

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas discusses the geological make-up of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades basin*

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: Now the rest, the shape of Florida, which you are all perfectly familiar with, is one completely of the rock, which we call oolitic limestone. It's not correct to call it coral rock, although there are bits and pieces of coral in it. Under the surface it's soft, that's how the bits and pieces of coral got into it, because we have the greatest coral reef in North America here in the Upper Keys. And when this land, 7,000 years ago, was covered with seawater, and when, 7,000 years ago, it finally rain off, the bits and pieces of coral were in the soft limestone which have hardened under being brought up to the sun. And that, there may be different phases of that limestone. Its called oolitic limestone, as I say, not correctly called coral rock, and it's full of holes, it's like a kind of like a rock sponge, and you see it everywhere. We make houses of it, we make rooms, we makes walls of it, and of some form we make roads of it; very useful. But because it is like a kind of rock sponge, when it is below ground and there is water in it, it becomes the aquifer, because the water is held in the interstices of the rock. That makes an aquifer, an aquifer is nothing more or less than oolitic limestone with water in it, if it hasn't got any water then it's not an aquifer. And the water comes from the surface water, from the surface of the rain and when the rain rains over the entire area, it begins to flow down very gently, or it used to, from the southern from Lake Kissimmee down the lower lakes and the meandering streams of Kissimmee River, through little marshlands and creeks down into Lake Okeechobee, from which it overflowed from the west in the Caloosahatchee, and the east in the Loxahatchee slough. But mostly, down the central arc of the sawgrass Everglades down to the south, to the Ten Thousand Islands to where the Everglades National Park is now. We call it the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades Basin, or you could call the whole thing the Everglades.