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University President

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Bowman Foster Ashe

Bowman Foster Ashe, a native of Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, came to Miami in 1926 to be involved with the foundation of the University of Miami. Dr. Ashe graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and held honorary degrees from the University of Pittsburgh, Stetson University, Florida Southern College and Mount Union College. Dr. Ashe became the first president of the University of Miami and held it together almost single-handedly during the dual hardships of the land boom failure in Florida and the Great Depression. Dr. Ashe led the University for almost 27 years until his death in 1952.

Dr. Ashe was keenly interested in the Everglades as a natural laboratory for the students of his young university. His correspondence with advocates of the proposed national park illustrates the "interlocking importance of the University and Everglades National Park"

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami & Gail Clement, Florida International University

[Letter from Ernest Coe to President Bowman Ashe,
April 1932.](#) University of Miami Presidential papers

It is reasonable to believe that funds will be forthcoming for a strictly modern laboratory calculated to provide ample facilities for biological research in connection with the Everglades National Park, as the area to be included within it will offer a wide range of material for study and advanced research along biological lines. How and where better could these laboratory facilities be planned for and located than as a unit of the general University of Miami development?



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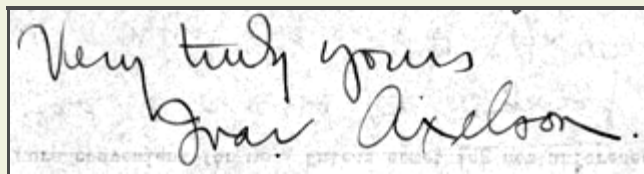
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Ivar Axelson

Ivar Julius Axelson was born in Portland, Connecticut on March 19, 1891. He received his undergraduate degree from Yale University and his Masters from the University of Oklahoma. In the early 1920s, Ivar Axelson worked as a real estate broker in South Florida where he met and married Mary McDougal in 1923. Together with Daniel A. McDougal, they became major shareholders in the Chevelier Corporation. Profits from land sales allowed them to leave the Miami area and pursue other careers. Ivar Axelson completed his PhD coursework in economics at Columbia University and taught economics at various universities during the 1930s. He then worked as a government economist in Washington during the early 1940s. Returning to Miami to care for his extensive land holdings, Ivar Axelson taught economics at the University of Miami. Ivar Axelson served as president of the Everglades National Park Landowners Association and led the Association for the Best Use of Florida Lands. He crusaded for many years against the expansion of Everglades National Park in Monroe County where he and Daniel McDougal owned a great deal of land. Ivar Axelson died in 1972 in Coral Gables, Florida.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami



**Sample of Ivar Axelson's correspondence,
June 2, 1934**

Image courtesy of University of Miami Libraries, [Mary McDougal Axelson Papers](#)



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Mary McDougal Axelson

Mary McDougal was born in 1891 in Oklahoma. Mary McDougal attended a finishing school in Missouri, known as North Texas Female College, and she later studied social welfare at the University of Oklahoma. Mary focused on political reform, establishing a home for delinquent girls, before concentrating on a literary career. Mary McDougal then left Oklahoma and moved to New York City where she wrote poetry and essays on suffrage until 1916 when she joined the Woodrow Wilson presidential campaign.

In 1920, Mary McDougal's father, Daniel A. McDougal requested that Mary assist with land sales in his Florida real estate business, which he operated as part-owner of the Chevelier Company. Mary successfully negotiated land sales and oil contracts, and managed to continue her suffrage work. While in South Florida, she joined and spoke before the Miami Suffrage League.

In 1923, Mary met her future husband Ivar Axelson, an economist. When the couple first married, Miami served as their temporary home. Together with Daniel A. McDougal, they became major shareholders in the Chevelier Corporation. Profits from land sales allowed them to leave the area and pursue other careers. The Axelsons retained a large portion of their lands, however, and were later involved in a prolonged battle to protect their property rights in condemnation proceedings related to Everglades National Park.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami.

Excerpts from [Mary's Scrapbook](#), 1920.

"Dad watching Road Work on Tamiami Trail...Dade dreams of the Future of the Everglades...A Little Fairy-tale House! Studio of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Coconut Grove, Florida"





Mary McDougal at Dade County line, 1920.

Photo courtesy of University of Miami Libraries,
Archives and Special Collections Department,
[Mary McDougal Axelson Papers](#)



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Richard "Dicky" J. Bolles

Richard J. Bolles was born in New York City on August 1, 1843. The son of a doctor, Bolles' instinct for business was apparent early on -- by 1886, at the age of 23, he had already acquired a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. Bolles had multiple business interests in various states across the nation, including a mine in Colorado and farm lands in Oregon.

In 1906, Bolles' business dealings came to the attention of Florida's former and current governors, Jennings and Broward, who hoped his success in land development and his millions in cash could ease them out of Florida's reclamation crisis. On December 26, 1908, the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund signed a contract with Richard Bolles, conveying to the latter 500,000 acres of overflowed state lands for two dollars an acre. As part of the deal, the State agreed to use half the proceeds of the sale for drainage and reclamation purposes. Dicky Bolles became the second million-dollar purchaser of lands from the State of Florida (matching Hamilton Disston's investment in the 1880's).

Bolles founded the first of his Florida enterprises, the Florida Fruit Lands Company, to dispose of 180,000 acres in Dade and Palm Beach Counties. The company divided the lands into 12,000 farms of varying size and designated a townsite, 'Progreso', with plans for streets, factories, schools, churches, and public buildings. For the price of \$240, a buyer could purchase a contract from Florida Fruit Lands Company, entitling them to bid on a farm and town lot through a scheduled auction. This same scheme was employed by other sales ventures pitching swamp land in Florida, including Okeechobee Fruit Lands Company, which dealt in Bolles' remaining 428,000 acres around the shores of Lake Okeechobee.

Eager salesman from the Florida Fruit Lands Company and similar ventures crossed the country, promoting the Everglades as a "Garden of Eden", a "Tropical Paradise," or "Promised Land". These "swamp boomers" enticed potential buyers with sales literature quoting government officials who extolled the possibilities of the Everglades. In one such advertisement, US Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson said "that doubting Thomases who were waiting for the Everglades to develop before buying would regret it all their lives" (Hanna and Hanna, 1948).

Bolles' land promotions reached a feverish pitch in March, 1911, when his Florida Fruit Lands Company held a giant land auction in Fort Lauderdale. When representatives of the potential bidders realized that no auction was to take place; that they were expected to execute deeds already designated by the Company; and that the purchased lands were still under water, they brought suit against Dicky Bolles and the Florida Fruit Lands Company. The case was settled in November 1913, with the court allowing Bolles to keep the \$1,400,000 already paid him, but prohibiting him from collecting any further funds until the State had fulfilled its contract to drain and survey the Everglades lands.

Federal prosecutors also initiated a case against Bolles and his cohorts,

producing a 122-page indictment and more than 100 witnesses from across the country. Bolles was arrested on December 18, 1913 and tried the following March -- he was found to be "an honest man". Successive efforts to indict the land speculator were foiled by Bolles' ingenuity. He continued to maintain that he believed what federal and state officials said about the Everglades, and that his opinions rested on the many substantial investigations already conducted to assess the possibilities of Everglades drainage and reclamation.

On March 25, 1917, Richard "Dicky" Bolles died shortly after boarding a train at Palm Beach. With him died the dreams of many disillusioned Everglades land buyers. The proposed town of Progreso never materialized; the majority of land contracts lapsed; and much of the property purchased from Bolles' enterprises reverted to the state for nonpayment.



View from Bolles Hotel at Ritta, Lake Okeechobee.

Photos courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#)

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University, adapted from Hanna and Hanna, *Lake Okeechobee, Wellspring of the Everglades*, 1948.

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Chief Billy Bowlegs

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Seminole men from three different generations were known as "Billy Bowlegs" by the white settlers living in Florida. The Seminoles, of course, have their own Indian names which signify a family or personal characteristic, and also contain the root word of the clan to which they belong. But the "white man's" historical records rarely mention the proper Indian name for any of the Florida Seminoles.

The earliest "Billy Bowlegs" was O-lac-to-mi-co or "Holato Mico" (circa 1810-circa 1864), a Seminole chief who was part of a ruling Seminole family. Bowlegs met up with Andrew Jackson during the Indian uprisings of the early 1800's. In the 1850's, when the few remaining Florida Seminoles were living peacefully on their own lands in south Florida, 'the old Chieftain' was provoked into war by Colonel Harney's surveying corps. One night Harney's men slipped into Bowleg's thriving banana plantation and hacked the plants to bits. When confronted by the outraged chieftain, the surveyors brazenly admitted to ruining the plantation because they wanted "to see old Billy cut up". The incident led to the Third Seminole War (1855-1858), bringing federal troops and bloodhounds into South Florida. Chief Bowlegs and his war-weary band surrendered on May 7, 1858. Thirty-eight warriors and eighty-five women and children, including Billy's wife, boarded the steamer, Grey Cloud, at Egmont Key to begin their journey to Oklahoma. Bowlegs died soon after his arrival, on April 27, 1859.

Following the Third Seminole War, the U.S. government abandoned efforts to remove all Seminoles. At that time, a few hundred Seminoles remained in Big Cypress and other isolated parts of Florida. Among the descendant of this 'remnant' was another Billy Bowlegs, a tall, soft-spoken man who was befriended by James and Minnie Moore Willson, of Kissimmee. Writing in *The Seminoles of Florida*, Minnie Moore Willson recalls a visit from "Cho-fee-hat-cho (Billy Bowlegs), a warrior of more than usual intelligence."

"Knowing that the information we sought was for the purpose of putting it into a book, so that "the people could read about the good Indians of Florida," he showed the greatest interest in the questions, making his answers direct and truthful. An air of deepest solemnity would rest upon his face until he was assured his meaning was thoroughly understood. During his visit he expressed an eagerness to learn to read and write, and followed a copy with remarkable exactness. With the desire to read and write, however, ended all ambition to be like the white man." [Excerpted from Minnie Moore-Willson, 1896, *The Seminoles of Florida*, Philadelphia : American, p. 85-86.]

