackson Lears argues in No Place of Grace, nervous prostration became the disease of the age and Neurasthenia became the catchall phrase under which doctors classified it.\textsuperscript{28} Most commentators readily traced the roots of their illness to “modern civilization” as “jangled nerves were the necessary price of progress.”\textsuperscript{29} Spreading communities and urban landscapes reimagined the environment, while the railroads revolutionized concepts of time, and factories sought to discipline their workers to the new constraints that clocks and quotas placed upon them. Technology shattered the sounds of the country with a constant reminder that modernity and progress were ever present, though the endless boom and bust cycles of the American economy denied them the security that modernity had promised.\textsuperscript{30}

Because of this shift in mindset, historian Nina Silver argues that northerners increasingly thought of the South as “an anti-modern refuge, where life had largely not been homogenized by corporate and commoditized culture.”\textsuperscript{31} For most northerners, the South offered a land of leisure, relaxation, and romance. Moreover, “late Victorians believed that Florida’s mild climate and sunshine to be a natural sanitarium for their therapeutic needs.”\textsuperscript{32} Specifically, Florida promoted an outdoor lifestyle in which those

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 52.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Jack Lane and Maurice O’Sullivan, The Florida Reader: Visions of Paradise from 1530 to the Present. (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1991), 129.
\end{itemize}
with weak constitutions could find rejuvenation through physical activity. With an expanding number of middle class workers receiving a one-week paid vacation, Silber suggests that “the southern health appeal was a persuasive one.” With tropical scenery rooted in biblical imagery of Eden and an architectural legacy that reflected a long colonial Spanish heritage, Florida offered a playground from which escapist fantasies and anti-modern pilgrimages in quest of authenticity for middle and upper class Americans quickly placed the state at the epicenter of a booming tourism industry.

As Florida historian Elliott J. Mackle suggests, “the state’s image was made by northern hands, for northern consumption in northern cities. The Eden of the South is a garden of health, renewal and communication with the transcendent beauty of the Earth. It is also a garden of hotels, machines, land offices, and profitable possibilities. It is Eden modernized.” Florida served as the focus of desire from which its promoters encouraged and fostered the consumption of agricultural and commercial products, natural resources, and real-estate. Tourism not only functioned as an insular economic stimulus, but increasingly, it came to serve as the gimmick to draw capital and investment for other industries as well. As sociologist David Jefferies discusses in Governments and Tourism “tourism helps promote economic stability as it establishes new markets for local products such as agriculture, fisheries, arts, and manufactured goods.” Starting with the close of the Civil War, the state, the public, and its cities consistently used and reinvented Florida’s image to sell not only land but also its varied products. By the 1880s, it was not uncommon to read tourist tracts expounding the benefits of “the wealth

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33 Silber, The Romance of Reunion, 68.
that is gathered there from-tar and rosin, phosphate of lime, of soda, of magnesia, potash, and many other important chemicals are wrung from their generous limbs.” Many cities began to advertise their hinterlands and back regions as a way of promoting its varied industries.

For a society largely gone mad with industrialization and capital, many began to see in the tropical scenery of Florida a pure and unspoiled Eden in which they could escape the sins of modernity and find rejuvenation. Others saw large tracks of old growth timber and natural resources as wealth lying fallow in the Florida soil, needing only capital to liberate it. Many sought new lives in the state’s vast expanses that promised a new agricultural abundance to escape ruined reputations, lost fortunes, shattered communities, and economic instabilities that habitually plagued a largely agrarian nation. Some would dream of all three and see in the state that emerged a vast empire upon which to build their fortunes.

What Florida offered at the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was the promise of land, and this expansive wilderness served as the foundation from which a vast and wide array of hopes and fortunes would be won and lost. Upon the shifting sands that would fill the boots of those who dotted its landscape, competing dreams and ambitions would clash, sometimes coalesce, compete, and in many cases emerge and exist next to one another. As long as the promise of cheap,

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36 Iza Duffus Hardy, Down South. (London: Chapman and Hall, limited, 1883), 118.
38 George J. Alden, Information for those who desire to know the state, its climate, resources, etc. (New Smyrna, Volusia County, Florida: Florida Union Print, 1875). 5. Florida encompassed 60,000 square miles or 38,000,000 acres of land with 1,200 miles of coastline. Most remained in the hands of the state or federal government with 10,891,552 acres of swamp and overflow lands to be used to encourage development through the state’s Internal Improvement Fund and another 17,262,459 of these acres belonging to the federal government and made available through the Homestead Act. Large Spanish Land Grants belonging to absentee landowners were also widely available.
accessible, and arable land remained available, competing desires and dreams were able to exist side by side even if neighbors did not readily agree with each other’s visions. However, as the desire for inexpensive land and resources pushed people and businesses to the fringes of Florida’s frontier, these competing and shifting dreams increasingly clashed as they sought to fill up the empty spaces of the map.

These movements, settlements, and competing aspirations served as the foundation upon which Florida would emerge in the twentieth century. Much of the state’s growth and expansion during this time period would be fueled by an ever enlarging national market that would follow, penetrate, and be encouraged by the same people who had sought to escape its influences. Carried on the backs of social, economic, and cultural refugees who desired to be liberated from modernity yet craved its creature comforts, settlers, visitors, travelers, and tourists pulled and pushed a consumer and market revolution that brought in a steady stream of goods, people, and gadgets to extract the materials necessary to fuel the flames of the machinery and feed the hunger of the masses whose labor served as the foundation for a new industrial and capitalist revolution. Within this new economy centered largely within the industrial Northeast, Florida’s land would be harvested of its natural resources and cultivated to fulfill the varied wants of the burgeoning consumer and industrial society.

While some of those desires fulfilled the economic needs of a wide array of emerging businesses, Florida’s tropical scenery and climate also embodied the fancies and escapist realities of an ever growing populace whose bodies and minds were unable to cope with coal driven, highly mechanized industries that required long hours and hard physical labors. Joining those whose thoughts and bodies had already been ravaged by
the agonies and anguishs of war, they sought and were prescribed in Florida a place of rejuvenation. Doctors such as George Miller Beard and Frederick D. Lente actively encouraged patients suffering from consumption and neurasthenia to take reprieve in Florida. The subtropical and sunny temperatures promised respite from swollen and arthritic joints made worse by the cold temperatures of Northern winters. Tropical fantasies of Eden offered the promise of life before the fall of man, serving as a refuge in which the ills of industrialization and the ravages of war could be escaped and reimagined with each generation, especially in an ever expansive capitalistic society strained by the forces of creative destruction, increased productivity, and market expansion.

Florida’s emerging role as one of the leading resort and tourist destinations would both fuel and counteract the colonial forces of the expanding Northern market economy. While the creation of railroads and the growth of industries geared at harvesting natural resources largely pulled valuable materials from the state, many of the same businessmen and entrepreneurs sought sanctuary in Florida to escape the environmental, civil, and social turmoil that plagued the industrial societies of the North, creating both permanent and seasonal homes and helping to foster market economies to fill their individual consumer needs. Tourists would also in turn bring a steady flow of cash that served as capital for the creation of new businesses and income to feed an ever-growing need for goods. Many tourists would create a cyclical and seasonal economy that operated during the winter months to serve the needs of a largely northern clientele and closed during the summer when most tourists found it too hot to remain.
The tourist economy also functioned as the means by which land speculation, settlement, and development were actively marketed. Although at first promoted largely by the state, Florida’s superfluous land grants to steamboats, railroads, and large land developers pushed many businesses and entrepreneurs into the role of tourist promotion, settlement, and development. Needing to sell off their newly acquired lands, steamboats and railroad developers emerged as land brokers, city developers, hotel builders, tourist advocates, and immigration promoters. While tourism helped spur passenger traffic along railroad and steamboat lines, numerous land rich companies found themselves peddling lands to passengers in hopes of encouraging productive settlements along the tracks, rivers, and ports in order to increase freight to and from newly developed communities. Outside of the older ports, many incipient cities burst to life as a result of the influences of steamboat and railroad companies that actively encouraged their promotion and development.

In many cases, a single railroad dominated each individual city, but as more railroads and steamboats connected at large emerging market and traffic hubs, four cities grew into commercial and economic powerhouses that dominated and defined the social, commercial, and economic spheres of their portion of the state. Starting with Jacksonville in the aftermath of the Civil War, steamboats and later railroads worked with the burgeoning timber and turpentine companies and orange farmers along the St. Johns River to garner the traffic of much needed raw materials. These same companies also pushed winter truck farming to overtake the market of imported fruits and vegetables during the months of December, January, and February. Spurring the growth of a number
of subsidiary industries geared towards the marketing of fruits and vegetables, Jacksonville quickly blossomed into the sole metropolis of the state.

As more railroads moved to take advantage of Florida’s gratuitous land grants, railroads quickly laid track across the vast stretches of Florida’s interior. Largely isolated from the rest of the state and more socially and economically aligned with Mobile and New Orleans, the first major city to benefit from such actions was the sleepy fishing village of Pensacola. William D. Chipley and the Pensacola & Atlantic Railroad Company would move to open up the vast stretches of virgin pine, timber, and farm land that existed between Pensacola and Tallahassee and in doing so attempted to close the social and economic gaps that had existed between West and East Florida. Although later becoming an employee of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, Chipley, who emerged as the land agent for the railroad, worked as the first major promoter of Pensacola and actively fostered the commercial growth of its harbor by moving to bring in federal subsidies through the expansion of the existing naval base.

Most of the natural resources of the western panhandle were funneled through Pensacola, and it emerged alongside Jacksonville as the second major commercial hub within the state. In spite of this economic growth, Pensacola lacked the picturesque qualities to compete with the subtropical scenery of Jacksonville or the antiquities of St. Augustine, and the city proved powerless to reap the benefits of Florida’s burgeoning tourism industry and was largely forced to compete against its Gulf neighbors to siphon off the raw materials of Alabama and western Georgia. While most of the wealth of western Florida was withdrawn in its virgin timber, the vast stretches of cheap cut over

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Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 298. Twice a month, all the main railroads with lines into the South ran special “home seekers trains” at half rates.
lands encouraged a steady flow of poor farmers from neighboring southern states to start their lives anew. In particular, Pensacola encouraged black settlement of the region due to a lack of laborers in the service industries. The colonization of the area by farmers from Alabama and Georgia would later contribute to the region’s nickname as the “Redneck Riviera,” helping to foster the notion of a backwoods mentality in the Panhandle.

The two major cities that would grow to become Jacksonville’s chief tourist and later economic rivals would be Tampa and Miami. Although Tampa served as the commercial center for Florida’s “Cracker Cowboys” and counterpart to Ft. Brooke along the Hillsborough River, railroad and steamboat developer Henry Plant would largely turn Tampa into the commercial heart of Southwest Florida by moving to capture the interior orange industry that had previously been centered in Jacksonville. The Orange Freeze of 1895 that destroyed most of the citrus trees of North Florida would send farmers and railroads further south to begin anew. Tampa quickly jumped on the bandwagon and was followed soon after by the tiny community of Miami. Seeing that the orange trees in the small village of Miami had survived, oil magnate turned railroad and hotel developer Henry Flagler pushed his tracks to the city and spurred the first major boom that Miami would experience. Both Plant and Flagler would develop commercial empires along the East and West coasts that would be dominated by their rail lines, steamers, land agencies, and hotels. After Jacksonville experienced a major yellow fever outbreak in 1898 and a devastating fire in 1901, both Tampa and Miami would rise as commercial and tourist rivals to the Gateway city, and in the case of tourism, the tropical scenery of the later two would place them both as the new tourist centers of state.
These four cities expanded to create their own unique social, cultural, and economic spheres that were shaped as much by developers as they were by the immigrants who would settle and work within the industries that each city helped to foster and promote. In many ways, the story of Florida in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is largely the narrative of the rise of these four major cities and the people and social, commercial, political, natural, and economic influences that brought about their creation and development. It was from each of these communities that tourists and settlers alike would experience their first taste of Florida. The cities and their promoters created, spread, and fostered the many images of the state that largely remain within the American vernacular today and continue to define not only the social and commercial characteristics of these communities and their back regions but also national concepts of class, modernization, travel, tourism, leisure, work, and play.

At the heart of Florida’s advertising blitz, promoters and boosters played on the ego of the wealthy in order to push demand for what was largely non-productive swamp land along the coast. As Sociologist Thorstein Velben discusses in the *Theory of the Leisure Class*, conspicuous consumption as exemplified through excess property and leisure became the chief marker of status and class from the Gilded Age through the Depression. Increasingly, beginning with Henry Flagler and Henry Plant, wintering in Florida became one of the preeminent symbols of status for the business and social elite of the United States. Both men used their hostleries and railways throughout the state to display their own wealth and prowess by creating lavish palaces filled with European art and Victorian dreamscapes. Helping to foster an image of elegance and abundance, both

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men would also spur a real-estate market based upon winter homes as a symbol of status for America’s wealthy. While second homes from Jacksonville to Miami helped populate the coast line with some of the nation’s wealthiest citizens, the state and its growers increasingly advertised many of its agricultural products as luxury items, in particular citrus fruits, helping to spur an orange craze throughout the 1890s that sent millions of orange crates North each winter.

More than any other engine, the tourist industry helped to stabilize the state’s economy from the ups and downs of relying solely upon a monolithic agricultural market. Descriptions appealing to tourists would dominate the promotional crusades in numerous Florida communities, helping to rationalize and standardize the role of tourism and boosterism in both state and community development. From these advertising campaigns, Jacksonville, Pensacola, Tampa, and Miami emerged as the leading tourist, economic, and social centers within Florida. While each of the communities eventually followed its own distinct developmental paradigm, the many leaders within these cities used tourism as a medium for harnessing their communities on behalf of their economic, political, and social needs.

These early prophets of Florida helped to fashion, foster, push, and promote lifestyles rooted in profits and pleasure. As George Washington Olney stated in *A Guide to Florida: “The Land of Flowers,”* “the whole population of the State is becoming rapidly convinced that men, money, and labor, are to be watch words in the success of the future of Florida.” While this shift in mindset occurred throughout the South, this work seeks to understand why it had its greatest success in Florida, how these concepts differed

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throughout the state, and what the parameters of growth and development were for the four major economic and social centers that arose. By establishing a social and economic milieu that fostered economic growth and development, Florida emerged from being the backwater of the South as the least populated and undeveloped state in the Union after the Civil War to the leading tourist destination and most urban southern state by the beginning of W.W. II. Few historians have explored the underlying roots of this shift, and none have done so through the lenses of the four economic and population centers that emerged at the turn of the century. The stories of Jacksonville, Pensacola, Tampa, and Miami and their varied strategies for settlement and development offer a unique perspective from which this dissertation works to understand the roots of one of largest mass migrations of peoples in American history as they made their way into Florida, how these individuals shaped and changed notions of development, colonialism, race, masculinity, escapism, consumption, and leisure, and ultimately transformed a tropical wasteland into the nation’s leading playground.
Chapter II
Jacksonville: Winter City in Summerland!

The Civil War revolutionized the political, social, and economic foundations of Florida creating, a stage from which the state would emerge from being the largest tract of untouched wilderness within the continental U.S. after the war to becoming the nations leading sanatorium and health resort by the turn of the century. At the center of this transformation, the city of Jacksonville arose to become the bulwark of development, converting a small backwoods settlement into Florida’s largest city, creating one of the South’s leading proponents of New South development, and serving as a commercial hub for an expanding northern market. Although Union strategists planted the seeds of this economic and social shift as they sought to colonize Florida with an array of northern sympathizers, Jacksonville’s land developers, speculators, boosters, and later tourist promoters tapped into these sympathies and strategies to encourage new settlement and development by promoting citriculture, market gardening, tourism, and real-estate through immigration and tourist tracts. These activities helped cultivate Jacksonville as the epicenter of business activity, boosting the city as the economic capitol of Florida.

The origins of Jacksonville’s Gilded Age development rest with Union strategists who desired to use the state tax board to confiscate Confederate lands and sell them to pro-Union immigrants in hopes of switching Florida from a southern state into one sympathetic to the Union. Seeing an opportunity for profit, northern businessmen pushed Senator Charles Sumner to make arrangements with the Secretary of the Treasury to open up trade and safeguard access to Florida’s raw materials while coaxing the loyalty of its
population.\textsuperscript{1} Salmon P. Chase, the head of the Treasury Department, sent agents to Florida to seize all abandoned property to be resold in New York. Union sympathizers in turn assembled in Jacksonville and called for a convention to establish a new government. These efforts failed after the government, fearing reprisal, recalled federal troops and Treasury Department agents. Upon their departure, Florida’s union sympathizers also fled the state to New York and Washington.\textsuperscript{2}

Many of these unionist urged New York merchants and businessmen and the federal government to renew a military campaign to recapture Jacksonville and take control of the Florida interior. In particularly, Lyman D. Stickney, a fly-by-night speculator, emerged from the New York crowd to win favor in the treasury department. Stickney established a legislative grant from Florida in 1861 for two townships outside of Fort Meyers and secured dozens of settlers with the promise of forty-acre homesteads. When Stickney was unable to come up with the capital for improvements that he promised, many of these colonists left the state in disgust.\textsuperscript{3} Stickney remained in Florida and operated a sloop along the Florida coast, but when union sympathizers fled to New York, he joined them and obtained himself a position on Florida’s Direct Tax Commission. The Treasury Department entrusted this body to execute the punitive Direct Tax Laws of June 7, 1862 that sought to confiscate the property of southern landholders who had unpaid taxes and to sell the property if payment was not received. Along with

\textsuperscript{1} George Winston Smith, “Carpetbag Imperialism in Florida 1862-1868 Part I.” \textit{Florida Historical Quaterly} Vol. 27 No. 2 (October 1948), 107.


\textsuperscript{3} Smith, “Carpetbag Imperialism,” 109-111.
John S. Sammis, another Florida loyalist, and Harrison Reed, a Wisconsin editor, the
three made up the presiding members of the Tax Commission.4

The state named Stickney the head of the Tax Commission, and he used this
position to lay the framework for a political settlement of Florida for those who were
sympathetic to northern commerce. The 1861 Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture
contained Stickney’s article, “Tropical Florida,” describing the agricultural possibilities
of the state. He proposed that cultivation of tropical fruits and sugar could make Florida
into the rival of Cuba. He also suggested that through tax sales northern settlement could
remake Florida into a “free labor” market economy. These sentiments brought Stickney
to the attention of Eli Thayer, an advocate for mass northern immigration into the South
to create free labor states and end sectional discord. Thayer convinced Northern
capitalists to form the New England Emigrant Aid Company, to plant free-soil colonies in
Kansas and the Upper South, and also turn its attention to Florida.5

Thayer believed that military force was wasteful and would require a long
occupation of the South and felt that mass migration into the region could produce the
same results without the financial costs of war and in turn create a new army of producers
within the region. He urged President Lincoln to create a “Homestead and Emigration
Department” to take charge of confiscated property from rebels and divide the property
into homesteads for loyal southerners. Thayer devised a plan to send 50,000 volunteers to
Florida to clear the state of Confederate forces and sympathizers, after which they could
take up abandoned properties. Edwin M. Stanton and Abraham Lincoln saw possibilities

in Thayer’s vision and encouraged him to search for recruits for his Florida campaign.\textsuperscript{6} One of Thayer’s leading proponents was Reverend Edward Everett Hale of Boston, a member of the Emigrant Aid Society, who envisioned a Florida in which discharged federal troops would establish a winter refuge for northerners who might “need a summer in January.”\textsuperscript{7}

In September of 1862, there were calls to create a “Department of Florida” with Thayer as the military governor of the state and James A. Garfield as the commanding general, but disastrous losses for the North resulted in delays, as both Lincoln and Stanton were turning sour towards the idea. Thayer and Stickney, with the backing of Salmon Chase, released a settlement pamphlet entitled \textit{Florida: Its Climate, Soil, Productions, Resources, and Capabilities; Also a Plan For Colonizing the State and Information to Emigrants} which described the agricultural possibilities of Florida if cultivated by the hands of industrious and enterprising settlers. Union newspapers also took up advertising the advantages of the state to immigrants.\textsuperscript{8}

Radical Republicans in Congress moved to force Lincoln to make a decision about Thayer’s plan. A resolution was introduced by John Bingham of Ohio to authorize 20,000 volunteers to serve nine months in Florida and then be disbanded there to settle the state. The house referred the matter to the Committee of Military Affairs. The economic advantages of the state were discussed at length, in particular the natural resources that Florida offered to the Union cause. During these meetings, Senators discussed making Florida into a refuge for freedmen, and the northern press helped foster the idea among the populace. General William T. Sherman wrote his brother that he opposed blacks

\textsuperscript{6} George Winston Smith, “Carpetbag Imperialism,” 114-115.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 116.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 117-121.
serving with his white troops, but he would not mind seeing “them armed and colonizing Florida.” Thayer gave the idea lip service, but his main focus remained upon free enterprise and labor for white settlers. Through his speeches, he captured the attention of a number of Northern newspapers, including William Cullen Bryant’s New York Evening Post and the New York Times, both of which praised Thayer’s proposals.9

William Cullen Bryant headed a Committee of Five, which presented Thayer’s Plan to the House of Representatives. The discussion never came to a vote, as most Representatives saw Thayer’s proposals as a distraction to the Union war efforts and an affront to private property rights. Congress tabled all discussion of Union efforts to colonize Florida, and Thayer cut his ties with the state, setting his sights on other colonization schemes in the West.10 Unwilling to see his efforts and vision for Florida destroyed, Lyman Stickney used his role as the head of the Tax Commission to continue to push for military campaigns into the state to recapture and secure Jacksonville in order to sell delinquent lands and encourage northern migration.11

Looking to garner support in Washington and maintain his good standing with Salmon Chase, Stickney began encouraging black regiments to make forays into Florida. In particular, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson and the First South Carolina Regiment was coaxed to make a foraging trip up the St. Mary’s River, returning with lumber, bricks, resin, and railroad iron. With the success of this mission, Stickney asked for and was granted permission by General Rufus Saxton for Higginson to march his troops into Florida with the hopes of carrying the Emancipation Proclamation and

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10 Ibid., 128-129.
recruiting newly freed slaves along the route. Saxton, an ardent abolitionist, hoped that Florida could be made into an asylum for freed slaves. Higginson’s expedition successfully captured Jacksonville and moved to take the St. Johns River but failed to maintain control over occupied lands.  

Despite the setback, Stickney returned to Washington to see Chase and convince him that a quick reconstruction of the state was still possible if he forced the War Department to send gunboats, four regiments, and two companies of cavalry to help the Tax Commission pursue its aims.  

Stickney learned that Massachusetts’ businessmen were recruiting colored regiments, and the government was enlisting black refugees in the Mississippi Valley. Mansfield French, a northern missionary in the Sea Islands, drafted colored troops in New York and Brooklyn. General Quincy A. Gillmore, Commander of the Department of the South, consented to another Florida campaign if the War Department agreed. With the backing of Stanton, Major General Henry Halleck granted permission to undertake a new campaign in Florida. *The Free South* and other radical newspapers discussed a glorious commonwealth of Northerners and freedmen “who will bring commerce to Florida’s rivers and soil and relieve it from the blight of slavery.”

In efforts to get presidential support, Stickney sold tax commission lands in St. Augustine to John Hay, Lincoln’s Private Secretary, and gained backing from Lincoln with the concession that John Hay oversee Lincoln’s new 10% plan after troops captured the state. Gillmore announced that he intended to return Florida to the Union and ordered Brigadier General

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15 Ibid., 276-279.
Truman Seymor to Jacksonville on February 5th. John Hay landed in Jacksonville soon afterwards to administer loyalty oaths, and Salmon Chase lifted restrictions on trade opening a floodgate of pent up resources that engulfed the streets with activity. *The Boston Advertiser* glowed with reports on the promise of Florida’s future and the natural resources that the state offered. A union army officer waxed poetic over an American Italy that needed only Northern hands to work the soil.\(^{16}\)

While Hay managed to get loyalty oaths from Confederate prisoners and merchants, he was still unable to enroll 10% of the Florida population, and he conceded that Lincoln’s reconstruction plan proved ineffective for Florida. A week later, federal troops suffered a decisive defeat in Florida at the Battle of Olustee in which Union forces were routed by an equal force of Confederates and compelled to retreat to Jacksonville where they remained until the end of the war.\(^{17}\) The failure of the Florida campaign forced Chase to resign from the Treasury Department in June. With his departure, Stickney’s control over the Florida Tax Commission was severely weakened. Stickney had made many enemies, among them his fellow commissioners, Sammis and Reed, both of whom resigned due to misgivings about Stickney after he objected to them selling confiscated lands to themselves and friends while he was away in Washington. Reed saw the failure of Union forces as an opportunity to attack Stickney and released documents showing Stickney profiteering from illegal trade with Confederates. Without Chase to assist him, Stickney resigned within the year. Reed would use his new clout to become the Reconstruction governor of Florida.\(^{18}\)

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\(^{17}\) Ibid., 288-289. 
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 290-294.
Despite his political failures, Stickney continued to advertise the state and its possibilities though newspapers that he had established with money from the Tax Commission until 1867. Stickney used his articles to firmly root the imagery of Florida within the American consciousness and vernacular. By working with abolitionists and radicals, Stickney imbued Florida and its many possibilities within the public imagination using northern newspapers, political discussions, and military strategies. By polarizing the settlement of the state in favor of northerners and sympathizers, Stickney set a zealous tone that later Florida boosters would seek to emulate when discussing the benefits and advantages of settlement. With his encouragement of a free black settlement and push to have black troops liberate the state from the Confederacy, he left an enduring legacy within the minds of later African American settlers who hoped for better economic opportunities. Stickney’s work with Thayer and the New England Emigrant Aid Society also laid a foundation from which Edward Everett Hale reinvigorated the Emigrant Aid Society’s work in Florida, Governor Reed pushed the society’s creed during Reconstruction, and Harriet Beecher Stowe and her siblings also encouraged a steady stream of northern migrants into Florida. Despite his misgivings, Stickney’s work set a zeal, tone, and dialogue, which later boosters of Florida would mimic.

Most of Florida remained cut off from the rest of the nation for much of the decade after the war as the rail lines of the South were slowly pieced back together. Less than 400 miles of track existed in Florida with most of the railroads having declared

bankruptcy. Only 84 miles of track would be laid during Reconstruction.\(^{21}\) None of the tracks offered a direct route to Jacksonville as they were forbidden from crossing the St. Mary’s River. Before the war, the railroads pushed for laws barring direct rail routes into the state, fearing that commerce would be siphoned off to Georgia ports. As steamboat companies emerged as the great commercial agents of Florida, they lobbied the legislature to maintain the earlier law to protect their own interests.\(^{22}\) Rail travel through Georgia and into Tallahassee and Quincy was possible, though the journey proved arduous. Therefore, steamers via Savannah became the main route of travel to Florida.\(^{23}\)

Throughout the early years of Reconstruction, the Union banned northern citizens and tourists from traveling in and around the South until they could reestablish order among the southern population. During this time, it was noted that “Jacksonville consisted of a few brick warehouses and stores along the street fronting the water.”\(^{24}\) Black Union soldiers and freedmen formed the largest contingent of returned citizens interspersed with a few rebel soldiers. Freedmen formed a number of camps on vacant lands throughout the city.\(^{25}\) The presence of black troops in Jacksonville and the arrival of the Freedmen’s Bureau provided hope for many of the freedmen concerning the future of the area, though it made southern whites leery of returning. An 1866 census by the Freedman’s Bureau recorded 1,700 inhabitants in Jacksonville, the majority of them


\(^{24}\) Whitelaw Reid, *After the Ear: A Southern Tour, May 1, 1865 to May 1, 1866*. (London: S. Low, Son, & Marston, 1866), 162.

\(^{25}\) Reid, *After the War*, 163.
freedmen who subsisted off the charity of the nation. Much of the native white population refused to return until titles to their property were cleared up. Great uncertainty remained over the rightful ownership to lands within the state due to the activities of the Tax Commission.

Many of these doubts and qualms undermined investment and immigration. These uncertainties pushed many poor southerners to bypass Florida and head out west to Texas to homestead and start their lives anew. One of the first promotional tracts to appear after the war appeared in 1866 and was entitled Florida vs. Texas. The tract sought to halt the flow of westward migration by describing tropical productions and the salubrious and healthful climate that Florida offered to its settlers. These efforts largely proved futile. Northern soldiers stationed in the state during the war became its first new immigrants. As the Texas tract noted, “northern officers who had never before seen a winter without ice, snow, and frost could scarcely believe their own senses. Many of them came to the shores to seek permanent homes.” While assigned to the key cities of the state, these soldiers wrote numerous letters to their friends and relatives describing the joys of Florida’s mild climate and scenery. Although most of the soldiers left the state to return to their families in the North, many of them came back again to establish new homes.

Black soldiers and freedmen also arrived in Florida and Jacksonville in particular. The Freedmen’s Bureau discussed opening the state as a New Liberia for former slaves. On New Year’s 1866, Thomas W. Osborn, the assistant commissioner of the Freedman’s

Bureau in Florida, wrote Oliver Otis Howard, the Commissioner of the Freedman’s Bureau in Washington, D.C. that the federal government should buy the entire Florida peninsula below the 28th parallel and organize a new territory to be homesteaded by freed slaves. He suggested that there were over 14,400 square miles of arable land that could sustain 115,200 farmers. 31 Although the efforts fell through, freedmen saw potential in the state and moved en masse from Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. Between the end of the war and 1869, the Freedmen’s Bureau moved to protect the rights of these new immigrants. The Bureau helped freedmen find employment, opened a normal school in Jacksonville, registered freedmen to vote, and tried to guarantee that labor contracts were fulfilled by both parties. 32 One reporter noted, “Agents insisted that the freedmen be free to choose their own employers and that substitute slavery would not be tolerated.” 33

On examining the issue in 1869, Bill Ledyard noted of the freedmen that “they dislike as a rule to do any labor for their old masters, since that would seem to them very much like the old system which they now have such a horror of.” 34 Joe Richardson also recorded,

Most commonly, the freedmen know, from general reputation, the character of the neighboring planters - so that they are found with those whom they have chosen to labor for. While this state of things is everywhere existent, there is on the whole a want of laborers. Where there is one planter who has engaged more than his complement, there are two who can not obtain so many as they want.” 35

34 Ledyard Bill, A winter in Florida, or, Observations on the soil, climate, and products of our semi-tropical state. (New York: Wood & Holbrook, 1869), 217.
To make up for labor shortages, many freedmen hired themselves out to work for other farmers as well as to the emerging lumber industry. Not everyone was happy with the new arrangement. As one man explained,

"Some are engaging in lumbering, and by the liberal wages they are offering, are taking from their accustomed places many freedmen who otherwise would be planting. The freedmen were doing the majority of the work for wages, averaging twenty-six dollars a month. One lumberman reported that even ‘common, poor, unreliable, lazy Negroes’ had ‘to be paid $1 per day and found.’ The average wage for the farm laborer was about twelve dollars a month for first-class."

Many freedmen, in turn, settled on the outskirts of villages and cities, in particular, Jacksonville, where they formed communities and sought wages in newly opened lumber mills. Bill Ledyard remarked that “freedmen were very anxious to secure to their families a resting-place, where they shall be free from molestation.” Unhappy with black immigration, the city ordered the military to remove all unemployed blacks from Jacksonville and clashes erupted between freedmen and the military. To guard against such policies, African Americans in the La Villa suburb of Jacksonville formed socially segregated networks of family and friends. These networks were rooted in and fortified by schools, the black church, and voluntary associations. Freedmen frequently sought cheap shelter, lived with relatives, and encouraged other family to move to the city as jobs and opportunities arose. With widespread unemployment and little job security, black households routinely struggled to meet daily obligations, and black

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institutions helped many families by occasionally providing aid but mostly serving as an emotional outlet and a space for religious expression, social interaction, and education.”

By 1869, African Americans had become the overwhelming majority in Jacksonville, supporting churches, schools, and, serving in political positions. Blacks and whites across the South considered Jacksonville as a hospitable community for black immigration and growth. Jacksonville and Savannah represented two of the few southern cities where African Americans held meaningful political strength. With that said, southern whites increasingly found themselves alienated by black troops stationed in the city and were unhappy with their own minority status. In February of 1869, white federal troops and local blacks came to blows in Jacksonville. A group of freedmen approached the troops to complain about their living conditions in the city. One of the soldiers fired upon the crowd killing one of the men. A large skirmish ensued between the troops and the crowd and required additional backup to put down the riot. No one involved was charged or arrested, but Federal troops were removed from the city and Jacksonville was granted self-government ending Reconstruction in the city years before the rest of the state. As early as 1873, Jacksonville discussed annexing La Villa to increase its tax base, but black voters and community leaders blocked any such movement until 1887, fearing the action as a means to political and economic control.

Despite the racial tensions, the Florida Commissioner of Lands moved to reassure black immigrants and settlers of Florida that “in no other state in the South has the degree

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42 Ledyard Bill, *A winter in Florida*, 83.
45 Kenney, *La Villa*, 201.
of progress been so marked as here. The large body of our colored citizens have already acquired means enough to build houses, purchase property, and surround themselves with most of the comforts of home. ⁴⁶ These comments reflected the movement of freedmen away from many southern states. The Florida Commissioner noted, “colored men of the country, immense numbers of laborers of the South, have been seen getting together their families and effects, and leaving behind them their patches of land and log cabins, have gone in search of homes in States where political opposition is less pronounced, and where their persons and property will be more secure.” The state of Florida moved to assure freedmen that “we want and seek more intelligent and thrifty class of colored men.” ⁴⁷ The work also noted,

> It has been said flippantly by politicians and detractors of the colored man that he will not work, that he is hopelessly lazy, and that his concept of freedom is exemption from toil. There are thousands of lazy white persons in the South. The colored man is today fulfilling the expectations of his friends, surprising those who, wishing him well, and is giving the very best answer to his calumniators by his industry, self reliance, and other great proofs of progress. ⁴⁸

In another tract, the Commissioner suggests, “The thriftiness of the colored man has been one of the greatest boons of the South. It has enabled him to exist on the smallest possible allowance. Colored labor is the cheapest, and therefore just the kind suited to the South in its present condition.” ⁴⁹

The Florida Commissioner also sought to highlight the citizenship protections guaranteed in Florida’s Constitution of 1869. Florida Democrats frequently referred to the new Constitution as the Freedmen’s Bureau and Post Office Constitution since its

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⁴⁸ Ibid., 47.

delegates had dominated the convention. In particular, Harrison Reed used the convention to bolster his position within the Republican Party in order to capture the governorship of Florida by garnering support among newly registered freedmen.⁵⁰ Reed noted, 

There are some other features of the new Constitution that are eminently worthy of notice. It secures immediate and absolute civil and political rights to all before the law, irrespective of race, color, or condition. Neither the words white or black, are to be found in the instrument. Its spirit is that of equal right and impartial justice to all. Slavery and secession are in specific terms and most solemnly abjured, and it is provided that this State shall ever remain a member of the American Union, the people thereof a part of the American nation; it provides with the utmost liberality for the noble and generous and comprehensive system of Education, consisting of free Public Schools, Seminaries, and a University, equally open to all, and a Homestead to the head of a family male or female, who is a citizen of the United States, the extent of one hundred and sixty acres land, or the half of one acre within the limits of any incorporated city or town, owned by the head of a family residing in this State.⁵¹

In outlining these rights, the Land Commissioner and the state of Florida hoped to induce and encourage southern black and white settlement.

By 1870, there were nearly 9,000 African American landowners in Florida, and by 1872, the Christian Recorder proclaimed that the state was destined to become a “Negro New Jerusalem.”⁵² Within less than a decade, freedmen would cultivate more than 18,000 acres.⁵³ The large numbers of black landowners prompted an array of speculative activities by Christian missionaries and the Emigrant Aid Society that sought to help northern migrants forge their way within the state to create a new Antioch.⁵⁴ John Hale, John Murray Forbes, and Martin Brimmer, sought to sell shares to individuals who

⁵¹ Cheney, Florida: Its climate, soil, 11-12.
⁵² Long, Cultivating a New Order, 22-23.
⁵³ Ibid., 24.
wished to become part of a Florida colony for $100 beginning in 1867. In 1869, the New England Emigrant Aid Society published *Florida: The Advantages and Inducements which it offers to Immigrants*. The society admitted that it could not offer “pecuniary assistance to parties wishing to go to Florida; neither has it any colonies located, organized, or in the process of organization, nor any interest in the purchase or sale of any lands,” but it hoped to “scatter information concerning Florida- the advantages and inducements which its soil, climate, and productions offer to those seeking new homes.”

The work inspired a number of other uplift immigration tracts, the two most significant being Mrs. H.W. Beecher’s *Letters from Florida* and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Palmetto Leaves*.

Stowe moved to Florida shortly after the war. She rented a home in the village of Mandarin for her son Frederick who had been wounded in the head during the war and experienced severe alcoholism and delirium. The family probably chose Florida because of the large number of tracts and pamphlets discussing the state as a healthy place to recuperate from neurasthenia and other nervous conditions. In 1867, Stowe followed her brother, Charles Beecher, and set up residence in Florida. Charles moved to Newport in Wakulla County where he intended to establish a school for freedmen. In March 1871, he would be appointed State Superintendent of Public Institutions. Henry Ward Beecher and his wife moved to Florida in 1872. The Beechers and Stowes became adherents of early tax commissioner, John Swaim, who carried on the ideas established by Lyman D. Stickney and Eli Thayer. Swaim hoped that northerners could

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control the balance of power between freedmen and white southerners in order to forge a state that was more politically, socially, and economically aligned with the North. Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mrs. Henry Ward Beecher adopted this mantle in their writings and turned northern immigration into the mantra and panacea for Florida’s development for all boosters who would follow.

Stowe’s *Palmetto Leaves* did not appear until 1873, but John Hammond Moore noted as early as 1871 that “Mrs. Stowe has turned to the more peaceful, if less notable, occupation of raising oranges on the banks of the St. Johns.” Stowe claimed to find spiritual and physical rejuvenation in the state. “My visit here has been like sunshine and spring to a frost bitten plant. I have had more life, more rest, more appetite, more conscious pleasure in existence than I have had for years in New England. Here must be my future home, for at least half of the year, if I am to live and do anything.” Stowe became the resident celebrity in Florida, drawing in a string of visitors that sought to capture a glimpse of the lady who had supposedly ignited the Civil War. Stowe saw opportunity and hope within the state. In a later interview, Stowe believed that “Assuming from the predominant spirit, I find in the diverse classes here, that Florida will soon rest upon a political basis satisfactory to the lovers of equal rights, there no longer remains any reason for the non-development of her natural resources.”

*Palmetto Leaves* reflected Stowe’s belief in Florida’s regenerative possibilities. Whether emblematic of her hopes for her son or her own physical transformation upon

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59 Reid, *After the War*, 159-160.
62 Ibid., 15-16.
arrival, Stowe believed that Florida was suitable for “nervously-organized dyspeptics who require a great deal of open, out-door life.” She also ascribed to the belief that northern migration offered welcome change to a southern frontier state. Stowe established a church and school house because she felt that seeing “people who are willing and anxious to be taught, growing up in ignorance is the sorest sight that can afflict one.” She thought that white and black southerners could be reformed and that northerners had an obligation to support social, political, and economic change. In Stowe’s eyes, the South could be rehabilitated though free labor and the market.

Stowe held a growing concern and fear that northerners were turning away from the cause of freedmen. An expanding dialogue had begun among northern men who had established themselves in the South and proclaimed the need for foreign immigration, as “the negro is an inefficient laborer.” The second half of Palmetto Leaves discusses the benefits of black labor, the contributions that freedmen have made to the state, and the continued work that should be performed on their behalf. Stowe argues,

The negro laborer carefully looked after, is as good as any that can be hired at the North. In some respects, they are better. As a class, they are more obedient, better natured, more joyous, and easily satisfied. The question as to whether, on the whole, the negroes are valuable members of society, and increasing the material wealth of the State, is best answered by the returns on the Freedman’s Savings and Trust Company. The report of this institution for the year 1872 is before us; and from this it appears that negro laborers have deposited with the Trust Company this year the sum of thirty-one million two hundred and sixty thousand four hundred ninety-nine dollars.

With regard to the future, Stowe reasons “negro children are bright, they can be taught anything: and if the whites, who cannot bear tropical sun’s fierce extremes, neglect to

64 Ibid., 22.
65 Ibid., 148.
66 Ibid., 285.
67 Ibid., 315-316.
educate a docile race who both can and will bear it for them, they throw away their best chance of success.”68 In this light, Stowe intended Palmetto Leaves to serve as a guide for northern immigrants on establishing equitable communities rooted in liberal values.

Stowe’s sister in law, Mrs. Henry Ward Beecher, echoed many of these sentiments in her campaign to populate Florida with Northern indigents in an attempt to alleviate the economic woes of both the North and South. Beecher’s Letters From Florida moved to inspire northern philanthropists and businessmen to promote immigration to Florida by supporting and providing the funds necessary for poor individuals and families to make the journey to the state and sustain themselves for a year. Her motto was “Give work, not Alms.” Beecher lamented,

How I long to see those who at the North are weary, seeking work and finding none, down here in Florida, where for fifty dollars forty acres of land, can be purchased or for fourteen dollars and sixty cents a quarter section of government land can be ‘entered,’ free from taxes for five years, or long enough to bring the land into a state of cultivation that will yield a very comfortable support till an orange grove is well established, and the trees almost old enough to give fair promise of remuneration.69

Beecher believed that Northern benevolence could send a steady stream of immigrants to Florida to restart their lives and shape the population and economy of the state.

With northern immigration, Beecher contends that they will “spread over Florida the same skill and energetic labor that for the last century has gradually clothed and beautified the North, and in less than one third of that time this State will be like the garden of Eden, and all traces of the ruin and desolation which war has left will be for ever obliterated.”70 She believes that these settlers would “restore that which has been laid in ruins, and establish communications through which the productions of these

68 Stowe, Palmetto Leaves, 317.
70 Beecher, Letters from Florida, 22.
regions will be sure of good markets, and amicable exchange become easy to all parts of our land.”

Finally, Beecher proclaims,

Bring down our Northern men who are begging for work, but finding none, and, as if by magic, not only will the work of re-creation go marching on, but new land will be broken up, young groves will be planted, and, where is now the wilderness, neatly fenced and well tilled fields, rich in cane and cotton, will obliterate the entrenchments and earthworks, sad token of the war.

The zeal in both Stowe’s and Beecher’s works would inspire a new crest of migration.

Along with these political motivations, hundreds of dispatches from newspapermen and soldiers depicted accounts of exotic beaches, rivers, lakes, animals, and the flora and fauna of the state. Enchanted by the landscape and atmosphere, few writers could resist contrasting the warmth and sunshine of Florida in the winter to the ice and snow of the north. These reports portrayed Florida as a new American Eden and a tropical paradise. For many Americans, these writings reflected the growing romanticism of nature among a society becoming increasingly distraught in the face of industrialization, urbanization, and an uncertainty of the effectiveness of modernization and development to solve the woes of society. The earliest tracts that highlighted Florida’s scenery frequently emphasized the healthfulness of its climate. T.F. Smith’s *Florida and Texas* explained,

As respects to health, the climate of Florida stands preeminent. The peninsular climate of Florida is much more salubrious than that of any other state in the Union. The general healthfulness of many parts of Florida, particularly on its coast, is proverbial. The average annual mortality of the whole Peninsula, is found to be 2.06 percent, while the other portions of the United States (previous to the war with Mexico) is 3.05 percent.

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72 Ibid., 34-35.
These statistics offered comfort and security to immigrants who feared swamp miasmas and malaria.

Following the war, climate and health statistics also addressed growing medical concerns. The *Florida Settlers and Immigrants Guide of 1873*, claimed, “the climate of the State is also well adapted for the cure of rheumatism; in fact it may be regarded as a specific for this disease.”

For wounded veterans who had returned to their homes with broken bones and amputated limbs, these passages promised seasonal and permanent relief from arthritic and swollen joints that caused agony and discomfort. In the same year, Robert Spier’s *Going South for the Winter with Hints to Consumptives* promised reinvigorated “life and health” for those who head South in particular in Jacksonville and Florida. By 1875, the healing virtues of Florida had become so well established within the medical field that Rambler’s *Guide to Florida* proclaimed,

> The wonderful salubrity of the climate of Florida is its greatest attraction, and is destined to make it to America what the South of France and Italy are to Europe, the refuge of those who seek to escape the rigor of a Northern winter. So well convinced are our physicians of this fact, that they now advise their patients to seek health in Florida.

These pronouncements sparked a large movement of invalids into the state primarily to Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and the St. Johns River. Frederick D. Lente’s *Florida as a Health Resort* sought to guide invalids along their path in Florida while giving comfort to locals who addressed concerns at the number of mentally and physically ill making their way in the state. Lente claimed that most invalids exhibited no

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77 Field, *Bright skies and dark shadows*, 76.
traits to the general observer and fell within the growing category of nervous prostration.

He observed that,

Certain forms of dyspepsia, which is, like other nervous affections, becoming more and more common— which is merely one of the many symptoms of modern “wear and tear,” and when various other treatment has failed— are permanently relieved by a winter’s residence in Florida. Florida offers a haven of rest and quiet for that condition which is unfortunately becoming so prevalent among the restless, driving denizens out of northern cities and towns, which comes under the comprehensive designation nervous prostration.80

Lente encouraged most invalids to journey to Florida, but directed those without means to take advantage of the outdoor life by hunting and fishing while they lived and camped in Florida.81

Lente suggests that “the best possible medicine for weak nerves is an out of door life in a climate not subject to violent changes; such a climate is afforded by Florida in winter.”82 James A Hensall’s Camping and Cruising in Florida reflects this sentiment with its account of a doctor’s journey with his patients on a camping excursion through Florida. As Hensall explains, what makes Florida special is that “one can live in the open air during the winter without discomfort, and therein lies the great and lasting benefit to the invalid who requires the open air life and nature’s great restorers, air, sunshine, exercise, and refreshing sleep.”83 For most doctors, these conditions offered, “the poor broken down man of business and the nervous wife and mother wearied and worn from household chores, a rejuvenating balm well calculated to restore nerve action to its...

81 Lente, M.D., Florida as a Health Resort, 22.
82 Frederick D. Lente, A.M., M.D, Constituents of Climate with Special reference to the Climate of Florida. (Louisville, Ky.: Richmond and Louisville Steam and Job Print, 1878), 52.
healthy condition." With prescriptions in hand, consumptives and invalids turned Florida and Jacksonville into a burgeoning tourist destination as invalids spent their winters in Florida returning home each spring. The seasonal influx served as the basis for the new industry and economy.

In order to house the growing number of visitors to the state, northern investors were the first to take advantage of the influx by building a large number of hotels and resorts. The St. James Hotel opened in Jacksonville on January 1st, 1869 and marked the beginning of a construction boom as northerners financed hotels across North Florida. In particular, sulphur and mineral springs served as locations for larger resorts. Doctors widely held that “the waters from sulphur springs were efficacious in curing all forms of consumption, scrofula, jaundice, and other bilious affections, chronic dysentery, diarrhea, disease of the uterus, chronic rheumatism, gout, dropsy, gravel, neuralgia, tremor, ringworm, and itch.” Along with hotels, Bill Ledyard observed the number of “private boarding houses kept by northern people, with pleasant surroundings, and quite as inviting as the hotels to those seeking but a temporary home.”

A growing number of northerners also began purchasing winter homes. Stowe’s *Palmetto Leaves* first suggested, “Florida is peculiarly adapted to the needs of people who can afford two houses, and want a refuge from the drain that winter makes on the health.” The wealthy platted residences from Jacksonville to St. Augustine and all up and down the banks of the St. Johns River. With neurasthenia growing in prevalence

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85 Foster, *Beechers, Stowes, and Yankee Strangers*, 55.
87 Ledyard Bill, *A winter in Florida*, 83.
among the industrial classes, many began to build houses in which to spend each winter. The numbers of second homebuilders increased exponentially after the start of the Franco-Prussian war blocked almost all travel in and out of Europe, sending American elites in search of a new tourist playground. Many increasingly found interest in the warmth, sunshine, and exotic appeal of Florida. Florida’s architectural and historical legacy of Spanish, British, and French colonial occupation offered Americans hungry for antiquities something upon which to gaze and imagine their own grand historic narrative.

Beyond the American elite, a number of middle-class workers in the North started receiving a week long paid vacation during the year. Interested in showing off their newly acquired status and escaping the extremities of city life, a tide of tourists and travelers began to peel back the Florida frontier. By 1872, George Washington Olney could proclaim that “fifty thousand people visited Florida last winter, of whom, about ¼ were invalids.” A large contingent of businesses stepped forward to take advantage of the tourism trade. Foremost among them were the steamboat and steamship lines, and preeminent among the boat owners was Colonel Hubbard L. Hart. The Colonel operated the first steamships on the St. Johns after the war and developed the largest and most lucrative fleets along the river. Hart refurbished a steamship used by the Union blockade then employed his ship to clear the Ocklawaha River as part of contract with the Internal Improvement Fund. He spent monies from the contract to build a fleet of boats

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90 Silber, Romance, 68.
and a shipyard across from the village of Palatka then established routes to Lake Griffin, the Ocklawaha, and the Silver River, which catered to tourist and settlers needs.93

Along with Hart, Captain Jacob Brock formed a partnership with John Clark of Baltimore purchasing the Hattie and Darlington to ply the upper St. Johns.94 Both men desired to take advantage of the flow of invalids and tourists into the state. Brock established the village of Enterprise on the Lake Monroe section to the St. Johns and built two houses and a hotel for invalids and tourists who wished to spend their winter along the river.95 In 1868, Frederick De Barry, a wine merchant from New York, purchased property outside of Enterprise and developed the De Barry Line of steamships after winning the mail contract for the state. He also used his ships to carry passengers along the river.96 The revenues gained from tourism sparked a number of steamboat and steamship lines to subsidize tourist publications, among the most prominent being Rambler’s Guide to Florida.97 With the success of the publication, many of Florida’s burgeoning steamboat lines came to the realization that tourism offered the optimal vehicle through which to encourage new commercial traffic by bringing potential settlers to the state’s leading commodity, land, and describing its many uses and potentials.

The promises of cheap and free land, the growing interest in oranges and citrus, and the birth of winter truck farming served as the initial hook that first drew many new settlers to the state. In 1869, Florida created the Bureau of Immigration headed by a

94 Elliot, Paddle Wheels on the St. Johns, 161.
95 Robert Speir, Going South for the Winter with Hints to Consumptives. (New York: Edward O. Jenkins, 1873), 198-199.
Commissioner of Immigration to advertise its agricultural possibilities as a means of encouraging settlement of frontier lands.\textsuperscript{98} To entice settlers to the state, Florida pushed winter market gardening and citrusculture. In particular, northern settlers outlined crop diversification as one of their main aims in hopes of moving beyond a cotton-based economy that favored the old planter class and oversized plantations.\textsuperscript{99} Personifying a growing belief throughout the state, Bill Ledyard believed that “early fruit growing and marketing would allow Florida agriculture to excel beyond her neighboring southern states.”\textsuperscript{100} By 1882, market gardening had grown into one of the leading industries and sources of capital within the state. On a trip through Florida, Frank Simpson observed of Jacksonville “during the winter, the city sends large quantities of vegetables to the northern markets, the cultivation of these products is becoming a very prolific source of income in Florida.”\textsuperscript{101} Another guide remarked, “hundreds and thousands of barrels and crates filled with products of Florida are steamed away to far distant markets of the east, north, and west. In return, hundreds of thousands of dollars are brought back and scattered across the land to the joy and material prosperity of almost every inhabitant.”\textsuperscript{102}

The orange rapidly grew to be the crop of choice for most new immigrants. Americans developed their first love affair with the orange in the 1870s, and Florida moved to capture the enthusiasm by encouraging settlers to try their hand at its growth.

\textsuperscript{98} Edward M. Cheney, \textit{Florida: Its Climate, Soil}, 22.


\textsuperscript{100} Ledyard Bill, \textit{A winter in Florida}, 8.

\textsuperscript{101} Frank Simpson, \textit{A Trip Through Northern and Central Florida, During March and April, 1882.} (East Orange, N.J.: East Orange Gazette Print, 1882), 5.

As early as 1869, Bill Ledyard proclaimed that “over half a million trees have been set out along the St. John’s and its tributaries within the last twelve months.”

Harriet Beecher Stowe counted herself among one of the early orange enthusiasts, and her *Palmetto Leaves* did much to harness interest in the crop sparking an orange craze that swept across Florida beginning in the 1870s, reaching its first peak in the 1880s.

Stowe’s discussion of her orange grove in Mandarin hinted to the lucrative possibilities of the fruit. As she testifies, “in regards to our own grove, consisting of a hundred and fifteen trees on an acre and a half of ground, we find that there has been an average crop mature of sixty thousand a year for each of the five years we have had it.”

Interest in the crop spread like wildfire among northern investors, and the desire for lands suitable for the growth of the orange spiked the values of property up and down the St. Johns River. While Florida lands as a whole had depreciated 55 per cent from their 1860 estimates, property near the St. Johns River had risen 33 percent in market value especially where northern settlers planted new orange groves and made improvements.

To encourage land sales and speculation, Riverboat Captain, Col. Hart bought one of the oldest and largest groves along the river. Hart informed tourists that his orchard contained “over seven hundred trees, some forty years old, annually bearing an enormous crop of the golden fruit, and yield their owner an income of $12,000 or $15,000. The trees bear from twelve to twenty-five hundred oranges each, some have been known to clear four or five thousand.”

Hart insisted that passengers on his steamboats make his grove a necessary stop during the height of the winter harvest to boost real-estate sales.

