

Royal Palm State Park

BY

Mrs. W. S. Jennings

(President Florida Federation Women's Clubs)

DURING the term of Hon. W. S. Jennings, as Governor of Florida from 1901 to 1905, we heard many reports of the wonderful Royal Palm Hammock, or Paradise Key, as it has always been known. The first of these reports was brought to the Governor's attention about 1901 by Mr. J. H. Tatum, of Miami, who had recently become identified with the lower East Coast country. His description was not only attractive and vivid but was considered remarkable, and caused much interest to be manifested in this hammock with its extraordinary palms. The lands at this time had not been patented, neither had they been surveyed nor platted, therefore, the exact location of the island was not known. The Everglades patent was obtained during the Jennings administration in 1903, and the last minute of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund during this administration was the adoption of the official plat or map "sectionizing the Everglades."

Every man that secured land in the Cape Sable District from that time on was in hope that the famous hammock would be found on his land. Governors before this time may have heard something from hunters and surveyors of the beauties of this wonderful tropical jungle, but those since have heard much. On account of the difficulties in travel in the Cape Sable district, it has been hard for surveyors to exactly locate the hammock, and not until about the year 1914 was the exact location of Royal Palm Hammock or Paradise

Key established by W. J. Krome's survey and brought to the attention of the Trustees of the I. I. Fund of the State by Hon. J. E. Ingraham.

To Mrs. Kirk Munroe is due the honor of first suggesting that Royal Palm Hammock be conserved by the Federation. In 1909, during Mrs. Kirk Munroe's chairmanship of Forrestry of the Federation, Hon. J. E. Ingraham told her of this wonderful hammock, and it was she who suggested that it be given to the Federation. At that time it was supposed to be located on the lands of the Florida East Coast Railway, which was owned by Mr. Henry M. Flagler. Mr. Ingraham represented the Flagler interests in the land department then as now. This suggestion was made to Mr. Ingraham in February 1909, and in March of the same year, Mr. Ingraham wrote Mrs. Munroe that he had spoken to Mrs. Flagler about giving the hammock, 640 acres, which it was supposed at that time would take in the entire key, and she was delighted. It was then discovered that the much desired hammock was not on the Florida East Coast Railway's lands at all, but belonged to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of the State, and Mr. Ingraham wrote Mrs. Munroe urging that the Federation buy this hammock, as it could be had at a nominal figure. He also advised that the Federation take the matter up with the Trustees. Mrs. Munroe then wrote Mrs. T. M. Shackelford, President of the Federation, who resided in Tallahassee, to call on Governor A. W. Gilchrist, which

she did. Mrs. Munroe wrote the Governor on March 17th, 1909, and the Governor replied under date of March 20th, 1909, to the effect: "This hammock is now claimed by the East Coast Railway Company. I hardly think the Trustees would take any action in the matter during the pendency of this claim," but added that he would bring the matter to the attention of the Trustees, and later the secretary, W. M. McIntosh, Jr., wrote Mrs. Munroe under instruction that the Governor's letter covers "all that can be said by them on the subject at present."

About 1879 the Legislature granted large areas of land to the Palatka Indian River Railroad Company, and the Florida Southern Railroad Company, and in after years many of these lands were divided between the Railroad Companies in alternating sections or areas. The minutes of the Trustees of the I. I. Fund show that the transfer was made under certificate of the Trustees to the Palatka and Indian River Railway Company, under date of December 31st, 1888, agreeing to deed the lands when patented; the township in which the Royal Palm Hammock or Paradise Key is situated being among the lands so granted and divided.

Volume 8, Page 415, Minutes of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida, 1910. "On March 30th, 1896, F. Q. Brown, Vice President of the Florida Commercial Company, who had purchased the land grants of the Florida Southern and other Railway companies, conveyed the lands to the Florida East Coast Railway Company as follows: Township 58, in range 37 east; also east half of section 15 and 22 in range 37; the State purchasing the other half of the above described lands in a compromise and reconveyed same to the Internal Improvement Fund." The Hammock or Paradise Key is located in section 15 and north half of section 22, township 58, south range 37, east, Dade County, Florida, and it will be seen from

this description that the East Coast Railway received half of each of these sections in exchange, and actually owned part of the hammock at one time.