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University



Painted Portrait of Chief Billy Bowlegs, ca. 1858.



Photograph of Billy Bowlegs, February 7, 1916.

Photo courtesy of University of Miami Libraries, [University Archives](#)

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Guy Bradley

At the turn of the century, wading birds in the Everglades were being relentlessly slaughtered by plume hunters seeking financial gain from the millenary industry. Alarmed by the looming extinction of these birds species, the Audubon Society acted to protect the remaining rookeries, or breeding colonies, from further decimation. In 1902, at the urging of Audubon Society members, the American Ornithologists' Union hired Guy Bradley, a Monroe County Deputy, to protect south Florida's wading birds from plume hunters. On July 8, 1905, at the age of 35, Guy Bradley was shot and killed in the line of duty. He was attempting to arrest a well-known plume hunter for killing egrets on Cape Sable.

An acquaintance of the Bradley family, writing in *Field and Stream* in January 1919, recounted the shooting incident as follows:

One Smith was residing at Flamingo at the time, and Bradley, believing that Smith was going to Cuthbert Rookery and also that he was molesting the heron rookeries on the Oyster Keys, went out one afternoon to investigate the latter's sloop which lay near one of the islands. He failed to return that night.

The following day, Bradley's body was found, still adrift off Bradley Key (the island that now bears his name) in his own skiff. Bradley's shooter, Walter Smith, turned himself into the authorities in Key West, where he spent five months in jail unable to raise the \$5,000 bond. Smith had been angry with Bradley for arresting his son Tom on two previous occasions. Smith had earlier threatened to kill Bradley if the warden ever attempted to arrest him or any of his family again. Although Smith was eventually acquitted -- the jury ruled he had acted in self defense-- the incident aroused public outrage and laws were soon enacted to protect the birds' nesting colonies.

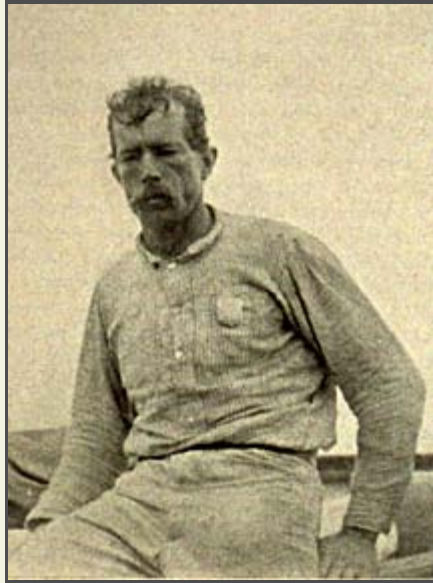
Bradley's obituary, published in *Bird Lore* in August 1905, characterized Bradley as "fearless and brave", noting his "extensive knowledge of the country and the birds that lived there."

The deceased acted as warden in Monroe County, a wild and thinly settled district, for over three years... During all this time he faithfully guarded his wards, the plume birds, traveling thousands of miles in the launch Audubon, in order to watch over them...A number of well-known ornithologists and members of the Association visited Bradley at different times, and always found him alert and faithful in the performance of his duty, and willing to undergo any hardship to protect the birds. He took a personal interest in his work and was genuinely proud when he could report an increase in numbers. ...Personally he was gentle and somewhat retiring, was pure in thought and deed, deeply interested in and a supporter of the small Union Church near his home. A young wife is left to mourn his sudden and terrible death, and his two children, too young to realize their loss, will never know a father's

care.

Guy Bradley was buried on a shell ridge at Cape Sable overlooking Florida Bay. A monument was erected by the Florida Audubon Society. The grave was later washed away in a storm.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University



Guy Bradley
Photo reprinted in [Bird Lore](#), 1905.



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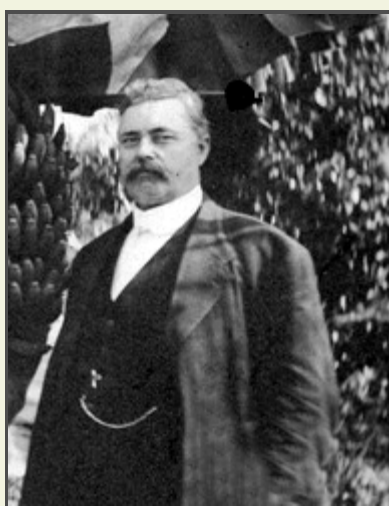
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Napoleon Bonaparte Broward



"Yes, the Everglades is a swamp; so was Chicago sixty years ago."

Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, "The Call of the Everglades", *Florida East Coast Homeseeker*, St. Augustine, Fla. vol. XII, no. 4

Napoleon Broward was born on a farm in Duval County on April 19, 1857. After losing both parents when he was twelve years old, he worked in a logging camp and as a farm hand, steamboat roustabout, steamboat pilot, and owner of a steam tug. In the mid-1890s, he used his sea tug, "Three Friends," to run arms out of Jacksonville to Cuban revolutionaries prior to the Spanish-American War of 1898.

Broward was elected sheriff of Duval County in 1890 and served in other State political offices during the rest of his career. He served as nineteenth governor of Florida, serving from January 3, 1905 to January 5, 1909. He unified the state's institutions of higher learning under a board of control and was successful in draining and developing portions of the Everglades.

Broward won the race for the U.S. Senate in 1910, but never took office. He died in Jacksonville on October 1, 1910 at the age of 53. The state named Broward County for him, memorializing his efforts to drain and channel the Everglades and for encouraging development in the region.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University

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James Milton Carson

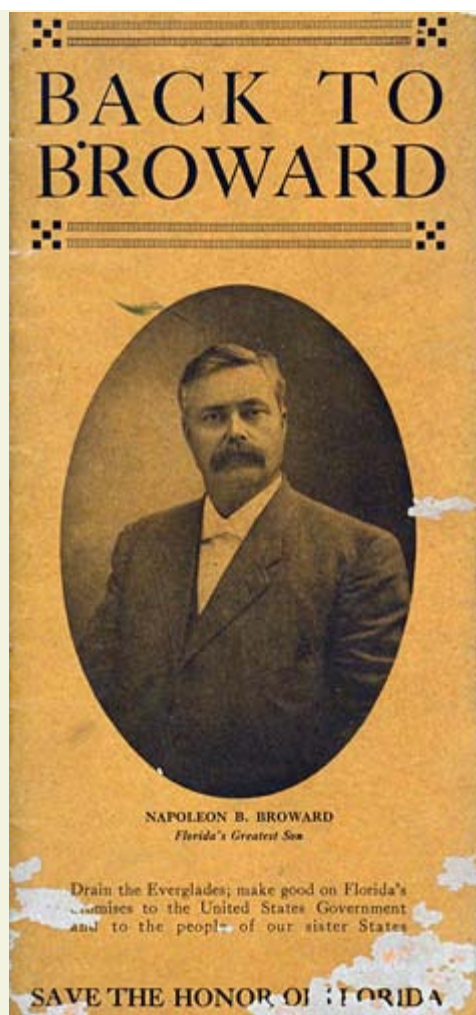
James Milton Carson was born in Kissimmee, Florida on December 16, 1887. Carson attended the University of Florida in 1903-1904 and graduated with a BA from John B. Stetson University in 1909 and an LLB from Washington and Lee University in 1910. Carson opened a law practice in Miami in 1916 and from 1926 through 1929 he was a member of the law faculty of the University of Miami. An authority on Florida history, Carson formed the Historical Association of Southern Florida in his home in 1940. In 1916, after moving to Miami, Carson became interested in the Everglades area and the possible developmental uses of the land. He worked with the Back to Broward League and avidly backed [Lon Farris](#) in the 1916 Florida gubernatorial race on a platform promoting drainage and extensive reclamation of the Everglades. Farris lost the election to Sidney Johnston Catts. Carson continued in his law practice in Miami until his death on April 10, 1950.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami.

Excerpts of letter from James Carson to Lon Farris, December 26, 1915
 University of Miami Libraries, [James Carson papers](#)

"I've been intending for a good long time to write to you about the everglades...The problem is not simply an engineering one, but one calling for the most constructive sort of executive ability - Finance, engineering, economic, agricultural, advertising, colonizing, immigration, transportation, business organization, experimental work of all kinds are some of the things that press for solution; some of the problems that must be met...

... Whoever does take up the work and carry it out will have several pages devoted to him in the 2000 A.D. edition of Florida History"



Pamphlet for "Back to Broward League" prepared by James Carson, 1916.

Photo courtesy of [University of Miami Libraries](#)



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Ernest F. Coe

Ernest F. Coe, affectionately known as Tom by his friends, was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on March 21, 1866. He graduated from Yale University's School of Fine Arts in 1887. He and his wife Anna came to Miami in 1925, settling in Coconut Grove. Anna died in 1941.

According to his friend Marjory Stoneman Douglas, writing in her autobiography *Voice of the River*, "Coe lost his money in real estate speculation during the boom and the bust. In the meantime, he'd discovered the Everglades and decided it should be a national park." Alarmed at the loss of rare birds through poaching and the removal of rare or unusual orchids from their natural habitat, Coe feared that many animals would face extinction if something wasn't done.

In 1928, Coe hatched his plans for a national park to be located within the lower Everglades. He created the Tropical Everglades National Park Association and appealed to south Florida notables to join up. Early members included *Miami Herald* journalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas and University of Miami president Dr. Bowman Ashe. Renowned botanist Dr. David Fairchild served as the association's first president.