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The combination of orange enthusiasm and speculation sparked the largest real-estate development of Florida’s Reconstruction Era. General Henry S. Sanford, the American Foreign Minister to Belgium became the largest of the orange and land speculators. Sanford purchased a 23,000-acre tract on the edge of Lake Monroe on the St. John’s River in 1870. Upon arrival, he laid out a city, constructed a wharf for steamers, planted a showcase grove that contained over 4300 oranges and 700 banana trees named St. Gertrude after his wife, developed another hundred acres in orange groves called Bellair, and imported thousands of citrus trees of every known value and variety, and established an experimental nursery to sell and give away stocks and buds to those who purchased real-estate parcels from him. He also built the Sanford House to house and draw in interested tourists as prospective buyers. He organized a partnership with English Investors to form the Florida Land and Colonization Society with aims of fostering a global interest and demand in the orange real-estate market. Believing that black labor was unreliable and too expensive, poor native whites were not efficient, and foreign labor would bring parity to wages, he imported Swedish immigrants to work on his development as indentured servants promising five acres of land for a year’s worth of work. Orange production during these years increased dramatically topping 1,000,000 boxes while driving up real estate values along the river, with parcels commanding up to a $1,000 per acre.

111 Department of Agriculture, Why I Like Florida, 141.
The real-estate market, the growth of tourism, and the growth of citrus and winter gardening drastically transformed Jacksonville in the seventies. Because of the number of northern tourists, migrants, and settlers, most promotional tracts referred to Jacksonville and Florida as a northern colony. George Barber called Jacksonville and Florida a “New England Garden.” Edward King noted that Jacksonville and neighboring Palatka had been rebuilt “according to the New England pattern,” and estimated that half its resident population was from the Northern states. Northern physicians, dentists, and lawyers began to outnumber the ministers and teachers who arrived after the war highlighting the economic turn that immigration began to take. Tourist brochures remarked, “this element, although by no means the largest, is yet by far the most important, and to it is due all the prosperity which is now spreading over every portion of the state.” Drawing attention to northern businessmen, many guidebooks exclaimed, “Northerners are developing the true resources and capabilities of the State, and who are engaged in all the enterprises of private and public benefit. They are building churches, schools, erecting saw mills, building new hotels, in fact, civilizing the entire region.”

Although new northern immigrants “built up” the country, they quickly abandoned their mission to lift up the locals with them. As one farmer indicated, “it has become fashionable for every quill driver in the land to inform us that we are not abreast of the age, that we don’t know how to farm. Northern brains and capital, they want to

113 Benjamin F. Rogers, “Florida as Seen through the Eyes of Nineteenth Century Travelers” *Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol. 34 No. 2 (October 1955), 28-29.
civilize us from without, not from within.”¹¹⁷ Many of Florida’s poorest citizens were its native “Cracker” cowboys, poor farmers, and southern “Crackers” from Georgia and Alabama who settled the frontier regions of Florida and lived the basest subsistent lifestyle. As northern observers described them,

> These crackers have few local attachments, moving twice a year does not inconvenience them. Like birds of the air, they only want a roosting place when night overtakes them. Their houses are mostly made of logs, notched to fit at the corners, the floors being often times of earth, but usually boards sawed by hand. The men are not dressed in “store -clothes”, but usually country made cotton home-spun.¹¹⁸

“Crackers” were initially described as “civil, full of character, and in their way, not wanting in intelligence.”¹¹⁹

As a younger class of venture minded Northerners moved into the region, so called “Crackers” quickly assumed a sinister character and became something to be derided, scorned, and eliminated. For northern intellectuals, Crackers increasingly became

> Ugly, bare, cheerless, and dilapidated. It has a repellent aspect for the new comer. Neutralizing the favorable impressions, which the climate and natural beauties of the scenery have made. Beware of falling, through a spirit of imitation into any of the untactful, slack, and unthrifty habits of the native. You may emulate his hearty kindness, ungrudging hospitality, and general openheartedness, but let your new home be the reverse of his.¹²⁰

Among his undesirable traits, a “Cracker” was said to be,

> Lazy, ignorant, squalid, and mean, he is at the same time vindictive and stupid. His appearance is tall and gaunt, his hair dirty and matted, having staring eyes, and a slouching gait. His house is a log cabin, usually having but one room and no

¹¹⁸ Brooks, Petals Plucked from Sunny Climes, 63-65.
¹²¹ South Publishing Company, Florida Portrayed, 129
floor. Here he lives in dirt and squalor, his wife as bad as himself, and both subsisting on cabbage palmettos, sweet potatoes, and wild fruits, with pellets of clay as a condiment. He lives away from all settlement, and as civilization and population increase is driven further away, until finally, it is hoped, he will be crowded out into the sea and drowned.121

“Crackers” were now unwanted, and they had become spectacles, examples of what not to be, and comedic buffoons. They were sketched, their houses visited, and every detail of their lives recorded within numerous pages of travel guides so that they could be known. Although many of these same traits and sentiments were long held for southern blacks, color failed to delineate difference in the case of Crackers, so character, custom, and lifestyle needed to be defined so that immigrants knew what not to be. At the same time, as northerners depended upon black labor to work their burgeoning orange groves and harvest their winter vegetables, traditional Northern perceptions of blacks also began to shift and change in the late seventies. Tourists began to look upon and define African Americans as exotic, amusing, and pictorial, while immigrants and settlers viewed the black populace as being in its natural element while laboring in the fields or on the boat docks of shipping yards.122

For most newcomers, the presence of the black body served as a physical marker of one’s arrival in the South, and “lazy blacks” increasingly embodied the repose of southern society. Edward King described, “The lazy, ne’er-do-well black boys sporting in the sand, so abundant in all the roads, have the unconscious pose and careless grace of Neapolitan beggars. This is he South, slumberous, voluptuous, round and graceful. Mere

121 Simpson, A Trip Through Northern and Central Florida, 24-25.
122 Silber, Romance of Reunion, 80-81.
existence is pleasure, exertion is a bore.”¹²³ Black workers came to symbolize a carefree lifestyle full of ease. Charles Hollock fantasized,

> Just in front, in easy camp chairs, sat the rest of our little party smoking, with their guns on the cable box in front, all of us feeling little interest in getting anywhere. It was indeed luxurious. Our little black imp was at hand to respond to every wish and attend to every want that might have caused greater exertion than winking, and we were convinced that man’s natural bent was laziness, from the very rapid and complete surrender of three hurrying, worrying, nervously acting Northerners to the abandon of the Sunny South.¹²⁴

Upon black labor, northern tourists created an array of dreamscapes and fantasies of a life of leisure in the new American tropics.

> As northern settlers moved into the region, black laborers were increasingly depicted as becoming “dirty, ragged, and lazy having no legitimate vocation, except what they can make from visitors, or in drumming for boarding houses.”¹²⁵ Moralists defined “the labor problem” as “idleness, fantasizing that workers were free agents and overlooking the structural causes of unemployment.”¹²⁶ As Frank Simpson proclaimed, “The Negro is docile and good natured, but is still very untrustworthy, requiring constant watching in order to extract from him his daily work. The negro in Florida is slowly and will doubtless eventually be altogether displaced as a workman by the foreign element which later class, although small, is usually thrifty and industrious in this state.”¹²⁷ With an older generation loosing interest in the cause of free blacks while embracing the sentimental black image of minstrel shows and Uncle Tom’s cabin of their youth, and a younger generation of Northerners searching for symbols of a fading antebellum

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¹²³ King, *The Great South*, 382.
Southern society, African Americans were increasingly symbolized as “Negroes,” “Cuffees,” “Mammies,” “Sambos,” “Aunties,” “Uncles,” “Urchins,” and “Pickaninnys.” In every way, they had come to symbolize the South but were rarely considered southern like their white counterparts and more often than not thought of as undesirable.  

Many African Americans despised this iconography, but many others made use of these northern stereotypes for work within the lucrative tourism industry. As Sylvia Sunshine illustrated,

Any strong minded market woman can don the bloomer costume, make and sell sugar, brown as her own bun covered face, and peddle vegetables verdant as the idea which promoted her to forsake the flowing robes of her fair sisters, and assume the half masculine attire of the sterner sex, without attracting any more attention than the lazy loungers in the market place.

Even “Crackers” and southern whites were willing to personify their stereotypes to garner tourist money. When asked how they made a living, a group of “Crackers” replied, “On sweet potatoes and consumptive Yankees’; and to the question, What have you to sell? Another replied “Our atmosphere.”

“In 1875, it was believed that each visitor would spend about $120 while in Florida bringing $6,000,000 in total revenue,” and the money was rapidly shaping perceptions of the state and its populace.

Edward King embodied this shift by discussing Congressman Cox, of New York. Having been invited to address a Republican meeting in Jacksonville, King explained that Cox “professed great surprise, and inquired how it was "that a Democrat was asked to make an address in a Republican caucus?" He was thereupon informed that it was not a party meeting, but that it was an effort to secure the best men and the best ideas for the

service of the State, even if they were found outside party limits.” Floridians wished to talk money, not politics. As Erastus G. Hill exclaimed, “I talk politics with all sorts of people & find that they all without exception say they are tired of this continual wrangle & that what the people of the South want is peace and prosperity & no more agitation on political subjects.” Floridians throughout the state exemplified a belief that “Northern capital has been invited and as warmly welcomed as it has been generally proffered, and Florida to-day presents the spectacle, business and professional firms are found in her streets where the native Floridian and the extreme down-east Yankee have combined for an agreeable and profitable co-partnership.” As Northerners who settled in Jacksonville gradually “lean toward Conservatism,” the city became increasingly dominated by a “Yankee-Bourbon coalition,” with white southerners pushing a conservative political agenda and Northern capitalists directing the economic and commercial resources of the state.

With little opposition, Northern businessmen used commerce and capital to rebuild the city. Bill Ledyard noted,

No city of the South can show better evidences of prosperity, or a larger increase of population, relatively, than Jacksonville. On every hand, we behold the magic touch of Northern hands and Northern capital. Whichever way we turn, new buildings and stores greet our view, old ones being enlarged, streets cleaned, and substantial, or at least convenient plank walks laid.

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132 King, *The Great South*, 419.
134 James Esgate, *Jacksonville, the metropolis of Florida; a description of its history, industries, churches, schools, hotels, hospitals, and other institutions, with sketches of some of its business & professional men.* (Boston: W.G.M. Perry, 1885), 40.
Rambler’s Guide to Florida proclaimed that “Jacksonville can boast the most progressive business community of any town of its size in the South, and the rapid strides it has made within the past few years, would do credit to any city of the North and West.”137 Because Jacksonville could not handle the growing number of incoming tourists and businessmen, Jacksonville’s tourist economy depended on many of the smaller villages and health resorts to handle the overflow of traffic.138 Most tourists developed an appetite for the picturesque, sublime, tropical beauties, natural wonders, and historic monuments, and Florida’s St. Johns River region offered a smorgasbord of retreats, jungle vegetation, sulphur springs, hunting excursions, and monumental ruins.139 A unique symbiotic relationship developed between Jacksonville and most of the surrounding communities as they deepened upon each other for their economic survival. Whether for tourism or investment, any trip to Florida required a trip up the St. Johns River in particular visits to St. Augustine, Palatka, Green Cove, the Ocklawaha, Silver Springs, and Lake Monroe.140

These resorts and tourist destinations offered places to entertain but also to sell and market real-estate in the expanding citrus and market gardening industries. Southern and northern farmers along many of the waterways had already started to peel back the frontier. Edward King noted, “The planters and negroes from the neighborhood, each superintending the loading of his own cotton, formed a lively group under the watershed at Silver Springs. The tiny steamer was by no means equal to the task and left great

140 Lanier, Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History, 18, 39, 122.
quantities of freight awaiting its return.\textsuperscript{141} At Silver Springs, Hart built a series of warehouses for turpentine, cotton, and market vegetables.\textsuperscript{142} His steamers were fitted with two decks, the lower for freight and machinery and the upper for passengers.\textsuperscript{143} The steamer stopped at most of the homes along the river to drop off and pick up freight. One guide card described “sixty-seven stations, but don’t get fooled, because there are only about four places on the entire river that you could possibly land at.”\textsuperscript{144} Edward King remarked, “Now and then a beacon disclosed some lonely cabin, thatched with palmetto beside which stood a solitary figure with gun strapped over his back. ‘Got any terbacker, Cap’n?’ or some such question, and we left the figure behind.”\textsuperscript{145} Steamers left and returned fully loaded. With each purchase, modern society was slowly weaving its way into the lives of the same inhabitants who had once shunned it.

Most of Florida’s poorer southern immigrants were forging new communities of their own on the frontier. When Harry A. Peeples arrived at Tocoi, the terminus for mule pulled railcars into St. Augustine, he found the woods full of military desserts, outlaws, and refugees who had assumed new aliases and identities. He noted “For quite a while some trouble was caused by some of my patrons who had recently left Georgia and South Carolina, and had found it necessary to change their names and would often forget how they ordered their mail addresses. This was, however, amicably settled by all of them meeting on Saturdays and opening up the mail and then each one would take the letter that was best fitted to his past career.”\textsuperscript{146} Within a short period, these outlaws and ruffians

\textsuperscript{142} Lanier, \textit{Florida}, 35.
\textsuperscript{143} Donald D. Spencer, \textit{A postcard journey along the St. Johns River}. (Ormond Beach, Fla.: Camelot Pub., 2002), 8.
\textsuperscript{145} King, \textit{The Great South}, 26.
\textsuperscript{146} Harry A. Peeples, \textit{Twenty-four years in the woods}, (Tampa: Tribune Printing Co., 1906), 10
had come together to lay the groundwork for a community. It should be of no surprise that the one event that brought most of them out of the woods was for the election of a constable. As Peeples observed, “Another peculiar but sensible rule these good people adopted was they would all turn out at the polls on election day and vote for any man for sheriff (this being the only officer in which they felt any interest), provided he, the sheriff allowed them to elect their own deputy sheriff from among themselves.” The qualifications of deputy sheriff were that he must be a Georgian or South Carolinian by birth, had left his native state permanently, and meant to make Florida his future home. A Georgian was more frequently preferred, as they generally came to stay.

For almost all settlers, life in Florida required a boat. Mable Zander noticed,

The people of the river are semi-amphibious. Their babies are rocked to sleep with the lullaby of the ocean waves or the whispering soprano of the river ripples. Their children go to school in boats instead of on foot, and the old folks go to church in the same way instead of buggies; and shall I say it, the ladies go on shopping and gossiping excursions also in boats. The river, in fact, is the great highway of the country, its transportation line, its picnic route, and its lover’s lane, all in one.

All settlers to the region depended upon the St. Johns for their livelihood, though not all were readily welcome. Travel writer Edward King noticed, “Negro boatmen pushing their long poles of which barges moved by negroes would come to receive the mail, the oarsmen hardly exchanging a word with our captain.”

Although blacks worked the boats of the river, harvested the crops in the fields, and owned land bordering its banks, they were largely deplored and unwanted by many

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147 Harry A. Peeples, Twenty-four years in the woods, 11
segments of white society. Harry A. Peeples discussed this after sending a black man to
run an errand for him. Upon seeing the face of the man when he returned, he asked

Harvey what had caused the trouble, he said: Mussiful Gawd! Don’t you know I
done forgit an’ cross dat nigger color line at Moccasin Branch and dem crackers
sure did open up fire on me. But I got dis to say: dat dar mule sure am a friend in
Need! I was duly notified by a committee, that if I ever sent another nigger over
that Branch, I would be used for cat fish bait. I apologized to him for having sent
him so far into the interior, and promised him if he would remain in our services,
it would never occur again. He stayed and received $20.00 a month. He opened a
little restaurant back of the waiting room and near the general delivery post office,
and cooked and eat [sic] all by himself.150

The color line that would come to define much of southern society penetrated deep into
the woods and frontiers of American life.

The St. Johns had emerged as the great highway of Florida. One traveler remarked,
“As of Rome, all railroads and waterways lead to and from Jacksonville.”151 All
communities that existed up and down the St. Johns depended upon Jacksonville to
organize the shipment of their agricultural products, deliver tourists to their hotels, and
bring staples to their families.152 Jacksonville banks reaped the benefits of the commerce
flowing through its ports, the lumber industry brought in lucrative profits, and real-estate
speculation increased the values of land and property for many of its inhabitants.153 Yet
despite all the money that had been invested in and moved through the city, Jacksonville
and Florida still lacked direct rail links to the rest of the nation, and only two additional
miles had been laid since the end of the Civil War. Most passengers entering into the city
still had to catch steamers from Charleston or Savannah or take a series of dilapidated

150 Harry A. Peeples, Twenty-four years in the woods, on the waters and in the cities of Florida. With
original illustrations by A. St. Clair Jones. (Tampa, Fla.: Tribune Printing Co., 1906), 12-14.
151 H. K. Ingram. Florida: Beauties of the East Coast. (St. Augustine, Fla.: Jacksonville, St. Augustine and
Indian River Railway Company, 1893), 1.
152 Emery, 99. Henry Lee, The tourist’s guide of Florida and the winter resorts of the South. (New York:
Chas. H. Smith, 1890s), 126.
153 Leora Bettison Robinson, Living in Florida. (Louisville, Ky: B.F. Avery & Sons, 1884), 57.
trains through Georgia and Florida to Tallahassee or Live Oak and into Jacksonville.\footnote{154} While steamers carried on the commerce and conveyed passengers into Jacksonville and the interior of the state, the time that it required to ship and transport produce and fruit to the North cost many growers and buyers dearly. Slowly and steadily a small contingent of inhabitants began to demand direct rail access to the North. For the few rails that did penetrate the state, Jacksonville remained the end of the line, and with steamers having traversed the smallest arteries of the St. Johns, further exploration and settlement required railroads.

Although the state repeatedly called for capitalists to invest in the infrastructure of the region, a great deal of fraud and plundering by Republican governments along with Carpetbag and Scalawag railroad developers during Reconstruction led to the state being swindled out of four million dollars and indebted for another million.\footnote{155} Interest on the railroad continued to amount for over ten years, until the state owed a debt of $1,000,000 with a $70,000 dollar yearly interest payment by 1881 pushing the state towards bankruptcy.\footnote{156} Unable to offer lands for railroad development or improvements and considered risky credit from Northern lenders, the State of Florida proved unable to draw in new railroad interests.

In response to the corruption and fraud that had taken place under the Republican Reconstruction governments, Democrats swept into office. William D. Bloxham won the election of 1881, and upon taking office; he made plans to put the state’s debt to rest. Upon hearing that Hamilton Disston, a wealthy Philadelphia saw maker, had been invited

by Henry Sanford to Florida to purchase land south of the town of Sanford, Bloxham convinced Disston to buy 4 million acres for .25¢ an acre (1/8 their value) giving the state the one million dollars it needed to pay off its debts in May of 1881. Disston became the largest land owner in American history, sparking populist outrage among many of Florida’s poorer inhabitants and farmers who were not offered the same liberal prices for unimproved lands. The sale freed the state to issue grants from its Improvement Fund, and the state commenced to encourage new railroad development with some of the most liberal land grants in the nation.\footnote{Dovell, “The Railroads and the Public Lands of Florida,” 236-238.} Florida’s legislature agreed to offer thirteen-thousand-four-hundred acres of land for every mile of track that was improved or built.\footnote{Heinz Erhardt, Florida: A Place in the Sun. (West Germany: Burda GmbH and Dietz Press, 1974), 41.}

What ensued in Florida during the 1880s was a free-for-all land grab by Northern railroad developers and capitalists. From 1879 to 1899, the state passed ninety-two acts granting lands to corporations. During this time, 564 railroad companies were chartered, though only 254 were actually constructed.\footnote{Dovell, “The Railroads and the Public Lands of Florida, 244-245.} Although many companies and individuals received vast amounts of land and natural resources surrounding their properties, they in turn flooded the state with new money, steady work, and a new class of eager real-estate developers who sought to make the state’s land grants pay for their investment. The arrival of railroads freed lumbermen from the rivers prompting lumber companies from the North to invest in cheap timbered lands seeking the largest tracts available while extracting more trees from the lands that they worked.\footnote{Edward Ayers, Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 124.} Developers turned and promoted agricultural experiment stations needing to draw in settlers to purchase company lands. Upon his acquisition of land, Hamilton Disston set an example,
establishing a 200,000-acre sugar plantation in Kissimmee upon lands he drained from the Lake Okeechobee region. Disston dug extensive canals, dropping water levels across the center of the state and opening up most of the region for new settlement. Many of the lakes and swamps saw their levels lowered anywhere between eight and eleven feet and converted hundreds of thousands of acres of swampland into fertile soil.\textsuperscript{161} At the same time, his work drastically changed the environment of the area, forcing numerous species that had been pushed to the brink to seek refuge in the Everglades.

For the citizens and businessmen of Jacksonville, the Disston contract paved the way for a direct rail line from Jacksonville to New York. In 1881, E. H. Harriman organized the Fernandina and Jacksonville, cutting 32 miles off the trip and offering direct connection from Fernandina to Jacksonville.\textsuperscript{162} During this same year, Henry B. Plant also made his first appearance in Florida, building the Savannah, Florida, and Western railway using convict labor. Despite being prohibited by the Florida legislature, Plant performed the first of his many underhanded maneuvers, allowing him to lay his railroad across the Florida and Georgia state boarder. Plant extended the Waycross, Florida Railroad from Waycross, Georgia to the St. Mary’s River. He then chartered the East Florida Railroad and laid tracks from Jacksonville to the St. Mary’s River. Both companies then built two docks that met in the middle of the river. Tracks were laid across the docks so that the railway had developed a continuous line on which to run. Plant had outmaneuvered the state along with the steamboat industry, which had dominated shipping interests.\textsuperscript{163} The laws were changed and the two companies merged.

\textsuperscript{162} Herbert J. Doherty Jr., “Jacksonville as a Nineteenth-Century Railroad Center,” \textit{Florida Historical Quarterly} Vol. 58 No. 4. (April 1980), 375.
to form the Savannah, Florida, and Western railway that ran from Waycross to Jacksonville via Folkston and Callahn allowing travelers a more direct route from the North than the previous connection via Live Oak some 85 miles distant.  

By March 1883, the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railway began laying five-foot gauge railway to Sanford, marking the second line to begin construction south of Jacksonville. The railway would be consolidated as part of the Plant Invest Company, which was formed in 1882. Plant bought controlling interest in the Southern Railway giving him access to build a line all the way to Charlotte Harbor on the West Coast of Florida offering up 2.7 million acres of land grants for his company. Plant also invested in the steamboat industry operating half a dozen boats on St. Johns under the pseudonym, the People’s Line. He erected a large wharf and depot along the St. Johns with a spur track and dock to which steamboats could unload oranges, winter vegetables, and lumber. As these new railways entered the state, they brought significant settlement and commerce with them, in particular to central Florida with the town of Sanford experiencing an increase in population from 300 in 1880 to 2,500 in 1886.

While Henry Plant charted his course through the center of the state, Henry M. Flagler, John D. Rockefeller’s business partner and the brains of the Standard Oil Company, made his first visit to the Florida in 1883 because he had read of the land grants offered by the state. The visit generated his interests in the hotel and railroad

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164 Doherty, “Jacksonville as a Nineteenth-Century Railroad Center,” 376.
industries and planted the seeds for building a real estate and railroad empire. By 1894, Flagler and Plant would begin to divide the railroad and hotel interests of the state between themselves creating two large financial and land empires on the East and West coasts of Florida. The actions of both men drastically altered the fabric of Jacksonville.

Henry M. Flagler arrived in Jacksonville for the first time during the winter of 1883, accompanying his ill wife. The Flaglers stayed in the newly built St. James Hotel, reputed at the time to be one of the finest hostelries in the South, with amusement rooms for bowling, billiards, and sun bathing. Flagler, however, voiced great concern that many of the hotel facilities and travel accommodations were insufficient for invalids. While on the requisite excursion to St. Augustine, Flagler grew mortified at the inadequate transportation system into the city. Despite these concerns, Flagler wrote to a friend that St. Augustine would make the perfect retirement home. On his next trip to Florida, Flagler bypassed Jacksonville and chose to stay in the newly built San Marco hotel in St. Augustine. Realizing the importance and profitability of St. Augustine as a tourist resort center, Flagler postponed his return to New York and started calculating what it would cost to build a hotel in the area.

Upon his return North, Flagler hired two architects, John Carrere and Thomas Hastings, to design his hotel. Flagler wanted something that matched the architecture of the city but would also impress hotel guests and visitors. Because coquina shells offered a look of antiquity, Flagler contracted with the state to quarry the coquina for the

170 Ibid., 93.
171 Ibid., 95.
172 Ibid., 103.
173 Ibid., 107.
construction of his hotel. The shells were mixed with concrete, and the blocs were used to form the walls and exterior of the structure. In its design, the architects used the Spanish architecture of St Augustine as an archetype for the style of their hotel. The main building was capped with a terra-cotta tiled dome and flanked by two medieval style towers. Two large wings were connected to the main structure to form an Italianate courtyard, and a landscapist was hired to provide a European setting for the exterior of the building.

When finished, Flagler had built the largest hotel in the country. Although only four stories, it sprawled across a five-acre complex with tropical gardens and palms covering most of the grounds. In honor of the founder of the state and in an effort to connect it with the other Spanish treasures of the city, Flagler named his hotel the Ponce de Leon. Unfortunately, due to the expense of building the hotel, he realized that another hostelry would have to be constructed to cater to the needs of less wealthy visitors and patrons. He immediately began construction of the Alcazar Hotel. Designed in a similar Moorish fashion, Flagler and his architects began constructing the image of Florida as a Spanish and European Riviera. For years to come, the Spanish architecture that dominated his hotels would be replicated in the construction of numerous architects throughout Florida.

The conspicuous consumption of the wealthy added to the grandeur of the hotel and city. The only drawback to St. Augustine, from Flagler’s perspective, remained its remoteness. Flagler found himself perplexed over the inadequate transportation system to and from St. Augustine. Many tourists complained of the time that it took to get into the city. For this reason, Flagler made his first venture into Florida’s railway development in

1886. Buying several of the rail lines from Palatka to St. Augustine to Daytona, he converted the tracks into standard gage and provided luxurious Pullman cars for the transportation of passengers. With this purchase, Flagler established himself as the leading businessman in both tourism and development in Florida.

The citizens of Jacksonville readily welcomed Flagler’s activities believing that they would only bring in more tourists to the community. Wanting to take advantage of the new activity and interest in the area, twenty business leaders of Jacksonville formed the Jacksonville Board of Trade in February 7th, 1884. With over 1,100 men at one time, the Jacksonville Board of Trade grew into the largest and most influential booster organization within the state. The city found itself at the center of a vastly expanding tourist, commercial, and financial empire. Since all of the rail lines terminated in the city, Jacksonville housed many of the passengers even if their desires were elsewhere. During the 1880s, Jacksonville adopted the moniker, “The Winter City in Summer Land.” The eighties saw a shift in the type of tourists and migrants that moved through the city. The decade saw fewer and fewer invalids visiting the region while more and more tourists came for escapism and pleasure. Increasingly escapism through enjoyable and pleasing activities served as the chief reason that tourists sought to stay in Florida.

Jacksonville saw the arrival of thousands of wealthy tourists during the winter. One visitor remarked,

Jacksonville might easily have been mistaken for Long Branch in July, with its great hotels illuminated from top to basement, its sounds of dance music in all the great parlors, and its array of long porches crowded with ease-taking men and

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177 Martin, Florida’s Flagler, 130.  
179 Scribners, “The Great South,” 7. Edward King repeatedly referred to the “phantom pleasure” on his trip through Florida discussing the shift away from tourism and travel centered on neurasthenia.
women in flannels and tennis caps and russet slippers and gossamer gowns. There were the same laughter and chatter, and rollicking semi-grown children; the same aimless but happy couple keeping slow-measure tread on the pavements; the frames of staring photographs, the nickel-in -the-slot machines, the shops full of gimcrack souvenirs made in Germany and New York, the peanuts and soda-water, the odor of perfumery, the rustle of silks, the peeing slippers- the very same; all the same. As a rule, most travelers are beyond the middle age and of comfortable figures. Generally men bring two women with him- his wife and a daughter.180

Along with St. Augustine, Jacksonville enjoyed the benefits of conspicuous consumption among its new clientele. The main street of the city was called “Alligator Alley,” because of the myriad of ways in which that animal was sacrificed.181 Souvenirs for the tourist trade served as one of the leading industries of the city. From ladies fans constructed of the plumage of parakeet and other colorful birds to stuffed alligators and sharks heads, Jacksonville supplied tourists with a wide array of dead and almost dead creatures. African Americans readily encouraged tourist interests in live parakeets. Ledyard Bill remarked,

The colored people find an article of trade and commerce. Numbers of them were brought on board at one of the landings, and were speedily snapped up by the pater familias of admiring and persuasive young ladies, who thought them “so splendid” that a couple dollars a head was readily paid for them. But the poor birds were short lived. A subsequent investment in a young alligator, of dimensions suitable for a cigar box, was so much more charming.182

The interest in exotic species spread throughout the Northeast, and the Carolina Parakeets became one of the chief species of the trade. By the 1880s and 1890s, interest in the parakeets had sharply reduced their numbers. By the turn of the century, they were extinct, the last one being killed in Florida in 1904. As for alligators, thirty dealers sold hides as souvenirs in Jacksonville in 1890, and 40 others stuffed alligators and polished their teeth in the manufacture of keepsakes. Between 1880 and 1894, more than 2.5

181 Ibid., 170-172.
182 Ledyard Bill, *A winter in Florida*, 120.
million alligators were killed to supply the Victorian hide and curio trade. Louisiana and Florida supplied 42 percent of the 280,000 alligator hides processed yearly in the U.S.  

To keep up with tourist demands, African Americans in Jacksonville serviced much of the tourism industry. As Edward King described,

No sooner had we reached the station platform than we were greeted by a crowd each ringing a bell vigorously promoting the culinary merits of the establishment which he belonged. Among them all, not any are more peculiar than the hackmen, who drive slowly up and down before the hotels, calling out to the borders. ‘I’d just as lieve drive you as Vanderbilt’ said one. ‘Dere ain’t no bars put up agin anyone what can pay de price.’ ‘Lend me a dime, an I’ll pay you back or sing you a song. I know lots of songs, and when I open my mouth you’ll think I wither got music or delirium tremens.’

Ralph Julian professed that local African Americans were very much superior to the dull-eyed shambling, and stolid hands of the other Southern states. These were comparatively fine fellows, full of ambition and energy, with intelligence quickening in their faces, well clad, and I think, less given to demoralizing holiday habits than the other. I never saw any men work so hard. They ran whether they were going loaded or returning light. Their pride in their strength and quickness was manifest, with grinning faces and sparkling eyes, they kept up the tension of their effort. In Florida, I saw the best work done.

While tourism and its subsidiary industries drove half of the city’s economy, Jacksonville received a number of economic boosts in the mid and late 80s that strengthened the city’s position as the industrial and banking center of the state. Winter gardens and orange culture continued to bring a great deal of commerce through the city, but railroad connections increased the time that fruits and vegetables could be brought to market, increasing the profits paid to merchants and farmers. The increased freight that moved through the city created new jobs while expanding the workforce. A number of subsidiary industries for the fruit market emerged from orange crates to jellies and

185 Julian Ralph, Dixie, 172, 185.
preserved fruits. High tariffs drove the Cuban cigar industry into Florida, and while most of the factories opened in Key West and Tampa, two opened in Jacksonville and Palatka, bringing in Cuban immigrants into the area.\textsuperscript{186} The discovery of phosphates in 1887 also brought huge investments of capital into the city.”\textsuperscript{187}

During this time period, Henry Flagler expanded his railroad venture, as he remained dissatisfied with the transit system of the state. Many tourists were still forced to take a ferry from Jacksonville to Tocoi to board his rail line. To solve this problem, Flagler bought an existing line within Jacksonville and decided to extend it to the St. Johns River in 1888. He then linked his railways by building a steel bridge across the St. Johns to allow rail cars to travel straight into the St. Augustine terminal. When it was complete in 1890, it was the first of its kind within the South.\textsuperscript{188} The business leaders of Jacksonville began to feel the burdens of the new competition that Flagler was providing. Although they had been benefiting from his construction, the city started to lose a large share of its seasonal tourism profits to St. Augustine.

On top of tourists being lured away by Flagler, Jacksonville suffered the first of several serious economic setbacks with the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1888. The plague shut down the city, scared away much of the tourist business for several seasons, and caused a massive exodus of the population, costing the city thousands of dollars in commercial losses.\textsuperscript{189} The quarantine of the city forced many of the businesses to close for several months, and the population plummeted from 25,000 in 1888 to 17,201 in

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\textsuperscript{186} James Esgate, \textit{Jacksonville, the metropolis of Florida; a description of its history, industries, churches, schools, hotels, hospitals, and other institutions.} (Boston: W.G.M. Perry, 1885), 43.
\textsuperscript{188} Erhardt, \textit{Florida: A Place in the Sun}, 43.
\textsuperscript{189} Carolina Rawls, \textit{The Jacksonville Story}. (Jacksonville: Jacksonville's Fifty Years of Progress, 1950), 10.
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The impact reached as far south as Sanford, with Henry Sanford’s Land Colonization Company recording their first losses as land sales fell “to 5,961 pounds and to 4,333 pounds in 1889.” Three years elapsed before the populace and commerce returned to their previous levels.

The Yellow Fever outbreak also marked an end to Jacksonville’s biracial political experiment. Earlier in the year, the city boosters voiced concern that tourists felt threatened by the presence of so many black officials. One New York tourist claimed that he had never seen a black official until he arrived in Jacksonville. The local press and city leaders feared that Jacksonville would be labeled a ‘Negro’ city throughout the North. When the city voted in the midst of the Yellow Fever outbreak, African Americans were elected clerk of the circuit court, clerk of the criminal court, three of the eleven justices of the peace, and six of the eleven constables. Whites responded by introducing House Bill Number 11 claiming that the elections were a sham as whites had not been in the city to vote. They moved to have the state legislature overturn the results and allow the governor to appoint city officials. The governor appointed Jacksonville’s council for the next five years until the franchise was restored in 1893. Although the original move was aimed at disenfranchising blacks, African Americans continued to hold political offices and elect black officials until 1907. During this year, the legislature authorized the redrawing of ward boundaries in Jacksonville, resulting in wide scale gerrymandering in favor of white precincts.

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194 Ibid., 143-144.
With the loss of tourists during the pandemic, 1888 marked a shift among Jacksonville’s business community towards strengthening its agrarian and industrial base. During this year, Jacksonville’s Board of Trade established the Sub-Tropical Exposition to highlight the products produced in and around the city and countryside.\(^{195}\) Since a large portion of the display was in reaction to California’s bid for tourists and agricultural products, the leaders of the board tried to convince Flagler to provide a portion of the funding to maintain the facility. Flagler, however, thought that it would draw away his own customers, so he refused to help support the exposition.\(^{196}\) In reaction, Jacksonville’s Board of Trade raised the money to sponsor the fair for the next four years. Realizing that Flagler intended to draw tourists away from the city, Jacksonville’s boosters moved to secure their city’s financial position by launching a new promotional blitz advertising the agricultural and industrial productions of the state.

While Jacksonville tried to stem its economic losses, Flagler turned his attention and money southward as he decided to move forward with plans to expand his railway and build new hotels. In 1890, Flagler bought out the Ormond Beach Hotel and made it into one of his opulent facilities. The hotel quickly became a new tourist destination as it had a large golf course and a wide surf along the beach that later became popular among racing enthusiasts. In an effort to entice more tourists, Flagler bought and improved the railroad lines from St. Augustine to Daytona Beach.\(^{197}\) Flagler decided to extend his line further south, and by 1893 he was convinced of the profitability of building a new hotel along the Indian River. Flagler purchased land in the vicinity of West Palm Beach on


\(^{196}\) Martin, *Florida’s Flagler*, 134.

Lake Worth where he laid out the grounds and built the Royal Poinciana Hotel, and for the first time, he began laying tracks instead of simply improving them. In return for his extension of the railroad, Flagler received eight thousand acres for every mile of track that he had laid. As settlers in Miami saw the economic profitability of hotel and railroad construction, they urged Flagler to continue with the development of his railway. Flagler acquired more land in the city and by 1896 had built the Hotel Royal Palm in Miami. 198

Many Jacksonville business leaders turned away from Flagler as his commercial and political clout expanded across the state. During this period, Flagler merged his resorts into what became known as the Flagler System and consolidated his railroads into the Florida East Coast Railroad Company. 199 Most of the new settlements in Florida now existed under Flagler’s sphere of influence. Threatened by and unable to compete with his hotel ventures, Jacksonville’s booster efforts turned from encouraging tourism to promoting commercial development. In December of 1889, following Henry Grady’s death, Jacksonville’s Times-Union Citizen eulogized the spokesman of the “New South” for nearly a week in its editorials and letters. 200 At that time, the city’s business elite began to establish seaport connections with other major cities like Boston, Philadelphia, and New York and started contracting business with cities in the Pacific and Europe. 201 In an effort to stem its tourism losses, Jacksonville launched its New South campaign.

During the 1890s, Jacksonville started advertising itself as the “New Metropolis of Florida.” 202 Civic associations became extremely important throughout the city as sports clubs, civic improvement societies, and fraternal lodges proliferated throughout the
decade. The community provided a uniformed police and fire department, three public libraries, and the largest public hospital in the state. Residents also continually upgraded gas, sewer, water, and electric services. After its streets were paved during the early nineties, electric streetcars were bought to update the public transportation system.

Despite the improvements, Jacksonville’s economy suffered a near fatal blow in the mid-nineties when a succession of two freezes in 1894 and 1895 destroyed the citrus harvests of those two years and killed many of the groves, helping to ruin the real-estate market and upend thousands of communities along the St. Johns and throughout North Florida. As a reporter noted, “at that time, the orange crop in Florida was about 5,000,000 boxes a year. It was reduced to nothing in one night when the temperature dropped to 14 degrees.” The orange freezes of 94 and 95 wiped out the entire citrus economy of North Florida. The trees that were not destroyed by the first freeze were finished off in the second. Accounting for nearly thirty-percent of the agricultural production of the state, the overnight disappearance of the orange was devastating. The state experienced losses of 50 to 75 million dollars, or between 1-1.5 billion in 2000 dollars. Property valuations plummeted with the appraisal of farms in the state falling from $72.7 million in 1890 to $40.7 million in 1900, a loss of 32 million.

Orange growers throughout the region saw their livelihoods reduced overnight, while industries dependent upon the citrus and vegetables crops including nurseries, fertilizer companies, packing houses, and box manufactures disappeared as well. The fallout rippled throughout the economy and across all sectors of the populace.

204 Mark Howard Long, *Cultivating a New Order: Reconstructing Florida’s Post-bellum Frontier.* (Ph.D.: Loyola University, December 2007), 189.
205 Ibid., 190-191.
Insurance Companies and Banks throughout the region collapsed, as did industries dependent upon their capital. Cities experienced a “wrenching process of contraction” as farmers and laborers fled the region preferring to head further South where the frost had not reached. Wage rates for agricultural workers fell from $1.50 to .50 cents a day. Two thousand African American laborers departed the state in just over a week, headed for Alabama where wage rates in Birmingham mills averaged $1.25 a day. The real-estate market that had boomed the year before collapsed, leaving numerous property owners owing more than their property was worth with no prospect of selling their parcels, as property values further south were significantly lower than the devalued property rates along the St. Johns.

With the collapse of industry, Jacksonville witnessed race riots, scandals, soaring crime rates, and a police shakeup. A devastating Hurricane destroyed railroads and thousands of acres of forest throughout the region. Railroad backers and rate reformers threatened to tear the Board of Trade apart. When Jacksonville made a move to become the new state capital instead of Tallahassee, critics slammed the city, claiming its citizens “are wholly given to idolatry of their own special interests.” Many religious Floridians considered Jacksonville to be the “wicked city.” Needless to say, Jacksonville was very much in need of a social and economic facelift, and the city’s regeneration began with the establishment and opening of Union Station in 1895. Flagler and Plant agreed that a terminal needed to be built to allow for easier transfers in the city, and they, along with all the other railroads of Jacksonville, financed and established the Jacksonville Terminal.
Company, creating the largest train depot in the South and securing Jacksonville’s position as the railroad hub of Florida.210

On May 3, 1901, however, tragedy struck the city for the third time when fire engulfed the entire commercial district and the surrounding residential area. Flames ravaged 466 acres on 148 blocks, as winds swept the blaze from one building to the next.211 Ashes ignited dried out wooden shingled rooftops that had been in much demand because of their durability.212 By the time that the fire department had contained the inferno, a panoramic view of the charred shell of the city could be viewed from the other side of the riverbank. With destruction stretching two miles by one mile, Jacksonville laid in ruins. One reporter remarked that “ten thousand people were homeless and jobless and twenty million dollars worth of property went up in smoke.”213 Only five million dollars of the losses were covered by insurance.214 Steamboats were turned into free-floating hotels and restaurants while railroads transported women and children for free to stay with other families and relatives.215

The rebuilding of the city served to stimulate growth, which in turn brought newcomers to Jacksonville seeking jobs and opportunities.216 One reporter remarked, “hosts of men and boys were given employment in cleaning and sorting brick. A large part of the city rapidly took on the appearance of a booming mining town.”217 Workers came from the Florida countryside, from South Georgia, and from as far away as New

214 Crooks, Jacksonville After the Fire, 17.
216 Crooks, Jacksonville After the Fire, 4.
York, Michigan, and Kansas, as they helped to reestablish the wholesale and market industries of the state. Through the collaboration of Board of Trade and the new City Mayor, Duncan V. Fletcher, Jacksonville was thrust into its rebuilding campaign. Two days after the fire had occurred permits were already being issued to rebuild the city.

Over the next two years, Jacksonville would build a modern city with a skyline unmatched by any in Florida. By 1903, Jacksonville held a Great Gala Week announcing its recovery. Because of the coalition of development minded southern businessmen and northern industrialists, Jacksonville quickly recovered from the catastrophe and reoriented its developmental scheme. Beginning in 1901, Jacksonville re-launched its New South Campaign calling itself the most “Cosmopolitan city of the South.” Within seven years, thirteen thousand new buildings were constructed within the town limits, and the population rose from 28,429 to 85,000. The majority of this increase stemmed from the great southward migration of new settlers. Jacksonville’s immigrants were primarily from southern states. This new influx helped solidify the racial stratification of the city, with 65 percent of its white population considered white-collar workers, while 76 percent of the African American population was confined to the semi skilled and unskilled labor force. Jacksonville advertised its industrious black workforce as one of the benefits of the city, along with its commercial and shipping amenities.

The Seaboard Air Line (1901) and the Atlantic Coast Line (1888) both formed consolidated railways whose capacity restored the shipping potential of the city, building

218 Crooks, *Jacksonville After the Fire*, 22.
shops, warehouses, and terminals and providing much needed competition in the railroad industry.\textsuperscript{224} The city emerged as the world’s largest naval stores and second largest lumber center. It also became the banking center of Florida, as it was the home base of thirteen of the South’s largest financial institutions. The deposits of the city’s banks averaged over twenty million, and it had nearly six million to loan as capital.\textsuperscript{225}

Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, Jacksonville was hailing itself as “The Queen City of the South” and the “Pride of the Sunny South.”\textsuperscript{226} City leaders began working with Congress to dredge the St. Johns River from 24 to 34 feet, allowing large steamers to sail up the St. Johns River and paving the way for Jacksonville to become the regional distribution center for consumer goods.\textsuperscript{227} Jacksonville had 180 establishments wholesaling meat, liquor, groceries, drugs, hardware, dry goods, electrical supplies, and machinery. More than 500 retail shops provided goods and services not only for the city but also for much of the state.\textsuperscript{228} The port and river would be dredged several times, each time requiring a deeper channel to make way for larger draft vessels.\textsuperscript{229} The Chamber of Commerce also updated the municipal docks in an effort to promote its overseas trade. Within five years, Jacksonville was calling itself the largest South Atlantic Seaport in the United States.\textsuperscript{230}

Although Jacksonville saw expanded economic growth at the turn of the century, its success was not shared by all of its citizens. Following the fire, Jacksonville
developed into two distinct cities, one rich and white and the other black and poor.\textsuperscript{231} With African Americans largely disenfranchised in 1887, most blacks turned inward to finance private developments while using the courts to garner access to larger public projects. When streetcar lines refused to add a second-class car for black passengers, forcing them to sit in smoking cars, African American elites established the North Jacksonville Streetcar Company to service the black community, hiring only black conductors, and made plans to purchase a park and build a new black suburb on the outskirts of the city.\textsuperscript{232} In turn, lawsuits were used to overturn segregated streetcars in the city. Both maneuvers proved to be a success. From this experience, black leaders within the community demonstrated themselves capable of directing their own economic and social affairs.\textsuperscript{233} Despite the success, the passage of Jim Crow laws across the state spelled the end of biracial politics, as Jacksonville came in line with the two-tiered political and social system sweeping across the rest of the South.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Jacksonville developed into a New South City “often being referred to as the working son in a family of playboys.”\textsuperscript{234} With the growth of Tampa and Miami as the state’s leading tourist destinations, Jacksonville moved toward promoting its industrial, shipping, and banking industries, forgoing direct tourist profits in exchange for commercial growth, as its wholesale industry grew to help supply the growth of the rest of the state. Because of those benefits, Jacksonville became a great proponent of many of its chief rivals, as its economy grew along with the expansion of each city and the varied railways of the state. As calls for increased profits

\textsuperscript{231} Crooks, After the Fire, 43.
\textsuperscript{232} Cassanello, The Great Migration, 81-82.
in almost all economic sectors demanded ever-cheaper labor, the business leaders of Jacksonville pushed for an economic system built upon cheap wages for black labor.

With white bourbons and northern capitalists fostering an electoral coup that ultimately led to black disenfranchisement and an end to biracial politics in the city, Jacksonville touted its large pool of cheap labor, its lack of corporate taxes, its inexpensive municipal electricity, and its anti-union sentiments to draw in new industries. Outside profits from Tampa and Miami, along with a desire to suppress local wages, undermined the desire for businesses and political leaders to invest back into the working class, helping undercut economic and social advancement. The city rooted its growth in a racially stratified social and economic system that created an ever-larger class divide between blacks and whites and sent many younger African America residents fleeing to the North. This shift marked the end of an earlier dialogue rooted in notions of the common good and hard work towards a model that demanded greater profits via increased productivity and lower wages while also restricting the social and economic mobility of the city’s black populace. These efforts undercut the open and dynamic community that had been forged in the previous forty years, culminating in the failure of one of the South’s most unique social, political, and economic experiments.

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Chapter III

Pensacola: Poor Man’s Paradise!

The Spanish, French, English, and Americans, all described Pensacola as one of the most promising locations on the Gulf of Mexico with one of the largest and deepest natural harbors in the South, yet despite these accolades, all failed to forge a city of any real value or size out of these natural advantages. Isolation proved to be the largest detriment in the community’s failure to grow. With over 190 miles of undeveloped and largely impenetrable wilderness between Pensacola and Tallahassee, the city lacked any social or economic ties with the rest of the state, which outside of Jacksonville and the St. Johns River also remained largely unsettled until the 1880s. During those rare occasions when Pensacola showed any signs of progress, biological and natural disasters in particular Yellow Fever laid asunder any grandiose plans for development.

Pensacola turned to its one harvestable and at the time inexhaustible supply of timber to spur its economic growth. Along with the surprise emergence of a Red Snapper industry after the war, Pensacola used its exports to grow a city and attract outside investment. Although the rest of Florida looked primarily towards northern capital and settlement to encourage growth and development, Pensacola turned mostly towards its southern neighbors to fill the same role. Unable to attract the northern land developers and settlers that flocked to the rest of Florida, Pensacola marketed itself as a “Poor Man’s Paradise.” African Americans and white southerners flocked to the city and region after the war in search of higher wages and steady work. These individuals helped forge a unique and dynamic multiracial community with high rates of land, property, and
business ownership spread across the populace. Even with this economic upsurge and relative prosperity, Pensacola’s growth failed to match the pace of development occurring throughout the rest of Florida, causing many to mark it as the backwater of the state. What emerged was a largely prosperous working class community that grew into a haven for black and white southern laborers who fought to protect its unique position forging a city that most came to know as the “Poor Man’s Paradise.”

The Civil War marked the beginning of the social and economic revolution that radically changed the city of Pensacola. The war exacted a terrible toll on the populace and local economy. At the beginning of the war, Pensacola’s population stood at 2,867, and by the end of 1863, the city had been almost completely deserted, while most of its lumber mills and the surrounding countryside stood ravaged and burned.¹ Under Union occupation, the city became a refuge for escaped slaves and freedmen who flocked to Pensacola from neighboring Alabama and Georgia. Upon arrival, most women and children were sent to New York where they were housed and received education. The military hired freedmen as laborers and paid $15 dollars a month and one ration per day. Many served as boatmen and teamsters. Union soldier, Rev Diossy, led Sunday school classes for the African American community and taught many to read and write.² The jobs and education provided a stable foundation from which many freedmen would build their lives and form stable communities after the war.

During the last year of the conflict, white refugees and contrabands poured into Pensacola from across the Gulf. Many arrived starving and penniless. The military provided a daily food ration. The numbers swelled dramatically from 200 women to over

609 women and children.\textsuperscript{3} As the war came to an end, more and more refugees returned to the city. Many sought to reclaim properties that had been confiscated under the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.\textsuperscript{4} With the loyalty oath, many reclaimed lands via the presidential provisions of Reconstruction. The large military presence at Fort Pickens, Fort McRee, Fort Barrancas, and the Navy Yard provided a steady stream of revenues flowing into the city. A number of freedmen went to work at the Navy Yard where they found regular employment. Rebuilding efforts at military fortifications and throughout Pensacola helped to kick-start the lumber industry, which expanded rapidly as demands for lumber across the South provided a steady stream of customers for mill operators. The need for labor also expanded, and many white Pensacolians returned to work in the lumberyards and at the port. The Freedmen’s Bureau negotiated with the lumber industry to hire freedmen.\textsuperscript{5} The call for labor provided a relatively smooth transition after the war as demand almost completely exceeded laborers in the city.\textsuperscript{6}

The Freedmen’s Bureau helped establish schools for former slaves to provide basic instruction and train freedmen in negotiating labor contracts. They constructed several schools in Pensacola providing the buildings and furnishings. With their help, they were able to establish enough facilities to meet the demands of over 2,500 black residents in Escambia County. Freedmen also established churches after the war, including the First Baptist Colored Church, which served as the center of the free black community. New freedmen also formed the basis of the city government, forging a new city council on May 24, 1865. Little is known of the council’s successes, as black codes

\textsuperscript{3} Brackett, “Naples of America,” 208.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 238.
\textsuperscript{6} Brackett, 38-40, 49.
passed by the state were used to dissolve the body. White citizens used the laws to try to close the First Baptist Colored Church and restrict African American movement, but the Freedmen’s Bureau blocked most of the actions. Although violence erupted across much of the South under newly reconstructed governments, Pensacola saw few outbursts. The large military presence along with the increased demand for labor diluted much of the racial animosity sweeping the region.7

Brigadeer General Truman Seymour took control over the city government in Pensacola after Radical Republicans pushed through Congressional Reconstruction. Seymour assumed power just as a Yellow Fever epidemic struck Pensacola in the summer of 1867. The fever arrived aboard the British Steamer Fair Wind. Although the city quarantined the ship, crewmen from other ships quickly contracted the illness. Until the summer, the disease remained isolated at the port, and then in July, it spread rapidly among the residential populace. When news of the outbreak spread, blacks and whites both fled to the countryside and left the city abandoned.8 The fever laid waste to many soldiers stationed at the Navy Yard and Fort Barrancas with over six hundred documented cases among the troops.9 The disease finally subsided during the fall, but it took the lives of 150 to 200 citizens. It marked the first of many outbreaks that would haunt the city during the second half of the 19th century.10

During the spring of 1868, freedmen cast their first ballots, helping to elect Republican Harrison Reed as the new Governor. The sheer number of freedmen at the polls in Florida prompted a growth in the Klan, particularly in the cotton region.

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7 Brackett, “Naples of America,” 45.
10 Brackett, 46-49.
surrounding Tallahassee. Violence raged across much of north and central Florida, though it failed to spread to Pensacola due to lack of connections and infrastructure. Racial tensions occasionally reared themselves. William Kirk, editor of the *Pensacola Observer* and Stephen Mallory, former Confederate Secretary of the Navy, publically argued over black suffrage, resulting in several thwarted attempts at public duels halted by the police. A few other incidents and outbursts occurred, but Pensacola remained relatively calm. After the new constitution was passed, Pensacola elected numerous black officials to local and state positions, with many holding public office until the 1880s. Salvador T. Pons served as both a state representative and the city’s only black mayor. Freedmen also served on the city council, county commission, and held a wide array of public offices from tax collector to justice of the peace and superintendent.¹¹

After the elections, Pensacola moved to have their only railway- the Alabama & Florida Railroad reconstructed. Creditors and mortgage bondholders demanded money, but claiming itself the majority stockholder, the Pensacola Board of Aldermen validated a bankruptcy sale. The Pensacola and Louisville Railroad Company then purchased the railway for $55,000.¹² In July of 1868, the state allotted the P&L R.R. $300,000 in capital stock, which could be increased to $700,000 if needed. Once the company sold $100,000 in stock it could move forward, and by October of 1868, the P&L.R.R. began rebuilding the road to Montgomery. Although given two years to complete the project, Pensacola finished its half of the line within months, and the project was largely completed by 1869 opening Pensacola to lucrative markets in the West via Chicago.

