

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas discusses the youngness of Florida and its swift development*

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: Now you see, the whole area is surrounded by salt water, and it is the salt water that has shaped this whole peninsula of Florida. The Gulf of Mexico with its more gentle current that sweeps down to the west, and when the hurricanes come, frays out of the areas of the Ten Thousand Islands so that islands become inlets and inlets become solid land. The whole changing area of that side and the whole great sweep of the Florida current which is only part of the Gulf Stream which goes up the other side of Florida, joins with the Gulf Stream and comes in a great circle in the North Atlantic, comes down again in the Caribbean and up again as the Florida Straits current. That has shaped the whole end of Florida, which we figure, in its present shape, as you see it now, is only about 7,000 years old. The youngest land, no doubt, in the entire area, well certainly of the United States, and I'd rather think, but I may not be sure of that, in the entire Northern continent. Probably nothing else like it in the entire country. And that is why it has been so difficult for people who came down here from somewhere else, and everyone came down here from somewhere else, it has been difficult for those people to understand why it is so different, and why they have messed it up so terribly in their attempts to exploit it. Because it is very late in the history of the country that this part of Florida was developed, that awful word that means so much else then: development, chiefly destruction. They came down here after the Civil War, after the Northern part of Florida was pretty well reconstructed after the Civil War, with a lot of Damn Yankee capital and Damn Yankee interests. Other people came down to the West Coast of Florida, from Tallahassee, when they were defeated Confederates. They came down to Ft. Myers, which is an old Indian War post. And they established themselves again up and down the Caloosahatchee River, with their own Southern tradition. Ft. Myers, and that West Coast, has not wanted, didn't originally want a lot of people coming down, but over here on the East Coast, people straggled down and set up little funny houses with dirt floors and palmetto roofs, anywhere along the beaches and wanted more and more people to come. They wanted to bring up their children with schools and they wanted hospitals and cities. So, the East Coast naturally has developed very much quicker than the West Coast and it's had all the terrible faults of development, which has resulted from this amazing explosion of population. I don't suppose there is any other part of the country, including Southern California that in the last, say, fifty years

has developed so rapidly and so tumultuously as the whole Miami area, the whole East Coast, what they call the Gold Coast.