About 1910, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund exchanged their one-half alternating sections in certain townships for the one-half alternating sections in certain other townships, with the East Coast Railway Company, the division being made in alternate townships and for the purpose of blocking up both the State lands and those of the East Coast in solid tracts. Under this plan of division, the township in which the Royal Palm Hammock or Paradise Key was situated became the property of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund.

It should be observed and at all times borne in mind that in these negotiations the key or island had never been located and it was not known at that time to whom the title to it was falling, nor does it appear that any reference was made concerning it in the negotiations.

It is well here to mention the fact that during 1914, the land companies were building a road from Homestead through the hammock at a cost of between \$22,000 and \$27,000, but had fallen about three miles short of reaching their lands. In this plan for the road building, the hammock was not taken into consideration, and those in charge were in sight of the island before they realized that the line run for the road led through the hammock. It became evident that if some steps were not taken at once for the protection of the royal palms, orchids and other rare growth to be found on the island, that the opening of the road would expose the beauty of the growth to all sorts of depredation and that it would be despoiled. Mr. Ingraham again appealed to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement fund setting forth the facts, as well as instances of palms having been stolen, and then the Trustees, in answer

to the appeal had the property posted.

In the summer of 1914, Mr. Ingraham took the matter up further with the Trustees, offering to exchange lands for the hammock, in order that Mrs. Flagler might convey the same to the Federation of Women's Clubs—pending which Mrs. W. S. Jennings, President of the Federation became interested in the project.

Upon investigating the matter, and the study of the more recently acquired information obtained through Mr. Jennings office and Mr. Ingraham's courtesy, Mrs. Jennings concluded to greatly enlarge the scope and plans concerning the hammock, not knowing of Mrs. Kirk Monroe's activities in the past concerning the hammock, at that time, and sought a conference with Mr. J. E. Ingraham to whom Mrs. Jennings submitted her plans for procuring the hammock on behalf of the federation for a State Park, and a like acreage for an endowment from Mrs. Flagler. Mr. Ingraham without hesitancy approved the plans, and agreed to recommend to Mrs. Flagler that she grant the land formerly proffered to the State for the hammock, to the Federation as an endowment, which she as quickly assented to—in a letter from Mr. Ingraham, November 28th, 1914.

December 14th, 1914, Mrs. Jennings addressed a letter to about seventeen of the officials of the Federation, setting forth her plans and the wonderful possibilities for great conservation work by the Federation, in saving to the people of Florida this rare tropical jungle as a State Park. Receiving favorable and encouraging responses, Mrs. Jennings proceeded to Tallahassee and secured an audience with the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund; accompanied by Mrs. Charles A. Cay, Vice President of Section Three, of the Federation, appeared before the Trustees December 10th and submitted a formal application for the ceding of Section 15 and the north half of Section

22, township 58, range 37, containing 960 acres, which was granted upon condition that the park be "maintained by the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, and upon their failure, of which the Trustees should be judges, that resolution should be revoked, annulled and void, and to assume full control, management and disposition of the aforesaid land and proposed State Park."

Mrs. Jennings was undaunted. The resolution caused a great deal of adverse criticism. Mr. Ingraham, of course, found it impractical to permit Mrs. Flagler to convey in fee simple a like acreage for endowment purposes in order to aid the Federation, when the Trustees reserved the power to revoke the resolution granting the lands at any time.

At this stage of the negotiations, Mrs. Jennings felt unwilling to go any further with the plans toward securing the hammock, without seeing the same, and although Mr. Ingraham and Mr. Jennings had visited the hammock, and agreed on its wonderful value for park purposes, Mr. Jennings urged Mrs. Jennings to visit the hammock with some of the Federation officials before any further steps were taken in the matter, and the trip was agreed upon.