As an official of the Tropical Everglades National Park Association, Coe persisted in gaining local and national support for the park's establishment. He wrote Stephen T. Mather, director of the National Park Service, with a draft proposal for the new park. A subsequent meeting took place. Soon thereafter, Senator Duncan B. Fletcher of Florida introduced legislation to create Everglades National Park: *An Act To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to investigate and report to Congress on the advisability and practicability of establishing a national park to be known as the Tropic Everglades National Park in the State of Florida, and for other purposes*(45 Stat.1443). In spite of considerable resistance by legislators who failed to see the merits of the proposed park, and by local landowners who feared lost profits, Coe prevailed. President Roosevelt signed the enabling act for Everglades National Park on May 30, 1934. It took another thirteen years to acquire the land and define the boundaries of the new park.

When Everglades National Park was dedicated in December 1947 the "father of the Everglades" found little satisfaction in the achievement. He was gravely disappointed that the final boundaries of the park comprised a smaller area than originally proposed. Coe had fought, without success, for inclusion of the upper part of Key Largo, the reef, and part of the Big Cypress. He insisted that, without these outer areas, the park wouldn't have the water supply it needed to survive. In the years after Coe's death, his arguments were found to have merit. Everglades National Park was expanded with additional acreage; the reef tract gained protection with the creation of Biscayne National Park and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; and Big Cypress was designated as a national preserve.

Ernest Coe died on January 1, 1951 at age 84. Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman said, "Ernest Coe's many years of effective and unselfish efforts to save the Everglades earned him a place among the immortals of the National

Park movement." On December 6, 1996, the National Park Service opened the "Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center" near the entrance of the park, in honor of "the father of Everglades National Park."

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University

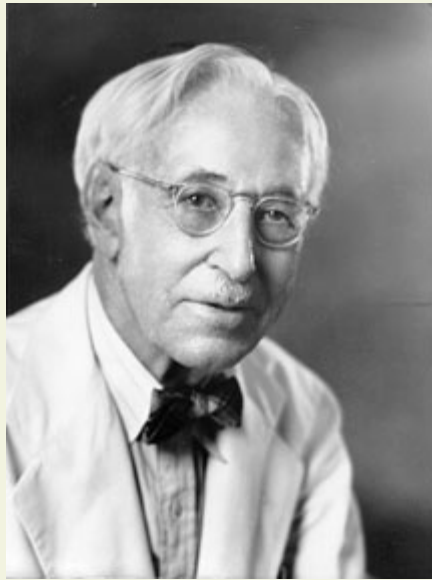


Photo courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#).

Excerpts of [essay by Ernest F. Coe](#), Tropic Everglades National Park of Florida, October 25, 1928. [Model Land Company Records](#), University of Miami.

"The State of Florida and particularly South Florida is to be congratulated in possessing within its confines an area so distinctive in its unique physical interests and from the standpoint of human attractiveness as to type up fully with Uncle Sam's rigid specifications as a National Park candidate...

From an economic standpoint it is quite obvious that Florida is very fortunate in possessing this Cape-Sable area. It places Florida on the map from many substantial angles. Once the Tropic Everglades National Park of South Florida becomes a reality such a flow of our great country's people as well as those from other countries will come into and through the State to visit it that Florida will profit immeasurably in many ways...

From this angle of approach it is quite evident that the State of Florida can very well afford to do its part toward making available such funds and other considerations as is her share. Individual interests in Florida can be depended upon to contribute its share and any necessary balance in a required total can reasonably be expected to be forthcoming from the general public, whose present appreciation of what our National Parks stand for and a Tropic National Park especially, produce many individuals so situated that liberal cash contributions and personal influences will be freely contributed as not only a duty but a privilege.

Far transcending any economic consideration as a reason for or means of acquiring this area stands out the Nation wide importance of preserving this Cape-Sable section of South Florida as a National Park for all time: -- truly a wonderland supreme and one of our Nation's choicest jewels."

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Barron Gift Collier

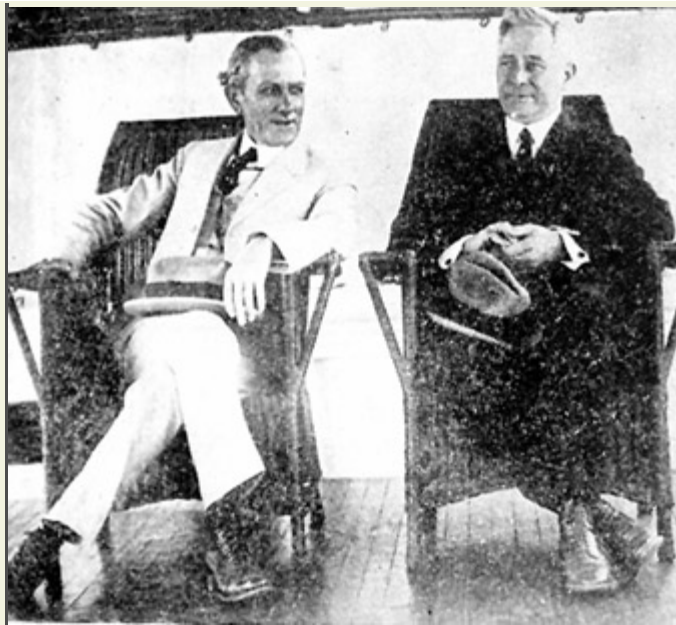
Born in Memphis, Tennessee on March 23, 1873, Barron G. Collier quit school at 16 and was a successful business owner at age 20. By the age of 26, he had amassed his first million by selling advertising card franchises to the nation's trolley, train and subway lines. Based in New York City, Collier's Consolidated Street Railway Advertising Company led the market in mass transit advertising with affiliates in over 70 American Cities, Canada, and Cuba. Collier married Juliet Gordon Carnes, a Memphis girl, in 1907. The couple had three sons who later carried on their father's empire.

In 1911, Barron Collier visited Useppa Island off the Fort Myers coast. He was immediately captivated by the region's subtropical landscapes, warm climate and golden sunshine. Over the next decade Collier accumulated over a million acres of land in southwest Florida, making him the largest landowner in the state. His holdings stretched from the Ten Thousand Islands coastal area northward to Useppa Island and inland from what is now Naples into the Everglades and Big Cypress areas. He owned 90% of Marco Island.

Envisioning a vacation, agricultural and environmental paradise on Florida's last frontier, Barron Collier invested millions of dollars to transform and develop his untouched tracts of wilderness. He was instrumental in early efforts to drain the Everglades and he helped build the Tamiami Trail. When road construction on the western side of the Trail faced financial difficulties, Collier agreed to finish the highway on the condition that a new county be named in his honor. The Florida State Legislature obliged, creating Collier County on May 8, 1923, with Everglades (later Everglades City) as the County seat. Collier also established luxury hotels, resorts and exclusive fishing clubs in southwest Florida.

Barron Collier died on March 13, 1939, at the age of 66; he was Florida's largest landowner at the time of his death. In 1947, land that Collier had hoped to turn into a nature preserve was turned over to the state for management as a state park. Collier-Seminole State Park opened in 1947, offering visitors a glimpse of the natural, untamed beauty that had captivated the young advertising baron almost 100 years ago.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University



Barron G. Collier (right) and Florida Governor Cary A. Hardee (left) on Collier's yacht, 1924.

Photo courtesy of Florida Bureau of Archives & Records Management, [Florida Photographic Collection](#)



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Everglades Biographies

Marjory Stoneman Douglas, 1890-1998.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas was born April 7, 1890 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She was raised in Taunton, Massachusetts after the divorce of her parents. Marjory attended the public schools in Taunton, and Wellesley College, in Wellesley, Massachusetts, where she majored in English composition, graduating in 1912 with an A.B. degree. After her mother's death and the end of her brief marriage, Douglas moved to Miami to work with her father, Frank Stoneman, then the editor of *The Miami Herald*. Douglas left the Herald in 1923, after many years working on *The Galley*, a daily column that always included a poem. As an assistant editor on the paper, Douglas also wrote editorials urging protection and development of Florida's unique regional character in the face of rapid commercial development. After leaving the paper, she devoted herself to her literary career, writing of short stories, 40 of which were published in the *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines between 1923 and 1938, many winning O. Henry and other awards. In 1947, Douglas published *The Everglades: River of Grass*, a best-selling guide and natural/political history that not only raised public consciousness regarding the Everglades but also helped to diminish the national misperception of wetlands in general as swamps. Douglas also became a leader of the successful campaign for the establishment of Everglades National Park and in 1969 helped to found the conservation organization Friends of the Everglades. Marjory Stoneman Douglas died in her home in Coconut Grove, Florida, on May 14, 1998 at the age of 108.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt from Marjory Stoneman Douglas' *Everglades and First Reclamation Idea*, an unpublished, undated manuscript, with annotations and corrections, from xxx, University of Miami

"The first known use of the term Everglades is on Turner's map of Florida (1823) and is cited in the Dictionary of American English currently being published by the University of Chicago Press. A map of Florida compiled by an English geographer for the British government and dated 1821 does not show the Everglades. The word seems to have come into use in Florida only after acquisition by the United States in 1819. The Spanish seem to have had no equivalent of 'Everglades'.

An early spelling was 'glad' and it meant bright, shining. 'Glade' in a sense now obsolete except in poetry meant 'a clear place in the sky, a bright streak or patch of light.' Derived from Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic languages, used by peoples in lands where bright waters were seen at some seasons of the year and snow and ice at another, glade was associated with water in any of its several forms... the Merriams' Webster's New International Dictionary defines Everglades (singular) as: 'A swamp or low tract of land inundated with water and interspersed with hummocks or small islands and patches of high grass; chiefly used as 'the Everglades', a great tract of this nature in Florida."



Photograph of Douglas during a trip to the Everglades, 1930

Excerpt from Marjory Stoneman Douglas' *Everglades and First Reclamation Idea*, an unpublished, undated manuscript, with annotations and corrections, from xxx, University of Miami



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Everglades Biographies

David Grandison Fairchild

David Grandison Fairchild was born in East Lansing, Michigan on April 7, 1869. In 1888 Fairchild graduated from Kansas State University of Agriculture, Manhattan. He also conducted graduate work at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and at Rutgers College, New Jersey.