With new rail lines linking Pensacola to Montgomery, many of the business and civic leaders felt that their future interest lay less with Florida than with Alabama. With a large number of its populace derived from Alabama and no real overland route to connect the city with Florida, the business leaders in Pensacola called for all of West Florida to be annexed by Alabama.\(^\text{13}\) Beginning in December 1868, Alabama Governor William H. Smith approached the Florida legislature about annexing all of West Florida past the Apalachicola River. He established a three-man commission to oversee the negotiations. Florida Governor Harrison Reed showed favor for the move, and the Florida Legislature overwhelmingly voted to cede the Panhandle, but the decision still had to be decided upon by the voters and approved by Congress. By May of 1869, both states reached a deal whereby Alabama would buy $1,000,000 in state bonds at 8% interest in return for West Florida.\(^\text{14}\)

The citizens of West Florida overwhelmingly voted to support the measure. Although most politicians in Alabama backed the purchase, many, in particular those in Mobile, complained that the price was too expensive and that Alabama had no need for another port. The delays proved costly, and a number of Florida legislators began to balk, saying that this was too much land to cede to another state. Many within Tallahassee feared that the sale jeopardized the city’s position as the capitol, worrying that it would be removed to Jacksonville. After the delay, negotiations fell through, and the Florida legislature tried to quell dissatisfaction by promising West Florida a new railroad connection with the east.\(^\text{15}\) When a railroad had not surfaced by 1873, the issue reared its head again, most likely reflecting the economic downturn during the year. Alabama once

\(^\text{14}\) Brackett, “Naples of America,” 64-65.
\(^\text{15}\) Ibid., 66.
again pursued annexation, but the measure failed when the legislature proposed selling Mobile to Mississippi in order to finance the purchase. Despite the frustrations and lack of rail connections to the rest of Florida, Pensacola turned its attentions inward and emerged as a booming and thriving lumber port by the early 1870s.\(^6\)

Most of the new lumber companies arose along the timbered regions of Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The communities of Millview, Milton, and Bagdad built before the war reestablished most of their large mills while several upstarts took over abandoned properties. Simpson and Company reopened its two mills and helped rebuild the surrounding community of Baghdad.\(^7\) Other operations sprouted near the community of Molino located twenty miles north of Pensacola. The Pensacola Lumber Company was the largest producer of timber in the area. The company opened offices in Boston and New York, and sold 60,000 square ft. of lumber produced by 400 employees daily.\(^8\)

All the mills relied upon five major rivers to float logs to the port, including the Perdido, Escambia, Blackwater, Choctawhatchie, and Yellow Water. Huge rafts of timber up to a mile and a half long snaked their way down most waterways with raftmen guiding the load to the bay. In Pensacola, the mills hired a keeper of lost timber who returned logs to their companies for a small fee.\(^9\) When the Perdido Railroad was complete in 1874, a profusion of lumber mills shot up in Millville. George W. Robinson, who supplied most of the cars for the new rail, bought several of the large lumber companies, becoming one of the leading employers. Wanting to increase traffic, he built the New Mill, which produced 45,000 feet of lumber a day. Robinson was given the moniker “King

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\(^8\) Brackett, 58-59.
Lumberman of West Florida.” In 1873, the upstart Perdido Lumber Company surpassed most of its predecessors producing 90,000 feet per day with over eighty employees.²⁰

Because lumber mills paid daily wages, they attracted many employees. Pensacola’s logging and mill operators were the highest paid unskilled laborers in Florida.²¹ The work largely undermined agricultural interests in the area as the promise of wages outweighed anything else that could be done in the white sand of the pine barrens.²² Steady work drew a number of laborers from Alabama who struggled to compete in an overextended cotton market. Loggers from the Northeast and Canada also came to work in the forest. Despite the dangers of the timber and lumber industry, wages allowed many of the workers to prosper. Most laborers worked in the forest cutting and transporting timber, while more skilled labor produced lumber in the mills. Pensacola produced a number of naval stores such as planking and masts, but few companies worked turpentine. This reflected the sheer number of turpentine operations in Northeast and Central Florida, but also the easy money in harvesting an immense supply of virgin pine. The close proximity of many of the firms to Pensacola undermined the ability of mills to establish company towns, as workers often went into Pensacola to shop. The large number of homesteads available also made it easy to purchase land and build a home.²³

Outside of lumber, Pensacola developed another major industry in fishing. A large number of New England fishermen began making their way into the Gulf of Mexico in the late sixties due to over-competition in the waters off the New England coast. They

²⁰ Brackett, “Naples of America,” 72-73.
²² T.C. Rigby, M.D., Dr. Rigby’s Papers on Florida. (Cincinnati: E Mendenhall Publisher, 1876), 38.
²³ Brackett, 59-60.
found the waters between Cedar Key and Pensacola teeming with Red Snapper. Many of the vessels found it cheaper and easier to catch and sell Snapper in Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans and throughout the Gulf than it was to deal with the overfished, cold, rough waters of New England. Many began to return to the Gulf every winter to fish for the local market. When Sewell Cobb began to import ice into Pensacola in 1869, he also organized a boat for the first shipment of Red Snapper to New England. Cobb purchased a sloop smack, and along with his ice company, he developed a lucrative snapper business. Between the new fishing and lumber trade, commerce and trade in and out of the port had largely trebled by 1873.

When the Panic of 1873 sank the country into the depression, the lumber industry experienced a momentary retrenchment in sales and shipments. Many mills and logging operators responded by cutting workers. Fearing that they would be the first to go, freedmen called for solidarity based upon citizenship and lashed out against the foreign element undermining labor in the city. They directed their fears at seasonal Canadian laborers, and freedmen formed raids to seek out and have Canadians identified and fired. Armed with pistols and clubs, the black dominated labor union, the Workingman’s Association, systematically swept through town forcing the residents of hotels and houses suspected of harboring Canadians into the streets, then forcibly removed any Canadian found. Laborers held armed vigils through the night for several weeks to bar their return. Canadians found it impossible to find timber or lumber work anywhere in West Florida.

24 Pearce, *Pensacola During the Civil War*, 239-241.
The British consulate fumed and demanded the mayor’s help, but the mayor claimed that the matter was out of his hand, so the consulate sought action from the head of the Navy Yard, who dispatched Marines to maintain order. The action did little good, as African American lumber and dockworkers refused to stand down until the Canadians returned North. During the confrontation, almost all exports halted as both lumber and longshoremen were involved in the standoff. The Canadians eventually left and work resumed. Despite the slowdown and two-month delay, 259 vessels carrying over 100,000,000 ft. of timber and lumber left the port in 1873.

These numbers are staggering, considering that Pensacola suffered another major yellow fever outbreak beginning in August and lasting sporadically throughout the year. During that time, half the population fled the city. The disease infected over 600 inhabitants, and sixty-one individuals lost their lives. The disease gripped Pensacola for the next two years leaving the populace ravaged. After a winter reprieve, Yellow Fever returned the following summer. When the first cases were reported in August 1874, the military began ordering quarantines and blocked all railroad traffic from entering into the city via Montgomery. Out of a population of 3,374, 2,000 fled back into the countryside and neighboring villages. Of those who remained, many became ill and 354 died. The sheer number of deaths created fear among the public, and many refused to stay long outside their homes. Winter brought another lull in the number of new cases reported,

33 Pearce, Torment of Pestilence, 456.
but in July 1875, the third straight yellow fever outbreak erupted in the city. Starting onboard the ship, Von Molke, arriving out of Havana, it quickly spread among the troops at Fort Barrancas and later at Fort Pickens. With strict measures to quarantine the soldiers, the military halted the spread of the fever among the general populace, but its mere presence rattled already shaky nerves.34

Stories of the sheer physical torment of black vomit and jaundiced patients kept many northern tourists and health seekers away from Pensacola. Concerns over Yellow Fever became the most prominent questions asked of the Commissioner of Immigration.35 Despite the outbreak of the disease, life continued as usual once the summer season of pestilence passed. The fever rarely disrupted the lumber industry, as most of the mills were located outside of Pensacola and continued their operations during outbreaks. While the fever did interrupt shipments, most operators waited until the winter when the disease passed and then sent out most of their lumber. The greatest impact of Yellow Fever was upon the ability of Pensacola to attract northern capital, as most northerners refused to visit the city, ruining most chances at luring new investors and curtailing any hopes of attracting the tourist industry benefiting the rest of the state.36

Despite the setback, Pensacola established itself as the most important lumber export-shipping center in the South. The value of timber exported from Pensacola in 1876 held an estimated value of over $3,000,000.37 By August 1879, Pensacola received 403 boats that exported 7,000,000 cubic ft. of sawed and squared timbers and 60,000,000 board ft. of lumber. By the decades end, Pensacola found itself in the midst of an economic boom.

35 Seth French (Commissioner of the Bureau of Immigration), Semi-Tropical Florida: Its Climate, Soil, and Productions, with a Sketch of its History. (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1879), 44.
36 Brackett, “Naples of America,” 73.
37 T.C. Rigby, Dr. Rigby's papers on Florida. (Cincinnati, Ohio: E. Mendenhall, 1876), 37-38.
Between 1870 and 1880, the population more than doubled. With money flooding into the city and cheap lumber and building supplies, new homes and subdivisions sprouted up by the 1870s. The wealthiest residents began to establish homes on North Hill because of the fresh air and views offered of the city. Middle class residents moved to East Hill, expanding out to Bayou Texar and helping build what became known as East Pensacola Heights. The influx of new immigrants, combined with the number of foreign ships moving in and out of the port, created a large immigrant population. Near the waterfront, ethnic neighborhoods emerged with Little Italy and Little Norway being the largest. Irish immigrants settled in the communities of Woolsey and Warrington and worked at the Navy Yard, docks, and lumber mills. A large number of Germans and Austrian Jews became retailers in the city. African Americans lived scattered along the railroad tracks and throughout the business district.

More affluent African Americans moved to the Belmont Devilliers neighborhood and business district southwest of North Hill. John Sunday, a free black before the war, became the leading real-estate agent for the African American community. The Creoles (descendants of Spanish/French, native Pensacola Indians, and Africans) also formed their own unique groups, living dispersed between black and white neighborhoods. Unlike freedmen who started out working for timber and lumber companies, most Creoles became professionals and tradesmen. Along with these groups, a large contingent of “Old Spanish” families lived in and around the Devilliers neighborhood.

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39 Jesse Earle Bowden, Norman Simmons, Sandra L. Johnson, Pensacola: Florida’s First Place City, A Pictorial History. (Norfolk: Donning Co., 1989), 82, 84.
The combination of the Navy Yard and port created a lively scene throughout the city. During the 1870s, a minimum of 125 soldiers and 6 officers remained garrisoned at the Navy Yard. The Navy assigned each of the officers a house and encouraged them to bring their families to Pensacola. The relatives of a number of enlisted men took up residence in nearby Warrington or Woolsey. Most of the soldiers were single and spent their free time on forays in Pensacola. Combined with the large number of single sailors arriving on merchant ships, a burgeoning red light district emerged in the city along Zaragossa Street. A large number of saloons and drinking establishments also catered to the needs of thirsty sailors. Gambling served as a frequent past time of many, creating a hedonistic atmosphere. One tourist guide remarked of “ungallant sailors, who reel like drunken elephants, and seven abreast, bellowing other pedestrians into the marsh.”

Despite the seeder side of life, many of Pensacola’s businessmen and inhabitants struggled to create a wholesome living environment. Businessmen helped organize the Pensacola City Company to promote real-estate and civic improvement. The city’s older families, in particular the Baron and Gonzales families, formed the Osceola Club in 1872 to provide an ornate social environment in which to throw parties and host guests. In 1875, several businessmen including C.C. LeBaron and James N Moreno formed a joint stock association to build a new hotel. The Continental considered the cities only first class hotel opened later in the year. A large wooden sidewalk was built throughout

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44 Ibid., 362.
45 Bowdens, Simmons, Johnson, Pensacola: Florida’s First Place City, 77.
46 Ibid., 82.
town to allow for easy conveyance. Even with the improvements, the city presented a back-woods appearance, as cows, chickens, and hogs all rambled in the streets.

Despite its shifty appearance, Pensacola prospered as a thriving business and residential community and continued to grow with the lumber and fishing boom. Yet Pensacola still lacked the one thing that it residents most desired- an eastbound train route to connect it with the population centers of the state. To go overland from St. Augustine to Pensacola via train required a 700-mile trip through the wilderesses of Florida, Georgia, and Alabama before finally arriving in Pensacola via Montgomery. On getting in and out of the city, one guide noted, “I had begun to think Pensacola was much like one of these traps, or rather that I was like one of the foolish birds for having got in by the railway, I spent ten days trying to find some other way out.”

Beginning in 1876, the fortunes of the city began to change with the arrival of railroad agent William Dudley Chipley, the new head of the Pensacola and Louisville Railroad. Chipley, a Civil War veteran of Columbus, Georgia, helped build the Columbus and Rome Railroad Company then later went to work for the Baltimore and Ohio railway in 1873. The B&O R.R. gave Chipley control of the struggling Pensacola and Louisville railroad due to its inability to reign in high shipping costs. As part of his efforts, Chipley began negotiations to merge the railroad with the Louisville and Nashville in hopes of controlling costs by increasing the bulk cargo being shipped out of the city. The Louisville and Nashville agreed to the talks, desiring port access to the Gulf of Mexico.

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48 Brooks, Petals Plucked from Sunny Climes, 362.
49 Ibid., 365.
50 Bowden, Iron Horses, 6.
52 W.A. McRae, Why I Like Florida: My native Land, (St. Augustine, Fl.: Dept. Agriculture, 1923), 97.
53 Brackett, “Naples of America,” 76.
The company had already made moves to acquire two other lines, leasing the Nashville and Montgomery R.R. in 1871 and negotiating for the Mobile and Montgomery R.R. to offer more direct access.\footnote{Charles Hildreth, “The Railroads of Pensacola, 1833-1883.” \textit{F.H.Q.} Vol. 37 No. 03 (January 1959), 409.} In order to encourage export shipping, the Pensacola and Louisville built its own two thousand foot wharf in Pensacola, along with an engine house, car shop, and storage facilities. Chipley felt that these improvements were necessary if the company wanted to increase its shipping potential. The move coincided with the creation of the West Florida & Mobile Railroad Company in 1875 that promised the first western route across the Panhandle with a rail connection to P&L facilities.\footnote{J.W. Pratt, \textit{The West Florida & Mobile Rail Road Co.} (New York: Steam Book & Job Print, 1875), 1-4.}

The West Florida and Mobile Railroad was intended to run from the Perdido River all the way to the Apalachicola River and then connect with the Jacksonville and Fernandina Railroad to the Atlantic Ocean. The railroad was planned to serve as the great East-West route running along the Gulf to the Mississippi River. When it would be completed, Florida alone promised the company over 1,536,000 acres of land grants.\footnote{Ibid., 5-8.}

The railroad would have turned Pensacola into one of the largest shipping and railroad centers along the Gulf. With this knowledge, Chipley hoped to use his role as a railroad agent to bolster his position within the city and get a jump on real-estate and business ventures. To prove that he had faith in the commercial future of Pensacola, Chipley wrote one of the city’s first promotional tracts in 1877. Called \textit{Flashlight on Florida: Pensacola the Naples of America}, the work highlighted the shipping advantages that the port offered to Midwestern cities and also the volume of port traffic that Pensacola Bay could handle,
arguing that the bay was “spacious enough to accommodate the navies of the world, and
deep enough to load and discharge the largest vessels alongside the railroad docks.”

Chipley wanted to promote the city as a tourist destination, arguing that the Escambia River was the “Ocklawaha of the West Florida.” He felt that Red Snapper fishing rivaled any of the game fishing occurring on the East Coast. He believed that the fresh oysters and turtling along the coast would draw in a large contingent of outdoor enthusiasts. To add some mystique to the city, Chipley portrayed the city’s unique colonial past as a long succession of conquistadors, adventurers, and pirates, which ultimately ended with the triumph of American military might over the failed attempts of the French, British, and Spanish. Because the city lacked many historic residences and structures, Chipley used the crumbling Fort McRee and Fort Pickens as tourist diversions and spectacles. Chipley wanted to draw tourists and travelers to promote agriculture in the region, believing West Florida could supply the Northwest and Central U.S. with truck crops, much as East Florida was doing with the Northeast. Through these measures, he hoped that his railroad could begin to capture shipments in particular of timber to the center of the U.S. Chipley’s ambitious goals largely hinged on the creation of the Florida and Mobile Railroad, but the railroad failed to materialize by 1877, despite being capitalized by the state for $2,100,000. The railway filed for bankruptcy without ever having laid a mile of track, and once again, the city was left without any major outside connections.

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61 Brackett, “Naples of America,” 76.
When Reconstruction came to an end in 1877, Pensacola merchants worried that the Navy Yard would be shut down, causing a loss of revenues to the cities businesses. The fears proved mostly baseless. While troops were removed from neighboring Louisiana, a strong military presence remained at the Navy Yard and coastal fortifications. On the other hand, the Navy Yard failed to receive the necessary appropriations to improve the facilities in order to build dry-docks, a machine shop, and other necessary renovations to be able to handle and repair newer vessels. The Navy Yard Commission issued a statement arguing that the Navy Yard in Pensacola was largely indefensible from high-powered guns in a time of war. The commission also argued that the city lacked the skilled labor supply necessary to run a modern Navy Yard. Although the navy opted not to close the yard, the lack of any federal appropriations meant that no major military expansions would occur for the remainder of the 19th century. The news sent many Pensacola businessmen scrambling for alternative avenues for revenue and development.

Upon the realization that the Florida and Mobile Railroad would not be constructed, W.D. Chipley made a series of moves to protect his railroad’s interests in West Florida and improve his own political and social clout among the people. In 1877, Chipley convinced associate, Daniel F. Sullivan, a Pensacola banker and lumberman, to incorporate the Pensacola Railroad Company and purchase the Pensacola and Louisville Railway in order to help facilitate the L&N acquisition of the rail. The failure of the Florida and Mobile, along with several other doomed railroad ventures, made most banks leery of loaning money for railroad developments. Sullivan agreed to the deal upon stipulation that the L&N provide a flat rate for the shipment of his lumber on any of the

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L&N lines.\textsuperscript{63} After the Pensacola Railroad completed its acquisition of the P&L, the L&N purchased capital stock and property in the Pensacola Railroad on February 27th, 1880.\textsuperscript{64}

Because of the failure of the Mobile and Florida R.R., Chipley and the L&N saw an opportunity to form a new company to complete the line across West Florida. On March 4, 1881, Chipley, along with associate Fred DeFuniak, formed the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad Co. as a division of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad with the L&N endorsing the $3 million in mortgage bonds of the new company. The formation date suggests that the company waited until Hamilton Disston completed his million-dollar purchase in January 1881 to free up the land subsidies of the Florida Internal Improvement Fund. Under the company’s negotiations with the state, the P&A was to receive 20,000 acres for each mile of track laid, plus alternate sections of land every six miles on both sides of the track. The charter authorized a grant up to 3,860,619 acres but received 2,214,024 acres, which equated to one-fifth of the entire state.\textsuperscript{65}

The deal proved to be good news to the citizens of Pensacola who had just suffered a devastating fire in December of 1880 that completely wiped out five blocks of its business and residential section.\textsuperscript{66} While Pensacola started rebuilding its cityscape, the P&A began construction in the summer of 1881, with crews working from Pensacola on one side and the Chattahoochee River on the other. The fire opened up much of the city


\textsuperscript{64} Bowden, Iron Horses, 14.


to allow easy track construction into and out of Pensacola, but rebuilding the city stretched the already small labor supply even thinner. Chipley managed to scrape together a crew of 2,278 men—engineers, woodcutters, track laborers, cross tie cutters, and camp workers. They began clearing the right of way and laying the track for the new railway. For two straight years, men bridged rivers and streams, graded the road, laid 3,000 freshly hewn crossties, hoisted the steel rails, and hammered the spikes in a chorus of grunts that echoed the arrival of civilization as it penetrated the wilderness.\(^67\) Of all the laborers, 50 cleared the timber, 1,520 graded road beds, 450 hewn cross ties, 50 laid track, and 268 worked on pilings in Escambia Bay. They slept in empty boarding cars and tents along the tracks surrounded by vast stretches of virgin forest.\(^68\) Although no homes or town existed along the proposed route between Pensacola and Mariana, a few small villages and wagon stops existed along old stagecoach trails. On occasions, workers ran into stray residents who had lived isolated for decades. One laborer noted, “the majority of people had no conception of what a train looked like. Some thought it had life. They even asked me if a train could get in the door of a man’s house.”\(^69\)

By December, construction crews from Pensacola had laid the tracks to Lake DeFuniak, and regular train service started running to the vicinity.\(^70\) Workers on the east end of the track completed the span over the Apalachicola River in February 1883, and the first through train went from Pensacola to Mariana on February 27\(^{th}\). The first passenger train, known as the Atlantic Express Monthly made its Blue ribbon run from Pensacola to Jacksonville on May 1, 1883. When completed, the tracks along with the

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\(^68\) Ibid., 24.
\(^69\) Ibid., 26.
\(^70\) Ibid., 27-28.
depots at Pensacola and Mariana cost $2,714,646.30.\textsuperscript{71} Several of the railway stations and stops grew into small towns and villages. New mills along the tracks also quickly developed into thriving communities as lumber operations were some of the largest land purchasers from the railroad after its completion. Mill towns included: Millville, Ferry Pass, Bay Point, Bagdad, Atmore, and Century. As these communities grew, some of the older outposts along the old Indian trail and stagecoach line disappeared as the inhabitants moved closer to the rail connection. Despite the demise of these older villages, the growth of the railroad and the new communities that it promulgated slowly strengthened the ties of West Florida with the rest of the state.\textsuperscript{72}

Chipley managed the railway during the first two years of its existence. Neither the railway nor Pensacola experienced the great awakening that everyone hoped that the train would bring. By April of 1884, Chipley disclosed to stockholders during his third quarter reports that the railroad had been operating at heavy losses.\textsuperscript{73} The railroad suffered from two serious issues, the first being the absence of settlers upon the railway lines with the only interested buyers in railroad lands being loggers and mill operators who cared little about encouraging settlement. The second major problem continued to be the public’s very real fears over Yellow Fever and its repeated appearance in the city. In 1882 during railroad construction, the city suffered another major outbreak of the disease when the Spanish ship, Salita, arrived with sickened crewmembers. Despite a strict quarantine, the epidemic spread to the city, and over the summer, 2,200 people had taken

\textsuperscript{71} Bowden, \textit{Iron Horses}, 29-31.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 55.
\textsuperscript{73} Gregg M. Turner, \textit{A Journey into Florida Railroad History}. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 85.
ill. When the fever had run its course, it had claimed the lives of more than 250 citizens.74 Fever returned again in August 1883, but the illness was largely contained to the Navy Yard, bringing reprieve to the populace.

Alabama and East Florida adopted a strict quarantine on interstate commerce after 1882. No train car was allowed to leave West Florida until the first frost to protect passengers from what they viewed as a potential danger. Most of the empty cars were placed on the side of the tracks, but the sheer number soon blocked the lines into the city. Throughout the course of the epidemic, the city and railroad were largely forced to halt operations.75 Because of impact upon businesses and the new railroad, the Pensacola Commercial pleaded with the Board of Health not to announce to the public when cases of fever were discovered in 1883. The board responded by canceling its subscription to the newspaper. The announcement threw the public into a state of frenzy, and they responded by burning the residences of the ill. All shipments were diverted to Mobile and other nearby ports. The outbreak proved to be the last scourge on the city until the 1890s, but the impact proved to be impossible to surmount at a time when the city and railroad were both trying to encourage tourism and new business. Northern fears of Yellow Fever largely sank both efforts and almost tanked the new railway.76

In order to bolster the ailing Pensacola and Atlantic Railway, the L&N took over operation of the line on January 1, 1885. Feeling that Chipley would be better served elsewhere, they made him the land commissioner for their properties in West Florida.77 Almost all the original property sales for the railroad were to Pensacola lumbermen.

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75 Pearce, Torment of Pestilence, 462.
76 Ibid., 463-466.
77 Bowden, Iron Horses, 32.
including mill owners George W. Wright and W.L. Wittich. Wright bought over 50,000 acres from the railroad. Soon after, operators from Alabama, South Carolina, Michigan, and the North East arrived in large numbers to purchase thousands of tracts of timbered lands along the railroad. The promise of easy shipment and increased access made the rich virgin pinelands a much more viable and profitable investment for many out of state firms who saw clear profits. The L&N brought in a number of new firms from Chicago, Michigan, and Wisconsin. One northern lumber agent in West Florida noted, “the woods are full of Michigan men bent on the same errand as myself.”

The Bureau of Immigration remarked that “as fast as the roads are completed, saw mills are erected for converting the growing trees into lumber.” Outside of timber and lumber companies, Chipley started heavily pushing turpentine operations, believing that the forest could and needed to support a wide variety of new industries if the railroad was to become self-sufficient. Wanting to promote growth throughout the region, Chipley helped form the Pensacola Board of Trade in 1884 becoming its President.

In order to market both the city and railroad lands of West Florida, Chipley used a variety of sources to issue a series of promotional tracts highlighting the many assets of the region. In particular, he used L&N funds to help create and develop an annual brochure known as The Gulf Stream, to advertise the benefits of Pensacola as the South’s

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78 Bowden, Iron Horses, 31.
81 Bowden, 24.
new commercial city in particular its shipping advantages over Mobile and Tampa.\(^{83}\)

Realizing the importance of the harbor for all future developments, Chipley became the leading proponent for dredging the bar of the bay to handle larger draft vessels. Chipley argued that close to 50 vessels had been stuck, stranded, or seriously delayed because of the depths at the bar.\(^{84}\) He wrote a letter to Florida’s U.S. Senator to push for appropriations for Harbor Improvements then headed a committee of the Board of Trade to lobby the federal government for $250,000 to deepen the bay to 26 feet.\(^{85}\) The L&N had already started the dredging project after establishing a subsidiary known as the Export Coal Company to ship coal and iron out of Alabama. Without deeper channels, coal and iron bearing ships could not move in and out of the harbor, and the L&N felt that it could not bear the costs alone.\(^{86}\)

Chipley argued that the federal government had a vested interest in harbor improvement, believing that the Navy Yard would benefit directly from the dredging projects and insisting that new jetties could be built to protect Fort Pickens and the Lighthouse. Chipley also suggested that the coal and iron moving through the port made the Navy Yard more attractive for the construction of modern sailing vessels and recommended that the federal government increase appropriations to its Pensacola facilities and resume shipbuilding. He lobbied to have a coaling station built at the Navy Yard to service the Gulf naval fleet and offer a regular customer for the L&N depot.\(^{87}\)

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87 Pensacola Board of Trade, *Memorial of the Pensacola Board of Trade*, 3.
Chipley was a huge advocate for the Navy Yard, but this partially reflected the fact that the L&N owned the Pensacola and Barrancas Railroad, which ran through Warrington and Woolsey and into the heart of the Navy Yard’s facilities. Without regular work and ship construction, the rail line offered little benefit to the L&N, and Chipley tried to work out a variety of developmental schemes that would make the side track cost effective for the L&N. 88 Appropriations were finally made for harbor improvements, but the government paid little attention to the Navy Yard. This likely resulted from ongoing disputes and legal battles with squatters who claimed ownership of some of Navy Yard lands. Many of these disputes were not fully resolved until the late eighties. 89

Even without any real expansion of the Navy Yard, the future of Pensacola and its railroads rested with the bay and its port facilities. In 1886, Pensacola hosted the American Shipping and Industrial League Conference. The meeting discussed the growing importance of Mexico and Central America as a rising market for imports and exports, and the need for Gulf States to take advantage of that trade. Arguing that Mexico imported $520,000,000 worth of goods produced in Europe, the convention suggested that the U.S. could capture many of these markets through improved shipping rates to lower the costs. It was agreed that Gulf ports should lead the efforts at efficiency by improving their own facilities to have a competitive edge in the shipping business. 90 Many of these same goals were outlined in the Pensacola Daily: Commercial Annual with the added fact that Pensacola was the nearest port to Latin American trade and that

its facilities were much closer to open sea than either those of Mobile or New Orleans.91 To help meet future growth, Chipley expanded the L&N’s Muscogee, Commendencia, and Tarragona Wharfs building facilities that could handle more car fleets and expanding coal and fertilizer facilities to meet global demands.92

While the promotion of shipping increased the materials moving through the port and along the rail lines of the L&N, Chipley knew that real success and growth depended upon encouraging new settlement across the lands owned by the railroad. Chipley became the biggest proponent for a wide array of settlement schemes to help populate the varied communities of West Florida. In particular, Chipley pushed for widespread expansion of farming. One of the first crops to be promoted was the La Conte Pear, also known as the “sand pear,” which grew well in the cutover pine barrens of West Florida. Its one draw back was that its tough skin made it less marketable in northern cities, whose populaces had become accustomed to the Bartlett.93 Believing that cotton was key to draw immigrants from neighboring southern states, Chipley argued that the early Florida growing season would allow its farmers to get their crops to market earlier than their neighbors and receive higher profits. Chipley suggested that the L&N could offer quick service for cotton farmers in southern Georgia and Alabama and also help them get an early jump on cotton sales by shipping through Pensacola.94 Within three years, Chipley’s efforts paid off, as cotton became the second largest production in the city.

92 Bowden, Simmons, Johnson, Pensacola, Florida’s First Place City, 79.
94 Bowden, Iron Horses, 25.
exporting 30,991 bags from West Florida.\textsuperscript{95} With numbers that surpassed those of its
neighbors, Chipley used the fact to promote West Florida as “The Poor Man’s Paradise”
in hopes of siphoning off black and white farmers from Alabama and Georgia.\textsuperscript{96}

Chipley believed that cheap lumber costs, low fuel costs, and wider profit margins
served as an enticing draw for many southerners. In one tract, he suggested “The
industrious, economical, though poor man may immigrate here and accumulate property;
yet it is far better to engage in farming, here or elsewhere, to be possessed of sufficient
means to purchase his farm, to build his dwelling and other buildings, to clear his fields
and enclose them, to buy his team and a small stock of cattle and sheep, and the tools,
and to supply himself, family, and teams with food, until he can raise the means from the
farm for his support.”\textsuperscript{97} Even if farmers took up homestead lands, Chipley believed that
they would be valuable assets to his rail service via shipping and merchandising.\textsuperscript{98} For
this reason, Chipley promoted both rail and homestead lands in all his advertising.\textsuperscript{99}

Almost all new immigrants to West Florida came from the South. As one
promotional tract noted,

The settlers of this region have been chiefly from the southern states with
Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, and the Carolinas furnishing the greater part.
Nothing analogous to the orange grove and tropical fruit craze, that has done
much in settling other parts of the State, has had anything to do with carrying
people to West Florida, but gradually, almost one by one, these people have
drifted down from more northern states with their families and household effects
transported in wagons, in search of healthful locations where the soil was fertile
enough to be turned to agricultural pursuits, and the natural vegetation sufficient
to sustain their flocks.\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{95} James Wood Davidson, \textit{The Florida of To-day.} (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1889), 182.
\textsuperscript{96} Chipley, \textit{Facts About Florida}, 15.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{98} Bowden, \textit{Iron Horses}, 25.
\textsuperscript{100} South Publishing Co. \textit{Sunny Florida. A Compendium of Information regarding the state of orange groves, for the settler, investor, or tourist.} (London: South Publishing Co., 1880s), 9.
William Chipley also worked with Henry Plant to encourage tobacco growth in West Florida to service the growing cigar industry in South Florida. Plant agreed to supply farmers with seeds from Cuba feeling that tobacco from Florida could serve, as a viable alternative to Cuba, should an embargo be placed upon trade with the island.\footnote{Chipley, \textit{Facts about Florida}, 51-52.} Production spread rapidly throughout the eighties and nineties. Stock farming, in particular cattle and sheep, proved to be the other large agricultural sector promoted by Chipley and the L&N. Like South Florida, Chipley believed that the cutover timbered sections of West Florida offered the basic necessities to build a lucrative trade in beef and mutton with the West Indies and Central America.\footnote{South Publishing Co., \textit{Sunny Florida}, 12. Chipley, \textit{Facts about Florida}, 17.}

Besides farming, Chipley also hoped to promote the growth of new industries. He helped establish a brush and mattress factory that used the native palmetto to produce a finished product.\footnote{A.A. Robinson, \textit{Florida: A Pamphlet}, 75.} He also tried to encourage the growth of poppies and the production of opium for domestic and foreign consumption.\footnote{Davidson, \textit{The Florida of To-day}, 203.} He became a big proponent of local cabinet, shingle, and boat manufacturers to take advantage of West Florida’s immense supply of cypress.\footnote{Chipley, \textit{Facts about Florida}, 23.} In order to bolster West Florida products, Chipley and the L&N sponsored the West Florida Fair in Mariana.\footnote{Thos. Gilbert, \textit{Second Annual Fair of the West Florida Fair Association to be held at Mariana, Fla. Tuesday, 30\textsuperscript{th} of November 1880}. (Columbus, GA.: Steam-Power Printer and Book Binder, 1880).} Chipley chose Mariana because the city served as a central hub for wagon traffic moving in and out of West Florida to Alabama and Georgia. Every fall after the harvest was complete in late October and early November, hundreds of wagonloads of people penetrated the Florida interior on their way to the coast to spend a week or two fishing and camping. One witness noted, “A week of
recreation is spent after the year’s work, on the beach, where these “up-country” folk enjoy the salt air and water, and return home with several barrels of pickled fish to be eaten during the winter. Last fall, it was estimated that more than three hundred Georgia wagons passed through Tallahassee alone.” With hundreds more farmers passing through the area, Mariana served as a central location to promote West Florida productions.

Outside of southern immigration, Chipley repeatedly tried to encourage settlement from the North. He devised a series of promotional schemes to attract attention to the benefits of West Florida, which had been largely overshadowed by rapid developments across the rest of the state. In order to boost tourism, Chipley developed tourist facilities in Pensacola and West Florida, believing that both were needed. He felt that even if epidemics of Yellow Fever discouraged tourists from visiting Pensacola, they could still take a tour of West Florida without having to enter into the city. Even inside Pensacola, the L&N developed its tourist facilities outside the city limits. The railroad helped build a large pleasure resort at Magnolia Bluff along the rail line at which picnics, dances, concerts could be given. Chipley also worked with locals to have William H. Chase’s house transformed into the Continental Hotel and offered to provide carriages to move guests from the depot to the hotel. The city and railroad also encouraged surf bathing on Santa Rosa Island hiring boatmen to provide trips to and from the beach. This conveyance served as the only access to the beach until the 1920s. To undermine fears of

107 A.A. Robinson, Florida: A Pamphlet, 41.
109 Occie Clubbs, “Pensacola in Retrospect,” 384
the fever in the city, Chipley described the beach as “a soft, salubrious atmosphere, with health in every breath.”\textsuperscript{110}

In West Florida, Chipley and Frederick DeFuniak helped found and build up the community of DeFuniak Springs. At first, the community was to serve as a health resort on the local spring fed lake, but the idea was soon scrapped because of the extensive resorts in East Florida.\textsuperscript{111} Instead, the railroad decided to make the city into the winter assembly for the northern Chautauqua. Chipley believed that the Chautauqua would draw middling and upper class citizens into West Florida. The “Hotel Chautauqua” was built on Lake Defuniak in 1885 and offered amenities to the first attendees. In order to draw locals, daily visitors, and long-term guests, rates ranged from $2 dollars per day to $10 dollars per week.\textsuperscript{112} The assembly brought in artists, teachers, scientists, and professors from around the U.S. to provide lectures to interested attendees.\textsuperscript{113} Receipts from these lectures helped provide for the support of the teacher training facilities and the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle that would function throughout the year.\textsuperscript{114} The goal of the railroad was to turn the community into a popular educational winter resort featuring a six-week lecture and entertainment circuit while also forging DeFuniak Springs as the center of educational uplift for both Florida and the rest of the South.\textsuperscript{115}

Through these efforts, Chipley worked to diversify the economy of West Florida, but the financial backbone of the region remained timber and lumber. Many mills began to diversify their operations, producing sash doors, blinds, and a lathe mill to help cater to

\textsuperscript{110} Chipley, \textit{The Naples of America}, 8.
\textsuperscript{111} Bowden, \textit{Iron Horses}, 31.
\textsuperscript{112} Chipley, \textit{Facts About Florida}, 28.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 28-29.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 37.
European tastes. Another began cutting red cedar to be shipped to New Jersey and Germany and made into pencils.\textsuperscript{116} The “Torreya,” also known as the stinking cedar only found along the Apalachicola River, served as veneer and was harvested to near extinction due to its durability and piability.\textsuperscript{117} About the variety of virgin woods available, one travel guide noted, “the forests of Florida produce a greater variety of ornamental woods for ceilings, panels, and furniture than can be found in any other state. Besides the fifty varieties of sub-tropical trees, the black walnut, the cherry, the red, white, water, and live oaks, the magnolias, the chinaberry, the sweet and black gums, the cypress, the cedar, the bays and palmettoes, outrivaling in colors and shades the woods of other states, and finally the pines of Florida as the finest ornamental wood excel the brushes and stains of all the painters of the world.”\textsuperscript{118} Throughout West Florida in 1882, it was estimated that over 6,615,000,000 board feet of standing timber were waiting to be extracted.\textsuperscript{119}

In order to harvest the timber, mills and logging operators generally employed teams of two hundred men, three gangs of choppers with two hundred yoke of oxen that helped transport lumber to the trains. Many lived in camps with cooks or built shanties in the woods.\textsuperscript{120} The Southern States Land and Timber Company with facilities in Alabama and Florida grew into the largest producer of lumber. Employing over 900 men, the company operated four sawmills and owned six locomotives. The accessibility of sidetracks and the railroad made it possible for companies to fell thousands of rough-cut

\textsuperscript{117} A.A. Robinson, Florida: A Pamphlet, 36.
\textsuperscript{119} Thomas D. Clark, “The Lasting Heritage: Land and Trees,” 25.
logs a day and transport them to lumber mills. Three large mill operations on Blackwater creek produced nearly 40,000,000 board feet of lumber every year. The four trains of the Pensacola and Perdido railroad were in constant motion day and night hauling lumber from the mills at Millville to Pensacola. The industry was making millionaires of most of the logging and mill operators. D.F. Sillivan, who owned the largest lumber mill, listed his company assets at $1,055,000.

The industrial and population explosion sweeping across Europe created a vigorous housing market that demanded a steady supply of lumber for construction, and with its seemingly inexhaustible supply of old growth timber, Pensacola became the port of call for many European vessels seeking inexpensive but durable lumber to feed the construction trade. Of the 518 lumber ships entering Pensacola in 1887, 316 were from foreign ports, the majority coming from England, France, Spain, Norway, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Australia. The largest shipment of timber in a sailing vessel to ever leave Pensacola occurred in July of 1884, when the British bark, Avenmore, left port carrying 85,666 cubic ft. of hewn timber, 49,000 superficial ft. of lumber, 304 ft. cedar with a total value of $9,578.00. By 1880, the lumber exports amounted to over three and a half million dollars. With a steady demand for lumber throughout the eighties and nineties, the industry kept a steady flow of traffic in and out of Pensacola’s port.

Along with the growing lumber fleet, the harbor facilities of Pensacola bay grew to accommodate the increasing demands being placed upon the waterfront. The fishing

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122 Occie Clubbs, “Pensacola in Retrospect,” 381
124 Occie Clubbs, “Pensacola in Retrospect,” 380-381.
fleets expanded with the creation of the Pensacola Ice Company in 1879. Fresh ice allowed snapper to be packed and shipped in rail cars and sent to markets in the northeast and interior of the U.S. Tired of having to rely upon seasonal New England fishing vessels, the ice company purchased four ships in 1880, then eight more by 1885. Fresh ice allowed fishermen to cut waste by allowing them to pack dead fish on ice until they could reach the harbor. Since any fish caught below a depth of 20 feet usually died of internal injuries, ice allowed fishermen to save the catch and deliver four times more fish to market. Because Pensacola was closer to the open ocean than either Mobile or New Orleans, fishermen overwhelmingly chose to deliver their catch to the city for transport elsewhere. To meet the new demands, four new snapper wholesaling houses opened between 1880 and 1885. The Warrington Fishing Company and E.E. Saunders & Co. grew into two of the largest commercial wholesalers. Saunders employed 16 schooners solely for snapper and 13 other ships for other marketable fish such as pompano, mullet, and trout. Warren started with 8 schooners. The three companies employed 300 and 500 fishermen depending on the season. Fishermen received free meals and board and a share of 40 percent of the profits of each catch with the cut based upon seniority.

When fish arrived at port, the wholesalers packed most of the snapper in barrels to be reloaded onto ships or onto L&N railcars and transported across the U.S. Within the first year, one hundred barrels a day were being transported to destinations in the East, Midwest, and Mountain West. Pensacola quickly became synonymous with quality,

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129 Chipley, Facts About Florida, 45.
and Pensacola Snapper appeared on the menus of all fine hotels, restaurants, and dining establishments.\textsuperscript{130} The E. E. Saunders Co. could produce 35 tons of ice a day and store up to 100,000 pounds of fish in cold storage. In order to reduce waste, the company also operated a fishmeal plant.\textsuperscript{131} Demand exploded beyond anything that wholesale houses could have imagined, with 100 barrels of snapper a week required to keep up with the local trade in 1889.\textsuperscript{132} As the industry grew, a contingent of other businesses developed to meet the needs of fishermen and wholesalers including barrel makers, sail makers, and ship chandlers.\textsuperscript{133} Besides snapper, wholesalers maintained the markets for a wide array of fish, particularly mullet and grouper. Locally, a significant market developed in West Florida, Alabama, and Georgia for mullet, whose inexpensive cost made it a sought after delicacy among many poor famers. Grouper served as the basis for international trade with Cuba purchasing all the fresh and salted grouper that fishing vessels could provide. Frequently, schooners would stop by Cuba on a fishing trip and unload their grouper to save space for snapper, pompano, and mackerel to cater to domestic demand.\textsuperscript{134}

Outside of the large-scale commercial companies, African Americans formed their own fishing operations catering to the black community. They formed small crews that fished out of boats called chings, which then sold their catch in the African American commercial districts of Pensacola. Poor whites operated similar chings, and displayed their catch upon the docks in the morning before 7:00.\textsuperscript{135} The many local fleets helped keep the price of fish low. Six Spanish mackerel could be purchased for .50 cents

\textsuperscript{130} Pearce, \textit{Pensacola During the Civil War}, 241.
\textsuperscript{131} Chas Bliss, “Pensacola Social Features.” \textit{Pensacola History Illustrated} Vol. 2. No 3. (Spring 1987), 12.
\textsuperscript{132} Pearce, \textit{Pensacola During the Civil War}, 241.
\textsuperscript{133} Bowden, Simons, Johnson, \textit{Pensacola, Florida’s First Place City}, 82.
throughout the 1880s in Pensacola, whereas the same amount would be close to $9 in New York.\textsuperscript{136} Most fish were sold in 20lb. bunches generally consisting of two large fish wrapped in banana leaves for .10 cents a pound.\textsuperscript{137}

With the continued emergence and evolution of the fishing industry, the harbor and docks of downtown Pensacola evolved along with it. Since most of the fishermen on the boats were not from Pensacola and had no real domestic ties, their 13 days of reprieve between month-long fishing trips contributed to the more licentious sectors of the Pensacola economy, in particular prostitution, gambling, and drinking establishments. Most locals simply referred to the port as “Hangover Harbor.” Police tolerated public drunkenness in and around the harbor and red light district as long as activities stayed around the waterfront and away from main streets. Because fishermen were almost impossible to keep or find, any arrests that were made resulted in small fines. For some offenses, a judge might even sentence a fisherman to 30 days in jail or 30 days at sea to force the fisherman to return to his job on the boat. This occasionally served as a form of maintaining levels of employment of the fleets in an industry where the turnover rate was over 80 percent. Most fishermen quit after their first trip.\textsuperscript{138} It was not uncommon for fishermen to be pressed into work. The most notorious incident involved a captain who hired an orchestra to play on his boat under the notion that it was for a few hours of fun entertainment, when the boat moved past the three mile mark, he told the musicians to drop their instruments and get to work; they were sailors now.\textsuperscript{139}

With over 21% of the workforce involved with the waterfront as longshoremen, fish merchants, and lumber operators, the harbor proved almost impossible for the public to avoid. At the same time, since most residential sections of the city lacked sewage and fresh water as late as the teens, locals used bathhouses at the waterfront to bathe and clean themselves on an almost daily basis during the summer. Dozens of open bathhouses lined the bay front. Most facilities remained open 24 hours a day through early November. Locals, sailors, and fishermen equally took advantage of the bathing and brought in a steady flow of locals and foreigners into and out of the waterfront. Although residents were accustomed to the situation, local businessmen feared that the bawdy environment might turn tourists and prospective clients away from the city.

In order to make the best of a largely licentious situation, the Louisville and Nashville tried to portray the waterfront to visitors as a “unique” and “mysterious” local “characteristic” akin to exploring “the waterfront at Frisco.” A brochure printed by the Louisville Courier Journal described the harbor as a “sailor’s rendezvous” filled with Latin chandlery shops, music halls and bars, and theaters. The brochure painted groups of drunken sailors and workmen as “swarmy” and “swarthy,” which portrayed all workers even African Americans as light hearted, light skinned, and maybe a little curious. The journal also emphasized all the local shops catering to the sailor’s needs, in particular the strange coffee shops and bars, portraying them as colorful with rows of parrots and cockatoos swinging on perches outside of each establishment. While these descriptions were exaggerated to make the best of an abysmal situation, they showed the lengths to

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which the railroad was willing to go to change perceptions of the city and increase tourist and business traffic flowing through the port.\textsuperscript{141}

The sheer economic explosion across West Florida helped create a building boom in Pensacola as new residents and businesses built homes and establishments that reflected their needs. After the fire of 1880, a new marble Customs House and Post Office were built though not completed until 1887. In order to help tourists and businessmen find their way around the city, Chipley encouraged that all streets be named and numbered in 1884. New Presbyterian and Catholic Churches with brick edifices were also constructed, adding a greater sense of permanence to the downtown skyline.\textsuperscript{142} One of the largest and most impressive buildings was the Pensacola Opera House, which served as the cultural and social center of Pensacola for the next three decades. The Pensacola Athletic Club and Osceola Club also became important social centers in the city.\textsuperscript{143} Businessmen helped turn the Florida, Georgia, and Alabama sections of the North Hill residential neighborhood into a display of wealth from the timber and fishing industries.\textsuperscript{144} African Americans also amassed property, constructing increasingly lavish and elegant middle class homes which reflected the large number of black carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, plasters and bricklayers, tanners, cigar makers, shoemakers, and cabinetmakers, longshoremen, and skilled craftsmen.\textsuperscript{145} Besides local growth, Chipley led the effort to help establish the Pensacola and Electric Light Power Company in 1887. With coal burning boilers whose steam supplied electric generators, the power company

\textsuperscript{141} Louisville & Nashville R.R., “Pensacola. As a Winter Resort or Attractive Tourist Point.” (Louisville, KY: Courier-Journal Job Print, n.d), 1.
\textsuperscript{142} Occie Clubbs, “Pensacola in Retrospect,” 391- 392.
\textsuperscript{143} Lucius Ellsworth, \textit{Pensacola: The Deep Water City}. (Tula, Ok.: Continental Heritage Press, 1982), 79.
\textsuperscript{145} Davidson, \textit{The Florida of to-day}, 116.
served as one of many local operations that the P&A helped to foster and service with its daily trains of coal from Alabama.\textsuperscript{146}

Because of political discussion over the nature of railroads in Florida, Chipley found himself directly involved in the gubernatorial election of 1884. Chipley backed and promoted E.A. Perry for his pro-business stance and denounced independent Democrat Frank Pope, who believed that railroads should be at the service of the citizens of the state. The election marked the small beginnings of the populist movement and rising demands for railroad regulation. Although most in Pensacola also backed Perry, the relationship between the Governor and Chipley drew the ire of many in Pensacola when Perry appointed Chipley to the City Commission in 1885 and selected him as mayor.\textsuperscript{147}

As part of the new commission plan, the Governor was granted the power to appoint local officials as a backdoor maneuver to accomplish black disenfranchisement throughout the state. Almost all new commissioners were white and pro-business. Many of these local commissioners were given sweeping authority, including the right to appoint and fix the salaries of all local public employees including; attorney, tax collector, and assessor, and those who directed the fire, police, and utility operations. The commissioners also had the power to borrow money and oversee special interests.\textsuperscript{148} After his appointment, Chipley’s actions became highly scrutinized by J. Dennis Wolfe, the editor of the \textit{Pensacola Commercial}, who feared that Chipley’s role as a developer compromised his role to protect the vested interest of the public.

\textsuperscript{146} The Pensacola Home and Savings Association, \textit{An Industrial History of Pensacola.} (Pensacola: Home and Savings Association, 1970s), 5-7.
\textsuperscript{147} Edmund C. Williamson, “W. D. Chipley, West Florida’s Mr. Railroad.” \textit{The Florida Historical Quarterly} Vol. 25 No. 4 (April 1947), 337.
\textsuperscript{148} John Appleyard, \textit{The History of Local Government in Pensacola & Escambia County.} (Pensacola: John Appleyard Agency, 2001), 35.
The situation came to a head in January 1885 when the City Commission was set to decide whether or not to pay bondholders of the yet unbuilt St. Andrews Bay and Chipley Railroad. The newspaper accused Chipley of having $16,000 worth of bonds and told him to recuse himself from the dealings. Chipley claimed that he had withdrawn from the company because it lacked strong financial backing, but he believed that it was in the best interest of the city to pay the bondholders in order to maintain the business principles and standards of the city. The newspaper accused Chipley of having backed out of the deal only because he knew that the railroad was going to fail in the first place, and Chipley responded with a scathing rebuke, claiming, “I with the utmost deliberation and premeditation denounce him as a willful and malicious liar and libeler and I apply the brand trusting that it may sink into his debased soul deep enough to touch his manhood, if there ever existed in his corrupt heart a single sentiment of honor.” Chipley’s response sent Wolfe into a tirade, proclaiming, “Look here Major Octopus, you can't talk politics, run the state of Florida, do a general land office business and run a railroad at the same time. Your tentacles will get tangled and suckers exhausted by too much labor.” The engagement set off an unparalleled social and political feud that split the city into two political and social factions, with the Democrats supporting the populist anti-railroad Mullets and the Republicans backing the pro-business Snappers.

After the argument, the Pensacola Commercial refused to call Chipley by his name, only referring to him as “Major Octopus.” In response, Chipley began pushing his own conservative newspaper, The Pensacola News. U.S. Senator Wilkinson Call also

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150 Bowden, Iron Horses, 33.
stepped into the political fray, contending that the state had granted too much land to corporate interests and that Chipley and the P&A railroad had overstepped their bounds when seeking the additional claim to federal and state grants under the defunct P&G, charted in 1856 but never built. Call argued that this was an example of the gross actions and corporate greed that the new railroads represented. Chipley demanded that Call show proof of any Floridian who had written him upset or concerned over the land grants and claimed that Call undermined business interests in the state by supporting the forfeiture of the grant. He then reminded Call that he not only represented the people but also the businesses upon which the people depended.153

Chipley further entangled himself in political matters when he backed Earnest Younge over Pensacola native Stephen R. Mallory for the seat of U.S. Congressional Representative. Wolfe and the Commercial felt that Chipley had showed his true colors, claiming, “To a man who obeys his mandates, Chipley is a true friend, but woe be to him who seeks to thwart his will.” The Snappers responded by backing Younge, and the Mullets overwhelming elected Mallory. The election signaled that the railroads had become too entangled with the politics of the state.154 The election also reflected larger political debates over discriminatory railroad rates, rebates, land grants, and the need for a railroad commission. During state legislative debate in 1887, newspapers throughout the state backed regulation, with one paper noting, railroads acted “in the fashion of the

154 Bowden, Iron Horses, 34.
old robber barons exacting ransom from beleaguered cities.” When it came to a vote, the legislature overwhelmingly voted to create a new railroad commission.

After the commission met and formed new measures establishing across the board maximum railroad rates for passengers and shipments aimed at all companies operating in the state, the L&N and Chipley balked at the measures. In particular, the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad claimed that it could not comply with the measures without going under. These were not unheard of tactics by the L&N and its subsidiary companies who often thwarted or ignored laws completely. The P&A used its legal council, William Alexander Blount, to challenge the 3-cent shipping rate passed by the commission. Blount, an Alabama transplant, had been hired by Chipley in 1877 to represent his varied railroad interests. For his services, Blount demanded shares of each company, which gave him a vested interest in the various legal battles that his clients faced. Blount recognized the authority of the Railroad Commission to regulate commerce, but he challenged whether or not their rulings were final claiming that matters of private property ultimately rested with the court. He claimed that forcing the company to operate at an unfair low rate was the equivalent of confiscating private property without due process of the law that was now guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment. The Florida Supreme Court sided with the P&A and reversed the decision.

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156 Ibid., 107-108.
of the Railroad Commission but argued that the commission had the right to regulate shipping rates but not if a company could not cover its expenses.\(^{160}\)

Despite Blount’s legal challenges, Chipley felt that he could best serve the railroad’s needs in Tallahassee and Washington, and in 1889 he resigned his position as City Commissioner to establish a plan of attack on his political enemies, in particular Wilk Call, whom he intended to challenge in the next congressional election.\(^{161}\) At the beginning of 1890, Chipley published a 123-page pamphlet challenging Senator Call’s congressional record and private life. Throughout the work, Chipley emasculated Call, claiming that he had a sterile senatorial record. He questioned his integrity, suggesting that he had cheated a small African American farmer out of his homestead, that he was involved with a massive bank scandal in Norfolk, that he cheated soldiers out of their land claims from the Indian wars, that he used to play ball with the much aligned and hated Carpetbagger Littlefield, and that he never had contributed to the Democratic party once during his term in office.\(^{162}\) Call addressed each of the issues, then retorted that Chipley was nothing but a political lobbyist for the railroads that had raped the state of its most valued asset of land subsidies. The debate set the stage for the state Democratic Convention, and with overwhelming populist support, Call ripped the nomination away from Chipley.\(^{163}\)

Having lost the election, Chipley and Blount worked to continue to fight the Railroad Commission, and they along with Henry Flagler and Henry Plant pushed Governor Francis P. Flemming to bring an end to the commission. When populist


\(^{162}\) Ibid., 343.