On December 28th, 1914, Mrs. Jennings was joined at Miami, by Mrs. T. V. Moore, Vice President at Large of the Federation, Mrs. A. Leight Monroe, President of the Miami Woman's Club, and Chairman of the Home Economics Department of the Federation; and at Cocoanut Grove, Mrs. Kirk Munroe, President of the Folio Club and Chairman Bureau of Information and Historian of the Federation. Accompanied by Governor Jennings and S. Bryan Jennings, the ladies proceeded to Homestead where they were met by Mrs. T. E. Evans, President of the Woman's Club and Mrs. L. L. Bow. Automobiles were arranged for by Governor Jennings to take the party

to the proposed Park. The trip was pronounced enjoyable and interesting, and the officers of the Federation were delighted with the Royal Palm Hammock, and all agreed that it should be secured if possible by the Federation for a State Park.

On the return trip to Homestead, the discussion about naming the road came up. Mrs. Kirk Munroe said "Let's name it for Mr. Ingraham." Mrs. Jennings admitted that she and Mr. Jennings had talked over the matter before, and decided that the road should be named Ingraham Highway, and that Mr. Jennings had even planned the signs he would give for the road, should the County Commissioners agree to adopt the name. Mrs. Jennings, as President of the Federation, was appointed by the club women present, to present the request to the Commissioners to name the road "Ingraham Highway." The Commissioners, realizing the justice of this mark of recognition of valuable services rendered, passed a formal resolution, adopting the name for the road from Miami through the Royal Palm Hammock to the Gulf, 78 miles in all, paying the Federation the compliment of permitting it the naming of the highway.

Hon. J. E. Ingraham laid out the city of Miami, and it was under his direction that the above mentioned road was built. It was through his persistent efforts that the Royal Palm Hammock was brought to the attention of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, and also the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs. It was through his good offices that the Federation was offered an equal acreage of land as a park endowment by Mrs. H. M. Flagler, and it was through his efforts that it was finally secured. Florida owes Mr. Ingraham much, and the naming of the road was a tribute of appreciation from the Federation.

Mrs. Jennings sought further council,

and after a conference with the officers of the Federation and Mr. Ingraham, decided that a legislative grant was necessary, and that the title to the lands being primarily vested in the State, the Legislature should be asked to cede the lands to the Federation for Park purposes, and to designate the hammock as the "Royal Palm State Park," conditioned upon the Federation procuring a like acreage of land as an endowment.

As President of the Federation, Mrs. Jennings called a meeting of the Board of Directors for February 8th and 9th, 1915, in Jacksonville. On the 9th, Mrs. Jennings presented all the correspondence and data in regards to her efforts to secure the ceding of the Royal Palm Hammock to the Federation, and also the resolution adopted by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, December 24th, 1914, before referred to. Mrs. Jennings presented a resolution, which was adopted by the Board, accepting the hammock under conditions imposed by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund. The resolution adopted by the Federation Board set forth the fact that the endowment could not be secured without the title to the proposed park being vested in the Federation, and that Legislative action was essential to a definite, complete and perpetual grant of said land for said park for public use; that the Legislature be memorialized to enact a law granting the 960 acres to the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, conditioned upon the Federation procuring a like acreage of land as endowment, and that an appropriation of \$1,000 be asked for, for Park maintenance.

The President was authorized to proceed to have a proper bill drawn embodying description of land desired set aside by the Legislature, appropriation, etc., and that bill presented should exempt the proposed park and endowment lands from all taxation, and that, as Mrs. Jennings

suggested, the Royal Palm Hammock be hereafter known as "Royal Palm State Park," which was also embodied in the bill.

The bill for presentation to the Legislature was carefully prepared, as well as the arguments to be used in presenting same, by Governor W. S. Jennings. Mrs. J. O. Wright, of Jacksonville, Forestry Chairman, under the Federation Department of Conservation, was given charge of the Park by the President of the Federation. She had the bills and arguments printed and distributed.

Mrs. Jennings placed the original bills to be presented in the hands of able men, both in the Senate and House of Representatives, and the first and only State Park in the United States was created by Legislative Act, and approved and signed by Governor Park Trammell, June 5th, 1915. By this law, the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs became the only Federation in the United States owning a State Park.