In 1889 Fairchild joined the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Washington, D.C. as a botanist and plant explorer in the plant pathology section. Fairchild searched the world for plants of economic and aesthetic value that might be cultivated in the United States. Excursions throughout the orient fostered in Fairchild a passion for exploration and tropical horticulture -- an interest he would pursue throughout this life.

In 1897-98, Fairchild helped fellow explorer Walter T. Swingle organize the USDA's Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction; from 1904 to 1928, Fairchild served as its Chairman. During that time, many kinds of plants were introduced into the country. Dr. Fairchild was instrumental in establishing several plant introduction gardens throughout the U. S. to screen plants with a potential to improve the diets and industry of Americans.

Among the facilities established by the Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction was a new subtropical laboratory and garden in Miami. Fairchild's associate Walter Swingle convinced railroad tycoon Henry Flagler to give the USDA an acre of land along Biscayne Bay to be used for construction of a laboratory to study plant diseases. He also persuaded another historic Miamian, Mary Brickell, to give him six acres across Brickell Avenue from Flagler's plot for use as a plant introduction site. In 1898 the USDA decided to lease, not own, these properties and the tropical agricultural program took off in earnest. Fairchild visited the garden in 1898, his first trip to Miami.

In 1903, Fairchild became acquainted with Alexander Graham Bell and his family in Washington DC. Two years later, he married Bell's daughter, Marian Hubbard ("Daisy") Bell, and the couple settled in Chevy Chase, outside of Washington DC. Their son Alexander ("Sandy") was born in the summer of 1906; daughter Barbara was born in spring 1909. In 1917, the Fairchilds began wintering in Coconut Grove. They purchased property at 4013 Douglas Road, naming it "The Kampong" (which means 'a cluster of houses' in Malay). Fairchild continued to travel all over the world collecting plant specimens and brought them back to his Coconut Grove home. In 1928, he and Marian built a two-story residence there, amid some of his collections. When Fairchild retired several years later, the Kampong became the family's permanent residence.

A new area of interest developed for Fairchild in 1929 -- the movement to establish a national park in the southern Everglades. As the first president of the Tropical Everglades Park Association, Fairchild brought his considerable reputation to the movement. He wrote essays, accompanied inspection parties, and provided testimony regarding the region's natural values.

The plant introduction facility that Swingle and Fairchild established in Miami

moved to southern Dade County in 1921, after the War Department offered the abandoned Chapman Field to the USDA. On April 26, 1923, the first trees were planted at the new USDA Plant Introduction Garden at Chapman Field. The period of great plant explorations continued unabated through the 1930s, with Fairchild and others bringing thousands of new plant specimens into the station for propagation

Dr. David Fairchild died on Aug. 6, 1954, in Coconut Grove, Florida. He is credited with overseeing the introduction of more than 80,000 species and varieties of plants into the United States, among them the flowering cherry, Chinese soy bean, pistachios, nectarines, bamboo, avocados, East Indian mangoes and horseradish. Fairchild also wrote several books, including *Exploring for Plants*, (1930) and the autobiographical *The World Was My Garden* (1938).

Biography prepared Gail Clement, Florida International University



Photograph of David Fairchild, 1889.

Photo courtesy of National Agriculture Library, Special Collections, [Galloway Photograph Album](#)

Excerpt from letter from David Fairchild to Ruth Owen, regarding Park Committee's inspection tour of the Everglades, February 1930.

I think we are all set here for the arrival of the Committee unless something happens on the eleventh hour... What I have been afraid of is that the committee will not be able to adjust their senses to such a radical change as that involved in the shift from a foot of snow to mangos in bloom.

The blimp trip of course depends on the weather. If the wind is from the North it blows across the entrance to the hangar and they cannot get the big cigar out...

Do your best to get them out of the pullman at seven sharp. I know they will have had two restless nights and am fearful that this is going to be hard, but am counting on the fact that they are scientific men and will see the necessity of action when they have selected to see the whole tip of this great state in only four days..."

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Ion L. Farris

Ion L. Farris was a Democratic candidate in Florida's 1916 gubernatorial race. Farris was supported in his candidacy by [James M. Carson](#). Farris ran with the "Back to Broward" campaign slogan, supporting large scale drainage of the Everglades and development of the new lands. Farris lost in the primary, but he did publicize the drainage matter, forcing the other candidates to address the issue.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt from [essay by Ion Farris](#), 1916.

"I shall, if it is within my power, see that some of the land in the Everglades -- as large a tract as possible -- is drained and reclaimed completely, and at once. This is utterly necessary in order that public confidence in Florida and elsewhere shall be reestablished and the effect of all the unfavorable publicity which Florida has received on account of mismanagement of Everglades affairs counteracted so far as that be possible."



Photograph of Judge Farris printed in Times-Union, March 19, 1916.

Photo courtesy of University of Miami Libraries, [James M Carson Papers](#)

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Everglades Biographies

Henry Morrison Flagler

Henry Morrison Flagler was born on January 2, 1830 in Hopewell, New York to Reverend Isaac and Elizabeth Caldwell Harkness Flagler. Flagler left school at 14 to seek his fortune in Bellevue, Ohio, where his mother's family resided. Penniless when he arrived, he became a successful businessman working in the family mercantile business with his half-brother, Dan Harkness. Before long, young Henry advanced from L.G. Harkness and Company's grain store to its sales staff, increasing his salary from five dollars a month to \$400. He eventually bought out a partner in one of the Harkness operations with money he had saved. He courted and married his half-brother's sister, Mary Harkness. They had two daughters, Jennie Louise and Carrie. Their only son was born in 1870.

Through his work with the Harkness company, Henry Flagler made the acquaintance of John D. Rockefeller. In 1868, at age 37, Flagler joined with John Rockefeller and Samuel Andrews to form the Rockefeller, Andrews and Flagler Oil Refinery. On January 10, 1870, the partnership emerged as a joint-stock corporation named Standard Oil and by 1872, Standard Oil led the American oil refining industry, producing 10,000 barrels per day. Five years later Standard Oil was considered the largest and richest industrial company in the world. It moved its headquarters to New York City, and the Flaglers moved to their new home at 509 Fifth Avenue.

Within several years, family concerns shifted Flagler's attention away from the business. Flagler's wife, who had always struggled with health problems, was very ill with tuberculosis. On doctor's orders, the Flaglers visited Jacksonville, Florida for the winter in 1878. When Henry Flagler arrived in Jacksonville, Florida, he found the most backward state on the Atlantic coast. Key West was Florida's largest populated city of about 10,000; Jacksonville 7,000; St. Augustine and Tampa had populations in the few thousands, and Daytona in the few hundreds. Miami was little more than a frontier settlement.

Mary's illness grew worse and she died on May 18, 1881 at age 47, leaving Flagler alone with their ten year old son. Flagler responded by distancing himself from Standard Oil and spending less time in its New York offices. On June 5, 1883, Flagler married one of his first wife's nurses, Ida Alice Shourds. Soon after the wedding, the couple visited St. Augustine, Florida where they found the city charming, but inadequately developed for visitors. Flagler recognized the state's potential for growth but acknowledged the lack of transportation and hotels. He set about the task of building both. Though Flagler remained on the Board of Directors of Standard Oil, he gave up his day-to-day involvement in the corporation in order to pursue his interests in Florida.

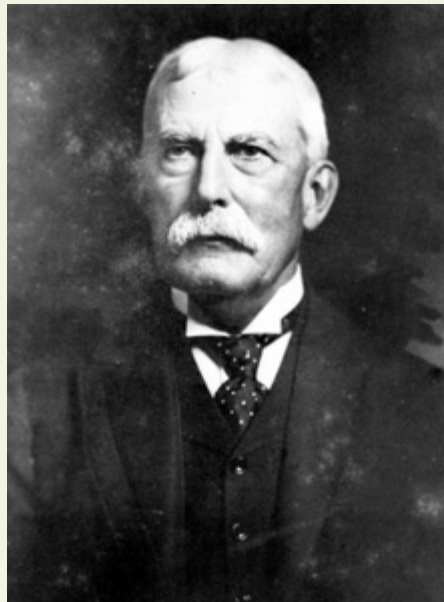
When the Flaglers returned to Florida in 1885 Henry Flagler began building a grand hotel St. Augustine, the Hotel Ponce de Léon. He also purchased the Jacksonville, St. Augustine & Halifax Railroad, the first railroad in what would eventually become the Florida East Coast Railway. The railroad system complemented his string of luxury hotels that included the Breakers and Royal Poinciana Hotels in Palm Beach, Royal Palm Hotel in Miami, and the Casa Marina

in Key West. In 1902, Flagler also built his palatial 55-room winter retreat named 'Whitehall'. The Palm Beach estate was built as a wedding present to his third wife, Mary Lily, whom he had married after divorcing his second wife -- a victim of incurable insanity.

One of Henry Flagler's most controversial undertakings was "Flagler's Folly." The aim of the project was to extend the tracks to Key West, a bustling city located 128 miles past the end of the Florida peninsula. The railway would span seven miles of open water on its way to Key West. During the seven year construction, workers were besieged by mosquitoes and sand flies. Five hurricanes threatened to halt the project, with hundreds of workers lost in the 1906 storm. Despite the hardships, the final link of the Florida East Coast Railway was completed in 1912. The railroad proved to be a failure, however, and never earned the expected revenue before it was destroyed by a 1935 Labor Day hurricane.

In 1913, at the age of 84, Flagler died after falling down a flight of marble stairs at Whitehall. He was buried in St. Augustine alongside his daughter, Jennie Louise and first wife, Mary Harkness. At the time of Flagler's death, the Florida East Coast Railway linked the entire east coast of Florida, from Jacksonville to Key West. His development of the agricultural industry through his Model Land Company established tourism and agriculture as Florida's major industries. Hotels built along the route of the Florida East Coast Railway established St. Augustine, Daytona, Palm Beach and Miami as famous resort cities.