\(^{163}\) Williamson, “W. D. Chipley,” 345.
commissioner McWhorter stepped down in 1891, Flemming threatened to appoint E.J. Triay, a pro-railroad appointee. Not wishing to have a commission that favored the railroads, the Populists aligned with the Bourbons and called for the absolution of the commission. After having settled the commission matter, Chipley moved to form the base of a new political party, claiming that the Democratic nomination had been stolen from him and that he had been misrepresented by Call. He now claimed that he stood on the same side as William Jennings Bryan and the Chicago Platform of 1892. A group known as the Pensacola Tammany Association then endorsed Chipley as their candidate for state senator. As part of the political goals of his new party, Chipley lobbied against Stephen R. Mallory, reviving the Snapper/ Mullet feud and celebrated Mallory’s defeat to S.M. Sparkman of Tampa. Chipley then focused upon his own campaign and rallied Populist support to defeat his Democratic opponent and carry him to victory in 1895.

As Senator, Chipley pushed forward a pro-business agenda and moved to block any measure that sought to regulate the railroads, including a measure to create a new railroad commission that he narrowly helped to defeat by one vote. The following year in 1897, a number of pro-Chipley newspapers began calling for him to challenge Call for his senatorial seat. The Populists warned Chipley that his reputation as a railroad man jeopardized any chance that he had of winning the seat, but his name, along with that of Call and political foe, Stephen Mallory, were entered into the political arena for the seat. A series of polls and ballots and votes were taken as a form of run off between all the nominees, which ultimately resulted in a final vote for either Chipley or Mallory. The final tally was a 49 to 47 victory for Chipley, after which two late Senators entered and

166 Ibid., 346.
cast their votes for Mallory, creating a 49 to 49 tie. In order to resolve the chaos that followed, Senator Barber changed his vote from Chipley to Mallory, and Mallory became the next Senator.\(^{167}\) Despite his defeat, Chipley returned to Pensacola to resume his position, but while on a trip to Washington D.C. in December of 1897, he suffered a heart attack and died. Pensacola pleaded to have his body returned to the city, but his wife had him buried in Columbus, Georgia.

One of Chipley’s last actions before he launched his first political campaign in 1889 was to help form the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce in September of that year.\(^ {168}\) During his absence, the Chamber, along with the Pensacola Commercial Association, emerged to promote the city’s many amenities throughout the 1890s. The two separate associations may have reflected the larger political divide of the city, as both organizations shared many of the same set goals and principals. The L&N also continued to highlight the many commercial, agrarian, and industrial features that West Florida offered. The Commercial Association launched its “We Believe in Pensacola” campaign with the targeted goal of “bringing industrial growth and light manufacturing” to the city. It also set the goal of establishing its own permanent agricultural and commercial display of local productions for the benefit of “informing strangers and our own people.” The Association also introduced its “made in Pensacola” crusade to have “Pensacola Product” stamped on every article and item of trade produced in the city. The association had a rural affairs department to oversee and promote agriculture and agrarian development with a specific aim of sponsoring agrarian finance.\(^ {169}\)

\(^{167}\) Williamson, “W. D. Chipley,” 349.


A large contingent of interests, including shipping, commercial, and fishing businesses, joined together to try and push the federal government to reestablish a dry dock in Pensacola and revive the Navy Yard, arguing that it was necessary for the economic interests of the city. The move came after a Navy review suggested that the Navy Yard be removed to Louisiana. Chipley personally stepped out of the political limelight to try to oversee the initiative directly in 1891. He wrote a tract examining the dry dock situation, arguing that the government’s neglect of the Navy Yard had put all southern shipping at a disadvantage and claiming that most people in Mobile, New Orleans, and Galveston knew of no other Navy Yard or repair facilities outside of Norfolk. He suggested that local commercial interests in Pensacola would happily share the costs of new dry dock facilities to help maintain the repairs of their own large commercial and fishing fleets. At the same time, they argued that the dry docks could help to kick start shipbuilding and repair activities at the long dormant Navy Yard. The Navy Secretary instead turned a blind eye to the situation and suggested that the dilapidated dry docks and machinery be sold to the highest bidder. He also proposed that expenditures for the Navy Yards be drastically cut, though not suspended. The loss of revenues directly cut into many of Pensacola’s business establishments and undercut the ambitions of commercial and fishing fleets that were hoping to lower costs through a local dry dock.

173 Ibid., 109-110.
The move sent the city into an economic slump which was followed a year later by the first Yellow Fever outbreak in over seven years. In August 1893, the Board of Health announced that two deaths had resulted from yellow fever, which led to the largest mass exodus that the city had seen. As one reporter noted, “This [news] flew like wild fire over the city and gathered wings as it went. The cheeks of timid people which but a few hours before had been radiant with smiles, suddenly paled with fear and in an incredibly short time in every part of the city preparations for departure were being made.”\(^{174}\) With many of the workers having fled the city, commerce and business completely shut down, throwing those who remained out of work. Fearing that the fever would ruin the port, Chipley had the state health officer come and examine the bodies, and he said that the board was wrong on their assessment and that the quarantine of the city should cease immediately.\(^{175}\) Because of the damage caused by the scare to the city, deepening the economic recession brought about by the panic of 1893, Chipley issued *The Pamphlet of West Florida* denying the presence of Yellow Fever and highlighting the industrial, commercial, and agricultural advantages of West Florida.\(^{176}\)

Chipley’s partner in the pamphlet was The Young Men’s Business Association, which had been organized to try and assess the city’s economic situation, in order to highlight and work on improving commercial activities in areas that were floundering or neglected. In particular, the association specifically called for dry dock facilities, cotton factories, and canneries for fruits, vegetables, fish and oysters, reflecting the needs and desires of the largest industries in the city. It also called for steel manufacturers, believing

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\(^{175}\) Ibid., 79.

\(^{176}\) W.D. Chipley, *This Pamphlet on Western Florida is Issued by the Louisville and Nashville R.R. Pensacola, Florida*. (Louisville, KY.: L&N R.R. Co., 1895), 3-7.
that they would be needed to help re-launch the Navy Yard.\textsuperscript{177} This work again highlighted the extensive railroad and government lands available for settlement, suggesting that West Florida remained a poor man’s country where “a farmer can readily find a home and have enough money to tide him through until he can get his land under cultivation.”\textsuperscript{178} Possibly in light of the tumultuous political divisions in the city, the work also stated that “a Republican is just as welcome here as a Democrat. Your politics cuts no figure.”\textsuperscript{179} The pamphlet was the last promotional material produced by Chipley before his death in 1897. Despite his torrid political engagements, his loyalty and service to the P&A, the L&N, and Pensacola never waivered.

Throughout the 1890s, the lumber and fishing industries continued to expand bringing large profits to mill and ship owners and providing two reliable industries upon which the city’s many laborers depended. The fishing industry experienced a few minor shifts by the mid 90s as commercial fleets expanded their ranges to meet growing demand, reaching as far as the Dry Tortugas to the East. Towards the West, a few companies started sending ships off the Campeche Banks and the Yucatan Peninsula to fish the large runs of snapper that swarmed in those waters. Because of the sheer volume of snapper and fish moving through the port, businessmen nicknamed the city “The Snapper Capital of the World.”\textsuperscript{180} Out of fears that the waters would be overfished, most of the leading merchants convinced the U.S. Fish Commission to hire Silas Sterns to conduct a marine census in order to determine the best methods of maintaining fish

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\textsuperscript{177} Chipley, \textit{This Pamphlet on Western Florida}, 14. \\
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 35, 49. \\
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., 51. \\
\textsuperscript{180} Pearce, \textit{Pensacola During the Civil War}, 240-241.
\end{flushleft}
populations along the Gulf for future commerce. The move marked one of the first steps at trying to encourage sustainable growth in almost any Florida industry.

Timber extraction also expanded rapidly throughout the decade, especially after the adoption of cross cut saws which had largely replaced axes by 1890. Along with lumbering, A.M. Moses and Company, the first rosin and turpentine company, set up operation in West Florida in 1895. The move marked the beginning of a gradual shift in which turpentine exports began to compete with timber extraction and lumber mills for West Florida’s natural resources. The largest changes in the woods marked the presence of large and middle-sized northern lumber mills that helped to fell the forests at a pace never before seen. Fifty new mill towns similar to those at Millview, Milano, and Bagdad sprang up across the interior, with most being owned by Northern operations. The largest were owned by Emory Fiske Skinner of New York, George W. and Rix Robinson, of Michigan, William S. and Albert T. Rosasco of Italy. To encourage growth, the L&N moved to promote and expand the cultivation of cotton on cutover lands. Through their efforts, cotton exports jumped dramatically, reaching 40,000 bales by 1896. With the expansion of commerce, the Chamber of Commerce and Young Men’s Business Association took up Chipley’s lobby for harbor improvement and helped secure $200,000 to deepen the channel to accommodate larger draft steel vessels.

Both groups also spearheaded a number of much needed improvements in the city throughout the 1890s. They helped establish the city’s first public water and sewage

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181 Silas Stearns, “Examination of the Fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.” (Bulletin V. 1885), 285-287.
183 Henry Clay Armstrong, Celia Myrover Robinson eds., History of Escambia County, FL. (St. Augustine, FL: The Record Co., 1930), 148-149.
185 Bowden, Simons, Johnson, Pensacola, Florida’s First Place City, 88.
187 Ibid., 5
systems. They also encouraged the promotion and expansion of the number of Volunteer Fire Companies. They began paving sandy streets through the business and residential neighborhoods. They also replaced the largely warped wooden sidewalks throughout the city and expanded many streets to create large thoroughfares.\(^{188}\) The L&N also worked on a variety of improvement projects, including the construction of grain elevators, a long time chamber goal, and also a large coal tipple. The L&N began constructing a local subdivision called Bohemia to offer cheap housing for railroad and dock employees. The L&N also started regular steamboat service out of Pensacola, offering a direct connection with Liverpool, England. The move was designed to increase tourist traffic through the port in the belief that West Florida offered untapped potential.\(^{189}\)

Although the L&N moved to pick up where Chipley left off in its promotion and development of Pensacola, a generational divide emerged the year after Chipley’s death, with younger progressives parting ways with their elders and with the L&N. Two men in particular, Frank L. Mayes and Chas H. Bliss, used their journals to promote the city while also pushing for progressive reforms. Bliss moved to Pensacola in 1895 from Kokomo, Indiana, where he was a schoolteacher and newspaper editor. Upon arrival in Pensacola, he began working as a newspaper reporter, then turned his sights upon publishing \textit{Bliss Magazine}, a literary, political, and promotional journal that focused upon the people, places, and events affecting Pensacola and West Florida. He later joined the Chamber of Commerce and launched his political career, becoming Mayor in 1905. Mayes took over the \textit{Pensacola Journal} in 1899 and began to set himself apart by attacking the older generation of boosters, city leaders, and the L&N Railroad for

\(^{188}\) Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce, \textit{Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce, 1889-1994}, 4
\(^{189}\) Ibid., 5.
allowing developers to steal the resources and wealth of the city without having left any significant development or positive impact upon the region outside of the immediate benefits to business operators.\textsuperscript{190} Mayes in particular detested the L&N, claiming that the railroad controlled both the city and West Florida, and that at times, the railroad suppressed wages by setting low salaries for its railroad and dock employees. He used his influence to try to counteract the power of the railroad, calling for municipal docks in the city, pushing the good roads movement, and promoting tourism to draw in new revenues and business ventures in the city.\textsuperscript{191} Calling themselves the “New Pensacola,” these two men would dominate Pensacola for the next decade.

Charles Bliss, in particular, became a strong force in the promotion of Pensacola using the very sleek \textit{Bliss Quarterly} to highlight the agricultural, industrial, and commercial advantages of the city while also promoting tourism and settlement to encourage new growth. He also used the magazine to discuss leading national topics, in particular labor issues, and on more than one occasion used the forum to call out social and political adversaries for differences of opinion. Bliss focused a great amount of attention on the harbor and port of the city, believing that the future rested with “El Commercial Americano” and the Nicaragua Canal.\textsuperscript{192} He argued that Chicago capitalists were already considering erecting steel mills and a ship building plant in Pensacola to construct 5,000 to 10,000 ton steamships and barges capable of navigating the canal and Pacific Ocean, and that the city should use the opportunity to expand its commercial base

\textsuperscript{191} Bowden, Simons, Johnson, \textit{Pensacola, Florida’s First Place City}, 93.
\textsuperscript{192} Chas H. Bliss, Ed., “Pensacola of Today: Illustrated and Copyrighted.” \textit{Bliss Quarterly}; Vol. II No. 3 (January 1897), 33.
by highlighting its many advantages over neighboring Mobile and New Orleans. Bliss started calling Pensacola the “Queen City on the Crown of the Gulf” to highlight not only the city’s preeminent status but also its outstanding location.

Not unlike his predecessors, Bliss believed that Pensacola’s success depended upon encouraging new growth and settlement. He continued to push the expansion of tobacco and stock raising, and he highlighted both cheap homestead and railroad lands providing an overview of what was available in each county of West Florida. In each of his journal’s issues, Bliss created a column for African American businessmen to highlight opportunities for black agrarian and wage labor as well as opportunities for black businesses. F.E. Washington and John Sunday repeatedly discussed the educational opportunities available for children and the positive social and business climate that Pensacola offered. The magazine served as one of the few forums in which black and white civic promotion coincided in Pensacola’s post Civil War development. Bliss’s actions most likely reflected his appreciation of the vibrant black business community that had developed in the city.

Pensacola had the highest rates of black property ownership in the South. Another journal editor, Matthew M. Lewey of the Florida Sentinel, organized the National Negro Business League in Pensacola to help encourage new black entrepreneurship. African Americans owned a significant amount of commercial real-estate, not only in Devilliers but also long Palafox, catering to black dockworkers and

194 Chas H. Bliss, Ed., Pensacola of Today, 61.
195 Chas H. Bliss, Port of Pensacola, 36-45.
196 Chas H. Bliss, Pensacola of Today, 133.
197 Ayers, Promise of the New South, 196-197.
longshoremen. Black businesses also featured a large number of middle class professionals, including physicians, lawyers, building contractors, masters of vessels, druggists, grocers, and undertakers.\(^{199}\) In 1900, it was estimated that black businessmen had invested over $50,000 in capital in Pensacola and held another $250,000 that sought new business ventures. When Booker T. Washington visited the city that year, he remarked on what a typical black business community could do when given the opportunity.\(^{200}\)

Beyond race, Bliss was also a big proponent and advocate for the needs of labor, but he always took a balanced perspective so as not to scare away prospective businesses.\(^{201}\) Outside of catering to southern agrarians and laborers, Bliss felt that Pensacola needed an infusion of Northern capital and energy to match the developments on the East Coast of Florida. In his narrative on tourism and the history of Pensacola, he discussed in great detail how William Panton had used the natural resources of West Florida to become “America’s First Millionaire.” He began highlighting yachting along the coast in order to attract a more affluent crowd. He also promoted bird dog hunting to entice upper class Northern sportsmen into the region. He then suggested that the city push its Mardi Gras festivities to draw tourists from East Florida and the Midwest and highlight the amenities and businesses that the city offered during the height of the season.\(^{202}\) In order to make Mardi Gras a unique and special event, he began to encourage


the Navy to bring its fleet into port and conduct drill exercises, which kept thousands of troops stationed in the city from December through February.

The Navy had largely reconsidered its position on the Navy Yard after the Spanish American War. Although Pensacola did not see the build up of troops that Jacksonville, Tampa, and Miami witnessed, the war drew the Navy’s attention to a need for a strong presence in the Gulf and Latin America, and it began increasing the appropriations and personnel for the Navy Yard in 1898. The corresponding expenditures had a positive effect upon Pensacola’s retail business and trade.\textsuperscript{203} During the three months at the height of the winter season, the presence of the entire North Atlantic Squadron rapidly transformed Pensacola’s harbor and business district.\textsuperscript{204} After the Navy completed its fall target practice training in Guantanamo Bay, the Navy chose to dock at Pensacola during its downtime, feeling that sailors were less likely to get into trouble in the city than in any other southern port. Sixty vessels ranging from cruisers to battleships would line up along the thirty-mile stretch of the bay. During the stay, locals and tourists would spend the days picnicking and perusing the bay while the boats conducted target practice in the Gulf, and each ship sent boatloads of officers and personnel into the city on leave. The highlight of each winter was the annual Mardi Gras parade in which “3,000 blue jackets from four or five flagships, with a band at the head of each ship,” marched in the parade, after which they were unleashed to enjoy the frivolity. The events proved to be a great boon to local business and trade.\textsuperscript{205}

\textsuperscript{203} Pearce, \textit{Pensacola During the Civil War}, 242.
\textsuperscript{204} Chamber of Commerce of Pensacola, \textit{Annual Report of Secretary}, 3.
\textsuperscript{205} Don McLellan, \textit{Fifty Years in Pensacola}, 20-21.
By the turn of the century, Pensacola’s population stood at 17,800, and by 1905, it would jump to over 25,000. Sixty-three percent of whites and eighty-three percent of African American settlers arrived from Alabama refugees from the cotton deflation which drove many from the market in the 1890s. Most found employment in the lumber industry or on the docks. Southern and Eastern Europeans, especially Greeks, Italians, and Scandinavians, made up the largest group of new foreign immigrants. The appearance of southern Europeans largely resulted from the work of two men, Constantine Apostolou Panagiotou and Albert Rosaco. Apostolou, latter Americanized as “Apostle,” encouraged a large Greek migration into Pensacola to work on snapper boats. Upon arrival, many Greeks opened restaurants, cafes, groceries, and fruit stands, owning over 33 retail fruit stores by 1903. Albert Rosaco arrived as a fishing chandler. He later bought a lumber mill, and desiring cheap labor, he went into partnership with his family opening a steamship line to Italy so that lumber could be taken to Italy and sold, and Italian workers and laborers could be brought to Pensacola to work in the mill when needed. Of the 1,370 new immigrants in 1900, 122 were from Italy. Scandinavians working the boats and German Jews also made up a large portion of the foreign population.

By 1900, Pensacola had grown into the largest port in Florida exporting $14,413,522.00 worth of products. This was nearly seven times the value of exports of

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209 Bowden, Iron Horses, 40.
the second largest port in the state. Fishing sales alone amounted to $5,000,000.\textsuperscript{211} Almost all the fishing being done by the turn of the century was now located off of the Yucatan Peninsula and the Campeche banks, as overfishing had decimated the snapper fisheries off the coast of Florida.\textsuperscript{212} Lumber remained the largest export and the largest employer in both Pensacola and West Florida. The largest lumber exports from Pensacola went to Germany and Great Brittan, and to meet increased demand, dock facilities expanded to encompass over ten different streets with docks located at the end of Perdido, Barcelona, Herron’s, Baylen, Palafox, Central, Commandancia, Tarragona, Sullivan and Muscogee.\textsuperscript{213} Along with the L&Ns railroad facilities, which also functioned as the repair shops for the entire L&N, these docks served as the economic engine from which Pensacola grew.\textsuperscript{214}

Between 1905 and 1911, Pensacola experienced a series of catastrophic economic shocks and natural disasters that physically leveled the city and largely crippled its economic foundations. The troubles began in July 1905 when a number of local families had gone to New Orleans to visit with family and friends. When they returned, Yellow Fever struck the Crescent City, and three Pensacolains contracted the disease by August. The news led to a mass exodus from the city, despite the fact that mosquitoes were now the known carriers of the disease. Mayor Bliss ordered the first wide scale fumigation of any city in the South and ordered all breeding grounds to be flushed out. In fear that infected persons would leave, armed guards surrounded and blocked all roads and a water patrol blocked the entrance of the harbor. By October, the fever continued to

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\textsuperscript{211} Chamber of Commerce of Pensacola, Annual Report of Secretary, 4.
\textsuperscript{212} McGovern, Emergence of Modern City, 25.
\textsuperscript{213} McLellan, Fifty Years in Pensacola, 12.
\end{flushright}
affect new citizens, and the State Board of Health sent an army of 100 men to fumigate the city and surrounding village. The measures largely worked, and by November the city recovered from its final battle with the plague that had haunted community leaders from its inception.\textsuperscript{215}

During the outbreak, a large fire swept through the Brent-Blount district of downtown on Halloween night, further crippling the commercial district.\textsuperscript{216} Although the business owners quickly rebuilt, a massive Hurricane followed a year later in September 1906 and completely leveled the business district. Heavy winds and rain whipped the fishing fleets in the bay, and then out of nowhere a massive tidal surge inundated the harbor and downtown along with the neighboring Navy Yard. The Naval hospital and almost all of the structures of the Naval Yard were completely washed away, causing millions of dollars in damages.\textsuperscript{217} Most of the buildings downtown were inundated, a number crumbled, and almost all lost their roofs.\textsuperscript{218} The storm flattened the majority of the buildings on Palafox from Garden to Romana.\textsuperscript{219} The most serious damage resulted to the snapper fleets, with almost every ship having sustained irreparable damage. When many of the fishing companies started to recover, the Mexican government outlawed fishing off of the Campeche coast in order to establish its own snapper industry. As the first boats headed to the Yucatan, the Mexican government started seizing vessels and arrested a number of crews beginning with Captain Giovanni Malfitano. Some boats

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\item \textsuperscript{215} Pearce, \textit{Torment of Pestilence}, 469-47.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce, \textit{Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce 1889-1994}, 11.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Pearce, \textit{U.S. Navy in Pensacola}, 118.
\item \textsuperscript{218} McGovern, \textit{Emergence of a City}, 25.
\item \textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 13.
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opted to take the risk, but the price of snapper shot up dramatically and the industry sank into a tailspin until the late teens, when fish populations stabilized and rebounded.\footnote{220}{William C. Hamilton, “The Warren Fish Company of Pensacola,” \textit{Pensacola History Illustrated: Vol. 4. No. 2} (Spring 1993), 7.}

While the city of Pensacola moved to rebuild, the economic downturn of 1907 proved to be devastating to the city’s black population. Combined with a slowdown in the fishing industry, a drop in sales for lumber forced wide scale layoffs that largely affected African American laborers. With massive black unemployment, a number of African American businesses quickly went under, and for the first time, the black population flat lined, reaching a high of 10,000 in 1905 where it remained until the mid twenties. At the same time, the white population doubled, reaching over 20,000 during the same period.\footnote{221}{Don H. Bragaw, “Status of Negroes in a Southern Port City” 283-284.}

Outside of the economic downturn, which drove many to search for employment elsewhere, race relations in the city and state deteriorated rapidly after the turn of the century. Beginning in 1905, the state passed a series of Jim Crow laws that moved to create a two-tiered economic and social system based upon race, passing laws against miscegenation, mandating segregation, and demanding disenfranchisement by 1907.\footnote{222}{Bragaw, “Status of Negroes in a Southern Port City,” 296.}

William Alexander Blount, the state Senator from Pensacola, moved to amend many of the measures, claiming that segregation would hurt businesses in particular railroad and streetcar service, but the laws were passed despite his objections.\footnote{223}{Muir, Jr. “William Alexander Blount: Defender of the Old South,” 469.}

When new Jim Crow ordinances were put in front of the city council later in 1905, the commission passed them, but the Mayor vetoed them. When constituents complained around the city, the commission overrode the mayor’s veto. After the Hurricane of 1906 when many businesses and homes began to rebuild, the city experienced its first case of
white flight with many middle class whites abandoning mixed neighborhoods for increasingly segregated suburban developments.\textsuperscript{224} As new construction took place downtown, black businesses near the docks that had catered to African American longshoremen were increasingly forced out.\textsuperscript{225} In 1905, the government forced Creoles to choose between being white and black for the first time. Those who could pass increasingly chose to be white for job security. Many moved into their own neighborhoods, and whenever their “whiteness” was questioned they became increasingly defensive, turning their cultural legacy into a reflection of the Spanish and French heritage of the city.\textsuperscript{226} The frustrations over racial tensions reached their peak between 1908 and 1909 when labor unrest resulted in open hostilities and violence throughout Pensacola and black and white streetcar workers went on strike for an increase in wages, shutting down public transportation in the city.

The ordeal began when the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees asked for a 2-cent wage increase to 20-cents an hour, arbitration in labor disputes, and a closed shop. When the company claimed an inability to pay, the union asked the Chamber of Commerce to help negotiate a settlement, but the Chamber proved unable to come to an agreement with the railway. By January 19th, the workers went on strike, and the company began looking for new laborers in Atlanta to fill their positions. At the same time, Pensacola’s Electric Company required all idled (laid off) workers to report to work three times a day in case they were needed. When they appealed to the mayor to ask the company to rescind the policy, the company refused to

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open any talks, and the next day, the entire labor force went on strike. Laborers sought arbitration, but the owner refused negotiations and fired all the workers. To try to settle the matter, the mayor demanded that the streetcar resume its runs, but the companies said that they would only do so with replacements. When new workers arrived from Atlanta and New York in April, the strikers boarded the streetcars and forced them back into their barns, then rioted, forcing scabs to flee to the jail for protection.\footnote{Wayne Flynt, “Pensacola Labor Problems and Political Radicalism.” \textit{F.H.Q}, Vol. 43. No. 4. (April 1965), 319.}

When the mayor requested assistance from Governor Broward, the Governor sent the state militia to set a curfew and maintain order. Such actions angered many of Pensacola’s 22 established unions, and almost all agreed to hold a labor rally in Seville Square on April 12th. The mayor offered the permit but was later forced to recant under pressure from Governor Broward, and the meeting was moved to the Opera House. Two thousand laborers both, black and white, filled the theater. With widespread community backing, union workers filled the streets to protect the rights of laborers. Their actions sparked the state to send more militia, much to the dismay of the Chamber of Commerce and City Commission. When the head of the state militia tried to negotiate an agreement with the Street Cars, the company refused any arbitration to bring the strike to a close. Angered by the rebuke, the commander pulled the militia out of the city, taking the troops back to Tallahassee. Strikers then became violent, hurling bricks and firecrackers into the railway cars. The Governor responded by deputizing local citizens.\footnote{Ibid., 320-323.} When a conductor was shot three times, the company demanded police protection, but 33 policemen resigned rather than help. The strike was only resolved after dynamite blew holes in the floors of the streetcars, causing a number of strikers to break ranks to halt the violence.
Union resentment punished the Democrats the following November, splitting the Democratic Party, with Populists and Socialists splintering from the ranks. The 1908 election saw the largest socialist vote in the state’s history, with Eugene Debbs receiving his greatest southern support from the state. Labor supporters overwhelmingly punished Governor Broward during the elections, voting against his senate bid. Frightened by the fracture in the party ranks, Democrats immediately turned to race bating, with the Pensacola Journal warning of the potential of “Negro domination” if the left wing of the Democratic Party continued to vote against the interest of the white man.\textsuperscript{229} The following year saw the first two black lynchings in Pensacola’s modern history.\textsuperscript{230} Although both actions were condemned by the City Council, African Americans no longer felt it was safe to stay, and the next year marked the beginning of a ten year exodus of African Americans as they headed North to escape the growing racial animosity and find steady employment. Unemployed whites from Florida and Alabama began filling vacated positions.\textsuperscript{231}

These social and economic collapses marked the most dramatic turnabouts for any of Florida’s major cities. Within less than five years, the strong multiracial community rooted in high wages and employment quickly succumbed to the economic downturn that systematically targeted African Americans and ethnic laborers by hiring unemployed whites to perform jobs that had been traditionally held by non-whites. With the collapse of the labor unions, the rise of black disenfranchisement, and the passage of Jim Crow laws, local blacks fled North in search of better opportunities. Immigrants from Georgia and Alabama helped stabilize the losses, but they took lower paid unskilled positions.

\textsuperscript{230} McGovern, Emergence of a Modern City, 67. Willis, Images in Black, 47.
\textsuperscript{231} Bragaw, “Status of Negroes in a Southern Port City,” 296.
Unable to funnel money into the local education system, the black community faltered while the white community continued to grow, though not at the rates seen in the 80s and 90s. West Florida failed to keep pace with the developments of East Florida, and many within the state looked at the region as Florida’s impoverished backwater. Later this economic gap led to West Florida being nicknamed “the Red Neck Riviera” because of its inability to draw settlers outside of the poorest sections of Alabama and Georgia. As its lumber and fishing diminished, much of Pensacola’s economy sank into depression. As the city was unable to develop new economies and industries to take the place of lumber and fishing, much of the region would not recover economically until World War II when federal expenditures brought new life to the region.

The period between the Civil War and the turn of the century marked a brief moment when the citizens of Pensacola strove to create a society that looked out for the general social and economic well being of its populace. What emerged was a city whose export economy exploded in the late 19th century swelling the population to the third largest in the state, only to have it plummet when its exports diminished and natural disasters undercut the entire infrastructure of the city in the 20th. When the economy collapsed, the unique though fragile multiracial community that had been forged during and after Reconstruction fell apart, giving way to the rise of Jim Crow laws that demanded a two-tiered social, economic, and political system that favored southern whites at the expense of all other racial and ethnic groups. Despite its collapse, Pensacola maintained and nurtured its unique legacy as a “Poor Man’s Paradise” among its southern neighbors who continued to flock to the city for social and economic opportunities.

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Chapter Four

Tampa: The Cigar City!

Following the Civil War, Tampa experienced a radical social and economic shift as a flood of new settlers and industries, in particular citrus, the railroads, and cigar manufacturing, moved to open up the region to a wide array of developments and productions. The capital and wages of these new arrivals quickly overtook and replaced the gold doubloons of the fiercely protective cattle industry as the primary currency for economic transactions, marking the beginnings of an economic, social, and political transformation for much of the region. Tampa’s new merchants and Board of Trade moved to create a diversified economy that would benefit the greater populace by attracting businesses that were equally concerned with the common good. Chief among the new industries was cigar manufacturing. Exiled from Cuba by the Spanish, manufacturers sought to create a new business model rooted in the principles of the Cuban Revolution that benefited not only management but labor as well. The rapid expansion of the industry helped create and foster a progressive business minded ethos that turned Tampa into the largest manufacturing center in the South and the most heterogeneous population of any southern city. With the rapid expansion of cigar manufacturing, Tampa emerged as a central shipping hub, and as the cigar industry grew so did Tampa. Cigar manufacturing and Tampa quickly became synonymous with one another, and for many new arrivals that meant good jobs, higher wages, and an expanding market in which to sell and ship commercial and agricultural productions. Within less than a decade, Tampa’s fate became uniquely intertwined with that of the cigar industry.
Starting in 1860, Florida’s cattlemen had become the sole inheritors of the largest frontier remaining East of the Mississippi. With fewer than two persons per square mile, the total population of South Florida stood at 7,077.1 spread over five counties, including Hillsborough, Manatee, Monroe, Brevard, and Dade. Hillsborough contained the largest population with 2,417 free and 564 enslaved inhabitants mostly centered around the tiny village of Tampa, which served as a trading post for the cowmen of the region and a small military garrison at nearby Fort Brooke.¹ Most of the cowmen and settlers arrived during the late thirties and early forties after the end of the second Seminole War. Many of these families moved as clans with one relative leading the way, followed by many in their immediate and extended families. Kinship served as an economic imperative for families who owned few if any slaves. These networks allowed family members to call on their kinsmen to help with construction; clearing land, handling and looking after cattle, and defending their homesteads against possible attacks. Since many of the cattle grazed on the open range between the homesteads of friends and relatives, raising scrub cattle proved to be a lucrative alternative to cotton and other cash crops for families who possessed few if any slaves. Settlers in Hillsborough County planted fewer than 100 acres of cash crops in 1860 and instead raised corn and sweet potatoes on over 3,500 acres of land. These crops required little labor and equipment and supplemented a diet of game, beef, and pork. Jacob Summerlin, “The King of the Crackers,” inherited twenty slaves valued at more than $1,000 each, but seeing no economic benefit for owing slaves in

raising cattle, he traded his slaves for 6,000 head of cattle spread between Orlando, Kissimmee, Tampa, and the Fort Myers region.²

Hillsborough County’s largest cattle rancher, William B. Hooker, owned large herds in North Florida before he moved to the area, following the opening of homesteads and larger grazing pastures on the Florida frontier. Hooker, like many early settlers, moved to Hillsborough and Tampa from Columbia County in North Florida in 1843 under the provisions of the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 designed to settle and populate the frontier. Hooker immediately built-up his cattle herd from 600 in 1846 to over 2,000 head of cattle as reported in the 1850 census. He described himself as a planter though he primarily raised stock.³ At the time, he was the second largest cattle owner in the state, but within the decade, his herds grew to be the largest in Florida, numbering 4,500 by 1855. Hooker’s cows grazed over five present day counties including Hillsborough, Manatee, Polk, Highlands, Glades, Hendry, and Charlotte Counties.⁴ While Hooker lived just outside of Tampa, it was possible to raise cattle in Florida without owning any land, and many squatters let their cattle roam freely until the fall, then gathered them to drive to market or sold them to a buyer getting ready to drive his own herds. Because of their robust nature, these cattle could be turned loose to forage for most of the year.⁵

⁴ Ibid., 17.
Starting in 1858, James McKay, a venture capitalist and sailor, purchased the steamship *Magnolia* and opened up direct trade with Cuba and the Caribbean islands. McKay, a Scottish immigrant, moved to Tampa from Mobile, Alabama, in 1846 with his wife, children, and mother-in-law, after pursuing his childhood love from Scotland to the United States. In Mobile, McKay engaged in shipping along the Gulf Coast, and seeing the promise of Tampa as a port, McKay moved his family and their slaves to the region. Upon arrival, he immediately began investing in real-estate and convinced the Morgan Steamship Company to run regular service between New Orleans and Havana with a stop in Tampa. McKay also bought his own schooner, the *Lindsey*, to spur commerce in the city. In the years preceding the Civil War, McKay became the middleman for many of the leading cattlemen of South Florida.” Within two years, the new market made rich men, not only of McKay but also of many of the leading cattlemen. Spanish gold and silver flooded through the region, and McKay’s monthly sales in cattle were estimated at $60,000 dollars. McKay purchased the cattle, then sold them ‘on the hoof” to the Spanish, who used many for bull fights. The Cubans and Spanish also preferred the gamey taste of Florida’s scrub cows whose diet gave the meat the flavor of venison and other wild game.

The trade became lucrative enough that James McKay purchased a second side-wheeler, *The Scottish Chief*, in July 1859 to keep up with demand and was also elected Mayor of Tampa. By 1860, 37,289 cattle roamed Hillsborough County, and the $108,165 that cattle bought in exports that year far surpassed the $13,500.25 brought from both

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cotton and sugar combined. The wealth of cowmen increased dramatically, and they became the wealthiest individuals in the region, owning 72% of the farmland and 92% of the livestock, though only 47% of the slaves. Cattle exports accounted for 64% of the total trade of Tampa. Through his wealth, McKay did much to promote the growth of the area, from founding the Loan Money Bank that supplied capital to farmers and businessmen to building a sawmill that provided construction materials for many of the new immigrants into the area.\(^9\) He also worked to try and secure the town’s first railroad in 1859 by helping to obtain finances for the proposed Florida Peninsular Railroad, though he was unable to raise all the funds necessary.\(^10\) Merchants in Tampa and cowmen in the backcountry of Hillsborough depended upon each other for their economic survival, and both groups used their positions to maintain a political balance claiming two seats each on the Hillsborough County Commission in 1860.\(^11\)

At the outset of the Civil War, many of Tampa’s and South Florida’s Union sympathizers and runaway slaves fled to Egmont Key until they could be transported to Union-held Key West.\(^12\) Most cattlemen and Crackers sided with the Confederacy though often acted in their own self-interest. In order to prevent federal raids upon their cattle, James McKay and W. B. Hooker established the Cattle Guard Battalion, more commonly known as the “Cow Calvary,” to protect herds destined for confederate troops. A wild band of settlers, soldiers, Indian fighters, ranchers, and cattlemen worked together to defend the herds from raids from Union troops, blockade runners, and deserters that

\(^12\) Karl H. Grismer, Tampa, a history of the city of Tampa and the Tampa Bay region of Florida. (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Print. Co., 1950), 139.
wandered the parries in search of fresh beef to feed themselves. McKay was also the head of the Fifth Commissary District and kept Confederate forces regularly supplied with beef and hides. Throughout the war, McKay’s cowmen drove over half a million cattle from South Florida to Georgia and beyond.\(^{13}\) Jacob Summerlin also held contracts with the Confederate government and sent about 600 cattle each week wherever they were needed by Confederate troops.\(^{14}\) Another leading cattleman of Tampa, John T. Lesley, formed the “Sunny South Guards” to patrol the Tampa Bay area. These men later formed Company “K” of the 4\(^{th}\) Florida Infantry Regiment and served throughout the South. Due to the large number of marauders and desserts that stalked the countryside during the war, Lesley returned to Florida in 1863 and joined the Cow Calvary forming Company “B” of the 1\(^{st}\) Battalion, Florida Special Calvary, known as the “sandpipers.”\(^{15}\)

A number of cattle owners were Union sympathizers; others were lukewarm rebels who did not trust Confederate money and preferred to hide their cattle.\(^{16}\) While supporting the Confederacy in name though not wanting to loose profits to what was deemed worthless Confederate dollars, many cattlemen moved their herds into the interior of the Everglades to hide them from both Confederate and Union raiders. With an eye upon the lucrative Cuban market, many within South Florida began blockade running and selling cattle in Havana and Nassau, then bringing back a wide variety of necessities from medicine and flour to powder and coffee, then selling them for exorbitant profits. Non-necessary items for confederate forces, in particular cotton, tobacco, and molasses,


\(^{14}\) Grismer, *The Story of Fort Myers*, 81-84.


\(^{16}\) Grismer, *A history of the city of Tampa and the Tampa Bay region*, 144.
also made their way through the blockade, as these items poured into South Florida from cash strapped planters hoping to make quick and lucrative profits in Havana and Nassau.

James McKay became one of the leading blockade-runners in the region. Sloops were loaded coming and going. McKay, who had never relinquished his British citizenship, flew the Union Jack above his ship in order to slip through the blockade largely undetected and unharassed. As the war drew to a close, McKay realized that Confederate dollars had largely become worthless, and he formed a partnership with James Summerlin in 1863 to run cattle through the blockade, where they were sold for $25 to $30 dollars each. Both men maneuvered themselves to dominate the Cuban cattle market for the next two decades.

Throughout the war, Tampa was largely abandoned by most of its citizenry as they fled to the interior of the state for food and shelter away from Union bombardment. Most of the businesses in town shut down. Federal troops shelled Tampa from Egmont Key three times during the war. Confederate forces maintained control over Tampa and Fort Brooke for most of the war until the town was occupied for a day late in the conflict. When troops finally arrived, they seized a large amount of property. When the war drew to a close, Tampa resembled a ghost town with half of the residents having fled to the countryside to live with relatives. Because of the dearth of food, many refused to return. Two cattlemen, William B. Henderson and Samuel Mitchell, supplied federal troops with beef and other necessities. Federal troops occupied Fort Brooke until

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17 Lambright, “Captain James McKay II,” 16.
18 Grismer, The Story of Fort Myers, 84.
20 Grismer, A history of the city of Tampa and the Tampa Bay region, 150.
21 Ibid., 151
1869. Most stores operated on a barter system exchanging goods for any necessitates that farmers could supply. After being pardoned, John T. Lesley built a sawmill on his property and supplied the area with lumber and helped the city rebuild.

Although local government was revived in 1866, Tampa like much of the region quickly fell into lawlessness, with an influx of deserters and renegades making their way into South Florida to escape their former lives. Roaming bands of men wandered the countryside foraging crops and cutting timber to sell illegally. The Swamps and Everglades served as cover for a wide array of criminals and illicit activities and a whole host of thieves and robbers. The citizens of Tampa and Hillsborough formed the City Watch after the war to try and bring a sense of stability, but a yellow fever outbreak in 1867 further depopulated the city, leaving hogs running wild and grass growing in the streets. Violence wreaked havoc across South Florida.

In spite of the lawlessness and drop in population, newly freed slaves readily made their way into Tampa from regional plantations after the war. Sixty of these new arrivals helped form the Watchman’s Club to look out for the welfare of new freedmen. Two companies of black troops were stationed at Fort Brooke after the war, and the Freedmen’s Bureau established courts in the area to help Union sympathizers recover property, though records indicate no money was recovered. Sarah Howell, a white plantation owner, worked with her former slaves along with freedmen from neighboring

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23 Grismer, Tampa, a history of the city of Tampa and the Tampa Bay region, 150-152.
25 Akerman, Florida Cowman, 71-72.
26 James W. Covington, The mayors of Tampa: a brief administrative history. (Tampa, Fla.: Social Science Division, University of Tampa, 1987), 16. Bane, Tampa, yesterday, today & tomorrow, 26.
28 Grismer, A history of the city of Tampa and the Tampa Bay region, 155.
plantations to assist them in attaining government lands for themselves. After the war, she offered land, homes, and equipment to her former slaves to raise food.

With the assistance of her two sons, Henry and Thomas, she helped 11 families to get government homesteads founding Howell’s Creek in 1866. This settlement later became known as Bealsville in 1923, named after Alfred Beal, one of the early black settlers. Many of the residents began farming and selling their produce in the city, and in 1868, the new inhabitants formed Antioch Baptist Church. Freedmen also established Freedtown and Possum Trot outside of Tampa to avoid being placed into labor camps for vagrancy. Clusters of rural blacks also resided in the communities of Cork, Crawford’s Mill, and Taylor’s School House. Many of Tampa’s black inhabitants readily found employment after the war. Black women took positions as domestics while black men filled the low skilled jobs of the community. Henry Brurick found success as a women’s shoemaker, while Lawrence Masters became an esteemed carpenter, and at the age of 37 in 1870, acquired over 1,500 acres of land.

Because of the scarcity of labor, racial violence remained suppressed in much of the region. In 1867, an army officer from Fort Brooke reported that the number of freedmen were so few that they had no difficulty in getting on well. In a letter, he wrote, “The freedmen are doing well. There is plenty of employment. Laborers receive from $25 to $30 dollars per month or when hired by the day $1.50 per day. Farm hands have also done well, corn, cane, and potatoes will yield a fair average crop.” Because most whites focused upon livestock before and after the war, black farmers found a unique

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29 Canter Brown, African Americans on the Tampa Bay Frontier. (Tampa: Tampa Bay History Center, 1997), 43.
30 Pizzo, Tampa the Treasure City. (Tulsa Ok: Continental Heritage Press, 1983), 72.
31 Brown, African Americans on the Tampa Bay Frontier, 47.
niche growing staple crops and vegetables that allowed them to achieve a modicum of economic success during Reconstruction. They quickly surpassed their white neighbors in the “quality and quantity of agricultural products produced.” Their economic success in turn allowed many of the burgeoning black communities to develop their own schools and meeting houses by the mid 1870s.32

Freedmen also became politically active in Hillsborough County during Reconstruction. On May 16th, 1868, freedmen formed the Black Democratic Club of Tampa.33 In the same year, Cyrus Charles and Mills Holloman became county commissioners and held those seats until 1871. Robert Johnson and John Thomas followed, taking their seats as commissioners from 1871 to 1873. Frederick D. Newberry served as the Justice of the Peace from 1868 to 1869, and for two years, freedmen served as the majority of the panel for the commission.34

The success of African Americans in Hillsborough County was not reflected throughout the region of Southwest Florida. In 1869, vigilante groups called Regulators wreaked havoc on African American communities along the frontier. While race certainly played a factor, settlement and fear of the loss of the open range also contributed to the lawlessness throughout the frontier region. Widespread squatting and wandering vagabonds after the war contributed to the chaos. In Manatee County, Regulators whipped and assaulted John Lowman twice and killed James Cooper and William Lewis. In Polk County, Nathaniel Read and Jim Pernell were both lynched. Neighboring Hernando County developed a reputation for violence against freedmen. After Reconstruction, Arthur W. St. Clair, a former county commissioner, was gunned down.

32 Brown, African Americans on the Tampa Bay Frontier, 50.
34 Brown, African Americans on the Tampa Bay Frontier, 57.
south of Brooksville along with Henry Lloyd, who rushed to his aide. The fury of the
countryside pushed many black families into Hillsborough County and Tampa. Polk
county’s black population dropped from 482 to 122 of which many moved to Tampa.\footnote{Brown, \textit{African Americans on the Tampa Bay Frontier}, 58-59. Larry River and Canter Brown, “African Americans in South Florida: A Home and a Haven” \textit{Tequesta} Vol. 1 No. 56 (1996), 5.}

It would be wrong to paint either Hillsborough or Tampa as a paragon of
acceptance during this period as the KKK was formed in the county in 1868.
Hillsborough’s black population also saw only a small measure of growth from 1860 to
1870 increasing from 839 to 854 with a number of freedmen moving to Key West after
the war; though it should be noted that Polk County was also carved out of Hillsborough
after the war.\footnote{Brown, \textit{African Americans on the Tampa Bay Frontier}, 45.} The city did offer a measure of racial fluidity during the period as
William Ashley, the first city clerk of Tampa, lived openly with his formerly enslaved
mistress. Both were buried in the same grave, and the tombstone erected in 1878 reads,
“to commemorate their fidelity to each other. Here lies Wm. Ashley and Nancy Ashley,
Master and servant. Faithful to each other in that relation in life, in death they are not
separated [sic].”\footnote{Pizzo, “Gleanings of Black Life,” 33.} While the number of interracial relationships that existed on the
frontier of Florida is unknown, blacks and whites shared many intimate connections in
their daily lives. Freedmen observed a number of common cultural celebrations with their
white neighbors throughout the frontier. The most prominent celebration was May Day,
which blacks and whites marked with pageants and ring tournaments.\footnote{Ibid., 30.}

To buy almost any necessity, settlers across the region made their way by boat to
Tampa as it served as the merchandising center for all of South West Florida. Tampa
served as the only port for most steamboats below Cedar Key, making it the major
economic center for the region for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the early years of Reconstruction, this economic exchange served as the only livelihood for the small population of Tampa that remained. Yellow fever outbreaks in 1867 and again in 1871 along with military occupation kept most settlers at a distance. Although city government was reorganized in 1866, the inability of most settlers to pay property taxes, the exodus of most of the population, and a fear of a black-led Reconstruction government in the city, as well as a widespread economic recession across the region, convinced the townsmen to disband the government. John T. Lesley ran on the ticket for Mayor to dissolve the government in 1869, and after being elected, Lesley along with members of the town council refused to hold meetings, and in October of that year they revoked the town charter.\textsuperscript{39} Tampa remained without a town government until 1873, leaving much of the governance and improvement of the city in the hands of individuals. Although Tampa’s population decreased during this period, Hillsborough County saw a substantial increase in population from 2,981 in 1860 to 3,216 in 1870, though if Polk County’s population was also included the actual population increase was 6,385.\textsuperscript{40}

Most of the newcomers who arrived after the war came from the North and settled under the Homestead Act. Most had money and planted citrus groves across the area as indicative of the Northern Republican zeal to populate Florida with its band of loyal citrus farmers. General W. P. Hazen arrived from Ohio and established the largest orange grove in South West Florida on Lake Thonotosasa. Few people in the region raised any of the major cash crops such as cotton or cane, and cattlemen continued to make up the

\textsuperscript{40} Grismer, \textit{Tampa, a history of the city of Tampa and the Tampa Bay region of Florida}, 153.
brunt of the populace. While a general economic malaise plagued the region until the early 1870s, the fortunes for most of the cattlemen of Tampa and Southwest Florida rapidly changed beginning in 1868. During that year, Cuban Rebels launched a ten-year insurrection against the Spanish, taking control over much of the countryside, in particular the grazing lands of the island.

In order to supply their troops with food, the Spanish turned to Florida for their immediate needs in beef. The increase in wartime demands by Spanish troops flooded the remotest sections of South West Florida with gold doubloons, spreading the wealth among even the most meager of cowmen. While the feelings of most South Floridians towards the Cuban insurrection are unknown, at least one Tampan, Captain Joseph Fry of the S.S. Virginius, a former blockade runner, transported guns and over 300 rebels to the island to fight against the Spanish after the Civil War. On November 7, 1873, the Spanish captured his boat, and he along with 53 freedom fighters were executed before a firing squad in Santiago de Cuba. For most cowmen, the wave of Spanish gold sweeping across Florida allowed them to remain indifferent to the Cuban revolutionary cause.

To keep up with the initial demand, a number of merchants and cowmen formed partnerships to ship cattle to Cuba. Captain McKay revived his shipments beginning in 1866, first chartering the Gov. Marvin from the Morgan steamship company, then purchasing the Southern Star in October of that year. McKay’s former partner Jacob Summerlin went into business with Captain F.A. Hendry in the fall of 1866 when they purchased the steamer Emily and began shipping cattle from Manatee in December. Realizing the economic benefits of shipping from Punta Rassa near Fort Myers, the men

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41 Grismer, *Tampa, a history of the city of Tampa.*” 161-162.
moved their operations and herds further South, and Summerlin became the largest cattle shipper in the state.\textsuperscript{43}

John T. Lesley formed a partnership with merchant William B. Henderson in 1869, purchasing cattle from across the state to ship to Havana.\textsuperscript{44} Ziba King also established a profitable cattle-shipping business.\textsuperscript{45} The Spanish sent agents to the region, paying a gold doubloon worth $15.60 American dollars for every steer driven to the shipping point, and half as much for every cow sent to Havana by cattlemen. Captain McKay monopolized the cattle industry in the Tampa Bay region, having developed a fleet of schooners and steamers including the \textit{Valley City}, \textit{Lindsey}, \textit{T.J. Cochran}, \textit{Ella Knight}, and \textit{Southern Star}. He received $23.40 for every head of cattle shipped to Havana. When he died in 1876, his son, Captain James McKay, Jr., took control of his fleet and also became a major political and economic force in Tampa. From 1868 to 1878, 165,668 cattle were shipped to Cuba from Florida, and in return, $2,441,864 worth of gold brought new life to the region, providing capital for new ventures and funneling money into new avenues of trade and economic development.\textsuperscript{46} One historian described this unique economic situation as yeoman agriculturalism supported by village mercantilism, though certainly the opposite also rings true for Tampa during this time.\textsuperscript{47}

By the 1870s, the cattle trade was bringing in enough money to capture the attention of many of the leading promoters of the state. J.S. Adam’s \textit{The Florida Colonist} discussed cattle ranching as a lucrative economic possibility for Northern settlers.

\textsuperscript{43} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 158-159.
\textsuperscript{44} Ivey, “John T. Lesley,” 14.
\textsuperscript{46} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 153-159.
Although he mainly focused upon sugar cane and citriculture, he also discussed the lives of cattle drivers and their families, describing them as “an all absorbing business” necessitating a migratory lifestyle for most of the cattlemen and a degree of alienation for women with distances of 30 to 40 miles between each homestead.\(^48\) The state immigrant guide which borrowed heavily from Adam’s *Colonist* claimed, “the raising of cattle upon the plains and prairies of this portion of the State is a profitable business.”\(^49\) Attempting to spur northern interest in cattle ranching, the work suggested, “a northern man of the most radical views is perfectly safe in traveling through any portion of Southern Florida. The people have no real love for the North as a section; but they will treat Northern men with respect and courtesy, and will encourage them to settle.”\(^50\) George Washington Olney’s *Guide to Florida* attempted to spark northern business interest by describing the cattle barons in Manatee County who owned over 100,000 cattle with little land as they wandered the open range across the prairies and glades of South West Florida.\(^51\)

Of course, older settlers captured and blocked anyone from entering into the cattle business outside of their immediate friends and relatives. Most Northerners were probably also swayed by much of the negative publicity surrounding South Florida. As a writer for the New York Herald stated, “I am confident no sane man who knows what Florida is would give a thousand dollars to gain possession of all the territory beyond the St. Johns. No decent man would think of living in the state outside of two or three points

\(^{48}\) J.S. Adams, *The Florida colonist, or settler's guide Answers to the question. "Where in Florida shall we locate?* (Jacksonville, Fla.: J.S. Adams, 1870), 57.


\(^{50}\) Florida Improvement Co, *Florida: Its climate, soil, and productions*, 128.

On a hunting expedition through South Florida in 1875, Frederick Trench Townsend warned, “I know of few places more unpleasant to travel than over these Florida prairies, where the head and body are scorched by the sun, and legs tore by the sharp teeth of the saw palmetto.” Townsend also cautioned that, “All houses in South Florida swarm with fleas to an extent which makes existence almost impossible, and sleep to the sufferer impossible. Cockroaches, tarantulas, ants, and other bugs were nearly as numerous in the houses as the fleas, all of which plagues might be gotten rid of by daily use of soap and water. The only meat ever seen, except what our guns provided, was tough bacon, which was served thrice a day, at breakfast, dinner, and supper.”