This was a great step forward in conservation work, and proves that Floridians are awake to the value of their beauty spots and have taken a stand for the policy of protection against their destruction.

Mr. Charles T. Simpson, of Little River, Florida, spent an hour in the park one day during the session of the Legislature, and submitted a list of fifty species of trees, as follows:

Eugenia Axillaris, White Stopper
Anamensis Dichotoma, Naked Stopper
Ocotea Catesbyana, Lancewood
Persea Pubescens, Swamp Bay
Icacorea Paniculata, Marlberry
Chrysophyllum Elivæforme, Satinleaf
Diospyres Verginiana, Persimmon
Roystonea Floridiana, Royal Palm
Myrica Cerifera, Wax Myrtle
Ficus Aurea, Wild Fig
Cocolobis Uvifera, Sea Grape
Magnolia Glauca, Sweet Bay
Pithecolobium Guadelupensis, Black Bead
Erythrina Arborea, Coral Bean

Bursera Simaruba; Gumbo Limbo
Metopium Metopium, Poisonwood
Exothea Paniculata, Inkwood
Carica Papaya, Pawpaw
Chytraculia Pallens, Spicewood
Solanum Verbascifolium, Potato Tree
Callicarpa Americana, French Mulberry
Cephalanthus Occidentalis, Buttonbush
Guettardia Elliptica, Velvetseed
Dipholis Salicifolia, Bustic
Baccharis Dioica
Eugenia Buxifolia, Spanish Stopper
Quercus Verginiana, Live Oak
Persea Burbonia, Red Bay
Rapanea Guyanensis, Myrsine
Chrysobalanus Icaco, Coco Plum
Sideroxylon Mastichodendron, Mastic
Inodes Palmetto, Palmetto
Salix Amphibia, Willow
Morus Rubra, Mulberry
Trema Floridiana
Annona Palustris, Alligator Apple
Laurocearbus Sphesrecarpus, W. I. Cherry
Lysilema Bahamensis, Wild Tamarind
Simaruba Glauca, Paradise Tree
Cocolobis Laurifolia, Pigeon Plum
Ilex Krugiana, Krug's Holly
Krugiodendron Ferrum, Black Ironwood
Tetrazygia Bicolor
Conocarpus Erecta, Buttonwood
Citharexylum Villesum, Fiddlewood
Schoepfia Arborescens, Whitewood
Guettardia Scabra, Rough Velvetseed
Psychotria Undata, Wild Coffee
Buccharis Halimifolia
Chrococoa Alba, Snowberry
One unidentified tree.
(This tree is Ilex Cassine.)

This list was submitted to the Legislature for consideration with the bill. Mr. Simpson has since offered to label the trees and rare plants for the Federation as soon as a system of paths is completed.

Soon after the law was passed, Mr. Ingraham caused to be delivered to the Federation, on behalf of Mrs. Flagler, a deed for 960 acres of land as an endowment, situated four or five miles from the Park, which concluded and fully complied with the Legislative Act, making the grant perpetual.

November 19, 1915, the Federation in regular convention assembled, authorized

the President and Corresponding Secretary to sign and seal with the Federation seal, the proper deeds to exchange the endowment land, which had Mr. Ingraham's approval, with the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund for land adjoining the Park, as proposed by Mrs. Jennings, in order that the lands be consolidated for greater convenience in care and management.

The Federation now owns 1920 acres of land for Park purposes contiguous, the endowment land consisting of the east half of section 20, and all of 21, township 58, south, range 37 east.

At this time the Federation authorized the creation by the Board of Directors of a new committee to be designated the "Park Committee," which the Board did at the session immediately following the adjournment of the convention, the President appointing Mrs. John Gifford, of Coconut Grove, Chairman; she has proven indefatigable in her efforts for the Park.