Biography prepared Gail Clement, Florida International University



Photograph of Henry M. Flagler, 19--?

Photo courtesy of Florida Bureau of Archives & Records Management, [Florida Photographic Collection](#)

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Duncan Upshaw Fletcher

Duncan Upshaw Fletcher was born near Americus, Georgia, on January 6, 1859. Fletcher grew up in Monroe County, Georgia and graduated from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, in 1880. He also studied law at Vanderbilt.

Fletcher started practicing law in Jacksonville, Florida, where he quickly began his lifelong political career. He served as a member of the city council in 1887. A few years later, the promising lawman was elected to the State house of representatives. Fletcher also served as mayor of Jacksonville from 1893-1895, and 1901-1903; as chairman of the board of public instruction of Duval County from 1900-1907; as president of the Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Association in 1908, and, later, of the Mississippi to Atlantic Waterway Association.

Fletcher was appointed and subsequently elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate for the term commencing March 4, 1909. He was reelected in 1914, 1920, 1926 and 1932 and served from March 4, 1909, until his death on June 17, 1936. In Congress Senator Fletcher distinguished himself as chairman of the Committee on Printing; the Committee on Commerce; the Committee on Transportation Routes to the Seaboard; the Committee on Banking and Currency and various other posts. He was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1913 as chairman of the United States commission to investigate European land-mortgage banks, cooperative rural credit unions, and the betterment of rural conditions in Europe. In 1916 the Senator was a delegate to the International High Commission at Buenos Aires, Argentina.

South Floridians may best remember Senator Fletcher for his support of the Everglades National Park movement. In December of 1928 he introduced legislation to create the Park. In spite of opposition from others in Congress and local landowners at home, this legislation was approved May 25, 1934 and was signed into law by President Roosevelt on May 30, 1934.

Senator Fletcher died in office 1936 in Washington, D.C. He was buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Jacksonville, Florida.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University

Excerpt from Senator Duncan Fletcher's [letter to Minnie Moore-Willson](#), September 6, 1913. From Minnie Moore-Willson Papers, University of Miami.

"My interest in the Seminoles dates back a number of years, -- in fact even before I was a member of the Florida Legislature. The character and habits of these people form an invaluable and integral part of Florida history. I formed a resolution long ago to do what I could in their behalf--at least, that is to say, to see that this great Government should mete to them simple justice if nothing more."



Photograph of Senator Fletcher and two constituents, John and Lena Cypress, 1931.

Photo courtesy of Florida Bureau of Archives & Records Management, [Florida Photographic Collection](#)



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Everglades Biographies

John Clayton Gifford

John Gifford, the first American to hold a doctorate in forestry, was Assistant Professor of Forestry at Cornell University before moving to Coconut Grove in 1902. As a bank official, nurseryman, and land-development company entrepreneur, Gifford quickly joined the drainage movement to reclaim the Everglades. His primary interest was experimentation with introduced trees that would absorb water and dry up the south Florida wetlands. In 1906, Gifford introduced the cajupet melaleuca, an Australian native, to Florida, planting seeds at his home on Biscayne Bay and at a nursery in Davie, Broward County. Gifford spread his ideas about drainage through numerous publications. His book *The Everglades and other essays relating to southern Florida* was dedicated "to the memory of Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, Father of the Everglade Drainage Project". His articles appeared as a regular feature of *Tropic Magazine*.

While in Miami, Gifford became acquainted with other scientists and agriculturists of the day, including David Fairchild from the USDA's Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction. When USDA administrators threatened to close down Fairchild's Plant Introduction Garden in Miami, Dr. John Gifford and others protested by sending telegrams to Congress and organizing a committee of citizens to take over the garden in case the Government abandoned it. The government backed away.

Dr. Gifford is remembered, in part, for his agricultural experimentation projects, particularly the introduction of the Melaleuca tree. In the hundred or so years since its introduction to South Florida, this hearty tree has literally taken over many natural communities, crowding out the area's valued native species. In fact, the eradication of melaleuca and other exotic pest plants has become a primary goal in Everglades restoration.

As an expert on tropical woods and a professor of tropical forestry at the University of Miami, John Clayton Gifford is also remembered for his contributions to the study of tropical plants. After Gifford's death in 1949, the University named its arboretum after him.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University

Excerpt from Gifford, John C., [The Everglades and other essays relating to southern Florida](#) (Kansas City, Mo.: Everglade Land Sales Co., 1911).

"In Southern California the hand of man has produced a highly developed and attractive region with no resources except vim and climate. Obstacles were met on every hand. In Southern Florida we have the resources, but the vim has been lacking. We have been reposing since the Seminole war. It is not laziness. We have been indulging our love of leisure. But it is this grappling with nature which develops the latent forces within the man. The coming age is to be an age of conquest, the conquest of nature, the reclamation of swamp lands and the irrigation of deserts. (p. 102)"



Dr. John C. Gifford inspecting a melaleuca branch, Davie, June 4, 1938.

Photo courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#)



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James Edmundson Ingraham

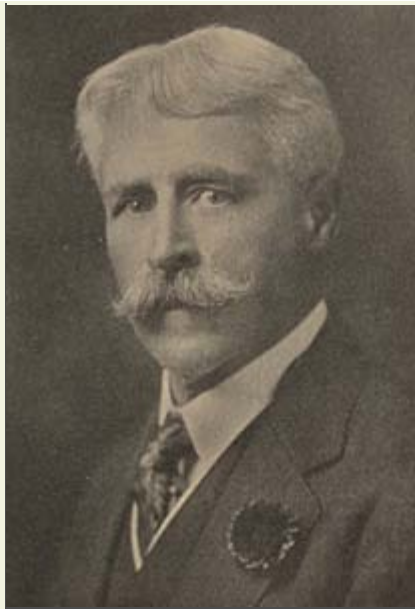
James Edmundson Ingraham, born on November 18, 1850, graduated from Racine College in Wisconsin and became a railroad engineer. Ingraham came to Florida in 1874 where he later served as president of Henry S. Sanford's South Florida Railroad Company. Ingraham was a member of the survey party that crossed the Everglades from Fort Myers to Miami in March 1892 in search of a possible railroad route for Henry B. Plant's railroad system. He caught Henry Flagler's attention when he reported that the east coast would serve as a more practicable route. Flagler immediately hired Ingraham and eventually placed him in charge of all land holdings. In 1897, Ingraham was made the third vice-president of the Florida East Coast Railway Company and in 1910 was made its vice-president. Ingraham was also president of several of the Flagler related land companies: Model Land Company, Chuluota Company, Okeechobee Company and Perrine Grant Land Company. From 1915 until 1920 he was mayor of St. Augustine. Ingraham died on October 25, 1924.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Quoted by John Clayton Gifford in *The Everglades and Other Essays relating to southern Florida (1911)*

"The project of draining the Everglades attracted the attention of Henry B. Plant in the early nineties, but he was by no means sure that the scheme was feasible, so I, acting under his direction, undertook an expedition through the region. Despite its proximity to centers of population, it was then for the first time thoroughly explored by white men. Ours was virtually a voyage of discovery. We paddled our light boats on lakes and camped on islands that, I have good reason to believe, had never before been visited by any human beings but Seminole Indians, and by these but rarely...our efforts were not in vain, for we ascertained the important fact that the Everglades, along the whole 160 miles of the eastern side, are rimmed by a rock ledge. We furthermore learned that all of the lakes are several feet above sea level, and we decided that there was nothing whatever to prevent the water of the lakes from flowing into the ocean and leaving the land drained if vents could be made in this long ledge of rock.

Experiment proved that this work would present no great difficulties. It was merely a matter of a great deal of digging. Henry M. Flagler took up the project, and it is being carried out by his lieutenants. We are not only making artificial outlets through the rock, but are also... turning large bodies of water into rivers and creeks which flow to the ocean. The work has progressed far enough to enable me to predict confidently the opening in Florida, within a very few years, of a great tract of land of almost unprecedented fertility."



Photograph of James E. Ingraham, in *Florida the east coast: Its builders, resources, industries, town and city developments*, 1924.

Image courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#)



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James Franklin Jaudon

James Franklin Jaudon was born in Waco, Texas on October 19, 1873. Early in his youth, Jaudon moved with his parents to Orlando, Florida where he attended public schools and studied with private tutors. At age 15 Jaudon started work as a clerk in the mercantile trade. He also joined the army.

In 1895 Jaudon left Orlando with his brother Paul to establish a mercantile business in Miami. He also helped organize Company L, Second Battalion, Second Infantry, Miami, serving as sergeant, lieutenant and eventually captain and post commander. Jaudon married Maude A. Coachman in November 1911 and the couple settled on N.W. Fourth Avenue in Miami. Captain Jaudon retired from military service in 1912.

In 1917 Jaudon established the Chevelier Corporation and served as its President. The corporation purchased extensive land holdings in Monroe County in southernmost Florida. Other business interests of Captain Jaudon included the Tamiami Railway, the Royal Palm Sugar Cane and Planting Company, the Tamiami Trail Committee, the Florida Rubber Company, the Tamiami Trail Land Company, the Perrine Mercantile and Investment Company, and the Heitman Estates/Bonita Springs development.

Jaudon was involved in most road construction projects in Miami in the 1910's and 1920's, promoting both the Ingraham Highway and Tamiami Trail projects. He invested considerable funds of his own to extend the Tamiami Trail eighteen miles from Miami west through Dade County. Indeed, it is the Tamiami Trail for which Captain Jaudon may be best remembered. The idea for building a highway to connect Florida's east and west coasts originated with Jaudon while he was serving as Dade County's tax assessor in 1915. As a landowner with interests in several townships south of the proposed Tamiami Trail route, Jaudon had high expectations for development and agriculture once the roadway was completed. His Chevelier Corporation financed much of the road construction for the Trail in Dade and Lee Counties. By 1918, Dade County had completed 43 miles westward from Miami.