Describing a meeting with native “Cracker” cowmen, Townsend reproached their appearance proclaiming “we were overtaken by a party of three Florida Crackers armed with rifle and revolver, as rough a looking lot as one might well meet, followed by two half-bred hounds as savage looking as their masters. These Florida Crackers are a class of men only met with in the wilds, who from various causes, avoid civilization and live by the rifle.” Similar descriptions were more than enough to keep would be settlers away from South Florida. While Townsend’s words hold a ring of truth about the lawlessness of the area, his portrayal of “Cracker” Cattlemen at the height of the gold rush reflects a strict belief in subsistence by many “Cracker” cowmen. Even with their wealth, most Crackers chose to live with only what they needed. When describing Jacob Summerlin in 1873, one report proclaimed, “Here in this dessert-like place, in that ugly old building, with the bare necessities of life around him, lives one of the richest men in Florida, who

53 Frederick Trench Townshend, Wild Life in Florida. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1875), 52.
54 Townshend, Wild Life in Florida, 56.
55 Ibid., 53-54.
could if he wanted to, live in princely style anywhere in the state. He was proud of his early hardships and dangers, but he dresses, lives, and trades as a poor man, but he gives to the poor and defends the cause of the fatherless against the land shark as only a rich man can. He was noted as saying ‘I am nothing under the sun but a native born sun baked old Florida cracker, and I don’t try to ape the quality’.”

Although subsistence for men like Jacob Summerlin was a choice, the ups and downs of the market and the vast change of fortune for many after the Civil War most likely prompted most of these nouveau riche “Cracker” cattlemen to save rather than spend. Displays of wealth also served little purpose for men whose lives revolved around rounding up and driving cattle to the nearest port twice a year.

Cattle ranching made many of the early ranchers and cattlemen rich, and for a select few, they made a vast fortune from their operations. The profits of the cattle business were enough to bring the Seminoles out of the glades as Chief Chitco began selling surplus flocks in Punta Rasa and Fort Myers, though the tribe continued to keep its distance from the larger white community fearing government agents who arrived in the late 1870s discussing removal to western reservations. With the influx of Seminole cattle, Jacob Summerlin made extensive profits from shipping their cattle out of Punta Rassa. He held a monopoly on shipping from the area until 1870 and made extensive profits by using government built pens and wharfs to hold his cattle and move them to port.

Fishing along the coast also emerged as a lucrative business during the 1870s due to increased Spanish needs and demands. Mullet served as the backbone of the fishing

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56 Akerman, Florida Cowman, 108.
58 Grismer, The Story of Fort Myers, 86.
industry bringing in $150,000 annually. The fishermen from Tampa held a monopoly over the Spanish market taking fresh catches to the port in Havana. Because of the steady trade, few fishermen salted or cured fish for the Northern market, though increasingly immigration guides from the time period encouraged Northern boats to make their way off the coast of Florida to take advantage of growing Northern demands for fish, in particular Red Snapper. Travel guides from the early 70s described the waters surrounding Tampa Bay as teeming with fish of enormous varieties and in numbers so large as to impede the passage of boats.\(^5\) In the area surrounding modern day Sarasota, fishermen established a fish oil and fertilizer plant. Unmarketable fish were squeezed and pressed of their oil to be sold as a health supplement, while their remains were packed in cedar bins on Siesta Key where they were left to rot and turned into fertilizer that was then sold to local farmers or transported by boat to Cedar Key and sold in markets in North Florida.\(^6\) With increased revenues from fishing and cattle across the region, these two industries provided the economic surge for postwar growth in South Florida.

By 1873, Tampa started to return to life with new streams of revenue pouring into the city, and in the summer of that year, the citizens decided to reestablish the municipal government. In order to reclaim the city from neglect, citizens were required to cut grass and work on the streets by filling in washed out trenches and re-grading overgrown roads. The city passed ordinances forcing owners to lock up livestock and keep pigs, goats, and chickens from roaming the streets. Most of these new measures were funded with licensing fees for hostelries, professionals, and vehicles.\(^6\) In order to establish a regular

source of outside communication, Tampa founded its own telegraph company after the companies in Fort Meade and Punta Rasa refused to extend their lines and service. 62 Tampa and several other communities also established lucrative lumber and saw-mill operations. 63 In particular, old growth cedar was harvested for pencil wood and exported to England and France. 64

The citizens of Tampa along with the leaders of Hillsborough and Polk Counties also tried to get a rail connection during the early seventies. With the backing of Governor Reed and the legislature, cattlemen Francis A. Hendry and John A. Henderson developed plans to build a railway from Gainesville directly to Tampa, while Hillsborough and Polk Counties formed the Tampa & South Florida Rail Road Company to extend from Mellonville on the St. Johns to Tampa. Neither group was able to move the idea from the planning stage because the Vose Injunction locked up land grants from Florida’s Internal Improvement Fund undercutting investments within the railroads. 65

Despite not getting a rail line, Tampa experienced a small rebirth during the seventies and established two local newspapers, one Democratic and the other Republican with each issued weekly. Two mail routes, one by sea through New Orleans and Cedar Keys and the other by stagecoach via Gainesville, connected citizens with the

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62 Grismer, Tampa, 164.
65 Brown, “Tampa and the Coming of the Railroad,” 21. The Vose Injunction was a lawsuit that blocked the state from issuing or selling any state lands from the Internal Improvement Fund until the state settled or caught up payments on its debts with Francis Vose.
outside world.⁶⁶ These changes reflected a steady shift in the population with an ever-creeping flow of Northern white immigration. By the end of the decade, 10% of Tampa’s 442 whites were from the North, though 90 percent of the population of the city remained Southern born, with 78 percent of the white population being native Floridians and the majority of the others immigrating from Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina respectively.⁶⁷ These statistics rang true for most of Southwest Florida.

Cattlemen regularly took advantage of the public domain and benefited from not having to pay property taxes on the lands which they used. With the arrival of Northern settlers, many cattlemen quickly learned the value of private ownership and began using their money to invest in surrounding real-estate, hoping to take advantage of the northern immigration by snapping up the lands closet to Tampa and surrounding communities. John T. Lesley, former state legislature for Hillsborough County as well as a cowman, invested heavily in Hillsborough, real-estate becoming the largest landowner in the county. When the lands included in Fort Brooke returned to public domain in 1877, he purchased most of the property for $1.25 an acre.⁶⁸ At the same time, he along with fellow cattlemen fought raising the property tax mileage rate and guarded against any attempts at limiting the public domain, encouraging new farmers to fence in their crops.

In order to induce new immigration, Dr. John Perry Wall, Mayor of Tampa from 1878 to 1880, attempted to increase Maritime trade to bring new business into the city. With the Spanish suppression of the Cuban Revolution in 1878, the demand and price of cattle dropped rapidly in Southwest Florida from $15 dollars a head to less than $10, and

Tampa’s businessmen moved to try and make up the loss of revenues flowing into the city. The influx of new settlers and homesteaders helped offset some of the economic losses by opening up new trade into the interior and back country. Because of the lack of steamers and rail connection, Tampa continued to serve as the center of trade for the entire southern portion of the peninsula. Trade for those families who subsisted upon farming was almost completely local.

The lack of railroads and direct connection with northern markets made it difficult for citrus farming to take hold throughout South Florida during these early years despite great success at growing most subtropical fruits there. These drawbacks kept Tampa as little more than a small mercantile outpost on the edge of the frontier throughout the seventies. As one early pioneer recalled of Tampa’s small size during the decade, “If we ever wanted to dance, we stood on the corner and hollered. The town was so small that a dance crier had no difficulty, whatever, in inviting the crowd in this way.”

While Tampa and southwest Florida grew during the 1870s, the immigration to the area was no match for what was taking place in the northern half of the peninsula. Many of the immigrants also chose not to file homestead claims for various reasons, and as new homesteaders arrived into the region, this created a predicament that threatened to turn Southwestern Florida into a powder keg of lawlessness and violence over claim disputes, property ownership, and the open range.

Many of these issues came to a head at the beginning of the 1880s when Hamilton Disston purchased 4 million acres in southwest Florida for $1 million dollars. More than any event in the history of the region, the Disston purchase marked the beginning of the

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social, political, and ecological transformation of the region from one of subsistent farmers and cattlemen living off the land to one of capitalist farmers, businessmen, and developers seeking to transform the land to reap greater and greater profits from their economic investments. This is not to say that the original inhabitants were opposed to economic development, but the events forced almost all settlers to become immediately aware of and involved in the politics of land development for their own economic survival. Particularly affected were cattlemen who depended upon the open range for their livelihood, farmers who could no longer purchase neighboring land from the state as it had been granted as part of a larger corporate contact, and squatters whose homesteads were being challenged by new corporate lawyers and entities that held claim over the lands upon which they had been living.

Certainly, these were not the original intentions of Hamilton Disston when he came to Florida on a fishing expedition in 1877. But when Governor Bloxham used his clout to convince Disston to purchase 4 million acres for $1 million dollars and the promise of more acreage upon the drainage of the Everglades, Disston directed most of his will and money at making his investment pay for itself.72 Upon the completion of negotiations in 1881, Disston along with his partnership company, The Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Company, became the largest landowners in the United States, and they immediately pursued varied means of economic production, growth, and development in order to see returns upon not only the original million dollars

invested but later, thousands more encumbered in seeing the development and drainage of the region.73

As part of his original purchase, Disston did not receive an undivided four-million-acre parcel of land, but instead bought a patchwork of unsold lands throughout the southern portion of the peninsula. As an example, in the area of what would become St. Petersburg in Pinellas County, Disston received over 150,000 acres, and as a result, he and the Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Company held the title to almost all the unsold lands on the peninsula. The company immediately raised the price on almost all the lands from less than a dollar per acre to over $2 dollars per acre.74 On many of the lands bordering the Everglades, the company raised the price to $1.25 an acre and up, sparking outrage throughout southern Florida among settlers and would be homesteaders alike. Besides receiving the major share of lands on the peninsula, Disston’s company also received most of the highlands in the original purchase, leaving only swamp and overflowed lands for would-be homesteaders in the region, and most of the remaining state lands were fragmented into unconnected parcels because of the purchase. At the outset of the purchase, settlers and cattlemen both claimed that they would have purchased the lands if they had been offered for as little as $25 cents an acre, and while there was discussion of overturning Bloxham’s agreement, there was little that the settlers could do, as Bloxham was not only the Governor but also the head of the Internal Improvement Fund.75

74 Grismer, The story of St. Petersburg, 49.
Almost immediately surveyors and lawyers moved to map out the ownership of the land and to remove squatters from their properties in order to guarantee that the company held clear claim over most of their lands. In the area of what would later become Sarasota, settlers and squatters formed an alliance against surveyors and refused to cooperate with any land developers that would lay claim to the region. As in the case of Pinellas County, Disston and other land developers who followed took over 90 percent of the state lands that constitute modern day Sarasota County, amounting to 296,064 acres of the current 328,960 that make up the area. Disston and his associates hoped to sell tracts of land along the water to speculators, but as long as the lands were in dispute, most would be buyers were unwilling to start negotiations for the lands. As a result, lawyers sent in surveyors to map out the lands in order to start ouster proceedings for squatters. A number of early pioneers quickly lost their claims to the land, and 17 early pioneers then formed a group known as the Vigilantes or the Vigilance Committee to block all efforts by land developers to survey the region. Jason L. Alford became the leader of the group after bogus charges of theft had been levied against him because he held the claim to two large tracts of land that speculators desired but were unable to get because he had purchased them legally from the state.

Upon their first meeting, the group agreed that none would cooperate or trust any outside entities in the region. When land surveyors began coming around and telling settlers to get out, holding documents showing exactly where there boundary lines were, the vigilantes knew that they had been betrayed by someone close to them. When they discovered that Harrison T. Tip Riley, an early settler, and Charles E. Abbe, the

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77 Ibid., 83.
postmaster, were cooperating with land developers for money, they agreed that both men should die. Riley was shot from his horse, and upon seeing that the man was not dead, the perpetrators hacked at his throat until he bled to death. Charles E. Abbe was shot while gathering kelp along the seafront to use as fertilizer in his orange grove. The sheriff then organized a posse of 26 men sympathetic to the land developers and rounded up 19 of the Vigilantes. Because of the growing wide scale interest in the region, the trials were covered by newspapers across the country. Not wanting the activities of the land speculators to become public due to their close ties with Governor Bloxham, almost all of the men had their sentences commuted while two of the other conspirators were allowed to escape rather than have any of the states large land deals questioned or tainted. These land deals essentially nullified the Homestead Act and halted individual colonization of the region by deeding over most of the lands to large conglomerate land holders. As an example, the Florida and Mortgage and Investment Co. attained over 50,000 acres of land during these early land deals and eventually formed the town of Sarasota.

For Hamilton Disston and the Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Company, these early land deals provided the monies necessary to meet their contractual payments with the state government while also beginning the process of canal dredging and Everglades drainage within 60 days of the original agreement. Disston and his associates had paid the original $500,000 in cash, but unable to meet the next payment of $500,000 due in December of 1881, he was forced to sell half of his four million acres to Sir Edward J. Reed of England for the remaining $500,000. Disston and the company still owned 2 million acres of the original land and held the contract for all

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78 Grismer, *The story of Sarasota*, 84. 87.
79 Ibid., 91.
the swamp and overflowed lands throughout the region. In turn, Reed had already formed a partnership with Dutch investors of whom the most prominent was Dr. Jacobus Wirtheimer. They also immediately established plans to advertise and plat colonies throughout South Florida. These agreements aroused the ire of many poor farmers, cattlemen, and settlers who lost out to large foreign corporations. The Sunland Tribune of Tampa became a vocal opponent to the deals, as editor J.B. Wall feared Disston would select the best lands in Hillsborough County, curtail the settlement of the region, and convince railroads to bypass the city for lack of population. Despite the opposition, these early land deals provided the capital to finance further development of the region by Disston and his land company.

Disston established his headquarters at Kissimmee and began dredging canals from Lake Tohopekaliga to Lake Kissimmee and the Kissimmee River to lower the waters of submerged lands in central Florida. Canals were dredged between many of the large lakes down towards Lake Okeechobee, forever changing the ecological make-up of the entire region. When the upper half of the canal project was completed, the water levels of the lakes plummeted, being lowered by eight feet and seven feet on two separate occasions. These actions immediately opened up several hundred thousand acres of land for development that had previously been covered by water. In order to take advantage of these new muck lands, Disston established a 200,000-acre sugar plantation to demonstrate the viability and profitability of growing sugar in the region. Sugar was

81 Whitney, Whitney’s Florida Pathfinder, 34.
82 Ralph Julian, Dixie; or, Southern scenes and sketches. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1896), 199.
84 Harner, Florida's Promoters: The Men Who Made It Big, 17.
selling for .10 cents a pound at the time, and there was little competition, as most of the sugar fields in Cuba remained untilled from the late insurrection. Later a sugar tariff protected his burgeoning industry. Disston also deeded 40 acres to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop an agricultural experiment station to study “muckland agronomy” and the commercial viability of farming in the region. To work on his canals and drainage projects, Disston recruited Italians to perform much of the labor.

The upside of the Disston purchase for many setters in South Florida was that Disston’s projects pumped money and capital into the region at the same time when the cattle trade had collapsed with Cuba. With glowing accounts of his drainage projects, a number of new settlers moved into the region from as far away as England and Australia. Disston made the Fort Myers region the headquarters of his southern drainage project. He brought in Captain J. Fred Menge from New Orleans to oversee the operations, and built the dredge in Cedar Key then shipped it down to Fort Myers to work its way up the Caloosahatchee River to Lake Okeechobee. When the canal was completed between Lake Hicopchee and Lake Okeechobee in 1883, Disston established a regular steamboat operation between Kissimmee and Fort Myers. Eventually, Disston operated over 12 steamboats between the varying lakes and rivers of South Florida. He formed the Kissimmee, Okeechobee, and Gulf Stream Navigation Company to oversee the operations of his new venture.

The section which benefited most from Diston’s early land deals and developments was the area of “Western Hillsborough” County across the Bay from Tampa along the peninsula that encompassed what later became Pinellas County. Distton’s efforts to develop and create a winter resort in the region led to the formation of the two largest communities on the peninsula, St. Petersburg and Tarpon Springs. Disston first visited the area in December of 1882 to examine the lands included in his purchase. He hired James Hope, the son of Sam Hope, the U.S. Deputy Surveyor, and one of the earliest pioneers of the Anclote River. Disston arrived with friends via Cedar Keys, and upon landing on the peninsula and traversing the many Bayous, they became enthralled with the area of Spring Bayou, a large circular clear and deep basin that emptied into a series of Bayous before joining the Anclote river and flowing down to the Gulf of Mexico. Disston founded the Lake Butler Vila Company at Spring Bayou, and by 1883 he had laid out the grounds for what would become Tarpon Springs and had built the Tropical Hotel in hopes of attracting wealthy visitors.90

Disston also turned his interests further south along the Pinellas Peninsula.91 Distton decided to develop a community on his lands bordering the shores of Boga Ciega Bay, and he named his development Disston City, forming the Disston City Land Company to advertise the city and oversee real-estate sales.92 Disston hired many of the pioneers and early settlers of the peninsula to work on his developments, providing some of the first “cash money” jobs of the region. He also created an extensive advertising campaign, placing ads in Northern and British newspapers describing the healthful climate of the area, and through these promotions, he sold five-acre tracts to Northern and

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90 Grismer, The story of St. Petersburg, 50.
91 Ibid., 39.
92 Ibid., 53.
English colonists who began to populate the peninsula.93 Many of these sales were based upon an understanding that a rail line would eventually reach his port, and Disston began to make arrangements to establish a railway.

Disston formed a partnership with Peter A. Demens (Piotr Alexewitch Dementief), a Russian Nobleman and captain of the Imperial Guard who moved to Florida after fleeing the Romanoff regime in Russia. Demens was a professed liberal who disagreed with the politics of the Czarists, and following a series of bombings; Demens fled a crackdown to exterminate Revolutionaries in the early 80s. Upon his arrival in Florida, he built a sawmill in Longwood, Florida, just south of the town of Sanford. After joining a cousin who owned an Orange Grove, Demens searched for cheap land, which he found through Sanford’s Florida Land and Colonization Company. Demens’ sawmill supplied railroad ties for the Orange Belt Railway worth $9,400, but when the company was unable to pay him, Demens made arrangements to take over the charter for the Orange Belt Railway, and he extended the line to Oakland, Florida, where he ran out of money.94

On December 1st 1886, Disston offered Demens one-fourth of all his lands from all his companies within six miles of the railway and one-half of all the town sites that he controlled along the proposed rail route stretching from central Florida to the Gulf of Mexico to help Demens raise money to extend his line. Demens convinced New York investors, in particular Walter Gillett of Griswold & Gillett, to help sell over $700,000 in railroad bonds, arguing that the railroad could build the only real harbor along the Gulf in South Florida, for which the railway would be the sole benefactor of all merchandise

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94 Ibid., 57-59.
moving into and out of the region. Demens originally intended to establish the railroad
port at Mullet Key, but Disston rejected that idea by insisting that the railroad terminus be
on Pinellas Peninsula where most of his lands were located. Demens eventually chose the
area of St. Petersburg because it had 18 feet of water, and he was able to purchase 500
acres of land. When Demens finished building the railway, he constructed a $10,000
dollar hotel for St. Petersburg, half of which he paid for himself and the other half of
which was paid for by the Orange Belt Improvement Company. The railway failed to
bring in the freight that he had originally expected, and within a year, the Orange Belt
Railway owed more than 900,000 to the H.O. Armour Co. They forced Demens to sell to
a syndicate for $25,500. The company formed the St. Petersburg & Land Development
Co. and secured the deeds to all the Orange Belt lands in order to dispose of the
properties and make up for their losses.

The railroad also failed to be the great bastion that Disston expected it to be. By
not insisting that the railroad terminate in Disston City, Disston’s development suffered
heavily while St. Petersburg grew. Disston failed to draw the crowds that he had
expected, and most new settlers were enticed by lands closer to the railway terminus. As
part of a humanitarian gesture and in an attempt to establish a small colony, Disston
offered 40 acres of land to fifty different Jewish families who had been displaced by the
Russian pogroms of the 1880s and left stranded in Philadelphia. In another last ditch
effort, he changed the name of Disston City to Veteran’s City in hopes of attracting Civil
War Veterans to the region, touting the healthfulness of the climate for older veterans, but

96 Ibid., 68-69.
the community failed to attract new settlement and was quickly surpassed in population and growth by neighboring St. Petersburg.\footnote{June Hurley, “Bicentennial Flashback: Swamps Became Eden.” \textit{Tampa Tribune}, August 23, 1976.}

Although Disston’s developments in Western Hillsborough failed to meet his expectations, his work in the area prompted many in Tampa to take notice. In particular, Tampa’s citizens believed that Disston’s steamboat operations along the Caloosahatchee and the creation of a port and railway in Pinellas signaled the end of their economic hold over most of South Florida. Fears in Tampa grew rapidly in 1886 after W.A. Belcher, a local state congressman, introduced and passed a bill through the Florida House of Representatives to create Pinellas County from Hillsborough. Joseph B. Wall, former Judge for Tampa, and state senator for the area, rejected the idea and momentarily managed to kill the bill in the upper legislature.\footnote{Donald J. Ivey, "A Little Insignificant County:“ An Early Pioneer’s View of the Proposal to Separate Pinellas from Hillsborough County in 1887.” \textit{Sunland Tribune: Journal of the Tampa Historical Society}. Vol. XXV. (1999), 19-21.} The situation in Tampa looked grim enough that when Abbie M. Brooks arrived in 1883, she came upon a town experiencing an economic downturn with the collapse of the Cuban cattle trade and the closure of the military reservation at Fort Brooke. She described “the merchants as anxious appearing as though that wanted somebody to come and make a purchase, while hotel-keepers are wishing for a few guests which they can relieve of three dollars periderm.”\footnote{Abbie Brooks, \textit{Petals Plucked from Sunny Climes}. (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Pub., 1883), 289.} Tampa lacked any strong economic or social direction during the late seventies and early eighties, as the city developed a reputation for moral perversion and violence. Gunfights were common, and feuds between leading citizens grew as economic conditions worsened. Known for its gambling, whiskey, and prostitution houses, the town frequently
attracted men and women looking for an escape from frontier life.\textsuperscript{101}

Beginning in 1883, Tampa’s business leaders moved to reestablish its moral and economic image. The City Council passed ordinances prohibiting “Lewd Houses or Houses of Ill Fame” by fining business owners $50 to $500 for each offense cited. The council also attempted to control drifters and alcoholics moving in and out of the community by decreeing that “any loafing person, who likely can become a nuisance, can be tried and if the mayor is satisfied he is a nuisance, can be taken into custody and put to work on the streets of the town.”\textsuperscript{102} The city also ordered the construction of wooden sidewalks, and because of the trash and disrepair of the streets, the council directed that any person convicted of violating town ordinances should be required to work for the public good cleaning streets and roadways rather than paying fines. Street and property owners were also advised to clear any and all debris bordering their properties.

Within a year, Tampa’s new business mentality had attracted the First National Bank of Tampa and three new hotels to the area. John T. Lesley also used his position in the Florida State Senate in 1883 to block legislation to regulate tariffs on the railroad, and steamboat industry in hopes of spurring railroad development into South Florida, highlighting Tampa’s pro-business mentality to developers and businessmen.\textsuperscript{103} Within the year, railroad baron Henry Plant would switch the southerly route of his South Florida Railroad from Cedar Key to Tampa and begin pushing his railroad towards the city as its new southern terminus. Lesley donated some of his own property and land to the Plant Investment Company to create a right of way for the railroad into the city. It should be


\textsuperscript{102} Covington, “Tampa, Florida: 1882-1887 The Five Years that Changed a Town into a City,” 18-19.

\textsuperscript{103} Ivey, “John T. Lesley,” 18.
noted that Lesley owned 3,553 acres in Hillsborough County whose values were likely to increase with the arrival of the railroad. He was also the founder and developer of the Hillsborough County Real-Estate Agency and used his monies to develop over a half a dozen subdivisions in Tampa.  

Henry Plant’s ultimate decision to terminate his railroad in Tampa resulted from a series of events that transpired between 1882 and 1883, which convinced Plant to move the railroad terminus from Cedar Key further south to Tampa. After seeing the land grants offered to Hamilton Disston, Plant became convinced of the profitability of railroad development within Florida and formed the Plant Investment Company in 1882 to oversee his investments in both Florida and the South.  

The Plant Investment Company was a collection of businessmen that Plant used to help finance and oversee his operations. As his chief railroad developer once noted, “It is Mr. Plant and his friends who have money to invest. When it is decided to do a certain thing, build a piece of railroad for instance, they figure out what each is to pay and they send in their checks for that amount. They have no bonds, no indebtedness, and no interest to pay.”  

Included among the investors were Henry Flagler, William Walters, and Benjamin Newcomer, Morris K. Jessup, Lorenzo Blackstone, and Henry Sanford. Plant was a Connecticut businessman who made his name as the head of the Adams Express Company and later owner of the Southern Express Company. 

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After Florida relieved its state debts and began offering liberal land grants, Plant increasingly saw his future economic success in Florida. Like his contemporary and business partner, Henry Flagler, Plant envisioned a land, railroad, hotel, and shipping empire that stretched across the state giving his company access to not only the natural bounty and wealth of Florida but also Cuba and Latin America. Upon the completion of his railroad to North Florida and steamboat operations along the St. Johns, Plant recognized the need for a terminus along the Gulf, and in 1881 he purchased the Live Oak, Tampa, & Charlotte Harbor Railroad Company which he extended to Gainesville. Fearing that Florida would be overbuilt, he made an agreement with the Southern Florida Railway that he would not extend the L.O.T&C.H.R further south if they did not expand their railway north of Gainesville. He also acquired controlling interest in the Florida Transit & Peninsular Railroad where he intended to expand the rail line to Cedar Key and make the city the railroad and steamboat terminus of western and central Florida.  

In 1883, Plant changed his plans to build at Cedar Key and decided to extend his railroad to Tampa, based upon a series of economic decisions that convinced him that Tampa was a more profitable location for his future business interests. Plant visited Tampa during 1883 while the government was dredging the Hillsborough River and discovered phosphate. Although the findings were not published for the public until 1888-1889, Plant along with other corporations, in particular the Ashley Phosphate Company of Charleston, S.C., immediately purchased the right of way to lands rich in phosphates along Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, Braiden Creek, and Terra Ceia Bay. Along with this new info, Plant desired larger land grants for his railroad construction

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and believed that a railway to Tampa offered more lucrative land grants, so after meeting with James E. Ingraham, the President of the South Florida Railroad, he was convinced to buy controlling interest in the South Florida Railway.\textsuperscript{110} He was not completely satisfied with the land subsidies promised to the South Florida Railroad which only offered 3,840 acres of state lands for every mile of track completed, and he preferred the charter of the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West railroad, which promised 10,000 acres per mile completed plus alternative sections within six miles of each side of the track, totaling 13,840 acres per mile.\textsuperscript{111}

In May of 1883, Plant made an arrangement with the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Company, which was running out of money, by agreeing to provide them with the capital to build the railroad to Palatka and Sanford if they gave him all rights to the railroads and lands that he built out of Tampa to connect with the northern branch of the railroad. In turn, the state also allowed him to extend the South Florida Railroad to Tampa based upon the J.T. & K.W. railroad charter, which provided an additional 10,000 acres of land for the South Florida Railroad Company for each mile they laid. In June of 1883, Tampa’s town council revoked an earlier right of way charter negotiated with the J.T. & K.W. and offered a similar one to the Plant Investment Company. Tampa’s town council leased the lower ends of Polk, Zack, and Twig streets with all riparian right to the railroad for $30 a year for five years and gave it an option to renew the lease indefinitely on the same terms. The company also purchased land needed for passenger and freight depots, paying “handsome prices.”\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{111} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 172.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 173.
Upon the completion of the deal, Plant had less than six months to finish his line from Tampa to Kissimmee in order to receive the land grants promised by the state. Plant relied upon Henry S. Haines to oversee the construction of the railroad. Crews were hired on either end of the railway to begin construction towards each other. On June 16th, a crew of 168 truck laborers started grading the road from Tampa while others were contracted in Kissimmee. The railroad required thousands of cross ties, and Haines hired a number of logging operations to meet his needs and brought in a number of new mills to help cut timber. Most of the logging camps operated from dawn to dusk. Every mule, ox, and wagon within 100 miles was bought or leased to help speed the operations. The influx of new workers caused a small economic boom throughout Central and South Florida as both farmers and cattlemen sold all of their produce and cattle to construction crews with most cattle being butchered on the spot. Haines ultimately hired over 1,600 men from both the North and South to work on laying the rails and cross ties. Towns along the railroad route sprang up and grew into thriving trading centers including Winter Have, Lake Alfred, Auburndale, Haines City, Lakeland, and Plant City.

On December 10th, 1883, the first trains pulled out of Tampa to Plant City though the railway remained incomplete between Plant City and Auburndale. Finally, on January 23, 1884, 48 hours before state subsidies were set to expire, the last spike was driven at Carter’s Mill, five miles east of Lakeland. Tampans went wild and celebrations commenced at the Orange Grove Hotel and lasted well into the next day. The *Suniland*

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*Tribune* reported, “The echoes had hardly died away when from every street and alley, every doorway and window, and from the four winds came a mass of humanity to gaze at the monsters of the rails. Townspeople were delirious at Henry Plant’s boast that he would turn the ‘sand heap’ of Tampa’s main street ‘into the Champs-Elysees (and) the Hillsborough into the Seine.’"118 The first through train left Tampa the next morning, and by February 13th, regular passenger service had been established. Before the completion of the railroad, the journey required a long steamboat ride from Cedar Key or a seven day journey from the St. Johns River to Tampa. When completed, passengers could make the journey from the St. Johns to Tampa from four to six hours.119

For his achievement, the Internal Improvement Fund granted Plant and the Plant Investment Company 2.7 million acres of state lands. Plant then renamed his Florida railroads the Orange Belt Route, and established a real-estate division of the Plant System at Sanford to advertise the company’s holdings.120 At Sanford, maps, guides, and transportation were made available to sell sites. Prices were determined based upon its distance from the nearest rail station, along with lakefront, lake view, and fertility, timber, and drainage. Land could be purchased with one quarter down payment and a three-year mortgage with 8% fixed interest.121 The Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railroad was completed to Palatka in March of 1884, though the journey still required steamboat connection on Plant’s People’s Line of steamers between Sanford and Palatka. In August of 1885, Tampa received its first direct rail connections when the South

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118 Brown, “Tampa and the Coming of the Railroad,” 19.
Florida completed its tract from Lakeland to Pemberton Ferry on the Withlacoochee River upon which it connected to the Florida Southern giving direct connection to Jacksonville via Palatka, Gainesville, and Ocala.

When the J.T.&K.W. was completed to Sanford, Plant purchased the railway outright and widened all of his tracks from three foot narrow to four foot eight inches to create one large trunk line through the center of the state and the first through service in Florida.\(^{122}\) James Ingraham convinced Plant to take over the Sanford and Indian River Railroad to give the Plant System dominion over the interior and southern half of the state.\(^{123}\) Advertisements released in 1885 described the new South Florida Railroad running through “the very hart of orange country” to Tampa and offering connections via Morgan Steamships with Havana, Key West, and New Orleans.\(^{124}\) Within the year, Plant purchased his own steamboat, the *Mascotte*, and established a Plant Line of steamers offering connections to Tampa, Key West, and Havana. He also organized steamers on the Chattahoochee, the Flint, and the Apalachicola rivers to guarantee a steady flow of freight upon his rails. Offices for the Southern Express Company were built in Tampa to integrate all of his businesses.\(^{125}\)

By the end of 1884, the city had established its second telegraph connection, and locals put up the capital to form the first street railway company outfitted with locally made passenger cars.\(^{126}\) The population of Tampa jumped dramatically, increasing from 722 in 1880 to 2,376 in 1885. The presence of so many new arrivals spurred the

\(^{122}\) Grismer, *Tampa*, 173-175.


construction of three new hotels including the H.B. Plant, the St. James, and the Palmetto.\textsuperscript{127} Tampa opened its first ice factory in 1884, and with it, a fleet of new commercial fishing boats operated by John Savarese, O.J. Safford, & Son, and J.R. Elkington & Co. who shipped their catch North by rail. The price of land in the city quickly skyrocketed from $10 an acre to over $250.\textsuperscript{128} Farmers poured into the region, and in Plant City, strawberries quickly emerged as a cash crop as they could be rapidly transported throughout the East.\textsuperscript{129} Within the first eighteen months of the opening of the railroad, over 45,000 new settlers arrived in South Florida.\textsuperscript{130} With all the new excitement, Tampa established its Board of Trade in May of 1885 with over 60 members including retail storeowners, lawyers, and other professionals.\textsuperscript{131}

Tampa’s Board of Trade quickly emerged as one of the driving forces for the development of the city, helping to sponsor a volunteer fire department, waterworks, paved streets, and the expansion of new trade and industries. Of its members, John T. Lesley proved to be the most influential, helping to incorporate both the streetcar railway and the waterworks. He also served on the board of directors for The First National Bank incorporated in 1886 and helped form the Tampa Electric Company completed in 1887. His greatest influence was the creation and incorporation of the town of Fort Brooke from his consolidated lands in 1886. From this parcel, he sold the original 16 blocks of his “Lesley Subdivision” for the development of Ybor City, a planned cigar-manufacturing

\textsuperscript{127} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 178-179.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 180-181.
\textsuperscript{129} Covington, “Tampa, Florida, 1882-1887,” 17.
\textsuperscript{130} James Ingraham, “Sketch of the Life of Henry Plant.” \textit{Why I Like Florida}, Florida Department of Agriculture, (St. Augustine, Fla.: Record Co., 1923), 121.
town on the outskirts of Tampa. The establishment of Ybor City marked one of three major developments between 1885 and 1888 that transformed Tampa into one of Florida’s leading urban meccas.

In 1885, Gavino Guiterrez, a Spanish businessman and trader from New York, visited Tampa seeking a location to establish Guava production facilities in the United States. While on his visit, Gutierrez did not find an area flourishing with Guavas, but he observed that the climate and humidity were similar to those of Havana, Cuba, and thought that it would make an excellent location for tobacco factories, so he made a survey of Tampa’s surroundings, mapping out possible locations for a manufacturing community. He then returned to New York and discussed the possibilities of cigar productions in Tampa with several friends, including Vicente Martinez Ybor, Ignacio Haya, Edward Manrara, and Serafin Sanchez, all of whom owned cigar-manufacturing operations in Key West or New York. Many of these cigar operators moved to the United States and Key West in particular between 1868 and 1878 as political refugees due to the first Cuban Insurrection while others relocated due to the exorbitant tariff of 40.3 percent placed upon finished goods during and after the Civil War.

Each of the men had considered leaving Key West for a number of years. After the Cuban insurrection failed, many disillusioned Cuban workers turned their hopes for independence to immediate needs for higher wages forming militant labor unions throughout Key West. Strikes and work stoppages plagued the cigar factories all over the

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133 South Publishing Company, Florida Portrayed, 39.
135 Grismer, Tampa, 182.
city.\textsuperscript{137} Because of the disruptions, Vicente Martinez Ybor increasingly desired to relocate from the city considering Pensacola, Mobile, and Galveston as possible viable locations.\textsuperscript{138} Upon hearing of the ideal conditions in Tampa, Sanchez went there to meet with the Board of Trade, receiving an enthusiastic reception. The \textit{Tampa Tribune} stated that the “benefits that the cigar industry would have on Tampa cannot be too deeply impressed on our citizens.”\textsuperscript{139}

Following the glowing reception, Vicente Ybor also visited Tampa. During his trip, John T. Lesley offered to sell Ybor 40 acres for $9,000, but Ybor was only willing to pay $5,000 for the lands due to the amount of work required to improve them.\textsuperscript{140} Lesley refused to lower the price, and fearing that negotiations might fall through, Colonel William Henderson and John P. Wall (both leaders within the Board of Trade) held an emergency meeting and convinced fellow members to subsidize the remaining $4,000 dollars.\textsuperscript{141} In return, Ybor agreed to purchase the 40 acre tract from Lesley plus an additional 30 acre adjoining tract from S.P. Haddon. He platted and began building the town of Ybor on October, 8, 1885. Ybor established a commitment to create a community of manufactures that provided a positive living and working environment in hopes of undercutting labor dissatisfaction and unrest.\textsuperscript{142} Ignacio Haya and Sanchez purchased land adjacent to Ybors and began construction of their own factory.\textsuperscript{143}

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\item[138] Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 182.
\item[140] Mormino, \textit{The Immigrant World of Ybor City}, 64.
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By the beginning of 1886, cigars were rolling out of three different factories, including those of Ybor, Sanchez & Haya, and Pendas & Co. To attract cigar makers to the largely undeveloped Ybor City, Ybor offered inexpensive homes to any employee of a cigar factory, something largely unattainable in either Havana or Key West. To draw in more cigar factories into the city, he enticed them with both free land and fancy buildings. Ybor typically offered a free ten-year lease on the land and a new factory built to company specifications. In turn, companies agreed to a fixed annual quota of cigars and agreed to provide jobs for a fixed number of laborers who would theoretically rent or buy homes in the city.\footnote{Mormino, \textit{The immigrant World of Ybor City}, 66-67.} Under these terms, cigar makers poured into the city, with Cubans forming the largest contingent of workers, followed by Italians seeking refuge from Disston’s sugar cane plantation in St. Cloud, and also Spanish cigar makers seeking refuge from the mis-governance of the Spanish authority.\footnote{Harner, \textit{A pictorial history of Ybor City}, 14.} A devastating fire in Key West on March 30th 1886 destroyed a number of manufacturers and encouraged many of those businesses to relocate to Ybor City.\footnote{Mormino, \textit{The immigrant World of Ybor City}, 67.} 3,000 more settlers quickly arrived from Key West and Havana in 1886. Finding the conditions primitive compared to what they were accustomed to, Vicente Ybor and Eduardo Manrara established the Ybor City Land Development Company to improve conditions.\footnote{Steffy, \textit{The Cuban immigrants of Tampa}, 8-9.} Malaria plagued new arrivals, and Ybor established La Iguala (The Equal), a worker-subsidized Health Care and Insurance program for laborers and their families.\footnote{Westfall, \textit{“The Evolution and Development of Ybor City,”} 19.}
Because of the demand for real-estate, businessmen soon found that money could be doubled in six months by the wise buying of property. During 1886, the first 40-room three-story hotel, The Almeria, was opened in Ybor City by Howell T. Lykes, a cattleman from Brooksville, showing the growing interest in the emerging city on the part of a wide array of South Florida investors. Along with a plethora of stores, restaurants, and commercial establishments catering to the needs of a burgeoning Latin clientele, more than 200 homes were built by the end of 1886, along with wooden sidewalks laid and hundreds of shade trees planted along the streets and avenue of the city. In the same year, Emilio Pons and Monne Brothers established new factories and a variety of subsidiary industries opened to meet cigar manufacturers needs, including cigar box plants and label manufactures. The birth and steady growth of Ybor City slowly transformed Tampa from a community rooted in “yeomen self-sufficiency” to one dependent upon manufacturing wages to support new economic growth. Cigar money generated capital for a wide array of new developments. Of considerable importance, factory workers spent considerable wages on passenger traffic for Plant’s railroad and steamships as they visited family in Key West, Havana, and New Orleans.

Henry Plant’s Port Tampa and the Tampa Bay Hotel also helped build the economic foundations for Tampa’s new growth. Upon the arrival of his railroad in Tampa, Henry Plant immediately made plans to develop a commercial port in Tampa Bay. Although the Plant Investment Company continued to extend its railroad down to Charlotte Harbor, Plant intended Tampa to serve as its overseas commercial hub to Latin

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151 Steffy, *The Cuban immigrants of Tampa*, 12.
152 Mormino, *The immigrant World of Ybor City*, 55.
America. To the dismay of Tampa’s residents, Plant chose not to locate his port facilities at the city’s harbor and docks, but instead opted for an area known as Black Point on Old Tampa Bay about nine miles away to create what he called Port Tampa. In 1886, the Army Corps of Engineers made plans to dredge the Hillsborough River and harbor at Tampa to allow for larger draft vessels to dock within the city, but their study found that the cost would be exorbitant. Henry Plant then used his connections to get the federal government to pay for the deepening of his facilities at Port Tampa, giving his railway a monopoly over most of the heavy water traffic moving in and out of Tampa.

Since his growing steamship fleet including the Mascotte, Olivette, Jamaaca, Juanita, Naugatuck, and Margaret also serviced the port and his railroads dominated the interior of the state, Plant completely controlled shipping throughout much of South Florida for over a decade.

Plant and the Board of Trade declared Tampa an official port of entry in 1887 in light of the large imports it received from Cuba and the West Indies, and a customs house was established. At Black Point, Plant built a large wharf nearly a mile long and extensive warehouses and offices. A connector rail with the South Florida Railroad was constructed and completed in February of 1888, and the rails were extended out onto the wharf and docks, allowing them to directly load and unload 26 vessels from shipside at any given time. In 1888, the steamboat operation of the Plant System were moved to the port from Hillsborough Bay, and the Mascotte and Olivette began moving people and

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153 Turner, The Plant System of railroads, steamships and hotels, 41.
cargo in and out of the port.\textsuperscript{158} Plant bought extensive acreage surrounding the port and built a community there, selling houses and property to railroad, steamship, and port workers who lived and worked for his companies. \textsuperscript{159} Plant also laid the foundations for Port Tampa Inn, a two-story hotel built over the bay at the end of his wharf was designed to house guests of his steamship operations. He also created an amusement resort called Picnic Island to the South of his port facilities to offer excursions to guests staying at his hotel. The island opened to the public with yacht races on July 4, 1888.\textsuperscript{160}

In 1888, Plant also announced plans to establish an extensive and lavish hotel in Tampa proper along the Hillsborough River with construction costs estimated to reach 2 million dollars. Citizens first rejected the idea of Plant building a hotel, believing that Tampa already possessed enough hostelries, but they eventually acquiesced in the face of the economic downturn. When town leaders struck an agreement with Plant, most understood that he planned to build his hotel within the city limits along the Hillsborough River. To their dismay, Plant had architect J.A. Wood purchase land on the opposite bank of the Hillsborough, fearing that the price would be escalated if he or one of his officials attempted to make the purchase.\textsuperscript{161} Although many of the Board of Trade felt that Plant acted underhandedly, there was little that they could do. Plant purchased what was known as the Hayden Orange Grove that bordered his Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railroad and extended to Lafayette Street downtown. He bought a total of 60 acres for

\textsuperscript{158} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 186.
\textsuperscript{160} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 186-187.
\textsuperscript{161} James W. Covington, “The Tampa Bay Hotel.” \textit{Tequesta} No. 26 (1966), 3-5.
more than $40,000 from Hayden and his daughter, Mrs. Nattie S. McKay. The purchase gave Plant the option to build a rail line directly to his hotel to deliver passengers.\textsuperscript{162}

Plant then convinced the City of Tampa to construct a wooden bridge across Lafayette Street to connect his hotel to the business district at public expense. Despite objections, they bought the property necessary for the extension and built a wooden drawbridge costing $15,000 with the cost split between the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County. He then delayed construction, fearing that taxes from the city would be too high, so he refused to build until the city agreed that his taxes would not exceed $200 a year. Once again, the city council agreed to Plant’s demands.\textsuperscript{163} Within weeks, architect, J.A. Wood laid out the grounds for the hotel covering over 16 acres on the properties bordering the river and overlooking the city. The first cornerstone for the hotel was laid July 26, 1888, and two hundred people crossed the river to witness the event.\textsuperscript{164} Playing upon the Victorian penchant for the exotic and fanciful, Plant and Wood designed a Moorish and Arabesque building that surpassed the pen and brush strokes of the most whimsical artist.\textsuperscript{165}

When completed, the main building was 500 feet long, 150 foot wide, and varied from four to six stories tall. With the solarium and dining room, the building offered a continuous walk of 1,200 feet with a walk around the outside being exactly one mile. The exterior walls were made of a dark Atlanta red brick with buff brick arches and stone dressings. Each of the cornices were made of stone and iron and supported with steel columns creating a largely fireproof building. All of the cornices formed 135 foot towers

\textsuperscript{163} Covington, “The Tampa Bay Hotel,” 6-7.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{165} Smyth, The life of Henry Bradley Plant, 184, 192.
capped with onion domes and gilt crescents. 13 domes and minarets topped the hotel symbolizing a complete lunar year.\footnote{Helen K Ingram, Tourists' and settlers' guide to Florida. (Jacksonville: Da Costa, 1895), 94.} Two larger towers of 250 feet height also capped by large crescents and domes formed in the center of the structure marking the main entry. The main entrances were “through three pairs of double doors, flanked by sixteen polished granite columns, supporting Moorish arches, over which balconies open from the gallery around the rotunda to the second floor. The principal staircase is of stone, and the horseshoe arch and the crescent and the star meet the eye at every turn with the electric lights in the dining-hall, the music-hall, the drawing room, the reception-room, the reading-room, and the office being arranged after these patterns.”\footnote{Smyth, The Life of Henry Bradley Plant, 185-188.}

In order to create his wonderland, Plant employed hundreds of skilled craftsmen, landscapers, bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, painters, and plasterers. The weekly construction payrolls ran into the thousands, and employees spent most of their pay in the shops and stores of Tampa’s merchants. From 1888 when construction started to 1891 when the hotel was completed, Tampa boomed with prosperity.\footnote{Grismer, Tampa, 187.} Thousands of laborers toiled day and night on the Tampa Bay Hotel. Five hundred mechanics worked around the clock to install pipes and plumbing while an army of electricians also wired much of the hotel.\footnote{North, “The Building of the New Tampa Bay Hotel,” 19-21.} Plant offered workers $1.25 per day for workers at both, Port Tampa and the Tampa Bay Hotel. Many of his new employees were craftsmen from Italy in particular Sicily whose economy stagnated under Spanish rule.\footnote{Anthony Pizzo, The Italians in Tampa, 3.} Over two thousand African Americans also worked for Plant, in particular among the shipyards and docks at Port Tampa, though many also served as laborers on the
Tampa Bay Hotel. Higher wages offered in Tampa allowed a burgeoning black middle class to buy homes, educate their children, and build other businesses.\textsuperscript{171} Central Avenue emerged as the central African American residential and businesses district.\textsuperscript{172} Tampa increasingly served as a haven for more and more rural African Americans as sporadic bursts of racism and violence threatened whole communities in the interior of Florida.\textsuperscript{173} While the fear of violence pushed many blacks into the cities, higher wages and employment opportunities served as an even greater draw.\textsuperscript{174}

Not all African Americans received the benefits of working at Plant’s railroads, as many women served as domestics, men and children served as baggage carriers, and hard labor regulated the lives of almost everyone in the countryside. But thrift and savings remained a dominant force within both the black and white communities. During the trip to Florida, Travel writer Iza Hardy remarked that “our colored brethren are often much better off than we can imagine, judging by appearances. Our chambermaid, an old woman with a good-nature, …was the proprietress of three cottages, and besides the rent of these, she and her husband possessed between them a sum of three thousand dollars in the bank.”\textsuperscript{175} African Americans also continued to vote and hold political and social positions throughout the 1880s with Joseph A. Walker being elected to the town council in 1887.\textsuperscript{176} Four African Americans also served as policemen, and Levin Armwood

\begin{footnotes}
\item[171] Smyth, \textit{The life of Henry Bradley Plant}, 42.
\item[173] Iza Duffus Hardy, \textit{Oranges and Alligators: Sketches of South Florida Life}. (London: Ward and Downey, 1886), 111.
\item[174] Hardy, \textit{Oranges and Alligators}, 100.
\item[175] Ibid., 101.
\end{footnotes}
became an acting deputy sheriff.\textsuperscript{177} After 1889, the passage of the state poll tax largely undercut African American political ambitions, and Tampa’s black community responded by forging their own economic and social institutions.

For Tampa’s and South Florida’s white community, the late 1880s saw a steady stream of immigration from both the North and South. As the lands of the St. Johns began to fill up with orange and citrus growers, many slowly made their way into the various communities of central and South Florida. In particular, the winter of 1884-85 spurred the first wave of growers to Tampa. Lands bordering the railroads in central and South Florida spurred migration into the region as they tapped into the citriculture craze sweeping North Florida. Hillsborough County’s orchards quickly developed into the fifth most valuable, behind those in north and central Florida.\textsuperscript{178} The railroads and the merchants of Tampa held an active interest in seeing the lands of the interior of the state settled in order to increase the volume of freight and merchandise moving to and from the area. In order to increase passenger traffic along its rail lines, the Plant Investment Company established vestibule trains with Pullman Palace cars in 1888 allowing passengers to travel directly from New York to Tampa. Plant also personally represented Florida, Tampa, and the South Florida Railroad at the Paris Exposition in 1889, displaying a wide array of products grown in Florida; this marked the first international exhibit of the state.\textsuperscript{179}

Public announcement of the discovery of phosphate in 1889 spurred the largest wave of new migrants and prospectors looking to strike it rich with mineral claims. The

speculation swept many of the mineral regions of the South from 1887-1892.\(^{180}\) Despite the fact that the largest of the phosphate discoveries had been made and kept secret in 1881, interested prospectors knew little of these earlier discoveries. The mineral rush of 1889 began when a German settler, Albertus Vogt, discovered a large phosphate bed while digging on his property in Dunellon. When news hit the papers, businessmen and prospectors swarmed into south Florida, purchasing properties throughout the region in hopes of finding mineral wealth. Trains arrived loaded with prospectors carrying picks and shovels.\(^{181}\) Tampa and other cities in Florida took on the atmosphere of western mining settlements with huge profits being made in real-estate.\(^{182}\) As one traveler later noted on her visit to South Florida, “I was surrounded by a constant buzz about phosphate. Everyone talked either of oranges or phosphate—“boxes” or “tons,” “sizes or grades, thousands of a tree or per cents of a mine.”\(^{183}\)

With the discovery of a number of new phosphate mines, the mineral quickly emerged as one of Florida’s most lucrative exports, shipped around the globe to be used as fertilizer. During 1892, shipments totaled more than 160,000 tons, 327 more tons than all other exports combined. T.S. Moore from Pennsylvania became the state’s first prospect miner, opening up the rich reserves of Arcadia, Florida and forming the Arcadia Phosphate Company.\(^{184}\) Within a year, phosphate poured out of the mines in central and south Florida, and Plant’s Port Tampa emerged as the great benefactor of the boom as Plant had already constructed elevators to handle the mineral. Phosphate was shipped on barges to Tampa, then dried and loaded upon his rails and steamships for export. Single

\(^{181}\) Grismer, *Tampa*, 222.
\(^{183}\) Helen K. Ingram, *Snowballs to Oranges*, 69.
\(^{184}\) Grismer, *Tampa*, 220.
African American men quickly made up the majority of the phosphate miners. They worked by the week or month, moving between the companies that offered the highest wages.\textsuperscript{185} The boom lasted throughout Florida until the depression of 1893 forced many of the mines to close as phosphate dropped from $18 a ton to $5.\textsuperscript{186} When phosphate production resumed after the depression, large fertilizer corporations bought up and controlled most of the mines, but the industry remained one of Florida’s largest.

Tampa’s population increased to 5,532 in 1890, and as more people moved into south Florida, the cattlemen who dominated the area increasingly came into conflict with new settlers as their cattle trampled the fruit trees and gardens of new immigrants. Cattlemen also grew disgusted with the railroads that crossed the open range, as locomotives slaughtered cows that stood on the tracks. The anger and disgust felt by cowmen exploded into open violence as “Crackers” vowed to fight any threat to the rights of passage of their cattle and the open range.\textsuperscript{187} As Frederick Remington later recounted,

> On account of running over their cattle by the trains, and then some old Cracker drops into the nearest station with his gun and pistol wants the telegraph operator to settle immediately on the basis of the Cracker's claim for damages, which is always absurdly high. At first the railroad demurred, but the cowboys lined up in the bresh of some dark night and pumped Winchesters into the train in a highly picturesque way. The trainmen at once recognized the force of the Cracker's views on cattle killing. They now have a ‘cow-attorney,’ as the company adjustor is called, who now settles with the bushmen as best he can.\textsuperscript{188}

New settlers and land developers also found themselves in conflict with cowmen over land usage, and a number of promotional tracts and writers called for an end to the open

\textsuperscript{185} Bill Arp, \textit{Leisure hours in Florida on the West Coast: the Real and Wonders of the Peninsula as seen by Maj. C.H. Smith (Bill Arp)}. (Plant System, 1895), 33.
\textsuperscript{186} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 222.
range, arguing that it was in the best interest of the cattlemen to enclose their cows.\(^{189}\)

When the Consumer, Electric Light and Railway Company built a dam on the Hillsborough River in the early 1890s, which flooded hundreds of acres of pasture and grazing lands, cattlemen responded by blowing a hole in the dam. No one was prosecuted for the crime, and the company folded as a result of the actions. Cattlemen felt the need to demonstrate the measures that they were willing to take to protect the open range.\(^{190}\)

Despite the growing interests of railroads and land developers, cattlemen still maintained stronger political and economic clout throughout Florida and managed to block and resist all efforts to force fence laws upon the cattle industry until the 1940s.\(^{191}\)

During the early 1890s, Henry Plant moved to increase his grip over the railway and steamboat traffic of South Florida by expanding his operations though buyouts and rail extensions. He also developed a variety of strategies to increase traffic along his railways and steamship routes in an effort to bolster land sales and settlement on his company’s properties. Among the most notable methods employed by Plant was the creation of a hotel empire throughout central and south Florida to entice tourists and advertise available lands in the surrounding locality. Between 1887 and 1897, the Plant System built and bought a series of eight hotels stretching from Kissimmee and Winter Park to Punta Gorda and Fort Myers.