The Legislature in passing the law granting the Park, cut out the appropriation and the financing of the care and improvement of the Park, which has made it rather difficult. Everyone has been kind in helping. The Abstract Company at Miami, furnished a \$14 abstract free; the County Clerk's office recorded deed for endowment without cost, and we must not forget the legal advice always at the Federation's service and legal papers drawn for transfers and passed on by Governor W. S. Jennings. Without his aid many of these transactions would not have gone so smoothly. He is deeply interested in the club work of the women, and especially in the Federation, and is ever ready to help. Valuable data and information which was of great assistance to the Federation was furnished by Mr. Roy D. Marsh, Civil Engineer, and Mr. Frank J. Powers.

The Park work has also had some gen-

erous personal cash donations toward the maintenance fund. The Park Committee consists of seven members from the State at large, and the advisory committee, for easy consultation with the chairman of twelve women from Ft. Lauderdale down, including Broward and Dade Counties. The entire committee is of splendid energetic women. The committee is under the Conservation Department, of which Mrs. Gaston H. Edwards, of Orlando is Chairman.

On December 23rd, 1915, was held the first Park Committee meeting, at 2 p. m. at Villa Serena, the residence of Mrs. W. J. Bryan, who is a member of the committee. Mrs. John Gifford as Chairman, called the meeting to order; as the President of the Federation had gone to Miami to attend the meeting, Mrs. Gifford asked her to preside. Suggestions and plans were discussed at length.

It is the hope of the Federation to rent the endowment land for tomato growing, but on account of the lack of roads, other plans for immediate raising of funds were discussed, and it was decided to send out foot strips, each holding twelve dimes, and in this way start a campaign to raise a mile of dimes, which would give \$6336.00 for immediate use if secured. The strips were ordered secured and distributed. The President offered to attend to this to relieve the Chairman, sending the letters to each club, and the strips also. 2268 dime strips have been distributed, and the returns are just beginning to come in. If every resident of Florida would give a dime towards the work, \$100,000.00 would be available in no time.

There have been four or more orange groves destroyed between Miami and the Park from forest fires. This Committee has been deeply concerned over the safety of the Park, and Mrs. Gifford urged the employment of a care taker on the Board, which met at Daytona, February 17th,

1916. The Park Committee was authorized to secure a caretaker with the approval of the President, which was done, and Mr. Charles A. Mosier, of Little River, took charge of the Park March 1st. He is a botanist of no mean ability and a very energetic man. As there is no lodge, Mr. Mosier and his family are living in a tent, but it is to be hoped that some interested party will donate sufficient funds to build a suitable lodge before summer, otherwise the Federation will be compelled to put up a temporary one. It is the plan to have a lodge sufficiently large to accommodate students of nature or the Federation's officers, and committees on inspection tours, and will also arrange for refreshments for the motorist.

It is the plan of the Federation to make a game preserve of the Park, and a bird sanctuary, and already Mr. Mosier is feeding the birds.

Last year a district road bond issue of \$100,000.00 was voted to build a road 43 miles from Homestead to Flamingo, near Cape Sable, through the Park. The \$93,000.00 contract has been let and the road is to be a 24 foot roadbed, with a 16 foot hard surface, and to be completed in ten months. The road south of the Park is to have an eighty foot right of way, the only one in the State, but there is a movement on foot, suggested by Mrs. Jennings, to secure the same width of right of way from Miami down if possible, which would make Ingraham Highway, if planted in royal palms, the most beautiful drive in the United States. The Federation plans to have the two miles and more of road which will run through the Park and endowment land, planted to royal palms also.

The Federation lands are included in a special drainage district recently formed, and will get the benefit both of this and the road bond without cost, as their holdings are exempt from all taxation

whatsoever. Mr. Mosier has begun to cut paths through the jungle and clean up. On March 19th, he recorded nine automobiles and 38 visitors to the park.

Mr. J. Horace McFarland, President of the American Civic Association, visited the Park, and is very enthusiastic, and assured us he would write an article on it. Mr. Popenoe and Mr. Harris, of the Carnegie Institute have also been down there taking pictures, and they too are very enthusiastic.