On Florida's less populous west coast, road construction was considerably slower. When the project faced delays due to lack of funding, wealthy landowner Barron Collier offered to finance the operation under one condition: the creation of a new county named for the real estate magnate. Collier County was thus created out of the southern part of Lee County. Jaudon and Collier battled over the Tamiami Trail's location in southwest Florida: the dueling land developers pushed to locate the road in their respective tracts. The state resolved the problem in favor of Collier, thus creating the 'dog leg' in the middle section of the Tamiami Trail. In April of 1928, thirteen years after its inception, the 283-mile Tamiami Trail was completed. The peninsula's two tropical coasts were at last connected, and life in south Florida was forever changed.

In the 1930, Captain Jaudon moved west to Ochopee, Florida to pursue his business endeavors -- a sugarcane plantation, rum distillery and logging operation. He was the first postmaster of Ochopee. A few years later, Jaudon

prepared histories of Lee and Collier Counties for the Federal Writer's Project. He was also involved, along with other landowners in Dade and Monroe counties, in negotiating the boundaries of the proposed Everglades National Park and establishing prices for land sales.

James F. Jaudon -- Miami pioneer, entrepreneur, community leader and "Father of the Tamiami Trail" --died in 1938.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University



Photograph of Captain James F. Jaudon, 1926.

Image courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#)



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Everglades Biographies

May Mann Jennings

May Mann Jennings was born in Bayonne, Centerville, New Jersey in 1872. Her family moved to Jacksonville, Florida while she was an infant. She graduated from St. Joseph's convent in St. Augustine and married [William Sherman Jennings](#) on May 12, 1891. During her husband's administration as Governor, she was known in Florida for her outstanding civic and political service. Jennings was an organizer of the Duval County Federation of Women's clubs and was president of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs. Jennings was known as the "Mother of Florida Forestry" for she took a large part in securing the legislative act creating the state Board of Forestry. She was also instrumental in the development of Royal Palm State Park near Homestead, now part of the Everglades National Park. Mary Mann Jennings died on April 25, 1963.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpts from [May Mann Jennings's letter to Minnie Moore-Willson, May 12, 1915](#), University of Miami Libraries.

"I am thoroughly acquainted with the work in the Glades and probably know more of it than any other woman in the State, and my husband has had a great deal to do with the work for the State as well as private individuals as a lawyer, and I know of no scandal of any kind that could be unearthed in connection with the Glades, and even if there was, it would not be the part of the Federation to take part in giving Florida a black eye..."

I think you realize from this letter that there is not the difference that you imagined existing in our attitude towards the Indians, except that I do not feel that the drainage of the Everglades and the exploiting of land scandal, even if it exists, has anything whatsoever to do with the State's attitudes towards the Indians, nor its duty to provide for them..."



Photograph of May Mann Jennings, 1901

Photo courtesy of [Florida Photographic Collection](#), Florida State Archives



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Everglades Biographies

Claude Carson Matlack

Claude C. Matlack came from Louisville, Kentucky, where his family ran an electric lighting business. Matlack's father also served on the board of a mountain settlement school in Oneida, Kentucky. Claude Matlack's early photographs document the communities around Louisville, including the school and its students and teachers. Many of these early photographs were published in the book *Dawn Comes to the Mountains* (George Rogers Clark Press, 1981).

Claude C Matlack first visited Florida in 1916, returning a year later to make Miami his home. He worked as a commercial photographer in Miami and Miami Beach until 1942. His studio was located on 23rd street in Miami Beach. Matlack photographed in Miami Beach, Miami, Florida Keys, Tamiami Trail, and the Everglades area; and to a lesser extent, in Fort Lauderdale, the Bahamas, and Fort Jefferson. As a member of Miami beach Chamber of Commerce , Matlack served on their committee that handled all of the publicity and advertising for the city until 1927.

Matlack's photographs give us some of the most memorable early images of south Florida's people and places. Matlack was especially busy during the "Roaring Twenties," when he photographed everything and everyone from flappers to tin can tourists. Other subjects included buildings of various types, Seminole Indians, people at beaches, recreational boats and boating, polo, golf, school children, aviation, film making, dredging, and construction.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University and Becky Smith, Historical Museum of Southern Florida



Photograph of photographer Claude C. Matlack, 19--.

Photo courtesy of Florida Bureau of Archives & Records Management, [Florida Photographic Collection](#)

Sample of Matlack's work in advertising, 1931.

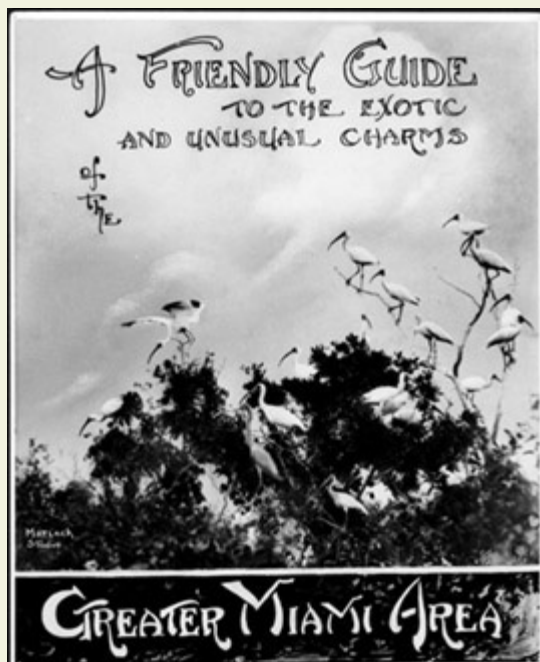


Image courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#)



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Everglades Biographies

Daniel A. McDougal

Daniel A. McDougal was born on January 14, 1865 in Wayland Springs, Tennessee. McDougal spent a year at Vanderbilt University and then studied law under the tutelage of his brother-in-law. He set up a law practice in Purdy, Tennessee and became active in politics. McDougal became interested in land development and the quest for oil in the western territories. He relocated his family to the town of Sapulpa, Oklahoma where he profited greatly from the oil industry. He entered local politics, becoming mayor of Sapulpa, and later a state legislator. McDougal crusaded for prohibition and supported women's suffrage in Oklahoma. During the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, McDougal assisted the legal advisor for the U. S. State Department. During the land boom of the early 1920s, McDougal came to Florida with his daughter, Mary McDougal Axelson. Here he team up with her future husband, Ivar Axelson, and began amassing land and oil rights in the Everglades. McDougal made his final permanent home in Coral Gables and spent his last years fighting the expansion of the Everglades National Park and the retention of his oil rights. Daniel A. McDougal died in Coral Gables in 1955.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt of [letter from Daniel McDougal to Charles Walker](#), October 19, 1925.
From Axelson Papers, University of Miami.

"While I have done well and made big profits on my investments in Florida, all that I have is in land and paper. I have never received one cent out of the profits of the sale of the lands from our big tract. We have sold about three and one-half million dollars' worth of land out of the big tract, but most of it was sold for 25% cash payment and some of it was for much less cash, and out of the cash payment, we paid a commission of 5% and had nearly a million dollars' of obligations in the way of road building expenses, floating indebtedness and bonded indebtedness...

We still have about five million dollars of unsold land in the big tract. I never had more property nor less cash nor more pressing obligations than I have right now."



Photograph of Judge McDougal wearing mosquito netting, 1919.

Photo courtesy of University of Miami Libraries, [University Archives](#)



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Everglades Biographies

Minnie Moore-Willson

Minnie Moore-Willson was born near the town of West Newton, Pennsylvania, on August 14, 1859. She married James Mallory Willson on September 3, 1890. Her acquaintance with Kissimmee, Florida, began in the early 1880s when she visited the area during the winter season and developed an interest in the Seminole Indians. Both Willsons were nature lovers and Minnie wrote for a number of wild-life magazines. The Willsons were active members of the Audubon Society of Florida and through Mrs. Willson's writings and influences, the town of Kissimmee served as one of the first towns in the state to become a bird sanctuary. The Willsons proved instrumental in the passage of an act by the Florida Legislature in 1913, setting apart 100,000 acres in the extreme southern portion of the state for use by the Seminole Indians. The Willsons worked closely with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the resident Indian Agent, and the National Indian Association, and their efforts culminated with passage of the bill. Minnie Moore Willson served as first president of the Kissimmee Women's Club and thereafter was elected honorary president for life. She was also a member of the American Pen Women and other literary groups. Willson authored many short stories and published *The Seminoles of Florida* in 1895. Willson's last works included a short history of Osceola County and a monograph of the Indian Chief, Osceola. Willson died in Kissimmee, Florida on August 12, 1937.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt from Minnie Moore Willson's' *The Florida Seminoles and their rights in the Everglades*. , an unpublished typescript (ca. 1915), with annotations and corrections, from Minnie Moore Willson papers, University of Miami.

In 1855 when the U.S. Government deeded to Florida all her "swamp and over-flowed lands" the Indians came as a part of the possessions, as they occupied the Everglades territory. Thus they became a STATE PROBLEM AS MUCH A PART OF FLORIDA AS THE LAND ITSELF!!

Florida accepted this gift of the Everglades country from the National Government. Can she repudiate her responsibility to her Indian subjects that came as part of this gift? Of the 58,000 square miles we call the Land of Flowers little remains for the original owners. So today we find our Florida Seminoles stranded in these great morasses, a Nation haunted by famine and extinction. Will the democracy of Florida allow a helpless people to be crushed out of existence by a handful of speculators, whose highest thought is the jingle of dollars? This forlorn remnant of a once powerful race are being pushed on and on, by a brute force totally unworthy of Floridians and the white speculator says, "There is no land left for the Seminole, let him make bricks without straw."...Surely the Everglades country has had enough ugly and destructive publicity, for all Florida suffers today for the high pressure sales of water covered Everglades lands.

The hour has arrived when the voice of Floridians should be heard and the call to right and justice should be sounded from every hamlet, town and city of this fair State. No longer should these wards of Florida be denied homes in the country they love so well, and no longer should a stigma on the fair name of Florida be heralded in flaming headlines to the world."