Franklin Q. Brown, a major stockholder in the Plant System, began construction of the Hotel Punta Gorda in 1887 which opened in 1888. Plant also built the Inn at Port Tampa featuring a Queen Anne style cottage constructed over the waters at the end of


\(^{190}\) Ethridge and Knetsch, “A Brief Outline of the Agricultural History of Hillsborough County,” 29-30

\(^{191}\) Ibid., 28-30.
Plant’s extensive wharfs at Port Tampa. Plant built the hotel to cater to passengers traveling on steamers to overseas destinations, in particular Cuba, and kept it open year round. The company also purchased Picnic Island to serve as a retreat for visitors and locals.\textsuperscript{192} Next Plant purchased the Tropical Hotel in Kissimmee and the Seminole Hotel in Winter Park in 1890. Both had been built in the mid 80s following the early railroad and canal expansion. The Tropical Hotel in Kissimmee, located on Lake Topokekaliga, featured Victorian topical architecture, contained 80 rooms, and promoted local fishing and hunting. The Seminole, located on Osceola Lake in Winter Park, an upscale suburb of Orlando, catered to a wealthy clientele, in particular the upper class of Chicago by whom the city was founded in 1882. The Seminole Hotel offered 200 hotel rooms and regularly serviced over 400 guests during the winter season.\textsuperscript{193}

Plant’s opulent Tampa Bay Hotel described earlier opened to the public on January 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1891, with momentous fanfare. Plant sent out over 15,000 invitations for the Grand Opening, including one to hotel and railroad rival Henry Flagler. Flagler responded to the invite by asking Plant, “Where is Tampa Bay? to which Plant retorted, “Follow the Crowds!”\textsuperscript{194} With a steady stream of traffic on his rail lines, Plant added the Ocala House in 1895 and built Clearwater’s Bellview Bellair and The Fort Myers Inn in 1897. Each of these additions reflected steamboat and railroad extensions made by the Plant System throughout the 1890s. After building a new railroad depot on Osceola Street in Ocala, Plant purchased and extended the Ocala House in order to cater to businessmen


\textsuperscript{193} The Plant System, \textit{Florida and Cuba: From the North and West, Through Florida to the Gulf of Mexico and on to Cuba, via.... The Plant System}, 1895, 15-18.

and health seekers at Silver Springs.\textsuperscript{195} Plant built the Bellview Bellair after leasing the Orange Belt Railway from the Armour Syndicate who had forced Peter Demens to sell the rail line. Plant built the Bellview Bellair in the community of Clearwater directly between the established resorts and communities of Tarpon Springs and St. Petersburg.

Because of the demand by Cuban tobacco workers for regular service to Key West and Cuba to visit with their families, Plant also bought two steamships to serve a Tampa, Key West, and Havana run from Port Tampa. Named after French opera’s, the Mascotte and the Olivette steamers operated three times a week during the fall and winter tourist season and twice a week during the summer.\textsuperscript{196} In order to increase traffic into Havana, Plant encouraged the Spanish government to allow American passengers to travel to Cuba without a passport by offering any official document as proof of citizenship.\textsuperscript{197} The Cuba service also convinced Plant of the viability of growing and supplying tobacco for cigar manufacturing, and he introduced Cuban tobacco to communities along his rail line in hopes of increasing shipping traffic. His advertisements contended, “The finest tobacco comes to us from the Island of Cuba,” but he also argued, “The lands upon which the aromatic Vuleta Abajo tabacos grow in Cuba are the same in all respects as the lands about Sanford, Orlando, Bartow, Lake City and other well known tobacco localities of Florida. Florida must soon become a rival of Cuba in the production of the finest cigar tobacco known.”\textsuperscript{198} By introducing new crops such as tobacco, Plant

\textsuperscript{195} Plant System, \textit{The Ocala House. Ocala, Florida. Open November to April}, 1897.
\textsuperscript{196} Plant System, \textit{Four Famous West Coast Hotels. Owned and Operated by the Plant System. The Tampa Bay Hotel, The Inn Port Tampa, The Seminole, Winter Park.} (Savannah, GA.: Passenger Traffic Department, December 1895). The Plant System, \textit{Florida and Cuba: From the North and West, Through Florida to the Gulf of Mexico and on to Cuba, via…. The Plant System, 1895.}
\textsuperscript{197} Plant System, \textit{Tarpon Fishing at Pine Island, Fort Meyers and the Caloosahatchee River. A winter Tour of Three Countries. Florida, Cuba, and Mexico, N.D.}
greatly increased traffic along his line. By the end of the decade, the Plant System owned and operated over 1,196 miles of railroad track throughout the South valued at $7,475,883.\textsuperscript{199}

Plant’s railway opened southwest Florida and Tampa in particular to unprecedented growth and development. In 1880, the value of all farms and improvements in Tampa was estimated at $583,767, and by 1890, farm and land values had risen to $2,964,910. The demand for land in Hillsborough County increased dramatically during the 1890s so that by 1897 only 3,746 acres of Homestead lands remained available in the area. The population of Hillsborough exploded during the decade from 14,941 in 1895 and 31,262 by the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{200} The number of farms also doubled from 779 in 1890 to 1449 in 1900. Compared to the national average of 25.5 percent growth for the period and the state average of 45.2 percent for the decade, Tampa grew by 668 percent from 1880 to 1890.\textsuperscript{201} Much of the farm and rural growth stemmed from the citrus freeze of 1894/1895. The dual freezes that struck in December of 1894 and February of 1895 decimated the citrus industry of North Florida, leaving a wake of economic destruction as groves valued at $100,000 the day before the first freeze were almost completely worthless the day after the second.\textsuperscript{202} The freeze left a wake of ghost towns throughout North Florida, and a number of farmers moved further south where the freeze had not been so severe. Hillsborough County emerged as the new heart of the citrus belt of Florida.\textsuperscript{203} The new immigration combined with growth from the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{199} Braden, \textit{The Architecture of Leisure}, 2.
\textsuperscript{200} Ethridge and Knetsch, “A Brief Outline of the Agricultural History of Hillsborough County,” 22.
\end{flushleft}
cigar industry allowed Tampa to experience unparalleled economic growth while most of the South and nation suffered from the recession of 1893.

Not all of South Florida experienced the same benefit from the Great Freeze as Tampa. The event largely served as the catalyst that led to Hamilton Disston’s death in April of 1895. Disston’s bad luck began with the Panic of 1893 as banks throughout the nation called in their loans, cutting off his company’s lines of credit. When he was not able to pay his employees, his dredges and steamboats stopped running at full capacity. 204 At the beginning of 1894, the federal government canceled a sugar tariff that it had established in 1890, which had allowed domestic sugar production to be competitive with sugar manufacturing in Cuba and the West Indies. Disston’s operations then largely rested upon its land sales geared at citrus production. When the freezes hit, they undercut land values throughout much of the state. Whether or not these were the contributing factors, Disston either suffered a heart attack or committed suicide (depending on the source). Instead of fighting for his properties, his family opted to sell his empire in order to pay off his taxes and debt, leaving many of the areas serviced by his steamboats without regular passenger and freight service. 205 The Plant Investment Company’s growth during the late 1890s stemmed in part from Disston’s demise as Plant took over many operations to areas previously serviced by Disston. He started the process by taking over the Orange Belt Railway, then later added steamship operations to Fort Myers. 206

With much of the surrounding area experiencing economic growth, Tampa benefited by serving as the shipping and retail center for many of the building and commercial supplies needed by new immigrants. In the year following the Great Freeze,

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204 Harner, Florida’s Promoters: The Men Who Made It Big, 15.  
205 Ibid., 15.  
206 Grismer, The story of St. Petersburg, 71.
trade for Tampa increased to $16,280,157 of which merchandise served as the biggest
total making up $11,000,000. By the turn of the century, total trade increased to nearly
$18,000,000.\textsuperscript{207} Tampa emerged as a wholesale and jobbing center for all of southern
Florida. The city boasted over “nine wholesale grocery houses, five wholesale lumber
houses, four wholesale commission houses, two wholesale whiskey houses, two
wholesale drug houses, one wholesale dry goods sample room, one wholesale coffee
house, three wholesale fish houses, two ship chandlers, three wholesale novelty works,
one wholesale vinegar works, one wholesale table sauce factory, two broom factories,
one palmetto fiber brush factory, one soap factory, and one washing powder factory.”\textsuperscript{208}

As merchandisers established themselves throughout the region, they became less
involved and dependent upon the Tampa Board of Trade to look out for their business
interests. Beginning in 1892, the board experienced a dramatic shift in membership from
a group that had previous consisted of retail storeowners and professionals to an
organization dominated by real-estate dealers, managers, lawyers, and manufacturers.\textsuperscript{209}
The swing reflected the growing importance of real estate in the city after the
establishment of the railroad, the development of Port Tampa, the growth of cigar
manufacturing and the importation of new laborers, and eventually the flood of new
citrus farmers. Moreover, it reflected the growth of an urban middle class who worked as
middlemen and managers in many of the bustling new industries and developments.

With the growth of the city, Tampa implemented a wide array of internal
improvements throughout the 1890s to keep pace with growth. During the decade, Tampa

\textsuperscript{207} Ethridge and Knetsch, “A Brief Outline of the Agricultural History of Hillsborough County,” 22.
\textsuperscript{208} Plant System, “Tampa Bay Hotel, Hotel Belleview, Seminole Hotel, Ocala House, Kissimmee Hotel,
voted to pave the streets, lay sidewalks, and establish a sewerage system. Capitalist battled to build and supply electric services and streetcar service. Four new banks were also established in the city each capitalized by local businessmen, and competition between various groups of business led to the establishment of two weekly newspapers delivered three times per week, the Tampa Times and the Tampa Tribune, each with their own adherents and economic outlooks.

Competition marked the era, and the Florida, Central, and Peninsular constructed a second railroad into the city that offered Plant competition, helping to keep shipping rates within the city manageable. When farmers in central Florida felt that Plant had increased their rates beyond what they could pay, three businessmen, G.S. Baxter, Walter Ferguson, and E.C. Long, formed a partnership and constructed the Atlantic, Valdosta, and Western Railway and built the first modern 70 pound steel lines in the state. Plant moved to block the railroad, but they received the right of way and extended a connector rail to Jacksonville. Farmers throughout central Florida abandoned Plant and offered their services to the A.V.&WR. Business leaders in downtown Tampa also fostered competition with the facilities of Port Tampa as both places received further dredging at the turn of the century and then every five years afterwards. With the increased commerce, Tampa issued a bond for $80,000 and constructed a new courthouse.

By and large, cigar manufacturing served as the single driving force and engine behind much of Tampa’s economic growth from the 1890s onward. Vicente Ybor and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[211] Grismer, Tampa, 199.
\item[212] Grismer, The story of Sarasota, 118-120.
\item[213] Robert Mann, Rails 'Neath the Palms. (Burbank, Calif.: Darwin Publications, 1983), 177.
\end{footnotes}
Eduardo Manrara established the first electric streetcar system in Tampa and Ybor city after Tampa’s financiers backed away from the opportunity. Ybor and Manrara bought controlling interest in the business, believing that it was necessary to promote growth.\textsuperscript{216} Manrara also established the Ybor City Building and Loan Association to help factory workers buy homes, and he provided the financial backing, contributing his share of more than a million dollars on the Ybor City Land and Improvement Company to assist in beautifying the city and encouraging factory development. At the beginning of the 1890s, the company donated over $126,000 in land and buildings. It brought in a number of companies including: Seidenberg & Co, Trujillo & Benemelia; Gomez, Mora & Co, Ami, Ortez & Co, Arquellas, Lopez & Bros.; Jose m. Diaz & Bro, and Creagh, Cundnect, \& Co. To finance many of his dealings, Manrara also established the Exchange Nation Bank of Tampa in 1894 and invested in the Tampa Gas Company in 1896 becoming the president of many of these business ventures. In the same year, Manrara built the Florida Brewing Company in Tampa producing three beers: the Florida Special, Export, and Bohemia. The F.B.C. became the first American company to export beer to Cuba and developed sales routes throughout Florida and Georgia capturing a large percentage of the market.\textsuperscript{217} When Vicente Ybor died in 1896, Manrara became the largest manufacturer of clear Havana cigars in the world.

Looking to provide competition to Ybor City, High C. Macfarlane, a Scottish immigrant, decided to establish a cigar manufacturing community in 1892. Although he had arrived in Tampa in 1883 to practice law, he quickly became involved in the real-estate boom, purchasing a 200-acre tract on the west bank of the Hillsborough River. To

\textsuperscript{216} Westfall, “The Evolution and Development of Ybor City,” 24.  
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 21-22.
entice business to the area, he offered factory sites and a three-story brick building to any manufacturer who would relocate to West Tampa. Two companies from Key West arrived in 1892, including O’Hara & Co and Julius Ellinger & Company. The factories contributed $30,000 to build a bridge across the Hillsborough River to transport their products.²¹⁸ C.E. Arnsworth & Co., A. Santella & Co., Pendas & Alvarez, the Morgan Cigar Company, and a number of other companies arrived in 1893. Strikes and labor strife encouraged many companies to move their factories from New York and Key West. Violent and prolonged strikes in the Key West cigar industry in 1889 and again in 1894 led to an exodus of cigar manufacturers from the island to West Tampa and Ybor City.

During the decade after its establishment, eleven factories moved from Key West, thirteen from New York, 5 from Chicago, and 2 from Havana and established factories in West Tampa.²¹⁹ In 1895, West Tampa’s population stood at 2,814 and was rapidly expanding. Macfarlane formed a partnership with Le Skinner, Philip Collins, Georga Benjamin, and C. B. Bouton to form a larger 1,000 acre tract with their combined 800 acres then established West Tampa as a municipality.²²⁰ Fearful of loosing out to West Tampa, Ybor City responded with equally rewarding inducements so that by 1895, Ybor City and West Tampa had attracted 130 cigar factories, which accounted for seventy-five percent of the city’s payroll.²²¹ By the end of the decade, over 4,109 cigar workers were employed within the factories of Ybor City and West Tampa with annual wages that amounted to over $2,000,000.²²² Wages provided by cigar workers became so vital to

²¹⁸ Grismer, *Tampa*, 204.
²¹⁹ Ibid, 205.
most Tampa merchants and businesses that the majority of Tampa’s managers and clerks spoke Spanish.\textsuperscript{223} With the expansion of manufacturing, greater Tampa quickly established itself as one of the leading cigar manufacturing cities in the world.

The influx of immigrants to work within the factory quickly distinguished non-native Latin Ybor and West Tampa from conservatively white Tampa. Two distinct though drastically different communities emerged alongside each other. As long as cigar wages poured into Tampa businesses, Tampa’s white political, social, and economic power structures turned a blind eye to the ethnically, racially, socially, and politically diverse city forming within its limits, creating one of the most diverse and culturally rich cities in the South. Ybor City and West Tampa transformed an assorted group of Cubans, Spaniards, Afro Cubans, and Italians into a distinct community of self-defined “Latinos.”

The openness of cigar factories and their willingness to hire women, men, blacks, whites, Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians and have them work side by side with each other created a socially diverse and integrated community of immigrants. Although animosity existed between the Cubans and Spanish, and black and white Cubans became increasingly racially segregated in white Tampa, Ybor City, its suburbs, and the manufacturers within its borders offered a liminal space in which this collective group of immigrants forged themselves culturally and racially into Latins. By 1900, the Latin community of Tampa included 2,000 Spaniards, 3533 Cubans, and 1,315 Italians.

Many of Tampa’s Latins used their cigar earnings as capital to establish other businesses. It was not uncommon for women to work in the cigar factories while their spouses started new businesses. Italians, in particular, expanded into a variety of trades including selling fruit and fish, making ice cream, baking, fishmongers, and producing

\textsuperscript{223} Steffy, \textit{The Cuban immigrants of Tampa}, 28.
dairy products.\textsuperscript{224} Italian women generally worked for the first couple of years in cigar factories while their husbands started businesses, and many Italian women became proficient tobacco strippers. In order to look out for the social welfare of their communities, many of Ybor City’s and West Tampa’s ethic groups forged their own social clubs. Tampa’s Spanish and Cubans established the oldest society, Centro Epsanol, in 1891. By 1895, Tampa’s Cubans had formed forty-one patriotic clubs which served the class, political, and social needs of Ybor City’s Cuban citizens.\textsuperscript{225} The Italians followed suit, forming L’Unione Italiana in 1894.\textsuperscript{226} Black Cubans also formed La Union Marti-Maceo. These clubs provided a social and economic safety net for immigrant communities by offering unemployment compensation, coverage of burial expenses, cooperative medicine, education, and social programs.\textsuperscript{227} While the Catholic Church traditionally served these functions, many of the cigar workers were self-proclaimed socialists and Marxists and despised the church, preferring the camaraderie of the mutual aid societies.\textsuperscript{228}

Despite the racial and ethnic clubs, what united Tampa’s Latins were largely the shared public spaces and public forums. In particular, the position of the lector in the cigar factories created a shared body of knowledge and experience among factory workers. “El Lector” or the reader was a position within most cigar factories in which cigar workers collected money each week to pay a reader to come and read newspapers, books, and documents on a wide variety of topics including politics, labor, literature,

\textsuperscript{225} Mormino, \textit{Immigrant World}, 79.
\textsuperscript{226} Mormino and Pozetta, “Immigrant women in Tampa: The Italian Experience, 1890-1930,” 310.
\textsuperscript{227} Long, \textit{Making of Modern Tampa}, 342.
\textsuperscript{228} Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta “The Cradle of Mutual Aid: Immigrant Cooperative Societies in Ybor City” in \textit{A Centennial History of Ybor City: Tampa Bay History}. (Fall/Winter 1985), 36-37.
local and international news, and other subjects in order to provide entertainment and education for workers at the cigar factory.\textsuperscript{229} The lector was generally educated, located on a platform above the room so that everyone could see and hear him, and he paused while he was reading to allow workers to voice comments and raise questions.\textsuperscript{230} The lector offered a shared base of knowledge from which Latins forged an intellectual community. In turn, Friday and Saturday evenings, Latins formed social connections partaking in the cafes and restaurants of Ybor’s Seventh Avenue. What Ybor became in the 1890s was a Latin community forged in a company town, surrounded by the realities of the rural South and governed by social and racial conservatives.\textsuperscript{231}

Tampa’s Board of Trade and white leadership established early on that they were unwilling to accept labor strife because of the economic hardship that it placed upon the business community, and while Tampa experienced little or no labor difficulties in the 1890s, the complacency of cigar workers largely paralleled their economic and political support for the cause of Cuban Independence. For many Cubans émigrés, the cause of class mobility became secondary to the desire for independence. Many cigar manufacturers personally supported and identified with the Cuban revolutionaries, including Vicente Martinez Ybor, Domingo Villamil, Teodoro Perez, and Cecilo Henriquez. Benjamin Guerra, a factory owner in Ybor City, was also the secretary-treasurer of the P.R.C. (Cuban Revolutionary Party).\textsuperscript{232} Carlos Balino, the founder of the Cuban Communist Party and Diego Vicente Tejera, the organizer of the Cuabn Socialist

\textsuperscript{230} Bill, \textit{Leisure hours in Florida on the west coast}, Dedication Page.
\textsuperscript{231} Perez Jr., “Reminisence of A Lector: Cuban Cigar Workers in Tampa,” 445-449.
\textsuperscript{232} Louis A Perez “Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901.” \textit{Florida Historical Quarterly}. Vo. 57 No. 02 (October 1978), 132-135.
Party, both lived in Ybor and worked as close collaborators with Jose Marti. From its inception as a community, Ybor City and Cuba Libre emerged together. In 1891, Jose Marti visited the burgeoning city and delivered two impassioned speeches at el Liceo Cubano, a tobacco-stripping warehouse converted into a Cuban social club for the event. While on his visit, Marti drafted Las Resoluciones the platform for the United Cuban Revolutionary Party. Most of Marti’s financial and political support came from Cuban émigrés in Tampa. Following his visit, 75 revolutionary clubs formed in Florida, representing over 10,000 Cubans in exile. Populist support among the émigré community stemmed not only from a desire to oust the Spanish from Cuba but also to forge a country not built on a foundation of race, exploitation, and oppression. Many identified with Marti’s vision.

Cubans in Ybor City developed juntas that served as the infrastructure for Marti’s P.R.C. and coordinated filibustering expeditions from Florida to Cuba. Most cigar workers donated a day’s pay every week to support the P.R.C. Factory owners in turn also supported the P.R.C., believing that the cause for independence undermined the desire of laborers to strike. Fernando Figueredo, a Cuban hero of the ten years war, was elected as the first Mayor of West Tampa in 1894. He worked as a bookkeeper for the O’Halloran factory and sent a box of cigars from the company to General Juan Gualbert Gomez as a sign to begin new fighting in 1895. Because of the energy and money coming out of South Florida, Spanish Captain General Salamanca thought that if

234 Perez “Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901,” 133-134.
236 Perez “Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901,” 134.
237 Sanchez, “Incentives Helped To Build West Tampa,” 22.
he could destroy the Cuban centers in Key West and Tampa that the rebel cause would collapse.\textsuperscript{238}

In 1896, Spanish Governor General of Cuba and the Philipines Valeriano Weyler declared an embargo on tobacco exports from Cuba hoping to stop the flow of money and arms from Tampa by shutting down the cigar factories. The junta and factory owners responded by persuading Henry Plant to send the \textit{Olivette} and \textit{Mascotte} steamers to Cuba before the embargo was put into place. The ships made it to Havana and were loaded with a tremendous amount of Havana Leaf Tobacco filling the staterooms, dinning room, salons, and bar to the roof hoping to save and prepare the tobacco industry in Tampa for the long haul.\textsuperscript{239} To keep morale behind the Cuban efforts, the juntas kept newspapers steadily supplied with stories concerning the horrors of “Butcher” Weyler and his reconcentrado policy.

Outside of the Cuban community, most citizens of Tampa remained largely indifferent to the cause of the Cuban Revolution. Many Floridians feared that competition from a strong independent Cuba would undercut the Florida sugar and citrus industries, while leaders of Tampa worried that the cigar industry might return to Cuba, especially if imperialists pushed for annexation. There were also concerns that a Cuban territory would push the American tourist further south, bypassing the state.\textsuperscript{240} Consequently, not until the combination of the DeLome letter and the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine did the population of Tampa spur into action.\textsuperscript{241} Fearing that Florida would suffer the worst effects from war, Henry Plant wrote to Secretary of War Alger to grant use of his

\textsuperscript{238} Schellings, “Florida and the Cuban Revolution,” 178
\textsuperscript{239} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 206 Harner, \textit{A pictorial history of Ybor City}, 24-26.
\textsuperscript{240} Schellings, “Florida and the Cuban Revolution,” 185.
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., 180.
facilities at Port Tampa while asking for protection of the port and the surrounding area. Alger responded by sending the Chief of Engineers to Tampa to prepare for its defense.\footnote{Schellings, “Florida and the Cuban Revolution,” 183.}

Although the city was not originally selected as a military base and port of embarkation for the war, the Tampa Daily Times discussed its many advantages, including its proximity to Cuba, rail connections, and harbor facilities. Frank Q. Brown, the vice-President of the Plant System, was invited by Secretary Alger to help make the decision as to which city should be chosen, and Tampa eventually joined Jacksonville and Miami in providing a port and camp for soldiers volunteering for the war.\footnote{William John Schellings, Tampa, Florida: its role in the Spanish American War, 1898. (Coral Gables, Fla., Thesis (M.A.): University of Miami. 1954), 29-31.} Almost immediately soldiers made their way into the city, with many southerners arriving wearing Confederate gray uniforms.\footnote{Grismer, Tampa, 208.} Tampa only expected to receive 3,000 troops as it was mainly designed to be a port for supplies, but by the time that war efforts were underway, over 39,000 troops arrived in the city, dwarfing the tiny population of 14,000.\footnote{Mary Wolfe Dumont and Rhodes Harrison. A guide to Florida for tourists, sportsmen and settlers. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912), 268.} Joining the soldiers, over 125 newspaper journalist and foreign observers also made their way into the city and waited alongside the soldiers for the conflict to start.\footnote{Alexandrea Frye, “Waiting for War to Begin: News Dispatches from Tampa Bay Hotel,” Sunland Tribune Vol. XXIV (1998) 19-21.} In order to handle the troops, four regiments were camped at Port Tampa, seventeen at Tampa at DeSota Park, Palmetto Beach, and Fort Brooke, and four at Lakeland. Officers stayed in the Tampa Bay Hotel, which Plant offered the Army to use as their headquarters throughout the war.\footnote{Johnson, “Plant’s Lieutenants,” 386.}
When the soldiers received $175,000 on their first payday, Tampa’s businesses experienced unparalleled profits. The benefits of the war quickly spread throughout south Florida. In order to keep the troops fed, fishermen in Sarasota and down the coast brought all the fish that they could catch and sold them at will to troops.\textsuperscript{248} Fresh fruits and vegetables from across the state poured into the city, and cattlemen throughout South Florida drove their cows to help keep the troops fed.\textsuperscript{249} The city organized picnics and baseball games to keep the large number of men entertained, while churches held special services throughout the week.\textsuperscript{250} The regimental bands played every evening at the Tampa Bay Hotel, and the people danced in the rotunda and ballroom.

Troops were finally shipped to Cuba beginning in July of 1898, with 16,000 making up the initial force followed by 4,000 others a few days later. Thousands of others waited to depart, but the Spanish fleet was quickly destroyed at Santiago and two days afterwards the Spanish surrendered.\textsuperscript{251} Thousands of troops and volunteers remained in Tampa, however, until the last soldiers departed at the end of August. When all was said and done, Tampa had stationed over 66,478 soldiers, cared for thousands of animals, and secured, then shipped, thousands of tons of supplies. The war helped improve retail trade and expand rail and harbor facilities, and it secured Tampa as the main entrance for new business with Cuba. Beyond this, lumber, livestock, fishing, and merchandising had experienced an unprecedented boom.\textsuperscript{252}

\textsuperscript{248} Grismer, \textit{The story of Sarasota}, 121-122, 124.
\textsuperscript{249} Schellings, \textit{Tampa, Florida: Its role in the Spanish American War}, 81.
\textsuperscript{251} Grismer, \textit{Tampa}, 210.
\textsuperscript{252} Schellings, \textit{Tampa, Florida: its role in the Spanish American War}, 72.
newspapers immediately called for a resumption of regular business to keep the state from slipping into a recession, and with that, Tampa went back to work.\textsuperscript{253}

Tampa’s Cuban community experienced drastic changes following the war. Many exiles especially professionals returned to Cuba. However, the lack of jobs caused by 50,000 soldiers of the liberation army seeking new employment, the devastated countryside, and a crippled infrastructure convinced just as many Cubans to remain in Tampa. Many émigrés had come to see Ybor City and Tampa as their home and enjoyed the community that they had helped to create.\textsuperscript{254} The war served as a drastic turning point in the lives of many Cubans, as pent up dreams and ambitions sacrificed for the cause of liberty and independence now gave way to fulfilling long neglected economic and social goals. Unfortunately, these desires emerged as the cigar industry experienced new economic pressures as large American tobacco conglomerates took control over tobacco fields and factories throughout Cuba. Within two years, 90 percent of the export trade in Havana cigars came under American ownership. After Vicente Ybor’s death, the Havana-American Company, a consortium of cigar factories in New Orleans, Chicago, and New York, bought out a number of factories in Tampa in 1899. The Duke Tobacco Trust followed in 1902, and the American-Cigar Company then took control over Havana-American the same year. Yankee ingenuity, new demands, new quotas, and new production systems overturned the relaxed though efficient principals of the old factory floor, giving way to greater focus on profits and labor rationalization, and in 1899, the first major strike swept across Tampa.\textsuperscript{255}

\textsuperscript{253} Schellings, “Florida and the Cuban Revolution,” 186.
\textsuperscript{254} Perez “Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901,” 135
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid., 136.
The weight strike, as it later became known, occurred after a number of cigar manufacturers instituted a weight system whereby cigar makers received a specific amount of tobacco to produce an exact number of cigars. Many of the older cigar workers demanded that the scales be removed, arguing that they were not given enough tobacco to complete the number of cigars demanded. At the heart of the conflict was an earlier unspoken agreement between workers and factory owners whereby each cigar worker was allowed to take a small quantity of tobacco for personal use and economic benefit; over time this had come to be regarded as part of a worker’s wages. The new weight system threatened to bring an end to this small perk, and it marked an unprecedented move by factories to take control and regulate time and proficiency of its laborers.\textsuperscript{256} The workers went on strike, and managers of the factories initiated a lockout. Cigar makers boycotted all business that did not support the strike.

Frank C. Bowyer, the mayor of Tampa, promised the factories police protection and arrested, then prosecuted, twelve of the leaders of the strike.\textsuperscript{257} The shutdown meant a loss of $60,000 to $70,000 in weekly wages, crippling many Tampa businesses. With 4,000 workers unemployed, 1,400 Cubans left Tampa permanently and returned to Havana.\textsuperscript{258} With heavy losses, the lockout ended in August with management agreeing to remove the scales. The strikers also managed to get uniform wages established in all the factories, workshop concessions from the availability of ice water to monthly factory cleanings, and also the right to form worker’s committees.\textsuperscript{259} Afterwards, cigar workers formed \textit{La Sociedad de Torcedores y sus Cercanías}, also known as \textit{La Resistencia}, a

\textsuperscript{256} Perez “Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901,” 137.  
\textsuperscript{258} Ibid., 352.  
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid., 353.
combined cigar union with workers in Havana and Key West. Cigar makers apologized to customers and welcomed back full productivity.

The tobacco trust increasingly consolidated power, and after the strike of 1899, they urged all factory owners in Tampa to form the Tampa Cigar Manufacturers Association with the stated purpose of “group handling of labor relations.” With the growing power and influence of large scale tobacco corporations, cigar workers gains dissipated after La Resistencia called a general strike on August 5, 1901, against Cuita Rey & Company for refusing to shut down a non-union branch factory in Jacksonville, Florida. Cigar workers believed this was a concerted effort to undermine the new power of the Cuban union by attempting to break up Tampa’s hold over cigar manufacturing. Owned and operated by the new American Tobacco Trust under the American Cigar Company, the new corporate power structure refused to submit to union will. The company shut down production of cigars and appealed to the leaders of Tampa to resolve the issue or have the company pull factories from the city. Workers from across the spectrum amassed to support the cause, including men and women cigar makers.

The strike lasted until November 25, when Tampa’s Board of Trade organized a secret vigilance committee that rounded up sixteen leaders of La Resistencia, put them on board the ship, Marie Cooper, and sailed them to Honduras, where they were dumped and warned not to return to Tampa or Ybor City under the threat of death. In support of the vigilance committee and manufacturers, the city police started arresting strikers for loitering while the Board of Trade recruited strikebreakers from Havana and Key West to

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260 Perez, “Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901,” 137.
262 Grismer, Tampa, 232.
264 Grismer, Tampa, 232.
come work in the factories. Because the vigilance committee kidnapped the president and treasurer of La Resistencia, the strikers had no access to money to support the cause. Workers from Havana cigar factories sent some monies to support strikers, but the funds were quickly absorbed. Strikers appealed to the Cigar Manufacturers International Union, an affiliate of the A.F.L., but their concerns focused upon higher wages whereas La Resistencia focused upon shop floor control and the C.M.I.U. saw itself as a competing organization. When the C.M.I.U. supported the efforts of the vigilantes against the cigar workers, the strike fell apart and marked the end of successful strikes in the city.265

After the collapse of La Resistencia, the International Cigarmakers swept in and absorbed many of workers into the larger American union, much to the delight of Samuel Gompers who felt La Resistencia divided workers based upon race and undermined union efforts in general.266 In turn, the American Tobacco Company instructed its factories that “no union shop will be permitted in Tampa.”267 Following the strike, Mayor James McKay pushed for and established the Good Government League in order to bring together capital and labor. However, the group largely became the bulwark for supporting the aims of capital while tying the hands of organized labor and undermining labor sentiments in the city. When firefighters went on strike in 1903, the city terminated all the strikers, found replacements, and pushed through ordinances forbidding public employees from joining any union.268

With the cigar union left in disarray after its defeat and dismantlement, the Tobacco Trust changed the organizational structures in many Ybor factories, unraveling

266 Perez, “Cubans in Tampa: From Exiles to Immigrants, 1892-1901,” 138.
268 Kerstein, Politics of Growth in Twentieth Century Tampa, 37.
the economic and social fabric that had held the community together during the 1890s. After the buyouts, many of the companies were no longer run like paternalistic organizations in which the factory owners threw parties, provided Christmas gifts to children, and knew most of their workers and their families on a first name basis. When the trust took control, leadership came not from the community but from corporate boardrooms in New York. They were concerned less about the welfare of the community and more about the bottom line. While Ybor and Manrana desired high quality hand rolled cigars, the larger tobacco corporations demanded efficiency and increasingly pushed for quantity over quality. Whereas most workers had been considered craftsmen in the old factory system, they became interchangeable cogs in the new labor structure.\textsuperscript{269}

Eli Witt’s Hav-A-Tampa Cigar Company, which opened its doors in 1902, came to symbolize many of these qualities. Over the next two decades, he introduced machine rolled cigars, developed one of the largest wholesale cash-on-delivery trucking systems in the South, created cellophane wrappers and wooden cigar tips, and through mass production, his company helped solidify Tampa as the center of cigar production.\textsuperscript{270}

Because new corporations had destroyed much of the social and economic foundation of Ybor City within the first three years of the twentieth century, many of Ybor’s and West Tampa’s ethnic communities turned to their social organizations to serve the larger social and economic needs of the city. The Centro Español expanded their facilities in Ybor City by building a hospital, the Sanatorio del Centro Español, in 1904 and providing one of the first cooperative social medicinal plans in the United States. Between 1908 and 1912, their membership grew to 2,600, and they built a second

\textsuperscript{269} Mormino, \textit{Tampa and the New Urban South}, 353

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid., 354.
clubhouse in West Tampa. The club owned four buildings and social hubs in Tampa including clubhouses and theaters in Ybor and West Tampa, a clinic, La Benefica, in Ybor, and the Bayshore Hospital. The Centero Asturiano also captured larger numbers of Tampa’s Latins with 6,000 members attending a picnic at Sulphur Springs in 1911. Although looking out for the needs of the Asturian populace, the Centero Asturiano served the Spanish, Cuban, and Italian communities and provided one of the most popular playhouses within the city.\footnote{Mormino and Pozzetta, \textit{The Cradle of Mutual Aid: Immigrant Cooperative Societies in Ybor City}, 41-43.} Labor and ethnic organizations also fostered suburban growth in the city away from developments sponsored by factory owners. In 1907, the Labor Society for Building “Los Cien” created a new subdivision known as The One Hundred in which 100 families pooled their money to help build and finance the construction of their homes. Members paid whatever they could afford from $1.75 a week and up until their houses were paid in full.\footnote{Sanchez, “Incentives Helped To Build West Tampa,” 25.}

With its growth of labor and social organizations, Tampa was home to the strongest and most active socialist movement in the South, particularly among Italian immigrants. They created the Italian Socialist Party, built a brick-meeting house, openly discussed socialist and anarchic principles, and became avid supporters of the cause of labor.\footnote{George E Pozzetta, “Foreigners in Florida: A Study of Immigration Promotion, 1865-1910.” \textit{The Florida Historical Quarterly} Vol. 53, No. 2 (October 1974) 177.} Eugene V. Debbs visited the city in 1900 and won the support of many within the immigrant community.\footnote{Kerstein, \textit{Politics of Growth in Twentieth Century Tampa}, 33.} The issues of anarchism and socialism had long been debated in many of the immigrant communities before they moved to Tampa, and upon their arrival, many held a heightened sense of class-consciousness because of the
economic and social conditions in their homelands. These activities galvanized a
divide between Tampa’s white citizens and its Latin communities, as Tampa’s white
businessmen continued to view socialism through the lenses of the Haymarket bombing,
the Pullman strikes, and the McKinley assassination. Their concerns led to a growing
movement to block all new foreign immigration into the state.

Anti-immigrant views gained steam in the late 1890s and hit a crescendo by the
turn of the century under the guise of the “Florida for Floridians” movement. By the
middle of the decade, Governor Napoleon B. Broward feared that these attitudes would
damage Florida’s drive for development by undercutting access to cheap labor. In 1908,
Broward called for a region-wide convention to be held in Tampa on the topic. The
Tampa Chamber of Commerce organized the event, sending out over 1,000 invitations to
southern governors, mayors, boards of trade, chambers of commerce, newspaper editors,
and other commercial organizations. Despite early responses, the convention was a
complete failure, with Broward being the only governor in attendance and refusing to
return after his opening remarks. With such a small turn out, those individuals opposing
foreign immigration took hold of the convention, addressing a wide array of fears from
concerns over Roman Catholicism, labor and political radicalism, and prohibition to the
growing number of Asians within the state. When finished, these individuals turned a
convention designed to support immigration into one that opposed even the slightest call
for or promotion of overseas labor and settlement into the state.

Despite these fears, foreign workers and settlers continued to arrive in the city and
surrounding area throughout the first half of the twentieth century, creating one of the

275 Mormino, The Immigrant World of Ybor City, 10.
276 Pozetta, Foreigners in Florida, 176.
277 Ibid., 177.
most ethnically diverse communities in the South. Tampa’s business and civic leaders continued to support immigration efforts, particularly for factory workers. When prohibitionists moved to pass blue laws in Tampa and Ybor in 1904, the mayor opposed the effort, believing that such actions would drive cigar workers and manufacturing away from the city. By 1907, the number of cigar workers had increased to 9,950 with a weekly payroll of $168,000. With such wages, Tampa’s businessmen could not afford to lose the revenues spent by cigar workers in their stores.

For Tampa’s African American community, the decade after the Spanish American war marked a steady decline in the social and political rights of African Americans. In 1898, the first public execution since the Civil War took place after a jury convicted Harry Singleton, an African American man, of killing a white police officer. He was hanged in front of a crowd of nearly 5,000. Protests erupted in the Scrub section of the city’s black wards. Later that year, riots broke out among the 4,000 black troops of the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth regiments after black servicemen moved to stop drunken white soldiers from using local black boys for target practice. These actions reflected the growing anger among Tampa’s black community towards the blatant racism of white Tampa and American society. M.J. Christopher, a black newspaper editor in Tampa, created the Labor Union Recorder in 1899 and routinely denounced police violence against the black community, calling white policemen “overgrown tramps and sneaking curs.” In a confrontation with policemen at a restaurant, he was beaten in the

278 Kerstein, Politics of Growth in Twentieth Century Tampa, 37.
279 Tampa Board of Trade, Tampa on the Highway of Progress. To-day there are 150 factories, sixty of them first class in size, appointments, character, and amount of output and in reputation, 1907.
head and fatally shot. Over 5,000 people marched to protest his death.\footnote{Leland M Hawes, ““Tampa at the Turn of the Century,” \textit{Sunland Tribune: Journal of the Tampa Historical Society.} Volume XXV. (1999), 69-77.} Noting the protests, the \textit{Tampa Tribune} remarked, “other agitators of his stamp who are deceiving the negroes of the South, should read the turbulent story of Christopher and mark the lesson well.”\footnote{Mormino, ““Tampa and the New Urban South,”” 347.}

Around the same period, William C. Crum, a settler from New York in the 1880s who published the \textit{Florida State Republican} and served as postmaster for the tiny community of Peck near the Idlewild section of Tampa was whitecapped after appointing an African American deputy postmaster to assist him with his duties. Crum was tied, beaten until his muscles turned to jelly, coated with carbonic acid and tar, and lashed again with a whip. Crum survived, and twelve men went to trial but were acquitted. The African American deputy escaped and left the community.\footnote{Leland M Hawes, “The Whitecapping of W.C. Crum.” \textit{Sunland Tribune: Journal of the Tampa Historical Society.} Vol. XIII. (November, 1987), 3-9.} In July 1905, Jim Crow legislation was passed by the city, and the black populace responded by boycotting the streetcars.

Tourist and settlement guides for the city from the time proclaimed,

Here the black not only knows his place, but is really a servant, and a good one at that. There are not so many of them as to make them obnoxious; they expect to serve, and do serve, and serve well, and in this particular the colored question is not of importance in the Flower State. Tampa is the most cosmopolitan city of its size in the country. The negro population is considerable, and is one that plays an important part in the development of the city. The negro is the laborer best adapted to existing conditions in the South, and with proper treatment, can be depended upon to give good satisfaction in the class of work which he is adapted.\footnote{Plant System, Tampa Bay Hotel, Hotel Belleview, Seminole Hotel, Ocala House, Kissimmee Hotel, The Inn. \textit{Southern Immigrant: A Monthly Journal of practical information about Southern Products, Climatic Conditions, Resources, Progress, Illustrated.} (April, 1898), 7.}
African Americans in Tampa faced a tough economic situation. Tampa’s multi-racial and ethnic society eliminated many middle class black vocations such as barbering, carpentry, and even boot blacking for working class children, as immigrants filled many of those positions. Largely disenfranchised after poll taxes were passed in 1889, African Americans turned to the church for social and economic uplift. The first black man to address Tampa’s Rotary Club was A.W. Puller, pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church. His speech was titled “What a Negro can be and do if he wants to.” Black Tampans also formed chapters of the National Negro Business League to assist in the development of black businesses and the African American Industrial and Benefits Association to provide affordable health and death insurance to the black community. Through the churches and economic organizations, African Americans in Tampa developed the communities of Hyde Park, West Tampa, and Garrison as the social and economic centers of the black community.

As a small black middle class developed throughout the state, there was a movement among the legislature to restrict suffrage to white males in 1907, but the state senate vetoed the action. In response, citizens in Tampa led by D.B. McKay established the White Democratic Primary in 1910, completing black disenfranchisement in the city. As this occurred, black churches and business organizations became increasingly important to provide the services that Jim Crow segregation restricted from most African Americans in Tampa. Despite the setbacks, African Americans in Tampa continued to

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288 Ibid., 43.
find good and steady employment with the railroads and ports, both of which rapidly expanded their services.

Although Tampa’s economy grew rapidly following the turn of the century, part of that growth came at the expense of many of its citizens’ own dreams, desires, and ambitions. African Americans increasingly found their social spaces and economic opportunities limited as a white Board of Trade demanded lower wages and a subservient black labor force. At the same time, dependence upon cigar wages and profits as capital meant that the larger business community of Tampa was unwilling to risk labor strife giving management the upper hand. When strikes and labor unrest did manifest themselves, the business community showed that they were willing to use all measures of force to put down strikes. These policies created a pro-business environment that benefited corporations and business owners at the expense of the needs and demands of labor. Businesses came to dominate the Tampa Board of Trade, in particular wholesalers that catered to the rapidly expanding agrarian populace who profited off of the expansion of citriculture and the growth of market farming. The rise of the business farmer marked a significant shift away from the subsistent Cracker cattlemen and contributed to their steady social and economic decline throughout the region. As the business mindset came to dominate the region, Tampa and South West Florida boomed economically, but the policies marked a fundamental shift away from the principles of men such as Ybor who had sought to create a community that looked out for needs of its employees by creating a multiracial and ethnic society that mutually benefited both owner and laborer. What emerged in its place was a racially segregated society that largely benefited white
laborers and corporations by limiting and curtailing the economic and social aspirations of its black, Latin, and ethnic populace.

By the turn of the century, cigars had transformed Tampa into one of the largest manufacturing centers in the South and fostered the most heterogeneous population of any southern city. However, the demand for higher profits by new corporations and the need to protect its reliable source of capital, spurred Tampa’s business leaders to turn against its progressive and liberal labor and immigration policies fostering a new business ethos that placed the needs of the corporation above those of individual laborers and the working class as a whole. Beginning with the establishment of the new tobacco trust after the turn of the century, the older model of development rooted in the ideology of the Cuban revolution gave way to capitalist and corporate expansion. The new business minded elite came to dominate the region as cattle barons lost political and social standing. Along with the collapse and defeat of the labor unions, the economic dialogue rooted in social and economic justice lost ground to anti-immigrant and anti-labor union forces that came to dominate the politics of Tampa. What emerged was a racially heterogeneous society of Cubans, Spaniards, Italians, and African Americans that came to be dominated by socially conservative white businessmen and outside corporate cigar manufactures.

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In the aftermath of the Civil War, the area of Miami and the Biscayne Bay territory, as it was more customarily known, remained what it had largely always been, a small, scattered outpost of fewer than 60 settlers spread out over the dry ridges and lands between the bay and the Everglades. Along with the remnants of a few scattered bands of Seminoles, the lives of most who lived within the confines of the tropical wilderness remained largely unknown to the outside world. Following the Civil War, matters drastically changed when the head of the Freedmen’s Bureau opened a national dialogue on turning South Florida into a refuge for freed slaves offering them a chance to start their lives anew as independent farmers. Although these ideas never fully materialized, the attention cast upon the region brought in a wide array of new settlers and speculators who sought to stake their fortunes and futures in the area by turning what they viewed as worthless swamp lands into productive farms and valuable real-estate.

Both political sway and money allowed new arrivals to purchase and claim large parcels of land that gave them a dominant voice in the economic and political future of the region. New arrivals sought to transform the values of their properties by increasing productivity and desire. The shift in mindset marked a radical change from the subsistence minded white and Seminole inhabitants who desired only sustenance from the land versus newcomers who sought to take and make their properties provide ever-greater returns upon their investment. Within ten years of the arrival of the first train, the landscape and lives of those who called the area home had been radically reimagined.
Miami sprang into a full-blown city almost over night, and its rapid transformation into a
tourist haven and center of tropical productions reinforced the local conviction that
Miami truly was “The Magic City.”

The development of Miami originated in the dreams of Republican ideologues
and reformers at the close of the Civil War. In a desire to help newly freed slaves build
new lives and communities beyond the shadows of southern plantations, the military and
government developed plans to transform the lower peninsula of Florida into a new
Liberia for freed slaves. Beginning with Colonel Thomas W. Osborn, the Commissioner
of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned lands in Florida, he devised and conceptualized
a plan of settlement in 1866. Osborn was a close confidant of the head of the Bureau of
Freedmen and Refugees, Major General Oliver Otis Howard, having served together at
Gettysburg. After living in Florida for a year, Osborn developed a strategy for the federal
government to purchase all the lands in Florida below the 28th parallel to be used as
homesteads for freedmen.¹ He believed that if homesteads were limited to 80 acres that
the lands could sustain 400 townships and 115,200 families. He thought that new
townships should open only when homestead lands were filled in other cities, believing
this would strengthen civic engagement and local government. He contended that the
tropical productions of the region would economically benefit the American government
and prove to be lucrative to the homesteaders of the area.²

After Orlando Brown, the head of the Bureau in Virginia, proposed sending
50,000 freedmen to Florida, Howard instructed Osborn to send inspectors into South
Florida to determine the true feasibility of settlement and the most optimal location to

¹ Bruce Rosen, “A Plan to Homestead Freedmen in Florida in 1866.” Florida Historical Quarterly Vol. 43
No. 4. (1965), 380.
begin homesteading. Osborn selected George F. Thompson, Commissary Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, to lead an expedition into the region. He was to be accompanied by William H. Gleason, whom Osborn selected as a special agent of the Freedmen’s Bureau. In Dade County, Thompson found the most promising agricultural lands and stayed in the vicinity of Biscayne Bay longer than in any other portion of his trip from January 27 to February 14, 1866. Thompson considered the area to be “Exilerating” and “the most equable of any in the United States.” He believed that 200 whites lived in the area though most resided in the keys below the mainland. Three black families also resided in the area, and he found none needed the assistance of the Freedmen’s Bureau. In the vicinity of the Miami River, Thompson noted one store operated by "French Mike" Sayers who conducted business with the Seminoles and a small number of homesteaders who principally worked Coontie starch for which he believed the area held an endless supply. Thompson felt that the most promising agricultural lands lay along the Everglades and were covered in water for part of the year. He recommended that the government conduct drainage to open the area to settlers, without whom he believed large-scale settlement would not be possible.

Thompson suggested that the drawbacks to settlement were the numerous moccasins and rattlesnakes along with panthers and bears. Most of all he felt that the droves of mosquitos and horseflies made settlement “almost intolerable” as they "vie with each other in their efforts to torment humanity." He was warned that the numbers of both increased in April to the extent that they drove most livestock and horses in the area

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3 George R. Bentley, “Colonel Thompson’s Tour of Tropical Florida.” *Tequesta* No. 10 (1950), 27.
5 Bentley, “Colonel Thompson’s Tour,” 29-30. Coontie is a tropical plant found predominantly along the coral ridge of Miami. Settlers used the root of the plant as a starch, which they sold throughout the West Indies. It required hard labor to dig it out of the ground that was laced with the thick roots.
6 Bentley, “Colonel Thompson’s Tour,” 35.
mad while killing others. Despite the disadvantages, Thompson believed that the area held promise for tropical fruits, as he found plentiful examples of “oranges, lemons, limes, bananas, ‘cocoa nuts,’ and grapes.” Because of the area’s agricultural promise, Thompson contended that if the government conducted drainage, it would develop into “the Garden Spot of the United States.” He found that freedmen throughout South Florida only needed the assistance of establishing schools, but that the federal government should assist in the "universal desire to become land owners" by assisting freedmen to establish homesteads throughout the region.⁷ Despite Thompson’s glowing account of South Florida, nothing became of the designs to settle, most likely reflecting fears and questions over labor. The cost of drainage also served as a factor. Instead, the Freedmen’s Bureau focused on helping freedmen establish homesteads in northern Florida.

Although the Bureau’s plans for South Florida failed to manifest themselves, the expedition launched by the bureau brought the most nefarious of South Florida developers into the region. Following his expedition and stay in Biscayne Bay, William H. Gleason returned to the vicinity of Miami in July of 1866 and came to dominate the area socially, politically, and economically for over a decade. Gleason moved to the area with his wife and two sons along with his business partner, William H. Hunt, his wife and son, and four hired men. They all moved into unoccupied and abandoned Fort Dallas, which Gleason claimed to lease from the government.⁸ Gleason, a native of Massachusetts, was not unfamiliar with the frontier lifestyle or land speculation, having founded the lumber town of Eau Claire in Wisconsin. When the bank that he had started there collapsed due to questionable business and land transactions, Gleason found himself

⁷ Bentley, “Colonel Thompson’s Tour,” 38.
in financial ruin. He was later accused of election profiteering by returning votes for Eau Claire when no election had been held. Gleason fled Wisconsin and established a pattern of fraud that he would repeat upon his arrival in Miami.\(^9\)

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Gleason professed himself to be a Radical Republican, and he launched a business partnership with William Henry Hunt of New York to open stores in Washington and Baltimore. When the war ended, Hunt and Gleason both moved to Virginia. Familiar with the effort to establish freedmen in Florida, Hunt proposed that the government build a cotton mill in Florida for him to run that would employ one thousand freedmen to be resettled in the state. The government rejected Hunt’s proposal, but his initiative helped boost Gleason’s position as a special agent for the Freedmen’s Bureau on the expedition in South Florida.\(^10\) When Hunt and Gleason arrived a year later, there were fewer than thirty-five settlers left in the area. Hunt brought with him many books on tropical farming, and he became the first settler to plant and encourage the growth of winter crops in the region.\(^11\)

Upon arrival in South Florida, Gleason began holding meetings with the Internal Improvement Board in 1866 to obtain property in exchange for draining swamp and overflow lands in the area. Gleason proposed that the state sell him land tracts of 640 acres for every 50,000 cubic feet of ditch or drain excavated. He proposed purchasing the lands east of Lake Okeechobee and south and east of the Everglades. He would in turn receive half of all lands reclaimed within seven years of beginning the project.\(^12\) While the board reviewed his proposals, he came to the attention of fellow Wisconsinite and

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11 Ibid., 105.
radical Republican Harrison Reed during his repeated trips to Jacksonville and Tallahassee. When Reed was nominated by the radicals to run for Governor in 1868, he nominated William Gleason to be his Lieutenant Governor. At the same time, Gleason’s erstwhile business partner William H. Hunt was elected to be Dade County’s state Senator in the Florida assembly. Within six months of the election, Democrats believed that Reed had turned a blind eye to shady land deals that benefited members of his administration and fellow Republicans. In turn, the Radicals of the Republican Party of Florida felt that Reed was not going far enough in pursuing Reconstruction measures and both began to call for the impeachment of the Governor.\footnote{Parks, “Miami in 1876,” 105-106.}

With dissent coming from both sides, William Gleason set his sights on the governorship, and he called for, then led impeachment hearings against Reed in 1868. While Reed was out of town, Gleason held a vote for the Governor’s impeachment and then declared himself governor. Unwilling to accept the verdict, Reed resumed his position at the state capital and ordered that Gleason not be allowed back in the building. Gleason took the state seal, set up office in a hotel across from the capital, and began running an alternative government. With two Governors, the state was thrown into chaos. Unable to come to an agreement, Reed claimed that Gleason was unable to become Governor as he had not lived in Florida long enough to run for state office. The State Supreme Court sided with Reed and Gleason was removed.\footnote{Parks, The Magic City, 41.} Undaunted by the setback, Gleason returned to Dade County where he was re-elected in 1870 to the Florida House of Representatives. He returned to Tallahassee and held the position until 1874. Feeling
cheated out of his original office, however, he continued to refer to himself as governor.\textsuperscript{15}

In Miami, Gleason established complete political control over the county. Between 1868 and 1876, Gleason listed himself as the County Clerk, taking control of the public records and dispensing money for public offices and projects. He named himself the tax assessor, land surveyor, and a member of the Public Board of Instruction at a time when there were no schools in the county. He paid himself for holding the various offices and performing differing tasks, including $120 for surveying a road between “Snake Creek” and the “Hunting Ground” that was not built until 30 years later and another $100 as the County Clerk.\textsuperscript{16} As tax assessor, he levied taxes on abandoned properties and then purchased the certificates when they failed to be paid. William Hunt and a black associate, Andrew Price, held all other public offices not taken by Gleason. Price became both County Commissioner and head of the school board reflecting Gleason’s Republican values concerning Reconstruction in the state. Gleason also named another of his black employees, Octavius Aimar, as head of the school board.\textsuperscript{17} Although Gleason proclaimed that he despised being called a Carpetbagger, his repeated actions proved him to be nothing but a relocated swindler. Between 1869 and 1872, Gleason pursued his drainage efforts with the Internal Improvement Board by establishing the Southern Inland Navigation and Improvement Company, which he chartered to build a canal between Fernandina and Key West. Under his contract, Gleason was permitted to purchase and acquire 1.5 million acres of swamp and overflowed lands for six cents an acre.\textsuperscript{18}

Despite his far reaching influence, Gleason’s kingdom began to show its first sign

\textsuperscript{15} Parks, “Miami in 1876,” 105-106.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{17} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 31.
\textsuperscript{18} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 41.
of cracks in late 1869 when Dr. Joseph V. Harris of Louisiana purchased William English’s 640 acre tract on the Miami River including Fort Dallas, which Gleason had commandeered three years earlier. Surprised by Gleason’s squatting, Harris demanded that the family vacate his properties. When Gleason refused to leave, Harris returned with his shotgun and evicted Gleason through force. By this time, Hunt had purchased his own homestead, and the Gleasons moved into Hunt’s home and took the Miami post office with them, changing its name to Biscayne and wiping the name Miami off the map. All mail for the county now arrived via Hunt’s home either by the barefoot mailman or by the mail boat, the Governor Gleason, operated by Andrew Price through Key West once a month. Unwilling to give up his claims to the properties and lands at Fort Dallas, Gleason developed a scheme to reclaim the properties after Price informed him that a man named James Fletcher Hagan lived in Key West. Gleason wrote to Washington pretending to be Hagen’s attorney. Claiming that James Hagen was the heir of James Egan (the original owner of the lands), he asked the name be changed due to a misspelling and the middle initial F. be added to purchase property deeds. He then claimed to have bought the properties from Hagan and asked that a new title be sent.