February 14th, 1916, Mrs. Jennings had a conference with Dr. J. K. Small, who has been coming to Florida for fifteen years securing plants against the inroads of civilization.

Dr. Small said that the Royal Palm State Park is the largest hammock of royal palms in the United States; that it, with other small hammocks and tropical growth in the Cape Sable district, was unique, in that it is different from any other in the world, and the only growth of its kind in the United States. Both he and Dr. David Fairchild agree that many of the smaller hammocks should be owned as reservations by the Government on account of the rare growth found in them, and it is generally understood that this is to be recommended by these gentlemen. Dr. Fairchild is the Agricultural Explorer in charge of the Plant Industry for the Government, and both his and Dr. Small's approval and assistance, as well as that of Professor Charles T. Simpson, means much to the success of the party work. Dr. J. K. Small has promised to help the Federation whenever possible in his trips to Florida, which are made several times a year. He has recently written an article in the *Journal of the New York Botanical Gardens*. He gives at length some of the choice and rare plants to be found in this section of Florida, and especially in Royal Palm State Park. The article is beautifully illustrated with

(Continued on Page 26.)

Royal Palm State Park

(Continued from Page 16)

many pictures. This article is reprinted from the Journal in pamphlet form entitled, "Explorations in Southern Florida in 1915." He gives a list of plants, the wealth of which have not been found before elsewhere in the United States.

It is the plan of the Federation to bring rare plants from other hammocks to the park and plant to save them. It is the President's hope that the Park can be financed without having to sell the endowment land, so that in time to come this may be saved to develop a botanical garden, which, from a standpoint of a collection of rare plants may equal the wonderful gardens of Java. The park is practically an island surrounded by a rock bottom slough which is covered by water a part of the year. The growth is composed of a tropical jungle.

There are some very fine live oaks to be seen here and royal palms over 100 feet in height. It is the plan to cut paths through the hammock so that the beauty of its growth may be seen, and still be kept as nearly as possible in its natural state, for in this instance it would be hard to imagine a more luxuriant or a more beautiful tropical growth anywhere in the world. The possibilities are unlimited because it is practically below the frost line, and trees and plants grow in this moist, warm atmosphere like magic. It will certainly become one of the most talked of and far-famed beauty spots of the world, and in time attract visitors, motorists and scientists from far and near.

The next convention of the Federation is to be held in Miami in November, and at this time the Miami club women, who are to be the hostesses for the occasion, are planning to take the convention in a body to Homestead, and from there, the Homestead, Longview, Redlands, Princeton and Larkin clubs are to take them to the park by auto.

Once the club women of Florida realize what a wonderful estate they possess, the problem of raising money to finance the park will be solved, and the future care of the Park be assured.

In the argument sent to the Legislature, the following description of the hammock, which conveys a most accurate idea by Mr. Charles T. Simpson, an eminent civil engineer and scientist, in the Tropic Magazine, published at Miami, February-March 1915, was used.

"Everywhere through the hammock rise magnificent royal palms, a few together or in large clumps, varying in height from those which have just lifted their elegant plumes above the average frost line to specimens which must have been over one hundred feet in height. The effect of the sky line of this palm forest was indescribable. I have been in Honduras, all over the west half of Cuba, the entire island of Jamaica, Haiti and practically all over the warmer parts of Florida, but never have I seen elsewhere such an ideally glorious view of tropical vegetation. Whoever named this 'Paradise Key' had a genuine inspiration."



Just Think of it!

ONLY \$6.95 Pre-paid

For this Pretty
Ladies' "Genuine
Palm Beach" Suit

This suit is made of Genuine Palm Beach cloth and bears the "Palm Beach" fabric label.

The coat has two breast flaps, trimmed with Pearl Buttons, wide self-belt and box plaits in front. The skirt has belt of same material.

Sizes 14 to 20 Misses
and 34 to 44 Ladies

Measure Bust and Waist
Size When Ordering.

Send Check or Money Order
Absolute Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Refunded

N. Y. Bargain Store
Miami, Florida.

Reference: Bank of Bay
Biscayne, Miami, Florida