Photograph of Minnie Moore Willson.

Photo printed in The least known wilderness of America: the Everglades of Florida. 1917



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Everglades Biographies

Mary Barr Munroe, d. 1922

Mary Barr Munroe was a Miami pioneer who contributed much to the community life of Coconut Grove. In her effort to save the egrets from poachers, Mrs. Munroe founded the southern Tropical Audubon Society. As a member of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, she was instrumental in the establishment Royal Palm Park which later became Everglades National Park. Mrs. Munroe also started the Coconut Grove Library in 1895 and taught many children in Coconut Grove how to read. She strongly believed, and proved, that women can make a great difference.

On September 15, 1883 Mary Barr married author Kirk Munroe, and the couple took a three month cruise from St. Augustine to Lake Worth, Florida. A few years later, the Munroes cruised the great Florida reef, ending up in Biscayne Bay. They bought a property on Biscayne Bay in Coconut Grove which they name "Scrububs".

Mary Barr Munroe died in 1922. She was buried at the Woodlawn Park Cemetery on S.W. 8th Street in Miami.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University

Excerpt from *Two Plume-bearing Birds*, by Mary B. Munroe, published in *The Tropic Magazine*, Miami (Fla.), 1915..

"'Oh, the bird died a long time ago!' That is the Florida Egret's obituary or what every woman says when spoken to about wearing the plumes of the Egret and Snowy-Heron.

It seems incredible that to-day there should be in the United States any person able to read who is not aware of the fact that the 'aigrette' is the nuptial plume worn by the egret and snowy heron at the nesting time of the year, by both parents, and that to procure them it is necessary to shoot the birds, which means that the young are left to slowly die of starvation.

...

Many women in Florida defend themselves by telling how they bought the plumes from the 'poor Indians.' Would these same women give the Indians the exact amount of money in sweet charity? And do they realize that if they would stop buying and wearing the plumes the Indian would not have them for sale?

...

But it is not the Indian's sin: it is the women who demand the plumes, so that white men have hunted the birds in such numbers that after a few more years of such reckless slaughter during the breeding season the egret and snowy heron will be classed among the extinct birds of the country."



Photograph of Mary Barr Munroe standing by a lime tree, ca. 1890.

Photo courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#), Ralph Munroe Collection.



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Everglades Biographies

Ralph Middleton Munroe

Ralph Middleton Munroe was born and raised in Staten Island, N.Y. His grandfather, William Munroe, designed and manufactured the first lead pencil in the U.S. shortly after the war of 1812. As a youngster Munroe was influenced by conservationists Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, both of whom were family friends. After attending military school, Munroe studied drafting at Columbia University in New York.

As a young man, Ralph Munroe took an interest in boats. In 1877 he jumped at the chance to sail to Key West, Florida with a relative. En route the party sailed across Biscayne Bay, discovering the wilderness along the coast and the scattered human settlements along the Miami River. Munroe was favorably impressed by the mild climate, subtropical landscapes, and the friendly people he encountered in south Florida.

Back in New York, Munroe met Eva Hewitt of Staten Island. The couple was married in 1879 and had a baby daughter the following year. When Eva Munroe developed tuberculosis a year later, the couple traveled by steamer to south Florida to find a more suitable climate. Accompanying them was Eva's sister Adeline Hewitt, who was also suffering from tuberculosis, and her brother Mott Hewitt. The baby remained in New York with her grandmother.

Munroe set up camp for the family along the north bank of the Miami River. Despite his efforts, however, illness claimed both his wife and sister within a short time. But Munroe's grief did not end there. Upon returning to New York with Eva's family, Munroe also learned that his baby daughter had died as well.

Yearning to see his wife's grave, Munroe returned to South Florida in 1882 with his brother-in-law Mott Hewitt. The pair helped a friend in Coconut Grove build a hotel on the shore of Biscayne Bay. The Bay View Villa (later renamed the Peacock Inn) opened the following winter. For several years thereafter, Munroe traveled between New York and south Florida.

In 1886, Ralph Munroe decided to make Coconut Grove his permanent winter home. He bought 40 acres of bayfront land for \$400 and one of his sailboats, valued at an additional \$400. In 1887, Munroe built a boathouse, using its upper floor as his residence until the main house was completed in 1891. The house was a one-story bungalow that Munroe named the "Barnacle. It was constructed partly from salvaged ship timber. Some ten years later, when more space was needed at the Barnacle, the original structure was lifted and a new first floor inserted below. The Barnacle still stands in Coconut Grove today -- the oldest home that has remained in its original location in Dade County.

In 1887, a group of residents formed the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club and elected Ralph Munroe as Commodore, a title he held for 22 years. Boats were the primary mode of transportation in Coconut Grove at that time, and the Yacht Club was a place of prominence in community life. Munroe made his living by designing yachts for many of South Florida's pioneers. He also worked as a wrecker, salvaging boats that had run aground in Biscayne Bay.

In the fall of 1894 Munroe met Miss Jessie Wirth while on a cruise with friends. They were married that spring. They had two children, a daughter, Patty, and a son, Wirth. The family took frequent cruises on Biscayne Bay and the children learned to sail at a very early age.

Ralph Munroe remained an active leader of the Coconut Grove community, successfully fighting developers who proposed to build artificial islands offshore and engineers who proposed piping raw sewage into the Bay. He established a library, post office, churches, and schools. His photographs depict the people and places of Coconut Grove, maritime places (Miami River, Florida Keys, Bahamas, lighthouses, etc.) and maritime activities around Biscayne Bay (boat-building, sailboats, wrecking, Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, etc.). Munroe's book, *The Commodore's Story: The Early Days on Biscayne Bay*, co-written by Vincent Gilpin, offers a rare glimpse of south Florida at the turn of the century.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University



Photograph of Ralph Middleton Munroe ca. 1890.

Photo courtesy of [History Miami \(formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida\)](#)



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Everglades Biographies

Ruth Bryan Owen (Rohde)

Ruth Bryan Owen was born in Jacksonville, Ill., in 1885; she moved with her family to Lincoln, Nebraska in 1887. She was educated in Nebraska and Illinois. After two years at the University of Nebraska, Ruth Bryan married an artist and had two children. The couple was divorced in 1909. She then spent a few years in Jamaica, West Indies and in London, England where she married retired major Reginald Owen in 1910. Ruth traveled the world with her husband, bearing two more children. She also worked as a nurse in the Voluntary Aid Detachment in the Egypt-Palestine campaign from 1915-1918. Upon returning to the United States in 1919, the Owens settled in Miami where Ruth's parents had earlier retired. Ruth Bryan Owen worked at the University of Miami as a lecturer and administrator for several years, while also taking care of her invalid husband.

The daughter of William Jennings Bryan, three-time Democratic presidential nominee and Secretary of State under President Woodrow Wilson, Owen had a natural interest in politics and government. In 1908, at age 23, she was responsible for Bryan's campaign correspondence. In 1929, just eight years after women obtained the right to vote, Owen was elected to the Seventy-first Congress and was re-elected to the Seventy-second Congress in 1931. She was a widow and the mother of four when elected to her first term. As the representative of Florida's Fourth Congressional District, she sponsored numerous bills benefiting south Florida, including the proposal designating the Florida Everglades as a national park. She also led passage of bills to develop state rivers and harbors, including Port Everglades.

Congresswoman Owen's staunch defense of the Everglades National Park project was not always appreciated by her constituents at home. Owen's longtime friend Marjory Stoneman Douglas recalled a particularly dramatic debate on Capitol Hill which Florida landowners attended to voice their strong opposition to the proposed Park. They argued that selling their property to the government was senseless because the Everglades was merely a worthless swamp filled with snakes and mosquitos. The constituents brought along a live snake to make their point. Congresswoman Owen, determined not to lose the argument to such lowly pranks, grabbed the snake, wrapped it around her neck, and announced, "That's how afraid we are of snakes in the Everglades!"

In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Ruth Bryan Owen as Minister to Denmark; she was the first woman to represent the United States in so high a diplomatic post. She served successfully until 1936 when she married Rohde, a Danish Captain of the King's Guard. This gave her dual citizenship as a Dane, so she resigned her post. In 1949, President Truman named Owen an alternate delegate to the UN General Assembly.

In 1954 Ruth Bryan Owen died in Denmark at the age of 68. Her remains were buried near Copenhagen.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University

Excerpt from *Hearing before the Committee on the Public Lands, House of Representatives, Seventy-first Congress, Third Session on H.R. 12381, to Provide for the Establishment of the Everglades National Park in the State of Florida, and For Other Purposes*, Government Printing Office, 1931.

"There seems to be an interest on the part of the committee to make a distinction between the preservation of bird and animal life, and the establishment of national park standards. Now, in answer to the question as to whether the Everglades territory measured up to national park standards, we have a group of scientists here to present one after another to speak of the various features, and before they speak I want to read a brief statement from from David Fairchild, who has been referred to by Mr. Albright as one of the most distinguished naturalists with a knowledge of plant life in the country, and he touches on the answer to the very question that was put. He says:

How can anyone object to the establishment of a great wild-life park where swimming and flying inhabitants will inspire millions of American children and give them a glimpse of the fascination of the tropics, which circumstances may never permit them to see elsewhere.

That is the inspirational, educational feature.

It will soon be within the reach of the week-end excursionists from the crowded centers of American life, and will startle them out of the ruts which an exclusive association with the human animal produces on the mind of man. It will be peculiarly a mid-winter park, the only one so far in the northern hemisphere warm enough to play in in the winter, where those too old or those too young to brave rigorous American winters can experience the thrill of the tropics.

That refers to the inspirational value.



Photograph of the Honorable Ruth Bryan Owen during National park committee visit to the Everglades, 1929-1930.