When the documents arrived, Gleason returned to Fort Dallas and demanded that Harris leave. Harris challenged Gleason to a duel, and when he refused, Harris beat him repeatedly with his cane. After Harris convinced the government that he was the rightful owner of the property, Gleason received a second title and continued to cloud its ownership.¹⁹ The dispute remained unresolved until 1874 when George M. Thew, head of a group of Georgians calling themselves the Biscayne Bay Company, agreed to purchase both titles, paying Harris $6,000 for his claims and Gleason $100 dollars and a thousand

¹⁹ Parks, The Magic City, 42-43.
shares of stock in the company for clear ownership and title to the lands.\textsuperscript{20} The company marked the first attempt at commercial fruit cultivation in South Florida by establishing a Banana Plantation along the Miami River.\textsuperscript{21} Although the soil proved to be incapable of producing a marketable product, the company moved the Dade County Court House into Fort Dallas in 1874.\textsuperscript{22}

Despite Gleason’s outrageous scheming, he did much to advertise the benefits of Miami. In George Washington Olney’s \textit{Guide to Florida, “The Land of Flowers,”} Gleason was quoted as describing Biscayne Bay as the true resort of the invalid, highlighting the “pure water, the chalybeate and other mineral springs” located in the vicinity, along with the “salubrity and equability of its climate.” He also highlighted the profitability of sponging and turtling in the area, claiming that both industries brought in $100,000 per annum.\textsuperscript{23} Daniel Garrison Brinton’s \textit{Guide to Florida and the South}, described dozens of settlers at Key Biscayne but found accommodations poor and insufficient. He suggested that Lieutenant Governor Gleason “will entertain travelers to the extent that he can.”\textsuperscript{24} Brinton describes the area as the most equitable spot in Florida. He suggests that the arrowroot could offer sustenance and employment as the Coontie root “forms a most admirable article of diet for the sick, and most profitable one for the cultivator.”\textsuperscript{25} Gleason was known to inform settlers of the Homestead Laws and also helped many in filing their claims, taking a portion of their properties as payment for his service. He also encouraged squatters to file claims, then paid them cash for their

\textsuperscript{20} Parks, “Miami in 1876,” 108.
\textsuperscript{21} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 44.
\textsuperscript{22} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 48.
\textsuperscript{25} Brinton, \textit{A Guide Book of Florida and the South}, 130.
properties. Dan Clarke and Edmund Beasely, both long time squatters, filed for homesteads with Gleason’s assistance. These claims may account for the abundance of Homestead petitions after 1868.\textsuperscript{26} For a brief period, Gleason even contracted with the *New England Emigrant Aid and Homestead of New York* to assist in finding homesteads for would be northern immigrants.\textsuperscript{27}

By 1870, a steady stream of new immigration began to make its way into south Florida, with the two most prominent new settlers being William B. Brickell and Ephraim T. Sturtevant from Cleveland, Ohio. The two men would be the first of several new immigrants from Cleveland, as the mineral and oil wealth of Ohio was being invested in South Florida real-estate and helped to capitalize many of its developments. Although both men arrived together, a disagreement erupted between Sturtevant and Brickell. Sturtevant filed a homestead in Biscayne and became the confidant of Gleason and Hunt, while Brickell opened up a trading post with the Seminoles on his property, trading hats, beads, cloth, coins, and liquor for the fashionable plumes, alligator hides, and venison. Brickle’s business became the most profitable and successful venture in Miami.\textsuperscript{28}

In 1876, Charles and Isabella Peacock of England moved into the old slave quarters of William English and opened a second Seminole trading post in partnership with William Ewan, the manager of the Biscayne Bay Company. During the same year, Henry E. Perrine arrived along with his sister to develop their father’s land grant. They advertised their property throughout the North, promising the first 35 settlers a free lot. However, after an 8 month dry spell, both returned to their homes in New York. Another failed business venture in 1876 involved three business partners from New Jersey, Henry

\textsuperscript{26} Parks, *The Magic City*, 43.  
\textsuperscript{27} Parks, “Miami in 1876,” 109.  
\textsuperscript{28} Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, 44.
B. Lumm, Ezra Osborn, and Ethan T. Field. They purchased all the beach properties between Jupiter and Cape Florida and planned to build a cocoanut plantation. The men planted over 300,000 coconut trees, but the shoots of the trees enticed rats, rabbits, and raccoons who devoured and destroyed their entire investment.\(^\text{29}\) Despite the setbacks, 1876 marked a pivotal year for South Florida as the new settlers helped unravel William Gleason’s political and economic stranglehold over the region.

In 1872, Gleason used his political clout to steal an election from Israel Stewart and John J. Brown by suspending the election, claiming voter irregularities and fraud, and then proclaiming himself and Ephraim T. Sturtevant the victors. In 1876, Stewart and Brown were once again nominated to run as state representatives. Stewart’s opponent was John Varnum, a new arrival from Gainesville, and Brown was pitted against Gleason. There were seventy-three registered voters in Dade County, and when the election results arrived, Brown and Stewart both won their races. Gleason once again claimed voter irregularities and fraud.\(^\text{30}\) For the first time, three voter precincts were opened in Dade County, one in Jupiter, another a Lake Worth, and the third at the home of Michael Sears which had been the voting precinct since 1870. E. T. Sturtevant, T. W. Faulkner and W. H. Jenkins were made inspectors of the "Sears Precinct," each being close associates of William Gleason. While counting the votes, several of the 55 ballots blew onto the floor and were picked up and returned to the table by several of the bystanders. Gleason used the incident to contest the votes in the Sears precinct, by far the largest in the county.\(^\text{31}\)

While voters in Dade County argued over the local election, the national

\(^{30}\) Parks, *The Magic City*, 49.
\(^{31}\) Parks, “Miami in 1876,” 168.
Presidential election between Democrat Samuel Tilden and Republican Rutherford B. Hayes proved to be equally as contentious. Having swept the rest of the South, Tilden believed that he had been declared victor, needing only one electoral vote to become president. With the election in Florida being tight, Democrats and Republicans both flooded into Florida to contest each vote that had been cast. The state was given 10 days to conduct a recount. When all the votes were in, Hayes had a slim 43 vote lead with all precincts reporting except Dade County. With the Dade vote missing, headlines from newspapers across the nation asked, “Where the Hell is Dade?” After hearing cases from around the state, the county canvassers finally arrived to hear Gleason’s case. The canvass board agreed to throw out the Sears district, resulting in Gleason once again stealing the election. Although Stewart won his election, he died on his return to Lake Worth. Hayes was also declared the victor over Tilden, 8 to 5.32

Although Tilden had the opportunity and grounds to contest the canvas board’s decision, he opted to concede the evening before the inauguration on the condition that Hayes bring an end to Reconstruction in Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana. In Florida, Democrat, George F. Drew, was elected Governor. When Hayes declared an end to Reconstruction, the Democratically controlled legislature refused to seat Republican legislatures, and in a karmic turn of events, Gleason was thrown out of office for a second time. When special elections were held in 1877 to select new county commissioners, locals turned on Gleason and removed all his men from office including Edward Barnott, Andrew Price, William H. Hunt, and E. T. Sturtevant. In turn, they elected William Brickell, John Addison, John Harner, and Andrew Barr. When the new men met for the first time, they voted to return the post office to Miami in September 1877. After the

election, Gleason left the area and moved to Bervard County.\textsuperscript{33}

Despite the political turn around, Miami remained a small-scattered settlement on the furthest reaches of the Florida frontier. Three out of every four settlers who arrived to stake claim to a piece of South Florida left without having had any real impact upon the people or landscape of the region. Those who stayed often moved around and squatted, searching for the most suitable land upon which to settle.\textsuperscript{34} Although much of the area proved to be alluring for many outside visitors during the dry winter season when wayward boats reached the shore, flooding from the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee inundated much of the surrounding area during the summer rainy season, cutting off land access to many settlers and forcing them to use dug out canoes to move in and around the region.\textsuperscript{35} As one visitor noted in 1875,

Throughout Florida, the settlement of Miami, on Biscayne Bay, is represented as a sort of terrestrial paradise, cultivated like the Garden of Eden, where every fruit of the tropics grows luxuriantly, where magnificent scenery delights the eye, and fever and death are unknown. It is in reality a very small settlement on a ridge of limestone, raising from five to thirty feet above the sea. The climate is equable but very hot, the scenery is pretty but never approaches magnificence, while the multitude of insects makes life hardly durable.\textsuperscript{36}

Miami’s relative isolation led to the removal of the courthouse and county seat further north to Lake Worth as a clientele of northern tourists and adventure seekers made the community more easily accessible.\textsuperscript{37} Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, most settlers around Biscayne Bay continued to rely upon Coontie starch to subsidize a subsistence


\textsuperscript{36} Frederick Townshend, \textit{Wild Life in Florida, with a visit to Cuba}. (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1875), 236.

\textsuperscript{37} E.V. Blackman, \textit{Miami and Dade County, Florida: Its Settlement, Progress and Achievement}. (Miami, FL: Victor Rainbolt, 1921), 16.
lifestyle of fishing, hunting, and illegal wrecking. Adam C. Richards, who moved to Miami from New York in 1875 and married the daughter of William Wagner, believed that the arrowroot served as the chief cause for the areas lack of development. He wrote,

The new settlers took it up and during the season they would make up all the starch necessary for them to secure the bare necessities of life and then spend their time in idleness until it was time to again take up starch making. If it had not been for this wild Coontie root, the people would have been obliged to have cultivated the ground to raise food for their families.

Richards became the first resident of Miami to grow and market winter vegetables for the northern market, planting tomatoes, beans, and eggplants and shipping them to New Orleans and New York.

The two most economically successful businesses in the region remained the trading posts of William Brickel and J.W. Ewan, both of whom did the majority of their trade with the Seminoles. The Seminole tribe remained in a relatively precarious position throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although the state passed laws recognizing the Seminole nation’s right to govern itself, legalized free trade between the white settlers and tribesmen, and made harassment of Indians punishable by law, it refused to recognize any right of tribes to ownership of any lands within the lower peninsula or to offer recourse for the loss of any lands to white encroachment. Brickle along with other traders sold alligator and buck skins, plumes, and beaver furs and otter pelts at a large profit to warehouses located in Key West, Fort Myers, and Tampa. As the

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39 Blackman, Miami and Dade County, Florida, 15.
40 Ibid., 16.
41 Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division. From wilderness to metropolis the history and architecture of Dade County, Florida, 1825-1940. (Miami: Metropolitan Dade County, 1982), 21.
42 Dovell, Chapter V: Latter-Day Explorers and Natives, 32-33.
demand for these items soared in the 1880s and 1890s, trade increased dramatically between the outposts and Seminoles, with an ever increasing flood of manufactured items penetrating the daily lives of most Seminole tribes.\footnote{Harry A. Kersey, Pelts, Plumes, and Hides: White Traders Among the Seminole Indians, 1890-1930,” \textit{The Florida Historical Quarterly} Vol. 51 No. No. 3 (January1973), 251.}

Despite their increasingly western lifestyle, the Seminoles’ rights to live and dwell within South Florida remained largely perilous. It was not uncommon for homesteaders to settle upon the cultivated lands of the Seminoles and use Indian gardens and clearings as evidence of land improvement to attain title to the lands. Encroachment upon hunting grounds also constricted game at a time when overhunting to meet market demands had already placed huge strains upon the local ecology. Locals and outsiders both began to take up the cause of the Seminoles. As one supporter noted,

\begin{quote}
  civilization has already gained a hold upon them, and each year finds them living more and more like white men. The mere recognition by the Government of these Indians as human beings possessed of human rights, as well of human feelings, would be the taking of one step toward the creation of a century of honor that should, in some measure, effect the memory of the “Century of Dishonor” just closed.\footnote{Arva M. Parks, \textit{Miami, the American Crossroad}. (Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 20.}
\end{quote}

Of course, not all of their contemporaries held good opinions of the Seminoles or for that matter of many early Miami settlers. A shift in the mindset of new immigrants and developers viewed any use of the land that did not produce marketable commodities and profits as a waste. Those who refused to settle upon and purchase lands saw their lifestyle increasingly derided, belittled, and portrayed as backwards. In 1882, Lippincott’s Magazine openly pushed for the removal of squatters and the Seminoles, arguing,

\begin{quote}
  These people were called squatters in the early days of the West occupying lands without title. When questioned as to why they thus lived on the public domain when they could acquire titles so cheaply under the Homestead Act, they would excuse their action by saying that they did not want to pay taxes when they could
\end{quote}
get the use of the land for nothing. These people enjoy their isolation. Nothing appears to annoy them more than the idea of being crowded. The land is in need of those who will make a better use of it, and the squatter will suffer absorption, as the Indian will expatriation.  

Increasingly, the discussion of profitability outweighed accessibility, as social discourse switched its focus from those who wished to live on the land to those who desired to make a living from the land. As one early settlement tract explained,

> Florida presents to the capitalist and the laborer, the merchant and the sportsman, the professional man and the mechanic, the farmer and the artist, the manufacturer and the hotel keeper, alike, unequalled opportunities for profitable investment, employment, and enjoyment of trade.  

On his trip through Florida, Daniel Garrison Brinton reflected these sentiments, claiming “the Everglades and cypress swamps may be considered at present agriculturally worthless. The ridge of sand and decomposed limestone along the southern shore, from Cape Sable to Indian River, is capable, however, of profitable cultivation, and offers the best field in the United States for the introduction of tropical plants.” Brinton also claimed “undoubtedly the finest winter climate in the United States, both in point of temperature and health, is to be fond in the south-eastern corner of Florida. It is earnestly to be hoped, for the sake of invalids, that accommodations along the shore at Key Biscayne and at the mouth of the Miami, will, before long, be provided and that a weekly or semi-weekly steamer will be run from Key West thither.” With an ever-larger presence of winter tourists in Florida, Miami’s marketable potential increasingly resided in its climate and the imagined and real healing properties that it offered to consumptive and neurasthenic visitors.

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48 Ibid., 102, 129.
Charles and Isabella Peacock proved to be the first settlers to meet the growing interest of tourists who wished a place to recuperate though not to settle. The Peacocks, who held part ownership in an Indian Trading Post with John Ewan, were persuaded to buy lands and build a hotel along Biscayne Bay after playing host to a New Yorker named, Ralph Middleton Munroe in 1877.\textsuperscript{49} Munroe first became aware of South Florida after visiting a government exhibition on the construction of the Fowey Light House and the Life Saving Stations that were being built along the coast of Southeast Florida. Munroe arrived in South Florida in 1880 after his wife, Eva, contracted tuberculosis, believing that the climate offered her the best opportunity to recover. Along with his wife’s sister, the three camped along the banks of the Miami River at the Peacock’s trading post until 1881 when Eva died. Munroe decided to move to South Florida in 1882 to be near to near his wife’s grave. Believing that lack of adequate accommodations was partly to blame for his wife’s death, he urged the Peacocks to build a hotel. They purchased an area along the bay front known as Jack’s Blight and began construction of Bayview House.\textsuperscript{50} When other structures were added, the Peacock’s changed the name to the Peacock Inn. Because of the improvements, Coconut Grove quickly emerged as the fastest growing settlement along the southern coast.\textsuperscript{51}

Ralph Munroe did a great deal to promote interest in the area. A sailing enthusiast, he encouraged other boaters to spend their winters along the banks of Biscayne Bay. Following his invitation, a wide array of sailing enthusiasts, writers, and intellectuals made their way to the Peacock Inn making Cocoanut Grove the focal point

\textsuperscript{49} Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development, \textit{From wilderness to metropolis the history and architecture of Dade County, Florida, 1825-1940.} (Miami: Metropolitan Dade County, 1982), 8. Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 50.
\textsuperscript{50} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 50.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 54.
of South Florida.\textsuperscript{52} Kirk Munroe became one of the most frequent of early visitors and one of the areas more prominent settlers.\textsuperscript{53} Kirk Munroe, the editor for the \textit{New York Sun}, and later, editor for \textit{Harper’s Young People Magazine}, was a sailing and sports enthusiast founding the American Canoe Association in 1880 as well as the League of American Bicyclist. In 1881, he took his canoe, \textit{Psyche}, on a 1600-mile cruise around Florida. The trip was soon followed by a honeymoon to Florida in 1883 after he married Mary Barr. Within a year, they bought property in Lake Worth, and within another year, they had purchased and set up their residence in Coconut Grove building their home “the Scrubs.” Upon arrival, Kirk Munroe and Ralph Munroe co-founded the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, which became the oldest continuous organization in South Florida. Many yachtsmen and boat enthusiasts made their way into South Florida solely because it was the southern most club registered.\textsuperscript{54}

As a steady stream of northern visitors, tourists, and upper class settlers made their way into Coconut Grove, another group of migrants followed suit in search of steady employment and later lands and homes. Soon after opening the Peacock Inn, Charles and Isabella Peacock hired Mariah Brown, a black Bahamian, to come and live and work on the hotel property. They later built a small Bahamian style house for her on the hill overlooking the hotel. As a steady stream of work became available, other black Bahamians soon followed. These workers purchased lands from early homesteader Joseph Frow and built a series of homes and farms, founding the community of Kebo, the first black settlement in southeast Florida.\textsuperscript{55} The presence of Conchs (Bahamians) in

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{52} Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development, \textit{From Wilderness}, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 54.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Blackman, \textit{Miami and Dade County, Florida}, 72.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 54.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
South Florida was not unknown. The Bahamian economy had experienced a steady decline throughout the 1870s due to overpopulation until the economy collapsed in the early 1880s, forcing many Bahamians to flee in search of steady work and employment. Black Bahamian migrants took intensive labor jobs grubbing out palmetto roots on new homesteads and digging coontie root on white farms. Severe competition from black and white Cubans, white Chonchs, Spaniards, Italians, and African Americans in Key West led many black Bahamians to seek employment elsewhere, so as farm and seasonal labor emerged in South Florida, black Bahamians migrated in mass to the area.

Because the climate and ecology of South Florida mirrored that of the Bahamas, Bahamian men and women held a strong advantage over other laborers and helped create a unique Caribbean labor market. Their expertise with tropical farming upon similar rocky soil allowed them to demonstrate to white settlers how to properly cultivate the land. With their knowledge, many in South Florida began fruit cultivation and farming seasonal vegetables. As George Merrick, a Miami developer and founder of Coral Gables, pointed out, “In the Bahamas, there is the same coral rock; and the Bahamian negroes knew how to plant on it; and how to use it; and they knew too that all kinds of tropical trees would grow and thrive on this rock.” Many Bahamians brought those same tropical trees and plants with them, providing the seedlings and cuttings from which

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56 Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, 1. Conch is a common term and moniker for citizens of the Bahamas. From the late 19th through much of the 20th century, Conch was used to denote white citizens of the Bahamas whereas Bahamian was used to designate black citizens of the Bahamas. Throughout this work, when I refer to Bahamians, I am generally referring to black natives of the Bahamas.

57 Ibid., 30.


60 Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, 36.
they could grow their own necessities.\textsuperscript{61} Outside of work and wages, the other great draw of South Florida for Bahamians was the promise of cheap lands upon which to settle and start their lives anew. Because both men and women found a readily available supply of work, it was not uncommon for young couples to move to South Florida together.\textsuperscript{62} It was also not uncommon for individuals to work a variety of jobs in salvaging, wrecking, turtling, sponging, grubbing, shipbuilding, and seasonal labor to complement their family’s subsistence farming.\textsuperscript{63}

To supplement their incomes, families took in relatives to live with them and encouraged immigration whenever jobs became available. These kinship networks offered the seed money from which lands could be purchased and homes built.\textsuperscript{64} To clear the lots, Bahamians hired other Bahamian workers, guaranteeing that monies stayed within the community. Through these tactics, Bahamians developed high rates of land and home ownership throughout South Florida.\textsuperscript{65} Bahamians frowned strongly upon intermingling with African Americans and strictly prohibited intermarriage well into the second and third generation of immigrants.\textsuperscript{66} The high rate of Bahamian property ownership contrasted sharply with the landlessness of African American pioneers who squatted in citrus groves and fields owned by white farmers. Early African Americans rarely settled in communities and rented cabins and shacks for a dollar a week, which they paid through seasonal work. South Carolinians made up the majority of both African American and white settlers in Lemon City, which may have reflected early immigration

\textsuperscript{61} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 37.
\textsuperscript{62} Shell-Weiss, "They all came from someplace else," 75.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 112-114.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 122.
efforts of William Gleason and William Hunt to encourage settlement.\textsuperscript{67}

Churches supplemented the stability created by home ownership among the immigrant community. These high rates of land ownership helped successive generations to invest in the community through the purchase of property and the construction of new homes.\textsuperscript{68} E.W.F. Stirrup proved to be one of the early forces to bring the Bahamian community together, helping to construct Charles Avenue in Coconut Grove and building over one hundred homes in the community during his lifetime.\textsuperscript{69} Outside of Kebo and Coconut Grove, Bahamians formed ethnic enclaves in Lemon City, Cutler, and South Dade County.\textsuperscript{70} In 1889, longtime resident and Bahamian John Saunders homesteaded land in Lemon City on which he had been squatting. He subdivided the land and started selling lots in what became the business district of the community.\textsuperscript{71} With a wide array of opportunities, Bahamians traveled more often to South Florida to seek work than to any other location, and they helped create a movement that would propel the area to become the second largest community of black immigrants in the United States.\textsuperscript{72}

As the new port of entry for South Florida, Coconut Grove grew into the largest community along Biscayne Bay.\textsuperscript{73} Many of the homesteaders brought with them little capital, and they relied upon what settler Charles Pierce described as the shared bonds of the pioneer spirit, explaining, “we were pioneers, and a pioneer call for help was never turned down.”\textsuperscript{74} Staples and luxury items were purchased by catalogue, at a store in Lemon City or Miami, or on market day when the boat arrived. The Montgomery Ward

\textsuperscript{67} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 16.
\textsuperscript{68} Shell-Weiss, "They all came from someplace else," 128, 136.
\textsuperscript{69} Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development, \textit{Wilderness}, 10.
\textsuperscript{70} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 16.
\textsuperscript{71} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 56.
\textsuperscript{72} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 66.
\textsuperscript{74} Mary Doughit Conrad, “Homesteading in Florida During the 1890s” \textit{Tequesta} Vol. 17 (1957), 17.
Catalog was often called the “Cracker’s Bible,” with many families “going in together to order staples from Chicago.” The market day offered not only the chance to buy staples but also to sell home productions. Many women braided hats, fans, flowers, and centerpieces for the table from palmetto and grasses.

As the small community of Coconut Grove began to grow, a number of its citizens began to make and push for new improvements in the community. Besides the Peacocks, Mrs. Thomas Hine, a new arrival from Newark New Jersey, spurred the construction of a new church. They along with Mary Munroe, the wife of Kirk Munroe, formed the “Pine Needle Club” to raise funds for the establishment of a library. These women, along with Flora McFarland, the first female homesteader and schoolteacher, also served as the foundation of the Housekeepers Club, which they organized and founded in February 1891 to discuss and raise monies for civic improvement and promotion. Women served as the driving force to bring about new social and civic improvements and used private monies to foster what they deemed the public good. By 1895, both Lemon City and Coconut Grove had grown into thriving settlements. Lemon City encompassed three short business streets with fifteen buildings that included a number of new homes, two hotels, one restaurant, a real-estate office, and a sawmill. A stagecoach also began tri-weekly service into the community. While these areas grew, Miami was virtually forgotten, remaining little more than the old rock buildings of Fort Dallas.

Miami’s fortunes began to change with the arrival of Julia Tuttle from Cleveland,
Ohio, in 1891. By the time Tuttle moved to Miami, she had become a regular winter visitor to the region. The daughter of Ephraim T. Sturtevant, she and her children spent most of their winters with her father returning to Cleveland each spring.\textsuperscript{80} Tuttle’s husband, Frederick, owned iron works throughout Cleveland, and through their business, they knew many of the leading industrialist of the era. When Frederick contracted Tuberculosis, Julia Tuttle took over the business.\textsuperscript{81} After her husband died, Tuttle developed a fear for her children’s “delicate” health and moved to Miami with her daughter, Fanny, and her son, Harry. In 1891, Tuttle sold the business and all her property in Cleveland, and she purchased the 640-acre tract of land on the North bank of the Miami River where Fort Dallas stood. Tuttle repaired and converted the fort into her home and opened it as the showplace of the region.\textsuperscript{82} From the outset of her move, Tuttle established plans to develop her properties in Miami. Before she left Cleveland, she met with J. E. Ingraham, who worked for the Plant System as President of the South Florida Railroad. Tuttle told Ingraham that if he could convince Plant to extend his railroad to Fort Dallas, she would offer him half of all her holdings in the area.\textsuperscript{83}

When Plant proved unable to extend his rails to Fort Dallas, Tuttle initiated a writing campaign to Henry Flagler to convince him to extend his railroad from Lake Worth and Palm Beach to Fort Dallas. Flagler had little to no interest in the southern portion of the state as he had developed plans to make Lake Worth into the premier winter resort of the United States, believing it to be the most attractive spot on the Florida peninsula. By 1894, Flagler opened the Royal Poinciana Hotel at Palm Beach, the largest

\textsuperscript{80} J.K. Dorn, “Recollections of Early Miami,” \textit{Tequesta} No. 9 (1949), 44
\textsuperscript{81} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 60.
\textsuperscript{83} Dorn, “Recollections of Early Miami,” 44. Blackman, \textit{Miami and Dade County, Florida}, 54.
wooden structure in the world at the time. For extending his railroad, Flagler received over 102,917 acres along his railway to Palm Beach and devoted all of his energies at marketing and selling those lands to prospective buyers in particular farmers. Flagler’s disinterest sparked a series of panicked visits by Tuttle to St. Augustine that frustrated Flagler to no end. Tuttle’s efforts seemed to come to no avail, and it looked as if her plans would end as had those of many of her predecessors, in disappointment. Nature then intervened when the freezes of December 1894 and February 1895 swept across North and Central Florida, destroying the citrus belt of the region. Tuttle saw an opportunity and seized the chance to convince Flagler of the economic feasibility of extending his lines to Miami.

Tuttle wrote a letter to Flagler claiming that the area around Biscayne Bay had been spared from the devastating freeze and offered an invitation to come and explore the region. With much of the backcountry upon which Flagler had staked his railroad in ruins, Flagler sent J.R. Parrott and J.E. Ingraham, whom he had recently hired from Plant, to Miami to verify her claims. Tuttle greeted the party and escorted them throughout Miami. Ingraham wrote to Flagler that he was delighted with the conditions, finding no evidence of frost with all the orange trees still in bloom with lush green foliage. He later recalled, “I found at Lauderdale, at Lemon City, Buena Vista, Miami, Coconut Grove, and at Cutler orange trees, lemon trees and lime trees blooming or about to bloom, without a leaf hurt, vegetables growing in a small way untouched.”

Not completely satisfied with the letter, Tuttle gathered a bouquet of flowers and foliage, which she sent

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86 Blackman, *Miami and Dade County, Florida,* 54-55.
with Ingraham to be hand delivered to Flagler. To further encourage his interest, both Julia Tuttle and William Brickell offered land concessions to Flagler if he would agree to extend his railroad to Miami. Upon meeting with Ingraham, Flagler set plans to meet with Tuttle and Brickell to begin negotiations.  

Along with Ingraham and Parrott, Flagler took his two leading architects, Joseph McDonald and James McGuire. Flagler agreed to extend the rails, build a hotel, construct a passenger station, and lay out the grounds for a new city, and in exchange, Tuttle and Brickell agreed to give Flagler half of all of their holdings. When formal contracts were drawn up, Tuttle granted Flagler a 100-acre tract from Biscayne Bay to the east while preserving her 13 acres at Fort Dallas. Flagler was granted alternate lots in what was laid out as the business district, despite wanting one solid tract. This allowed Tuttle to market some of her remaining property for commercial ventures. The Brickles developed a similar deal with Flagler, maintaining their properties along the Bay while offering alternate lots on the south bank of the Miami where Flagler planned to construct a bridge. During the visit, the architects selected the lands upon which to build a hotel and ordered them to draw up plans for The Royal Palm. He also laid out the locations for a passenger station and freight yards and ordered Parrott to begin plans to extend the rail.

In order to maximize his gains for extending his railway to Miami, Flagler made arrangements to extend the intercostal inland canal down to Miami, receiving 10,000 acres a mile from the Boston and Florida Atlantic Land Company along with 1,500 acres per mile from the Florida Coast Line Canal and Transportation Company; this brought him over 100,000 acres of agricultural land to sell to new customers and settlers along the

new track. Flagler also approached the Bahamian Government about extending steamship service to the island in hopes of capturing the lucrative travel market. The government agreed on the condition that Flagler construct a new pier and purchase the Royal Victoria Hotel that he would rebuild into a larger facility. These negotiations were largely kept under wraps until work on the Miami extension was completed. In turn, Tuttle also maximized her profits, buying up vacant lands to sell after news of the railroad extension was formally made. She also intercepted lumber being shipped from Key West in order to guarantee that she held a monopoly on building supplies. Each of the major real-estate holders moved to maximize their individual profits and drive up land values.

To protect her lands from “undesirables,” Julia Tuttle established Miami as a dry town, requiring both Flagler and Brickell to write anti-liquor clauses into all the deeds with the exception of the one for the Hotel Royal Palm, which gave Flagler a monopoly over liquor sales in the city. Although this halted the construction of saloons and alcohol establishments in the immediate vicinity of their properties, railroad and construction workers with new wages and appetites for beer and liquor spurred the development of an area called North Miami. To spur sales of their properties, Flagler, Tuttle, and Brickell offered rebates from 25-40 % depending on location to anyone who paid cash and put up a building within a year. Prices for properties in the new business district ranged from $75 to $2,500. As the train pushed forward and the hotel progressed skyward,

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92 Ibid., 54.
94 Edward M. Chesney, *Florida: Its climate, soil, and productions with a sketch of its History.* Natural
businessmen from throughout the region vied to become the first business in their area of trade. A slew of merchants, bakers, printers, druggists, hardware stores, livery stable owners, and professionals made their way into the city and opened new businesses.95

The first trains arrived on April 13th, 1896, and regular passenger service began a week later. With the railroad complete, Flagler focused most of his efforts on constructing the Royal Palm. McDonald, Riley, and John Sewell arrived on March 15th. The following day, a sternwheeler called the “St. Lucie” arrived loaded with tools, so Sewell hired a crew of over 1000 men and began constructing the hotel. As spring had arrived in South Florida, all the workers wore mosquito nets and kept in constant motion to avoid the swarms of mosquitos and yellow flies that rose from the nearby mudflats and Everglades.96 While construction crews labored throughout the city, Miami’s first newspaper, the Miami Metropolis, issued its first paper on May 15th and featured the opening of the Bank of Biscayne, which brought needed capital into the community.97

The Miami Metropolis along with a number of older citizens proved to be the driving force behind city incorporation, arguing that it was necessary to set and enforce ordinances. With men bathing nude in the streams and creeks, the established residents of the area wanted to bring back a modicum of conventional stability.98 The first informal incorporation meeting of 100 people, of whom 40 were registered voters, took place in June. The meeting rejected desires by the church to include North Miami in the new community in order to clean out the saloons. The area was rejected largely because neither Flagler nor Tuttle desired it to be part of the new community. After publishing

95 Parks, The Magic City, 65.
98 Ibid., 93.
news of the incorporation meeting for five weeks, a second meeting was held on July 28th. Of the 438 eligible male voters, 368 showed up for the vote, of which 162 were African American and Bahamian. They all voted to incorporate the “City of Miami.”

Although this illustrates early biracial political efforts, evidence suggests that the railroad only counted black votes to help meet the necessary quorum to push a vote.

Following incorporation, officers for the city had to be elected. Because of fears that the railroads would take control of politics of the area, a small contingent of political opposition arose. Outside of Tuttle and Brickell, other pioneers in the area had little say in the development plans. Five tickets were put forth, all of which selected John B. Riley as their candidate for Mayor. Riley was the head of Flagler’s Fort Dallas Land Company in Miami, and Flagler wanted to ensure that anti-Flagler groups were not able to take control of the city after he had spent a fortune to extend the railroad. Because of these and other actions, Flagler was sometimes known as “Miami’s Benevolent Dictator.”

In order to win the approval of Tuttle and Brickell, John Sewell allowed them both to select their own aldermen, forming what was known as the “citizen’s ticket.” Alex C. Lightbourn, an African American voter, delivered the most impassioned speech of the night on behalf of the citizen’s ticket. With overwhelming support throughout the community, the ticket won handily.

Throughout 1896, John Sewell continued to head crews clearing land and laying out streets, while businessmen pushed construction efforts for their businesses. When John Sewell completed his task, two square miles on both sides of the river had been cleared for the fledgling city. Sewell mapped out roads and began the process of forming

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100 Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development, Wilderness, 22, 29.
and paving the streets. He and his crews used the native rocks to form hard surfaced streets, digging down and laying larger rocks with smaller rocks and pebbles placed upon the upper surface. When completed, communities throughout the bay and Dade County began to call for hard surface roads to connect them with Miami, and with the assistance of Flagler and his men, roads were constructed to Coconut Grove and Buena Vista.\(^{102}\) With many of his employees unable to purchase property and housing, Flagler paved 13\(^{th}\) and 14th streets and built 35 middle class cottages which he rented to his workers for $15 to $17 a month or could buy for $1,800.\(^{103}\) These served as the only properties that Flagler ever rented. Because the Royal Palm demanded both electricity and sewage, Flagler built the first sewage system and waterworks and electric light plant in Miami.\(^{104}\) He later became the President of the Florida Power and Light Company to help control costs.\(^{105}\) He also donated property to establish the first school, courthouse, city hall, and a number of churches. He also built the first hospital in the city.\(^{106}\)

While these efforts exemplified Flagler’s overwhelming generosity to the people, they also served to help encourage land sales throughout Miami and the bay, for which Flagler’s East Coast Railroad now claimed majority stakes. In order to push land sales as quickly as possible, Flagler built a two-story brick building to house his Model Land Company.\(^{107}\) Flagler established the land company earlier in the year to oversee and manage all of the F.E.C.’s landholdings, which were quickly approaching two million acres. He placed J.E. Ingraham as the head of the division, and the two developed a wide

\(^{102}\) Blackman, *Miami and Dade County, Florida*, 64.
\(^{106}\) Martin, *Florida’s Flagler*, 164.
\(^{107}\) Blackman, *Miami and Dade County, Florida*, 211.
array of plans and tactics to promote and encourage immigration into Miami and the rest of Florida. The company needed a steady supply of settlers, not only to buy property, but to patronize Flagler’s freight business. Flagler believed that every settler was worth $300 dollars a year in freight along the F.E.C. railway. Through booklets, pamphlets, fairs, and a magazine called the Home Seeker, Flagler advertised his hotels and the communities in which he held major parcels of property. He also moved to plant small colonies of people in key areas along his railway to encourage the growth of new communities. In later years, he employed horticulturalists, agriculturalists, and stockmen and built agricultural experiment stations to determine the most suitable forms of cultivation for each locale. Greater productivity meant larger freight shipments for his railroad. To boost land sales, the F.E.C. refunded the cost of a train ticket to anyone who bought land in Miami or the backcountry.

Beyond Flagler’s direct effects upon the construction and growth of Miami, many of his employees contributed greatly to the city’s development. Joseph A. McDonald, Flagler’s head architect on the Royal Palm Hotel, also constructed the first house and hotel along Biscayne Bay at a cost of $50,000, which he dubbed the Biscayne Hotel. He leased the hotel to the F.E.C. to provide hotel accommodations during the summer when the Royal Palm shut down. John and E.G. Sewell opened the first store in downtown Miami. Dr. James Jackson arrived at the behest of Flagler and established the first medical practice. He later wrote “The Miami Spirit is a Great Thing. It is

110 Parks, The Magic City, 76.
111 Dorn, “Recollections of Early Miami,” 44.
113 Dorn, “Recollections of Early Miami,” 52-54.
infectious.” This boom time spirit forged the creation of a new middle class in Miami.\textsuperscript{114} Many of Flagler’s African American railroad and later hotel workers established the first black residential and business district in Miami called Colored Town, and with steady wages to fuel commerce, it quickly emerged as the epicenter of the African American middle and professional classes in Dade County.\textsuperscript{115}

Tuttle helped build the first Episcopalian church in the city, and she encouraged Flagler to help pay for the first Presbyterian Church. They both helped sponsor large tent churches for other denominations. By encouraging the growth of churches, Flagler and Tuttle hoped to bring stability to a frontier community in which courts and the legal system were not always reliable. Beyond Christian denominations, Miami also attracted a large number of Jewish immigrants. Among the 16 original merchants, all but 4 were Jewish. When the local sheriff arrested the merchants for opening their stores on Sunday, leaders throughout the community protested until the men were released. Their actions helped establish an open religious environment throughout Miami.\textsuperscript{116}

As 1896 was coming to a close, Miami started to resemble a community for the first time. When locals went to bed on Christmas Eve, the Royal Palm was well on its way to being completed, the downtown had largely started to take shape, homes had begun to sprout up, and everyone eagerly awaited the opening of the tourist season in January. Then at 4:00 a.m. on Christmas morning, a fire broke out in Brody’s grocery store. It quickly spread and engulfed the Bank of Biscayne along with 28 other buildings that encompassed the business district. Locals rushed to help put out the fire, but with no

\textsuperscript{114} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 65.
\textsuperscript{115} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 51.
\textsuperscript{116} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 68.
fire department, downtown Miami was laid to waste and ruin.\textsuperscript{117} The fire marked the first of a series of setbacks that threatened the very foundation of Miami before it even got off the ground. Soon there after, locals established the first volunteer fire department with the financial assistance of Flagler.\textsuperscript{118} Both Flagler and Tuttle stepped in to aid many of the businessmen to rebuild their stores.

A second catastrophe occurred when a devastating freeze reached the southern tip of Florida for the first time in recent memory, wiping out newly planted citrus groves from central to south Florida and destroying the vegetable crops that were almost ready for market. Tropical foliage throughout the Lower Peninsula turned brown from frostbite. The temperatures dropped low enough in Miami that buckets of water froze on the porches and the streets were covered in tropical birds stunned by the rapid dip in temperatures. J.K. Dorn remembers picking up 27 mocking birds and warming them in his home until the freeze had passed.\textsuperscript{119} Fearing another great exodus of farmers, Flagler quickly called in all of his heads of staff. Flagler, Ingraham, and Parrott all agreed that it would be best if the railroads issued free seed to farmers throughout the state to help them rebound some of their losses and also to hedge freight losses that would result that year. Ingraham contacted all seed houses and exchanges to guarantee that enough seeds were made available. Fearing that the banks would also go under if the crops failed as they had done in 94-95, Flagler ordered Ingraham to offer farmers loans at 6 percent for as much and as long as the farmers needed without any need of security. Ingraham claimed that Flagler feared that the women and children would starve, so he capitalized the venture for up to $200,000. These efforts also assuaged fears in an already panic stricken real-estate

\textsuperscript{117} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 73
\textsuperscript{118} Dorn, “Recollections of Early Miami,” 50.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 54.
market, calming jittery bankers eager to pull out and saving the citrus and winter truck industry of the state.\textsuperscript{120} Within 72 days after the first relief checks were issued, vegetables were shipped out by the carload, saving the fledgling industry.\textsuperscript{121}

To help bolster the agricultural industry, Flagler decided to sponsor the Dade County Fair that E.V. Blackman organized to showcase south Florida agricultural products while the Royal Palm hosted its first convention for the International Tobacco Growers. Flagler paid the entire fair expense and offered large prizes, including $75 for the best display of homegrown vegetables.\textsuperscript{122} The fair proved to be such a success that Flagler had Blackman organize the event every year with an agreement to pay full expenses.\textsuperscript{123} Eventually, Flagler paid for a permanent Fair Building, which he erected on the Bay Front. These fairs helped to illustrate the profitability of truck farming throughout the region, which Flagler used to promote the area for settlement.\textsuperscript{124} After the freeze, Flagler took a direct interest in the health and welfare of the agricultural industry. Early pioneer Mary Doughit Conrad, who moved to Little River and opened a hotel, remembered, “Flagler frequently got off the train to look at the farms and encourage the farmers.”\textsuperscript{125}

To help reestablish the citrus industry after the freeze, Flagler planted eighty acres in oranges and grapefruits in nearby Kendall to serve as a model citrus grove. Other early citrus groves in the region included those of John Douglas and the Potter brothers who moved from Sanford and took up a homestead in Coconut Grove. George B. Cellon, of

\textsuperscript{121} Dorn, “Recollections of Early Miami,” 57.
\textsuperscript{122} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 76.
\textsuperscript{123} Blackman, \textit{Miami and Dade County}, 70.
\textsuperscript{124} Dorn, “Recollections of Early Miami,” 51.
\textsuperscript{125} Conrad, “Homesteading in Florida During the 1890s,” 5.
Beuna Vista, moved to help establish an avocado and mango industry beginning in 1897. Realizing that all the avocados in Miami matured at the same time when apples, peaches, and strawberries were flooding the market, Cellon decided to search for trees that would fruit in the winter. After searching across Florida, he found one avocado tree on the homestead of C. L. Trapp that produced in the late fall, and he took the buds to start the avocado industry in South Florida. Trapp Avocados soon flooded the yards of South Florida settlers. Wanting to build upon his work, the Department of Agriculture sent specialists across Guatemala and China in search of new species of avocado and found a variety that produces every month of the year, which was sent to the experiment station, then distributed to farmers. The Department of Agriculture also imported the Mulgabo Mango and developed a grove in Jupiter, Florida, from which the fruit was distributed to interested farmers.\textsuperscript{126}

During the spring, construction work for the Royal Palm finally drew to a close. The Royal Palm offered true Victorian opulence to the landscape of Miami. While not as large as the 934 ft. Royal Poinciana in Palm Beach, the Royal Palm stretched 680 feet long and 267 feet wide. It was five stories tall and formed a large courtyard with two large wings stretching from the main building. A 578-foot veranda wrapped around the East of the building and overlooked the Bay.\textsuperscript{127} Like most of Flagler’s other wooden hotels, it featured colonial architecture with a yellow-framed building, green shutters, and a red mansard roof.\textsuperscript{128} The hotel could accommodate up to 500 guests. There were 200 bathrooms, over 350 guest rooms, and another 100 for maids and a hotel staff of over

\textsuperscript{126} Blackman, \textit{Miami and Dade County}, 62-63.
\textsuperscript{127} Martin, \textit{Florida’s Flagler}, 163.
\textsuperscript{128} John Sewell, \textit{Miami Memoirs}. (Miami: Arva Parks and Co, 2008), IX.-XII.
The main dining room could seat 500, while there were 3 other separate dining rooms for maids, children and their caretakers, and black hotel workers. There were electric lights throughout and two electric elevators. The hotel also operated its own ice plant. It featured a ballroom, a writing room, billiards room, and a reading room.

Clock golf, a 40 x 150 ft. heated swimming pool with 100 changing rooms and two 25 and 75 foot tall slides, and bathing casinos with bay water served as entertainments for hotel guests. A flower conservancy, tennis courts, baseball fields, croquet, and golf facilities were also added. A large pier was later built to allow easy access for guests who arrived on their yachts. An orchestra played every evening in the rotunda and gave a concert every Sunday night to guests and locals. To provide quick transport into Miami, Flagler initiated the Florida Limited between Jacksonville and Miami with six passenger cars. The trip took 12 hours. Another passenger train was added between Palm Beach and Miami to transport wealthy guests between the two hotels. The Royal Palm quickly emerged as the new symbol of Flagler’s wealth and power in the state.

After the hotel was complete, Flagler sent his crews to begin work on the harbor and hotel facilities in the Bahamas, making his larger plans known to the Miami public. To ease public worries over what these developments might mean for the people of Miami, Flagler began work on dock and port facilities, cutting 15 ft. channels for shallow draft boats in order to help turn Miami into a port of entry for his steamers and vessels drawing over six feet of water. Parrott, who was overseeing the dredge work,

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went before the Rivers and Harbor committee later in the year to receive permission to
widen the channels to 18ft.\textsuperscript{131} Flagler persuaded Congress to appropriate $11,000 to
complete the dredging.\textsuperscript{132} The amount covered only a small cost of the $100,000 project,
but Flagler believed that he could offset the cost with the mail contracts with the
Bahamas that the government had awarded him. Over the summer and fall, he erected a
large terminal dock and a spur track from the bay to the mainline in order to make Miami
the chief terminal for the FEC Steamship Company, which serviced Key West, Cuba, and
now the Bahamas Islands.\textsuperscript{133} The project was completed by January 10, 1898, and Flagler
had the S.S. Miami built to service the four ports. While Flagler intended the ship
primarily to haul hotel guests and mail between Miami and the Bahamas, it also emerged
as one of the main avenues of passage by which Bahamians made their way into Miami
for the first time.\textsuperscript{134}

Flagler’s developments received great acclaim from the \textit{Miami Metropolis} and
almost everyone supported his efforts, but a few worried that he had permanently altered
and destroyed the environment and its natural surroundings. Naturalist Hugh Willoughby
addressed some of these concerns in his 1898 work \textit{Across the Everglades}. In one
remark, he noted,

\begin{quote}
What a change has been made in this place since the same time last year- from
two houses, it has been made into a town of two thousand inhabitants. Of course, its
splendid big hotel with every modern convenience will prove a great boon to the tourist,
but for me, the picturesque seemed to have gone. Its wilderness has been rudely marred.
Those who have seen the enormous increase in hotels in the Adirondacks will appreciate
this feeling. But in the nature of things, the wilderness must gradually be encroached
upon. What would the settler and the farmer be without this railroad that now gives him
\end{quote}

Quarterly} 38 (1960): 201.
\textsuperscript{132} Derr, \textit{Some kind of paradise}, 55.
\textsuperscript{133} Blackman, \textit{Miami and Dade County}, 68.
\textsuperscript{134} Mabel Hart Zander, \textit{Where Wave the Palms}, (Chicago, Ill.: Hack & Anderson, 1905), 92.
rapid communication with the North for his winter products. We must not look upon these things from a sentimental point of view. The romance and poetry must be suppressed for the sterner, material welfare of our fellow man.\textsuperscript{135}

Willoughby also noted that many of the Seminoles had been driven off their lands. He remarked,

On the ruins of the picturesque Indian village, that we had so much admired the year before, was built an unsightly wooden shanty and the quadrangle which the palmetto shacks had stood was occupied by a rude vegetable garden. The happy little faces that we remembered, the squaws busying themselves with their house chores, the stalwart braves returning laden from the chase, and the air of quiet contentment which had pervaded the scene had now vanished never to return again.\textsuperscript{136}

Many Seminoles found themselves unwelcome to new arrivals, and they made fewer visits to the trading posts and stores. Despite taking note of these early concerns, little was done to alleviate the problems as locals felt that they were a necessary evil in order to develop the community. Development and modernization became the two new mantras that would shape Miami’s growth over the next century. With a population that had sprung to 1,681 overnight, the majority of Miamians cast off the city’s frontier image and embraced tourism and the agricultural revolution that was shaping and changing the landscape.\textsuperscript{137}

Julia Tuttle died unexpectedly in 1898 following the Spanish American War, leaving much of the city in mourning.\textsuperscript{138} Tuttle’s death changed the very fabric of the nascent city. After her death, Tuttle’s son Harry began to sell off her property without the liquor clause. Later, he decided to turn her property into a casino.\textsuperscript{139} Flagler became a more dominant figure in the city after her death. In 1899, he pushed for the country

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{135} Hugh L. Willoughby, Hugh L. \emph{Across the Everglades; a canoe journey of exploration.} (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott company, 1898), 62-63.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 67.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Sewell, \emph{Miami Memoirs}, 190.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Parks, \emph{The Magic City}, 78.
\item \textsuperscript{139} David Leon Chandler, \emph{Henry Flagler: the Astonishing Life and Times of the Visionary Robber Baron Who Founded Florida}, (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 184. Parks, \emph{The Magic City}, 81.
\end{itemize}
courthouse to be moved from Juno to Miami, and he used his black employees to swing the vote in his favor. John Sewell recalled, “when it came to voting, I used my black artillery to good advantage. We beat out West Palm Beach and won the election by a good safe majority.”

Squabbles also broke out between the *Miami Metropolis* and the Model Land Company over land values. Ingraham warned that “Miami Real-estate could be more vulnerable, and newspapers should be careful since “A very little thing will sometimes stop a boom and create a panic.”

In the face of growing disenchantment on the part of newspapers across the state with railroads, and the increasing calls for regulation, Flagler started purchasing a number of papers. Starting with the *Florida Times Union*, he eventually purchased the *The St. Augustine Record*, the *Palm Beach Daily News*, and *The Metropolis*.

Despite Miami’s internal squabbles, the turn of the century saw stability, growth, and expansion as the city settled into its new role as the nation’s new winter playground. Starting with “The Magic City” which reflected both its tropical allure and astounding birth, Miami adopted a number of monikers that it used to advertise its winter amenities and home life, including, “Land of Palms and Sunshine,” “In the Tropical Zone of Florida Where winter is turned into Summer,” and It’s Always June In Miami.

Newcomers including E.G. Sewell, John B. Reilly, and Isador Cohen proved to be the most prominent early boosters.

As both a real-estate dealer and a representative of Flagler’s Model Land Company, John Reilly had a vested interest in the success and promotion of the nascent

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143 Van Beynum Horn, “City and Community Slogans. Gathering Words and Catch Phrases that are Popularizing Florida Cities, Miami and Dade County Florida,” *Suniland* Vol. 1 No. 3 (December 1924), 41.
city. He served as Miami’s first Mayor and held that position for four consecutive terms, then headed up the Board of Trade when he stepped down. Isador Cohen arrived in Miami with the Freeze of 1895. A Russian Jewish immigrant who was educated in New York, Cohen made his way South opening mercantile houses in Savannah, Georgia and Fort Pierce, Florida. Believing that Miami offered opportunity, he loaded a boat with his stock and headed to Miami, opening one of the first stores in 1896. Cohen became invested in the success of the city, helping to found the Merchants Association in 1900, then serving as its President from 1902 to 1906. He later served as treasurer of the Board of Trade from 1906 to 1907, secretary from 1908-1911, and President in 1912. He also held a wide array of other civic positions throughout his life.\(^{144}\) Working with the Flagler Railroad, E.G. Sewell arrived in Miami along with his brother, John Sewell. Opening a men’s retail shop with his brother, E.G. Sewell felt the need for an organization to represent the interests of Miami businessmen and pushed for the creation of a Merchants Association. Later the members of Merchants Association helped spur the creation of the Board of Trade in 1907. Sewell also served as both the President and head of the Publicity Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce and organized the first national publicity campaigns for the city of Miami.\(^{145}\)

With a strong civic engagement and real-estate promotion, Miami saw rapid expansion and growth. Among the first new buildings to penetrate the skyline, the Halcyon Hotel also known as “The White Palace” offered a majestic alternative to Flagler’s Royal Palm. The steady stream of tourists led to the construction of a number of

\(^{144}\) Blackman, *Miami and Dade County*, 164.  
\(^{145}\) Ibid., 91.
new hotels including the San Carlos, Green Tree Inn, Biscayne, and Graylynn. The realty board demanded adherence to strict guidelines to maintain the city’s image as a tropical paradise. When Nelle Irene Coates’ father started constructing a fireplace in their living room, he was reproached by Mrs. McAllister, a realtor and later hotel owner, who felt that his fireplace undermined Miami’s image as a winter retreat and threatened to stifle land sales. Miami’s tropical allure sparked a boom in winter houses among America’s millionaires, as Henry Tuttle and William and Mary Brickell sought to offer exclusive housing to a budding clientele. Tuttle opened Fort Dallas Park, which became the finest residential street and walled subdivision Miami. At the same time, William and Mary Brickell took advantage of the lack of development on their half of the river to create Brickell Avenue, also known as “Millionaire’s Row” for its exclusivity.

Having invested over $20,000,000 to reach Miami, the Florida East Coast Railway remained the leading proponent for the expansion and growth of Miami as both a tourist and agricultural center, and it looked upon every passenger as a possible real-estate investor. Since a number of its lands were under water, the F.E.C. moved to establish a drainage contract with the government whereby it would receive additional lands in exchange for draining properties. With the creation of a new state railroad commission in 1897, opposition to state land grants to railroads had become a contentious issue. In order to try and sidestep the dilemma, James E. Ingraham, J.R. Parrott, and Rufus E. Rose started the Florida East Coast and Sugar Corporation to petition the

146 Parks, The Magic City, 78.
147 Nelle Irene Coates, How I remember the Early Days of Miami. (Personal Account, N.D), 10-12.
148 Parks, The Magic City, 78-80. Blackman, Miami and Dade County, 64.
149 Bates & Company. Florida tourist and southern investor's guide. (Cedar Rapids, Ia.: Bates. 1898), 5.

government for public lands in exchange for draining the lands east of Lake Okeechobee.

The government and Governor Bloxham agreed and set a contract to allow the company to purchase 20,000 acres of land for .25 cents an acre for each 200,000 cubic yards of drainage canals excavated. Upon receiving the contract, the Sugar Corporation handed over their operations to the Florida East Coast Railway and became a subsidiary of the company. Flagler and Rose laid out plans to drain the Glades by diking selected areas and then digging canals to reclaim the lands. Flagler and Rose then developed a larger plan to drain much of the area by diverting water through the Hillsboro, Miami, Cypress, Middle, Little, New, Arch Creek, and Snake rivers by busting the limestone barriers and diverting drainage canals into the river beds. He spent about $100,000 initiating the project but then ran into a series of delays; he asked for extensions to start the project on two separate occasions, but this proved to be a political mishap for the railroad as the state moved to freeze all land giveaways at the turn of the century.

A dilemma had emerged during the twenty years between Governor Bloxham’s first and second terms when the Internal Improvement Board of the State had given away over 17 million acres of its 20 million swamp and overflowed lands, primarily to railroads and drainage corporations. With its last contract made with the Florida East Coast and Sugar Corporation, the Internal Improvement Board had oversubscribed itself by nearly 6 million acres. When Governor William Sherman Jennings took office in 1900, he immediately halted all land giveaways. Flagler moved to try to lay claim to what he believed were crucial lands near Cape Sable, but he was blocked by Jennings who

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152 Ibid., 46-48.
informed the F.E.C. that the promise of land was not worth the paper upon which it had been written. The F.E.C. responded by filing a lawsuit for 2,000,000 acres, but after a series of cases, Flagler only received about 260,000 (though not in the areas of Cape Sable, which Jennings’ wife wanted to set aside to form a park).

When the Florida East Coast and Sugar Company asked for a second extension on October 11, 1902, the Internal Improvement Board rejected the request but told the company that if they began immediate drainage, they could purchase the lands for .30 cents. Jennings then petitioned the federal government for monies to fund state drainage projects, which he believed beneficial to the people of the state.\textsuperscript{154} A wide array of lawsuits were filed against the Internal Improvement Board, but the state finally decided in November 1904 that any land grants in the Everglades made by the state for anything other than drainage were neither legal nor binding. The matter was finally resolved on January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1905, with the case of Southern States Land and Timber Company versus the Trustees of the Improvement Fund in which power was handed back to the IIF Board to deed lands solely for reclamation.\textsuperscript{155}

When Napoleon Bonaparte Broward decided to run for governor as Jennings’ successor in 1904, he took up the cause of Everglades reclamation. A former steamboat man turned sheriff of Duvall County and later filibuster during the Cuban Revolution; Broward viewed himself as a representative of the common man. He subscribed to Populist rhetoric and feared the growing power of corporations over state politics. Upon entering the race, Broward proclaimed, “I decided to become a candidate and give the people an opportunity to elect a Governor who has never allowed himself to be put under

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 73-77.
obligations to the land grant corporations of this State, and who will not be hampered, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, in voting against giving away the State's lands, or in adjusting their claims to the money now in the State Treasury.\footnote{Dovell, “Chapter VI,” 86-88.} He then turned the election into a referendum upon whether the state should take up the cause of Everglades’ reclamation for the common man. Arguing, “Water will run down hill,” Broward proclaimed that if the overflow of the Nile and Mississippi could be controlled, then so could the Everglades. He portrayed the election as a fight for the average man against the seduction of corporate tyranny.\footnote{Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, \textit{Open letter of Governor N.B. Broward to the people of Florida.} (Florida: Broward, 1906), 1-14.} He won the election hands down, and on his inauguration day in January 1905, he made William Sherman Jennings the general counsel of the Internal Improvement Fund.\footnote{Dovell, “Chapter IV,” 90-93.}

Much of the appeal of state drainage swirled around the possibility of making over 3 million acres of rich muck land available to farmers for rock bottom prices.\footnote{John C. Gifford, \textit{John C. The Everglades and other essays relating to southern Florida.} (Kansas City, Mo.: Everglade Land Sales Co., 1911), 1-7.} Broward initiated efforts by having the state government authorize the creation of an Everglades Drainage District with the right to levy a 5 cents tax upon lands encompassed in the district in order to conduct drainage.\footnote{Dovell, “Chapter IV,” 99-102.} Flagler and the F.E.C. did everything within their means to limit their power of the drainage district and frequently refused to pay the drainage tax levied upon their properties. These evasive tactics had little effect, as Broward initiated dredging projects throughout the state, starting with the New River Project in Fort Lauderdale. The plan was to widen and deepen the riverbed to help lower the water table of Lake Okeechobee and limit the overflow from the lake during the rainy

season. Broward also petitioned for a canal project at the head of the Miami River if the citizens of the city would agree to supply $40,000 for the acquisition of dredges to conduct the project. The F.E.C. objected to the appeal due to the fact that they still maintained that they held the rightful contract to conduct dredging, but there was also concern that new lands could lower property values along the bay by making state lands more desirable than those owned by the railroad. Despite Flagler’s worries, the state laid plans for the canal project, which it started in 1909.

Unable to pursue his interests in drainage, Flagler turned his focus back upon his railroad and shipping interests. In 1900, Flagler acquired and merged the Plant Steamship Company with the Florida East Cost Steamship Company. He also operated a partnership with the Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company giving him a monopoly in Caribbean shipping interests. Flagler believed that the future of his shipping interests rested with a deep-water harbor in Florida. Although Biscayne Bay had been deepened to accommodate his steamers, he felt that the future lay in the completion of the Panama Canal and Pan-American trade, and the ability to build a deep-water port with terminals that were easily accessible by the railroad. Since Key West already possessed such a harbor and anti-railroad sentiments had grown immeasurably, Flagler worried that the government would not provide the expenditures to deepen the port facilities at Miami, so he announced that he would extend his railroad across the Florida Keys in 1905. He believed that Key West would replace Tampa as the closest port for Pan American Trade by nearly 300 miles, and he could use the leverage to undercut shipping prices at the

161 Dovell, “Chapter IV,” 90-93, 109-112.
162 Isidor Cohen, Historical sketches and sidelights of Miami. (Miami, Fl.: Priv. print, 1925), 166-168.
164 Parks, The Magic City, 87.
Atlantic Coast Line’s facilities at Port Tampa.165

While Miami worried over its future development, Flagler began extending his railroad tracks to try to ensure his company’s competitive survival. From the outset, he ran into a series of obstacles. When he desired to extend the rail through Coconut Grove, the wealthy citizens filed injunctions and forced him to choose a different route.166 The new plan required crossing the marshy terrain of southern Dade and then extending the railway across the ocean. To accomplish the task, Flagler hired a crew of over 4,000 laborers. He was forced to purchase his own dredges, sea going cranes, floating cement mixers, pile drivers, a fleet of tugboats, steamboats, and barges to even begin to tackle the expansion.167 The logistics of the project and its unprecedented scale and distance over open water forced Flagler to rethink his designs on several occasions. The costs proved to be astronomical- over $20,000,000 in seven years to complete his rail line.168 Flagler’s response to the expenditures was always, “You can’t expect to get anything out of a state when you put nothing into it.” The more money he put into the expansion, the more Miami got out of it, as the city served as the staging ground for the railway construction with many of the laborers returning every weekend to spend their wages there and a number of them establishing homes in the city.

At the same time, the leaders of Miami increasingly came into conflict with both Flagler and the F.E.C. over a variety of political and economic issues that threatened to tear apart and undermine the working relationship that existed between the company and city. The first incident emerged when Flagler helped push for the break-up of Dade

167 Parks, The Magic City, 87.
County by urging the creation of Palm Beach County in 1908. After seeing its success, the citizens of Fort Lauderdale launched their own campaign to separate from Dade County and two years later received recognition as Broward County. These events served to exemplify the growing divide between the F.E.C. and the community of Miami. To meet the political and economic competition, the Board of Trade merged with the Merchants Association and created the Chamber of Commerce. The move directly resulted from the refusal of the F.E.C. to complete its dredging project in Biscayne Bay. After the completion of the overseas railway, the F.E.C. saw little incentive to complete its contract with the federal government and it halted all work on the project.

Because of the actions of the F.E.C., anger erupted throughout Miami, in particular from newspaperman S. Bobo Dean. The F.E.C. responded by offering Miami a three year option to buy all the bay front from Flagler Street to the P. & O docks, including the channel and spur tracks for $415,000 in 5 percent bonds. Infuriated by the turn of events, Miami’s newspapers and political leaders launched a tirade upon the F.E.C., portraying the company as a greedy corporation out to destroy the lifeblood of the city. The city followed filing a lawsuit against the F.E.C. to claim the lands by right of eminent domain. While the city followed its legal case, the new unified Chamber of Commerce moved forward in trying to secure federal funding for the completion of its dredging project. The government agreed to dredge an 18 foot channel into the bay, and in turn, the city had to pay for the dredging of an 18 foot channel and turn basin. After the city negotiated new dredging contracts with the government, the F.E.C. upped its asking price

169 Blackman, Miami and Dade County, Florida, 14.
170 Cohen Historical sketches and sidelights of Miami, 75. Blackman, Miami and Dade County, Florida, 34.
172 Cohen, Historical sketches and sidelights of Miami, 78.
173 Blackman, Miami and Dade County, Florida, 68.
for the harbor facilities to $1,500,000, which the city outright rejected. A firestorm erupted between the city and the F.E.C. that raged on for years. Finally, the company refused to respond to any letters or requests concerning the matter, leaving Miami with a largely inaccessible port. Calm was not reached until the city sent requests to the Flagler Estate to sell them the facilities for $1,000,000 in Miami bonds at 6% in 1920. An agreement was finally struck, bringing an end to the calamity.\footnote{Ballinger, \textit{Miami Millions}, 13.}

Despite the growing divide between Miami and the F.E.C., Flagler’s activities still dominated the ups and downs of the labor market, and his shadow loomed large, not only over the city and backcountry that he helped to create but also the entire state. With much of the railroad completed, Flagler’s energies and monies pushed the railway across the vast open stretches of the Florida Keys. Sometimes called Flagler’s Folly for the sheer amount of money invested, other times labeled the Eighth Wonder of the World, the completion of the railway marked a turning point in the lives of the people of South Florida. At the age of 83, Flagler saw his railroad cross the state that he had helped to open. It moved across the map of his empire as it ran from St. Augustine to Daytona down to Palm Beach and Miami and across the blue azure of the keys into Key West. During his last major speech to a crowd in Key West, Flagler joked, “Now I can die happy; my dream is fulfilled!” His tracks now stretched from one tip of the peninsula to the other. After completing the railroad, Flagler retreated to his home in Palm Beach where he continued to run the company. A year later he suffered serious injuries after falling down his marble staircase. Unable to recover, he died on May 20, 1913. Despite a number of misgivings, flags from Miami to Jacksonville flew at half-staff. Although Flagler was one of many whose grand ambitions helped to shape the state, no other single
man had done so much to transform Florida into the nation’s leading winter retreat and tourist resort.\footnote{Les Staniford, \textit{Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad that Crossed the Ocean}. (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002), 202.}

With the completion of the railroad in 1912, Miami’s economy experienced a drastic slowdown as workers sought other avenues of employment. With the loss of their wages to support local businesses, Miami’s business leaders moved to secure the city’s position as a tourist resort and pave the way for its growth as a viable city. With ongoing disputes between the city of Miami and the F.E.C., the Chamber of Commerce moved to fill the publicity gap lost after Flagler’s death. Everest G. Sewell emerged as Miami’s new champion and crown prince, becoming the head of the publicity board of the Chamber of Commerce. Sewell had gained wide recognition for his promotional efforts to celebrate the city’s 15\textsuperscript{th} anniversary by bringing the Wright Brothers’ airplane to Miami Beach.\footnote{Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 90. Paul S. George, “Passage to the New Eden,” 447.} After heading the publicity board, he collected money from all the leading businessmen of the community and launched the first national publicity campaign for the city of Miami. His efforts helped fill Miami’s hotels to full capacity for the first time in several years.\footnote{Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 95.} The success of his campaign launched him into the presidency of the Chamber of Commerce. Sewell helped grow the chamber of commerce to over 745 members. He enlisted the help of a number of civic organizations including the Rotary, Civitan, and Kiwanas. These efforts marked a shift away from sole reliance upon the railroad to trying new approaches to redefine tropical paradise in a rapidly changing and modernizing world.\footnote{Blackman, \textit{Miami and Dade County}, 34.} Through Sewell’s efforts, Miami had to turn away over 10,000
prospective visitors during his first year as president.\textsuperscript{179}

As with most new developments, the changes brought about by railroad expansion and Everglades’ drainage came at a price. When dynamite blew through the falls of the Miami river to release Everglades waters from the back country, a torrent of water rushed from the canals, and down the river, and out into the bay. Muddy black water poured into the bay for weeks killing off whatever fish and coral remained.\textsuperscript{180} The fresh water springs that had for so long sustained the village of Miami rapidly disappeared.\textsuperscript{181} Locals remarked at the rapid pace at which the water levels dropped around Miami and the county. The reclamation of lands hastened the salt intrusions that had already started to occur as a result of water withdrawal from the aquifer. Crocodiles that once called Arch Creek and Biscayne Bay home moved further south to Card Sound.\textsuperscript{182} As the water table dropped, the waters in the Miami River became depleted, killing citrus groves along its banks. The sawgrass meadows rapidly dried up and Miami began to experience its first dust storms as topsoil blew from the reclaimed lands of the Everglades.\textsuperscript{183} As land sales increased and real-estate agencies sought to claim lands, pioneer families and the women’s club led by Edith Munroe convinced William Sherman Jennings’ wife to lobby her husband to save Royal Palm Hammock by creating a preserve and park there in 1906. These efforts served as the foundation from which a burgeoning environmentalist movement would begin a long push for the preservation of the Everglades and the creation of a national park.\textsuperscript{184}

The rapid influx of new arrivals accelerated the ecological collapse of the

\textsuperscript{179} Parks, \textit{The Magic City}, 92
\textsuperscript{180} Parks, \textit{Miami, the American Crossroad}, 31.
\textsuperscript{181} Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development, \textit{Wilderness}, 62.
\textsuperscript{182} Henshall, \textit{Camping and cruising in Florida}, 71.
\textsuperscript{183} Hoyt Frazure, \textit{Memories of old Miami}, (Miami, Fla.: Miami Herald, 1965), 18.
Everglades eco system as alligator and plume hunters all but wiped out wildlife across the region. One spread of egret plumes brought as much as $50.  

One agent was known to ship over 130,000 plumes a year to meet demands. Seminoles and whites served as the leading plumers. The Seminoles knew the best rookeries, but they took only straggling adults and always left enough adult birds to maintain and look after the rookeries. New hunters and plumers saw only profit, and they decimated bird rookeries throughout the state shooting all the adult birds and leaving un-hatched eggs and chicks for the bellies of raccoons and buzzards. One plumer slaughtered close to 1,800 spoonbills, herons, and other semi-tropical species around the area of Cape Sable. By 1900, a single rookery of brown Pelicans remained on Pelican Island, and they had ceased breeding. A pair of reddish egrets was all that remained of the species in the state, and the wild Flamingos had been hunted to extinction. The teaming life of waterfowl that swarmed the skies of South Florida during the winter had almost completely disappeared in less than a decade after the appearance of game hunters. In order to protect the remaining species, the Audubon Society lobbied the state legislature to take action, and in 1903 a ban was placed upon plume hunting throughout the state. The measure had little effect, so the Audubon society hired former hunters to serve as wardens to help guard the rookeries from hunters. Congress also passed the Lacey Act, which forbade interstate shipment

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189 Blackman, Miami and Dade County, 76.
of wild animals protected under state laws.\textsuperscript{190}

Along with the wildlife of the Everglades, drainage and population expansion began to cut at the very social and cultural fabric of the Seminole population. In his memoir, Isador Cohen remarked,

The Seminole Indians who had been very much in evidence in the early days of Miami are now rarely seen on the streets of the city except during the tourist season when they appear in groups composed of gaudily dressed men, women, and children, and receive much attention from the winter visitors. They also derive considerable revenue from visitors to their villages, which are located in the northwestern section of the city at Musa Isle, overlooking the north fork of the Miami River.\textsuperscript{191}

One early pioneer remarked,

The few Seminoles who remain as relics of past glory and power are becoming demoralized, in an alarming degree, by the encroachment of modern civilization and “wyomi” (whisky). The potent agents have, in great measure, subjugated the eesta-chatta’s wild unbridled tendency to live and die as free, and as innocent of work, as the alligators and herons of his native marshes.\textsuperscript{192}

With game rapidly disappearing, their farming lands seized by new settlers, and laws passed restricting the pluming trade, the Seminoles tribe found itself being squeezed out of its homeland as it retreated further from the encroachment of new settlement. At the same time, the loss of its primary source of revenue forced the tribe to turn to the tourist trade as a source of income, exhibiting themselves as spectacles for a small tourist profit.

Drainage threatened the very existence of the tribe more than any other new developments as it renewed calls for Seminole removal in order to pave the way for civilized settlement of the Everglades. Dynamite blasts and the sounds of the dredges penetrated the interior of the glades shaking the pots, pans, and kettles of the Seminole

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{190} Kersey, Jr. “Pelts, Plumes, and Hides,” 259-260.
\bibitem{191} Cohen, \textit{Historical sketches and sidelights of Miami}, 204.
\bibitem{192} Andrew P. Canova, \textit{Life and Adventures in South Florida}, (Tampa, FL.: Tribune Printing, 1906), 101.
\end{thebibliography}
Anthropologist Minnie Moor Wilson called the sounds the death song and recessional of the Seminoles. One tourist guide noted, “As the Seminole sees the water in the Everglades slipping away from him through the efforts of drainage commission, he is disturbed about the future. The lowering of the waters means the eventual disappearance of his livelihood.” Promotional tracts for Everglades drainage consistently called for Seminole removal, snidely remarking, “When the Everglades are drained they will doubtless be told once more to move on, to make way for the white man's encroaching wheels of progress. And the Seminole will doubtless move on, because the Seminole loves freedom above everything else--even the freedom of the Everglades.” With a lack of government recognition and no strong desire to establish an open relationship with the federal government, the Seminoles found their legal rights still largely unsettled.

To try and calm growing worries and fears over labor in South Florida, the state used reclaimed land to promote foreign immigration in hopes of supplanting black labor in south Florida. The three most prominent communities to be established by drainage were the towns of Dania, Hallandale, and Yamato. Immigration labor agents from New York, Chicago, and Europe worked to supply a large number of foreign workers and laborers for settlement throughout the state. Dania emerged when fifty Danish families were brought to farm around the area of Modelo. Upon their arrival, they changed the name to Dania. A similar number of Swedish families were imported and founded the colony of Hallandale. In 1905, fifty Japanese families were brought to Dade County as

196 Rainbolt, *The town that climate built*, 92.
part of an experimental station for cultivating new crops. The colony experimented with silk, tobacco, tea, rice, and a wide array of fruits. Each of the colonies experienced mixed results, and they failed to confront “the labor issue” which really stemmed from a racial issue, as an agrarian culture confronted the need for cheap wages and long hours in a capitalist society that had come to despise its failures with the symbolic “negro” of the South.

Despite the attempts to displace black labor throughout Florida, African American and Bahamian workers flocked to the region. Beginning in 1905, with the commencement of Everglades drainage and railroad extension, a new wave of Bahamians poured into South Florida by the thousands to work as both laborers and agrarian labor. An equal number of African Americans also flocked to South Florida following the growth of the new citrus and truck farming region. Bahamian men largely worked in the burgeoning construction industry though many also served as seasonal farm laborers, sailors, and deckhands. Most of Miami’s buildings were constructed using Bahamian methods of forming a lime mortar from the oolitic limestone to make a kind of stucco for brick homes and walls. This style helped give Miami one of its early nicknames as the Great White City as the white stucco frequently glistened in the Florida sun.

Bahamian women arrived in large numbers to meet the growing need of middleclass families for maids, laundresses, and domestics. Miami businesses and entrepreneurs advertised daily in the Nassau Guardian and other Bahamian

198 Shell-Weiss, “They all came from someplace else,” 89.
199 Dunn, Black Miami in the Twentieth Century, 37.
200 Shell-Weiss "They all came from someplace else," 95.
newspapers. As the demand for laborers increased, small schooners stacked with people standing on the decks carrying fifty or sixty new immigrants became a regular sight as a steady flow of steamers to and from the islands made the trip affordable. When it was required to have $5 upon arrival, boat captains gave five-dollar bills to passengers that were then returned upon entry. Bahamians joked that the same $5 bill admitted thousands of Bahamians in Miami. The flood of new workers brought new revenues into the thriving Bahamian community. Charles Street in Coconut Grove became the commercial, residential, and business center of Bahamian society as it was filled with Bahamian owned homes, businesses, churches, and schools. As Miami’s Bahamian community began to thrive, monies sent back to their homes also helped the island economy begin to recover for the first time in over two generations.

The turn of the century also saw African Americans forging their own community in South Florida. Most African American men served as common laborers throughout South Florida. They tended to serve as the primary labor for planting, tending, and harvesting crops throughout the region. Many also served as porters and laborers at Flagler’s hotels. Unable to shop in white stores in downtown Miami, Colored Town, later known as Overtown, blossomed into a thriving business community as farm wages sustained and helped grow African American businesses. Many of the early business leaders formed a Colored Board of Trade that promoted African American entrepreneurship and helped to establish over a hundred black owned businesses in Miami including groceries, parlors, savings and loans, and dry goods stores. The Lyric

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202 Shell-Weiss, “They all came from someplace else,” 159.
204 Shell-Weiss, “They all came from someplace else,” 125.
205 Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, 47.
Theater also emerged as the largest and most beautiful theater operated by African Americans in the South, helping to give Overtown the nickname of Little Broadway. D.A. Dorsey, who arrived with Flagler’s Railroad after the freeze, became one of the leading real-estate developers and black hotel operators. He quickly emerged as Miami’s first black millionaire, laying plans to turn Fisher Island into an African American beach resort. Cola Nip bottling company became one of the first black businesses to thrive, specializing in Orange Smile and Peach Soda. Florence Gaskins became one of the leading black businesswomen through her laundry service that catered to leading whites in Palm Beach. With a large number of black working mothers, African American women’s clubs rose to meet the challenge of childcare, with 1 in 4 clubs providing daycare services.

When a number of these middle class black families tried to move into the white neighborhood of Highland Park in the early 1900s, white residents overwhelmingly called for restrictive land deeds and covenants forbidding the sale or lease of properties to anyone other than whites. With a black population of over 2,258, African Americans began to swell beyond the traditional black neighborhoods of Miami, causing “boundary problems” where black and whites residential communities butted up against one another. Contention between black and white residents resulted in bombings of unoccupied buildings in Colored Town during the summer of 1910. After the explosion, African American mobs assembled on Waddel Street and Avenue K. When reports spread among the white community that African Americans had armed themselves, the American Legion was called out to take control of the streets.

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206 Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, 78.
208 Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*, 77.
With continued violence over the next year, the issues reached a head in November 1911 when a proposal was made to create an alley to separate Miami from North Miami and create officially segregated neighborhoods and districts throughout the city. Morse Street became the official racial boundary line.\textsuperscript{209} When nativism and fears over immigration began to emerge, the African American community turned upon Bahamian immigration, with the black Board of Trade calling into question the need for immigration and whether there were already too many “Nassau Negros” living in Miami. The issue highlighted the social and economic divide between the African American and Bahamian communities, with African Americans pushing for tighter immigration policies against both white and black immigrants. When the demographic shift of Bahamian immigrants moved towards poor black males, the Miami Board of Trade sided with the black Board of Trade and also called for stronger immigration restrictions.\textsuperscript{210}

Over the next two decades, a greater influx of white and black citizens only heightened the racial and economic tensions of the community. Jim Crow laws eventually demanded separate public facilities for blacks and whites, and private hotels moved to hide black labor out of sight of the eyes of hotel guests and visitors. When the Hurricane of 1926 struck Miami, it brought to light many of the underlying issues. Due to years of neglect and lack of oversight by the local government, large swaths of Overtown, the African American business and residential section of Miami, were almost completely flattened by winds, as shady construction using inexpensive materials gave way under torrential winds and rains. With black churches and social clubs also demolished, the storm largely undercut the ability of the black community to recover physically and

\textsuperscript{209} Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 77-78.
\textsuperscript{210} Shell-Weiss, “They all came from someplace else,” 172.
financially.\textsuperscript{211} In the years following the hurricane, economic recession and later the Depression slowed any ability to rebuild much of the area, and increasingly black neighborhoods turned into blighted urban slums. The white community’s response was not to help rebuild the existing communities but to tear down black neighborhoods, creating instead urban housing outside of the sight of white residential neighborhoods. White Miamians who depended upon cheap black labor to sustain their lifestyles preferred to be sheltered from the economic realities of the workers who made their lives a reality.\textsuperscript{212}

This complete indifference to the lives of others marked a drastic shift from the ideas of earlier settlers. The growing push for higher real-estate values and increased profits from agricultural productivity undercut a belief in the common good, and as this basic principal disappeared, so did the ability of white Miamians to see the humanity in many of their neighbors. By the turn of the century, as the spacial and economic realities of growth came to the forefront of public debate, the desires and needs of those outside of the white community increasingly failed to matter. While African American, Bahamian, Seminole, and white communities continued to grow, reaching unprecedented heights during the boom of the 1920s, the needs of white developers came to dominate the political dialogue of the city and region at the expense of almost all other discussion.

Miami continued to expand rapidly, but the city’s social and political openness began to slowly dissipate as white inhabitants increasingly called upon and desired to have black neighborhoods moved. With increased competition between African Americans and Bahamians for jobs, both groups began to turn upon one another. At the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[211] Dunn, \textit{Black Miami in the Twentieth Century}, 130.
\item[212] Miami: Metropolitan Dade County, \textit{From wilderness to metropolis the history and architecture of Dade County, Florida, 1825-1940}. (Miami: Metropolitan Dade County, 1982), 150.
\end{footnotes}
same time, white businessmen in the Board of Trade and Chamber of Commerce sought to reimagine Miami’s future growth. Increasingly those plans failed to include any space or voice for black or ethnic inhabitants. Over the same period, Seminoles continued to see their hunting grounds and fields disappear as settlers encroached upon and in many cases took their lands with little recourse for their losses.

These changes marked the beginning of an increasingly conservative period in Miami, whereby the city leaders pushed an economic, social, and political agenda that benefited white developments and residents over the needs and desires of African American, Bahamian, and Seminole communities. Although the Seminoles had largely remained voiceless throughout Miami’s growth, the sheer increase in the number of new inhabitants threatened to undercut the ability of Seminole families to sustain and support their individual clans and tribes. These actions changed the ecological make-up of the environment helping to destroy the habitat for wild game and fish upon which Seminoles survived. In turn, the Seminoles helped devastate much of the native ecology as trade for skins, hides, and plumes drove most animals to the verge of extinction by the turn of the century. Within less than 10 years after the arrival of the first train into the region, the landscape and lives of those who called the area home had been radically reimagined. After filling up much of the desired space in Miami and along the bay, competition undercut and changed the earlier openness of development as white residents chose their own needs and desires at the expense of all other groups in the area.
Chapter Six
Conclusion: The Profits of Pleasure!

An estimated eighty-nine million tourists and travelers arrived in Florida in 2012, marking the largest number of yearly visitors in the state’s history. During their stay, most of those travelers were likely presented with a wide array of images and articles of consumption symbolizing the authentic Florida experience, from squeaky alligator toys to sacks full of oranges or grapefruits and from billboards and posters of families playing in the surf and sunshine to specialty shops featuring Cuban sandwiches and cigars. During their stay at a hotel or at a stop along the interstate or highway, many of those same tourists were also probably offered, on at least one occasion, a free gift in return for an hour of their time. For many of those tourists, that hour was spent touring a new development or luxury condominium looking to sell rooms or time-shares in a highly competitive real-estate market. With the promise of yearly access to the health giving Florida sunshine and surf, high stakes salesmen try to push tourists into buying their own piece of Florida paradise within the limited hour spent with their guests. During that time, many salesmen might highlight the warm sunshine in the middle of winter, showcasing luxurious tropical foliage and gardens, emphasize the easy access to the beach or lake front property, offer each guest tables full of decorative fresh “organic” fruits from nearby orchards and farms, and market the overall positive and pleasurable experience of owning a piece of Florida real estate.

Few people think about the symbolic meaning of the imagery presented to tourists and even fewer contemplate the origins of these representative actions and experiences
that comprise a unique Florida vacation. For most tourists, peeling and biting into their first fresh juicy orange bought at a fruit stand along the side of the road is more than enough to help fulfill that desire for an authentic Florida experience. Many rarely contemplate what drives and propels them to spend hours and days baking in the hot Florida sun while playing in the sand and surf along the beach, or why those actions provide immeasurable pleasure and joy even when those same events may have caused aching sunburns, dry brittle hair, and blistered feet. For many millions of American and foreign tourists, Florida and its many communities repeatedly ranks at the top of vacation destinations for millions of travelers. Even with its overbuilt beaches, crowded highways, and its increasingly urban landscape, simply mentioning Florida in a crowd conjures up images of tropical paradise and pleasurable experiences that sometimes confounds those residents who call the state home.

The question then arises how Florida has managed to sustain a social and cultural dialectic that repeatedly characterizes this ever-changing space as a pleasurable paradise requiring at least one pilgrimage during a lifetime but more commonly a once-a-year excursion. More than any other state, Florida has long fostered a unique collective of businesses, producers, politicians, and bureaucrats that have cooperated to forge a powerful construct of the state as paradise found. Even when advertising the uniqueness of their separate localities, rarely do communities in Florida undermine the booster efforts of other cities in the state. Instead, many cities and towns present themselves as the most delightful or authentic location in Florida to draw and encourage tourists to visit and spend money in their community or at their business. This unique arrangement stems from the overall economic impact of tourism on the Florida economy. Taxes spent by
tourists on gas, amenities, and souvenirs largely subsidize the treasuries of both the local and state governments and create a unique situation whereby Florida remains one of a handful of states without an income tax. Tourist dollars also largely subsidize the maintenance and repair of highway infrastructure. This largely serves as an economic incentive for citizens and businesses alike by undercutting the need for monies from local property taxes and helping keep the mileage rate down for many towns across the state.

While this discussion sounds as if it is reflective of modern developments and changes, Florida’s emergence as a tourist destination and the importance of tourism to the local and state economy traces its roots and origins back to the late 19th century in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. Although most Florida historians would situate the rise of tourism with the expansion of the railroads in particular the Florida East Coast Railway owned by Henry Flagler and the Plant System of railways owned by Henry Plant, these works fail to tap into the previous twenty-year period of tourist expansion and settlement in Florida. Both men most certainly helped open up vast stretches of the state to new developments, and they helped to expand the tourism infrastructure in particular through their many spectacular hotels and resorts, extensive railways, and plush railcars, but placing the rise of Florida’s tourism and development solely with these two individuals fails to capture the earlier dialogue, zeal, and effort aimed at encouraging tourism, agricultural expansion, and real-estate that first brought the attention of both Plant and Flagler to the state in the first place.

The true fervor underlying Florida’s tourist development was born out of war time necessity as Union sympathizers of the Florida Tax Board forged plans to settle the state first with colonies of loyal northern settlers and later with African American union
soldiers in hopes of switching Florida from a uniquely southern state to one politically and economically aligned with the North. When those strategies failed, members of the tax board, in particular Lyman Stickney, along with abolitionists in the New England Immigrant Aide Society, continued with the campaign in hopes of creating a free society in Florida wherein Northerners and African Americans could utilize the free market to fashion a new state in the image of the North, a state that they imagined could be a shining model to the rest of the South. After the war, many of these same ideas were also picked up by the Freedmen’s Bureau with plans of turning Florida into a refuge for freedmen across the South.

These ideas called forth a small contingent of new adherents determined to transform and open the Florida wilderness for the creation of a new and just society rooted in farming and the free market. At the culmination of the war, Harriet Beecher Stowe, an adherent of the New England Immigrant Aide Society, became one of the leading proponents of settlement. She tapped into the growing interest in citrus and the growing consumerism of the North and envisioned a new wave of independent productive farmers that could develop a sustainable commerce for the state upon which Northern immigrants and freedmen could create an equitable future for themselves. While Stowe noticed a large contingent of freedmen entering the state, she failed to see the great thrust of northern settlers that had been predicted. The question then remained how to encourage and develop a steady stream of northern interest in the region.

For Stowe, the answer lay with her own son, who was emblematic of the growing number of invalids who were making their way into Florida every winter to recover from a wide range of ailments from pneumonia to rheumatism to mental disorders stemming
from the former war to an inability to cope with the new cycles of modern society. Stowe, who saw many of these same people return for several consecutive years, believed that many could purchase or homestead lands and farm citrus to help support their stays in Florida. The groves would allow them to enjoy the outdoor sunshine and air that brought them to Florida, while also offering much needed jobs to freedmen who had recently settled in the state. At the same time, for those who held little interest or desire to purchase land, Stowe believed that the lack of hotels to house many new invalids offered a viable avenue for new development to house the ever growing stream of visitors to the state each year.

During these early years of Reconstruction, the dialogues of settlement and tourism became uniquely intertwined within the vernacular of Florida’s boosters and developers. Growing interest within the state among invalids sparked a unique scientific dialogue discussing the health-giving properties of Florida’s climate, which in turn brought in an ever-larger stream of health seekers into the state. Like Stowe, the state and businesses began trying to encourage many of these new visitors to stay on a permanent basis. Businesses hoped to increase new sales through growth, and the state hoped to sell land and advertise the states growing population to attract railroad and transportation developers who had largely side stepped the state after the war for lack of incentive.

Steamboats served as the only viable means of transportation throughout the state, and they were also some of the first businesses to promote both tourism and real-estate within Florida. Steamboat owners and operators such as Hubbard L. Hart were given government contracts after the war to help clear many of the streams and rivers of logs, Lilly pads, and hyacinth which had choked most of the waterways and created lengthy
impassible stretches. In return for their efforts, they were given small land subsidies along the banks of the river. Hart, in particular, planted a large grove across from the community of Palatka hoping to cash in on the growing interest and demand for citrus.

With an overabundance of new visitors in Jacksonville each winter, steamboat operators found that they could make extra money by offering excursions to invalids to help pass the days during the winter. A number of unique spots emerged as tourist destinations among them St. Augustine, the Ocklawaha River, and Silver Springs. While on their excursions, steamboats made frequent stops at citrus groves along the river with Harriet Beecher Stowe’s grove being one of the largest and most prominent side trips. During many of these excursions, travelers learned of the ease and profitability of growing oranges for would be settlers or as a side investment and were told to plant winter crops until trees reached maturity. Within a few years, demand to see and explore orange real estate had grown along with tourism to increase steamboat traffic along the river. Many steamboat operators invested in hotels to help house guests, and they also bought real-estate or made agreements with real-estate agents to promote land sales along the banks of the St. Johns. In particular, a number of boats made arrangements with Henry S. Sanford who bought over 23,000 acres that he desired to turn into new citrus estates. By the mid seventies, new settlers set out millions of new orange trees along the river and around the city of Jacksonville.

Increased steamboat traffic helped bring more and more oranges to market, flooding Northern cities beginning in December and sparking an orange craze across most of the North East. Oranges quickly became a wintertime delicacy, filling Christmas time stockings and enhancing the flavor of Christmas puddings and fruitcakes. With
silversmiths making special bowls, spoons, and knives in which to serve the fruit, the
demand for oranges grew to an all time high and Florida became synonymous with
quality oranges. Beyond its image as a delicacy, oranges came to symbolize profits and
freedom, with orange groves offering the first real viable agricultural staple for farmers
both black and white to not only sustain themselves but also fostering a burgeoning
market from which a variety of other businesses could grow and depend.

Along with the growth of the market for oranges, real-estate in and around
Jacksonville and the St. Johns exploded with prices for orange lands commanding top
dollars. Increasingly, locals found that their lands held value beyond what they could
produce themselves, and with a steady stream of tourists as prospective buyers, prices
only stood to go higher. The unique environment created a situation whereby real estate,
orange production, and tourism all developed together in Florida creating an economy in
which all three became uniquely dependent upon one another.

The state became an active supporter of this method of growth, especially after
Francis Vose won a legal injunction against the state’s Internal Improvement Fund for
The Florida Railroad’s failure to meet its pre-Civil War obligations. Since the state
backed the railroads debts and investments with government lands in the Improvement
Fund, Vose used the courts to place a stoppage on the sale or grant of all government
lands by the IFF until he received full compensation and payment for his investment,
which by 1880 amounted to 1 million dollars. The state hoped that land sales would allow
them to meet their obligations, but they came to find that was increasingly an
impossibility as government lands beyond the St. Johns River could not command
equally high prices. Without rail access, northern capitalists had little desire to invest in
the state without the promise of compensation or higher returns neither of which looked promising.

In order to show higher returns on orange investments, a number of northern farmers began demanding cheaper forms of agricultural labor. Because of the small pool of mostly black workers, high demands kept wages high. A number of larger farmers, in particular Henry Sanford, began demanding the importation of foreign labor to bring down agricultural wages across the state. His actions were met with increasing hostility, not only from black laborers but also from northern missionaries and settlers who saw the actions as undermining the original intent of encouraging northern settlement to create a market that benefited both northern whites and recently freed blacks. While little action was taken, mainly because lands remained cheap, profuse, and open to most anyone interested in taking them, the move marked the beginning of an ongoing dialogue in which the needs and demands for higher profits to increase real-estate sales increasingly came at the expense of northern beliefs in creating a market that looked out for the greater economic needs of society as a whole. This tension would play out through much of the late 19th century with laborers and producers slowly loosing ground to the demands and needs of property owners.

With little success in undercutting wages to show profits, farmers desired to increase the marketable crop size, but with the current steam boat traffic and the time necessary to get fruit to market, many farmers saw their only chance at increasing the number of harvestable oranges for the northern market was to have direct access to rail lines. Increasingly farmers across the state called upon the Governor to resolve the Vose claims in order to encourage new internal improvements within the state. When Governor
William D. Bloxham came into office, he made resolving the issue his top priority. After winning the election, he moved to secure a variety of sources to pay off the debts owed to Vose, but unable to meet the obligations, he made one last ditch effort to Philadelphia millionaire, Hamilton Disston, to purchase 4 million acres for one million dollars and free the improvement fund. An agreement was struck, and Florida was again allowed to start advocating for internal improvements.

The agreement was met by harsh populist dissent across most of the state as most farmers, cattlemen, and real-estate developers claimed that they would have purchased more land if they have been offered the same inducement for .25 cents an acre. Anger also erupted as Disston was given properties in parcels throughout the state undercutting the ability of farmers in some locations to buy homestead or state lands for not only themselves but for future generations. Beyond these grievances, many farmers believed that it set a bad precedence because it encouraged other developers to demand ever-higher subsidies and grants in order to develop in the state. These worries quickly came to fruition as new railroad developers sought larger land grants in order to extend their tracks, and each was offered what most residents considered outrageous acreage/ per mile subsidies, sparking an explosion of railroad and land developers eager to enter Florida throughout the 80s and 90s.

What transpired after the Hamilton purchase was a vast draw-down of lands in the public domain, as railroads and large land developers took advantage of the state’s liberal land grant policies. In many cases, these actions drove up land prices undercutting poor subsistence farmers’ abilities to purchase lands and sending them further into an ever-diminishing frontier. At the same time, needing to increase traffic and freight along their
lines to show profits, railroads quickly took up the mantle of tourism, settlement, and development in many ways taking over the role of steamboat operators in the state. In the case of Henry Flagler and Henry Plant, both added steamboat lines to supplement their railroad facilities.

Both Flagler and Plant expanded the dialogue of what tourism and development could mean in the state of Florida, creating land, railroad, and hotel empires along the East and West coasts respectively. Flagler, in particular, tapped into the lexicon of class, style, and prestige to create an all new market in both tourism and real-estate aimed at enticing America’s new super rich to not only spend time and money at his new lavish and plush hotels, but also to buy and build extravagant winter homes in and around his resort posturing both wealth and social standing. Through his efforts, Flagler helped establish much of the East Coast of Florida from St. Augustine to Palm Beach and later Miami as the winter social center of America’s power elites, drawing in the leading businessmen and socialites of the Gilded Age from November to April. Plant offered similar establishments, catering particularly to wealthy southerners and mid-Westerners with communities such as Winter Park, which served as a social center for wealthy Chicagoans.

Both men also became the state’s leading advocates for commercial farming in particular the growth of winter truck farms and citiculture, in hopes of increasing freight to and from cities along their tracks. A unique difference in their strategies stemmed from the fact that Flagler mostly created new cities along his tracks below Ormond Beach, whereas Plant (lacking much of Flagler’s personal wealth) extended his rail towards existing small commercial centers in order to guarantee a modicum of initial freight along
his lines. Although this occasionally caused a few headaches for Plant, the energies of
existing Boards of Trades more than paid off in particular in Tampa where the creation
and expansion of Ybor City offered immeasurable direct and indirect avenues of profits
for his rail and steamboat lines. Flagler, on the other hand, largely moved to build freight
traffic by encouraging settlers to buy directly from him. Through all his extensions, he
felt the need to hold both political and social control over the areas in which he extended
his rails in hope of ensuring his investment and curtailling competition.

The influence of both men and their settlements grew extensively after the freezes
of 1894 and 1895 forced the center of the real-estate, citrus, and truck farming industry to
move away from North Florida toward the warmer climes of Central and South Florida.
Once again, the interests of citrus, real-estate, and tourism aligned themselves to help
foster sharp jumps in the populations of South Florida helping to turn Tampa and later
Miami into significant economic rivals of Jacksonville. Although these changes
drastically altered the economy of North Florida, Jacksonville quickly realigned its
economic interests toward meeting the growing shipping and mercantile needs of the
state, becoming the banking, wholesale, and distribution center of most of South Florida.

With this steady source of revenue derived from wholesaling goods to South
Florida, Jacksonville looked to diversify its economy by building its industrial base after
the turn of the century. In order to compete in a larger southern and national market, the
city leaders moved to undercut competition by advertising cheap fuel, low taxes, and
cheap black labor. Jacksonville managed to accomplish this effort by enacting a political
coup in the late 1890s in which white citizens pushed the governor to appoint local white
politicians in the city, undercutting political dissent from African Americans, and then
later passed social legislation enacting public segregation. Following the fire of 1901, white business leaders followed suit with pay cuts for black laborers under the guise of economic necessity. By 1905, Jacksonville’s businessmen from both the North and South made it clear that their interest in the earlier social dialogue rooted in directing the free market for the greater social need was officially over. Political leaders instead began pushing disenfranchisement through white primaries while at the same time undercutting the economic base of the black community to increase individual profits. African Americans responded with the first major wave of black emigration from the state.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Tampa managed to quell labor discontent. In the new though expansive cigar industry of Ybor and West Tampa, Cigar workers traded wage stability for larger industrial support of the Cuban revolutionary cause. At the same time, the vast expansion of Cuban and overseas immigrant labor cut into traditional manual labor jobs held by African Americans. The lowest skilled blacks helped swell the pool of agricultural laborers needed to meet the new and expanded demands of immigrant citrus growers. At the same time, Plant offered well-paid jobs to educated African Americans on his rail lines helping to swell the black middle class and undercut resentment. A relatively stable labor market, surplus capital from the cigar industry, and business minded new immigrants allowed Tampa to grow exponentially from 1885 to 1900. During this period, Tampa relied less upon the tourist industry to increase settlement as nature and the cigar industry did much of that for them.

The situation in Tampa changed rapidly after 1900. Following the Spanish American War, Cubans in Tampa began to demand higher wages after 15 years of relatively few wage increases. When new corporations began to take over the cigar
industry and increased oversight and productivity, two back-to-back prolonged labor strikes resulted, with the second forcing the white Board of Trade to step in and squash the labor movement for fear of loss of business revenues within the larger white community. The actions led to suppressed and stagnant wages for over a decade. Although cigar wages continued to provide a reliable and steady base for business growth, Tampa began to look at its wholesale business to help expand the economy. Tampa’s growing wholesalers encouraged population expansion throughout the rest of South Florida relying on tourism to draw in an ever-larger number of prospective buyers in which to supply necessities. After 1900, there was a significant demographic shift across Florida, with northerners settling mostly in resort communities along the two southern coasts, and southerners, ravaged by the cotton monoculture, making up the thrust of new agrarian farmers along the interior of the state.

Flagler’s developments in Miami were late compared to what was happening in the rest of Florida. In many ways, the city quite literally sprang to life in 1896 when the railroad arrived, bringing with it new economic activity. With few other avenues of growth, Flagler subsidized commercial citriculture and truck farming in order to encourage prospective tourists and settlers to populate the region. Flagler also propped up the development of an international labor market rooted in the Bahamas to help supply the labor demands of new settlers. As long as tourists arrived every winter, cheap lands remained available, and wages poured in from railroad expansion, the economic situation remained relatively calm.

However, within ten years of the completion of the road to Miami, racial tensions began to arise when African Americans began to settle in and around white
neighborhoods, sparking calls for restrictive land deeds and desires for black resettlement into other neighborhoods of the city. Increased competition between African Americans and Bahamians led to a massive anti-immigrant movement calling for a restriction on Bahamian immigration. Growth among the African American and Bahamian population led to an overextended labor market, suppressing wages throughout the city. At the same time, whites in Miami moved to restrict black settlement in the city by limiting where African Americans could live. The actions largely resulted in overcrowded neighborhoods and later the growth of urban slums.

Unlike Jacksonville, Tampa, and Miami, which largely relied upon tourism to help spur immigration, growth, and development, the city of Pensacola and the area of West Florida largely proved to be an enigma for Florida, in many ways mirroring the development of the rest of the South. With millions of acres of undeveloped virgin pine, the citizens of Pensacola used lumber exports to help grow their local economy. Along with the growth of the Red Snapper industry, the extraction of lumber and fish helped swell wages and profits in the city, with laborers making the highest wages of any city in the state. At the same time, while tourist interest was sweeping the rest of Florida, inaccessibility and repeated Yellow Fever outbreaks largely limited the development of the industry in the area. Even after the expansion of the railway across the panhandle, the city failed to attract any real tourist interest and mostly marketed lands to agrarian farmers from southern Georgia and Alabama referring to the area as a poor man’s paradise.

Unlike the rest of the state, the railway only brought a nominal increase in growth to either the city or the region. Although it was able to encourage the expansion of cotton
and tobacco, lumber and fish remained the top two exports. What the railroad did accomplish was to increase the speed at which lumber could be extracted from West Florida, opening up new lands that could be sold to new Northern firms who helped to fell large sections of the forest within the first ten years of their arrival and the railroads’ existence. By 1905, lumber exports began to diminish rapidly. In the following year a hurricane helped destroy the snapper fleet, and within less than a year, the economic base of the city completely collapsed. The number of unemployed rose dramatically followed by a drop in wages. African Americans took the brunt of the hit, as businesses hired white employees over blacks. Much as had been the case in Jacksonville, African Americans left Pensacola en masse after city leaders began pushing Jim Crow laws.

By 1905, much of the earlier dialogue of development and growth rooted in protecting the larger economic, social, and political ambitions of the many over the limited desires of the few had largely failed throughout Florida. Much of the state began to experience stagnant economic growth. When the recession followed in 1907, it took its greatest toll upon African Americans within the state causing the first exodus of black Floridians for the North. Even as many blacks loaded trains for departure, other African Americans continued to arrive in Florida from across the South. Since Florida’s economy remained relatively strong compared to that of its southern neighbors, southern whites and blacks flocked en masse to the state.

When Populist governors Jennings and Broward began Everglades drainage to open new lands for the growth of farming, they had little idea that those lands would help pave the way toward economic rebirth for South Florida. Tourist and settlement tracts and brochures advertised the lands to poor farmers guaranteeing ten acres and freedom
with the promise that truck farming would help create small independent commercial farmers while the sunshine would bring health and happiness. With the real-estate venture devouring much of what remained of public lands, the efforts marked the last significant examples where tourism was used to help embrace growth strategies rooted in social uplift.

Following this period, tourism was largely co-opted by community chambers of commerce, which principally looked out for the needs of white businesses and entrepreneurs. By the 1920s, when the largest real-estate boom in the state’s history swept across the entire landscape, its motives were rooted solely in promoting pleasure and profits. Fueled by fast trains, bootleg liquor, and, easy money, Florida emerged as a decadent play resort. All along the coast of Florida, in particular in Tampa and Miami, lavish play palaces sprouted up commanding unheard of prices for the time. Tourists and investors looking to have a good time and get rich quick poured into the state on trains and caravans of cars that covered and dotted new and lavish highways. The state made millionaires of many overnight, but those fortunes were based and rooted solely upon speculation. Towards the end of 1925, few people even realized what they were purchasing, as real-estate was sold on binders with the same parcel of land being sold two or three times a week. When some investors realized that they were purchasing underwater swamplands, the bubble burst, and the decadence of the twenties slowly fell into the Depression.

Despite their misgivings, investors still needed to make their properties pay for themselves, and planned developments continued to be built, though not at the pace and speed at which high-rises had been going up. Existing hotels and trains also needed to
continue to make money, and throughout the Depression, all of the groups and businesses used low fares and prices to draw in tourists, and apartments began offering time shares to would-be tourists who could not afford to buy an apartment outright in order to move real-estate. Slowly, the coastal cities used tourism to help recover economically from the Depression. In particular, cities marketed small homes to new retirees and social security recipients, advertising the area as a healthful retreat for older Americans. These communities promised an outdoor lifestyle for retirees and communities filled with like-minded socialites whose retirement years would be Golden Years. In turn, a large number of tourist attractions sprouted up aimed at entertaining the surge of new children being born during the baby boom who took yearly summer vacations to visit their grandparents.

Following W.W.II, tourism was also used to help sell Florida’s agriculture, but with the growth of agribusiness and corporate farms, the state had little interest in selling farming to new tourists. Certainly new farmers arrived in the state in particular from neighboring southern states hoping to find better opportunities, but tourism was aimed more at selling marketable fruits to help farmers commercially. Oranges and Orange Juice remained the dominant industry, but the growth of shrimping fleets and the fishing industry made the shrimp cocktail the growing fad among tourists and later the centerpiece of cocktail hours across the cities of the North. Cattle also remained one of the largest industries in the state, and the second largest cattle industry in the nation, but the growing demand for beef undermined the necessity of marketing this product to tourists. Oranges and orange juice, on the other hand, had to compete with a growing list of native and imported topical fruits for the American palate, and Florida wanted to make sure that its staple crop remained competitively marketable. Competition from growers in
California also forced Florida to use tourism to help push oranges and citrus, helping to brand Florida oranges and orange juice as the best quality and ensuring that shoppers would ask for Florida oranges.

By the 1950s, when mass tourism began to reach new heights, tourism had emerged as a multi million dollar industry all its own. It had long since shed its roots as a settlement scheme to draw in new settlers into the state. Slowly, it was even losing its dialectic rooted in health. Certainly new homes still had Florida rooms offering the health-giving rays of the sun, but slowly the Florida room was more about design and less about health. People continued to go to the beach, but it was less reflective of healthful desires and more for an unspoken pleasure. During the teens, twenties, and thirties, Florida repeatedly led campaigns encouraging families to take their children to the seashore to enjoy the healing rays of the sun. By the fifties, families continued to take their children to the ocean and beach, but it was more reflective of a fun Florida vacation.

Following the turn of the century, the narrative of fun and pleasure began to supplant the health promoting dialogue used to originally draw settlers and visitors to the state and market its agricultural products. The state’s springs increasingly lost their health appeal but gained new interest as natural curiosities and sources of entertainment, in particular as provided by the glass bottom boats at Silver Springs. Beaches served less as healthful day retreats and emerged as singular destinations in and unto themselves where families spent free time enjoying the sun and surf. When tourists arrived, they were no longer inundated with settlement tracts and real-estate advertisements. However, real-estate salesmen continued to use tourism to sell property, advertising in hotels or at flashy stops along the highway and later interstate, but they were often forced to offer free
tickets to a resort, show, or park to convince tourists to take a tour of their new
development.

Despite the changing language, the tactics used by Florida developers and
businesses to draw in new visitors and tourist into the state remained relatively the same. Although few people think of Civil War settlement schemes as the origins of Florida tourism, the immediate imperative to create a sustainable free market economy guarded by like minded northerners spurred the growth of a tourist, agricultural, and real-estate industry that emerged together to populate and sell the state’s many assets. While tourism largely lost its moral imperative by 1905, the underlying zeal and thrust of the industry remained; so too did the unique cooperative relationship between the state, its many varied businesses, and its larger agricultural interest. From the cooperative energies of these various groups, they worked together to turn Florida into the leading tourist destination in the U.S., and through their continued efforts, they continue to reinvent notions of pleasure and paradise to sustain the state’s position as a leading vacation resort.

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Esing, Christopher M. (author), Manning, Mary M. (illustrator), Dubious Jack the Pumpkin King. (Lake City, FL.: Allegro Press, 2009). First in a series of children’s stories to be released by the author.

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