Photo courtesy of University of Miami Libraries, [University Archives](#)

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Everglades Biographies

John Kunkel Small

John K. Small was a botanist and taxonomist most renowned for his research on the flora of the southeastern United States, particularly Florida. Born in January 31, 1869 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Small studied botany at Franklin & Marshall College and Columbia University. After receiving his doctorate from Columbia, Small served as the curator of the institution's herbarium. In 1898 he moved to the newly founded New York Botanical Garden, where he remained until his death in 1938. He personally collected over 60,000 specimens for the Garden's collections.

Small was one of the first botanists to explore Florida and he documented many areas that had previously been unknown. His first trip to Florida occurred in 1901. Over the next 37 years, he returned many times to collect specimens, to study the natural history of the region, and to photograph natural landscapes, tropical plants, Seminoles and other local folk. His excursions were conducted by car and boat, and often included his wife Elizabeth and their four children.

Small's botanical research was recorded in 450 published works, mostly articles, and numerous unpublished typescripts. Among his most well-known publications is the book *From Eden to Sahara--Florida's Tragedy*, which received acclaim in 1929 for documenting the severe deterioration of south Florida's botanical resources that he had observed up to that time.

Much of Small's Florida work is reflected in the [John Kunkel Small Collection](#) maintained by the Florida State Archives, comprising 25 cubic feet of correspondence and thousands of photographs. More than 3600 of these images are freely accessible through the web site of the Florida State Archives.

While the collections represented in *Reclaiming the Everglades* contain only a small sample of materials relating to the life and work of Dr. Small, no history of the South Florida environment would be complete without recognizing his contributions.

Biography prepared by Gail Clement, Florida International University

Excerpt of letter [from John Kunkel Small to Minnie Moore-Willson](#), January 21, 1929. From Moore-Willson Papers, [University of Miami Libraries](#).

"There is much activity now to get parts, at least, of the Everglades rescued from the vandals."



Photo courtesy of Florida State Archives, [John Kunkel Small Collection](#)



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Everglades Biographies

Frank Stranahan

Frank Stranahan was born in Vienna, Ohio on August 21, 1864. He relocated for health reasons to Florida in 1890, settling in Melbourne. In 1893, Stranahan moved to Fort Lauderdale to assume management of the overland mail route from Lantana to Coconut Grove. He established the first post office in Fort Lauderdale, along with a trading post and a ferry service for crossing the New River. By 1895, Stranahan's Trading Post was a South Florida landmark.

Stranahan also established the first banking institution in Fort Lauderdale and financed the construction of the first road from the New River to Miami. He became one of the largest land owners in the area but gave away large portions of his land for public welfare, including sites for the memorial Hospital and Stranahan Park. Due to his extraordinary early efforts in the area, Stranahan is known as the founder of Fort Lauderdale. He died in the city on June 23, 1929.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt from 'Statement of Mr. Frank Stranahan', *Conditions of the Florida Seminoles: hearings before the Committee on Investigation of the Indian Service, House of Representatives, 1917.*

"At the present time I am president of the Fort Lauderdale State Bank. I located at Fort Lauderdale here January 27, 1893. At that time the Indian camp was about a mile east of here. My camp was pitched within about 300 feet of it. I might say that they were located in a heavy hammock where there was a large field, and they had plenty of corn, Indian pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and Lima beans. They were living in no want whatever at that time. I was in the mercantile business here for 18 years and had considerable experience trading with the Indians in alligator hides and others, and at one time the plume bird also. That part of it was cut off by the Government along about 1899 -- the killing of the plume bird.

"...At one time Osceola had a camp here. He is dead now. In one season he grew tomatoes and shipped them. He shipped enough to buy a horse and wagon. I helped him out with the fertilization proposition then. Then he could go out and grow stuff on one piece till the soil gave out, and then move somewhere else. But later, as fast as they clear a piece of hammock and work it two or three years, some white man comes along and takes it."



Stranahan Home on New River, Ft. Lauderdale, 1906.

Photo courtesy of Florida Bureau of Archives & Records Management, [Florida Photographic Collection](#)



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Everglades Biographies

Ivy Julia Cromartie Stranahan

Ivy Julia Cromartie Stranahan was born in White Springs, Florida on February 24, 1881. She moved to Fort Lauderdale in 1899 to become the town's first school teacher. She married Frank Stranahan in 1900 and lived at the Indian trading post founded by her husband. Stranahan taught school in Fort Lauderdale for 17 years. She also informally taught Seminole Indian children for over 15 years. Stranahan was active in social affairs, including women's suffrage, the Audubon Society, and the establishment of the Everglades National Park. Her most noted accomplishment was the foundation of the "Friends of the Seminoles" and her role in persuading some of the Seminoles to move to the newly created reservation at Dania. Stranahan died in Fort Lauderdale on August 30, 1971.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt from 'Statement of Mrs. Frank Stranahan of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.', *Conditions of the Florida Seminoles: hearings before the Committee on Investigation of the Indian Service, House of Representatives, 1917.*

"I might say that three years ago the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs took this work up and appointed me as chairman, and during those three years I have been working endeavoring to work with the Government representatives here, assisting them in every way possible

...

It seems to me, though, that the State of Florida, having had these Indians in their possession or on these lands, that have been given them by the United States--if they have not done anything for them for this number of years and have simply left them to go as they are, it is time that the Government was at least seeing that they fulfilled their obligation to these people that were on this land when they acquired it from the Government..."



Photograph of Ivy Stranahan, 18--.

Photo courtesy of Florida State Archives, [Florida Photographic Collection](#)



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Everglades Biographies

James Mallory Willson

James Mallory Willson, a native of Somerset, Kentucky, and former resident of Chicago, Illinois, relocated to Kissimmee, Florida in the early 1880s. Through contacts with the Southern Baptist Organization, James Willson helped organize Baptist missionary crusades for the Seminole Indians. Together with his wife, Minnie Moore Willson, he was instrumental in the society known as "Friends of the Florida Seminoles." This organization dealt with the Indians through education and attempts to raise their standard of living. During his extensive dealings with the Seminoles, James Willson also compiled an extensive vocabulary and dictionary of the Seminole Indian language. James M. Willson, an invalid the last few years of his life, died on August 5, 1943.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt of letter from James M. Willson to M.K. Sniffen, Secretary of the Indian Rights Association, January 26, 1925. [Minnie Moore Willson Papers](#), University of Miami.

"If this drainage plan is carried out as it is outlined then I believe it would include the 100,000 acres we persuaded the Fla. Legislature to set aside for the Seminoles....

Then too there is another part of this work we must consider and that is to have that tract of land turned over to the National Gov. for these Indians, and thus get it out of the hands of Florida. As long as it is left in its present title I fear, now that people are getting land crazy, some one will come forward with some scheme to get that land turned over for other purposes.

The Florida Seminoles are now so far down in the Everglades I have not seen any of them for a long time, but I am very anxious to make a trip to visit them. So far as I know they are getting along about as usual, with the hunting about gone, which means of course more hard times for them than they have ever known. They need all the friends they have and then some..."



Near Lake Okeechobee, James M. Willson and Billy Bowlegs, with a deer on his back, just returning from an hour's hunt. February 8, 1916.

Photo courtesy of University of Miami Libraries, [University Archives](#)



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Everglades Biographies

William Sherman Jennings, 1863-1920

William Sherman Jennings was born March 24, 1863 near Walnut Hill, Illinois. He was a first cousin to William Jennings Bryan, congressman and three-time Democratic presidential nominee. Jennings attended the public schools in Marion County and graduated from Normal University in 1883. He studied law at the Union College of Law in Chicago and completed his law studies under the tutelage of his brother, Charles E. Jennings, who was the state attorney for Marion County. Jennings moved to Florida in 1885 and began a law practice in Brooksville, becoming the judge of Hernando County in 1888. In 1893, Jennings accepted an election to the state legislature and became speaker of the house in 1895. During the next few years, he served as a colonel in the Florida militia, president of the Brooksville town council and chairman of the Democratic committee. In 1900, Jennings was elected governor of Florida for the term from 1901 to 1905. While governor, Jennings is credited with coming up with the idea of draining the Everglades by cutting the natural rock dams in the rivers and allowing the water to run out. He was succeeded in the governorship of Florida by [Napoleon Bonaparte Broward](#). After his term in office, Jennings practiced law in Brooksville and Jacksonville. He died on February 28, 1920.

Biography prepared by Ruthanne Vogel, University of Miami

Excerpt from "Message of Gov. W.S. Jennings to the Legislature of Florida Relative to Reclamation of Everglades, 1903", In *Everglades of Florida: acts, reports, and other papers, state and national, relating to the Everglades of the state of Florida and their reclamation*. Government Printing Office, 1911.

"..it will appear that the drainage of the Everglades is entirely feasible and practicable, thus reclaiming 3,760,000 acres, a large percentage of which would be available, and the most valuable agricultural land in the Southern States."



Portrait of Governor William Sherman Jennings

Photo courtesy of Florida Bureau of Archives & Records Management, [Florida Photographic Collection](#)



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[Ask An Everglades Librarian](#)

The online Reference Desk of the [Everglades Digital Library](#)
Florida International University Libraries

History Miami (formerly Historical Museum of Southern Florida) [Archives and Research Center](#)

101 West Flagler Street

Miami, Florida 33130

Telephone: 305-375-1623, Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Email: archives@historymiami.org

Finding Aids and Guides: <http://historymiamiarchives.org/guides/>

University of Miami Libraries [Archives & Special Collections](#)

1300 Memorial Drive

Coral Gables, FL 33146

Telephone: 305-284-3247

Email: k.tasa@miami.edu

Collections and Finding Aids:

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University of Florida [Florida Environments Online](#), [Herbarium Collections Catalog](#), and [Florida Map Collection](#)

George A. Smathers Libraries

Guide to Libraries & Collections: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/libcoll.html>

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Minnie Moore Willson seated in a chair, courtesy of the University of Miami Libraries

Jaudon Realty Company advertisement for land adjacent to Tamiami Trail in Collier County, courtesy of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida

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