

Thomas Elmer Will,

Twentieth Century Pioneer

By J. E. DOVELL

One of the major drainage problems of the United States concerns the Everglades watershed of the peninsula of Florida. This watershed extends one hundred miles southward from Lake Okeechobee in a shallow valley, thirty-five miles wide, to the Gulf of Mexico. The area of the Everglades, about four thousand square miles of land and water, is approximately the same size as the state of Connecticut. Within the present century a considerable part of the Everglades has been drained of surplus waters and brought into agricultural and commercial production.¹

The drainage and reclamation of the Florida Everglades has proven to be an enormous undertaking fraught with many difficulties. This transition, from a primeval morass, dominated by saw grass marshes that are almost level and which are flooded or nearly wet to their surface most of the year, has consumed many years of tedious effort. In addition to the problem of drainage has been that of handling the peat soils of organic origin, products of the growth and slow decay of vegetation in a region of low elevation enjoying a warm climate and a heavy rainfall.²

Random references to the Everglades are found in the records of the explorers of Florida, but little was known of them until the Seminole Indian wars in the 1830-1840's. The creation of an Internal Improvement Fund by Florida in 1851 marked the beginning of attempts to reclaim the Everglades. Efforts of the Trustees of that fund to encourage reclamation through grants and sales involved the area in a confusion of ownership and interests. This situation resulted in the establishment of the Everglades Drainage District, in 1907, with the authority to raise funds for drainage operations by levying a drainage tax on the overflowed lands. Prior to 1907, Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward and other members of the joint boards of Internal Improvement Trustees-Everglades Drainage District Commissioners had sought such funds through the sale of state lands.

Broward and his board had assembled a dredge in July, 1906, which began digging a canal from the north fork of the New River at Ft. Lauderdale toward Lake Okeechobee sixty miles northwestward.³ Another dredge, launched in April, 1907, was at work in the south fork of the same river. By

1909 the original dredges had cut their way fourteen miles into the Everglades and two new dredges were added. To finance these operations the trustee-commissioners sold large blocks of land in the Everglades to real estate operators. These sales amounted to \$35,000 in 1907 and \$123,000 in 1908.⁴ One purchaser, Richard J. Bolles, bought 500,000 acres in 1908 at two dollars an acre to be paid over a six-year period. The Bolles land sales companies in turn divided the purchase and resold it in five-acre and ten-acre plots at prices varying from \$20 to \$24 an acre.⁵ Perhaps the most spectacular Bolles promotion involved the Florida Fruitlands Company. Through this corporation Bolles sold 16,000 contracts for small tracts of Everglades land for which he received \$4,000,000 in a "scheme of financing that would have done credit to a Wall Street promoter."⁶

In the summer and fall of 1910 the trustee-commissioner's advertised Everglades lands in Florida and midwestern newspapers.⁷ In addition to the paid advertising by the state officials and the various companies, the Everglades received a great deal of publicity in the accounts of travelers and general writers. D. A. Simmons wrote in *The World Today* that: "When Okeechobee's surface has been lowered five or six feet, it will draw in the water from the surface of the Everglades, and the work of reclamation will be complete."⁸ By 1911 the rapid growth of Everglades land sales were approaching "boom" proportions. Among the many thousands of purchasers it was estimated that forty per cent of them were made to prospective settlers, and the remainder to small speculators who hoped to get an increase later on "when they come out from under the water."⁹

One of the largest syndicates interested in Everglades promotion at this period was the Everglades Land Sales Company with general offices in Kansas City, Missouri. Interesting in the light of subsequent events is a form letter issued by this company in 1910 and 1911 from its Washington, D. C., office which informed the prospect that "the work of reclaiming the Everglades is advancing by leaps and bounds."¹⁰ The letter pointed out that six state dredges were at work on the Florida project on a twenty-four hour schedule with several more scheduled to begin work. The communication declared that 224,000 acres of lands had been disposed of under the company's auspices and that land at fifty dollars an acre is "now almost gone." The letter further offered the facilities of its Washington office, with its displays of Everglades products, and "lantern lectures" three nights each week and expressed a desire "to present THE opportunity of a life time" to those who have not bought lands.¹¹

Among the productions of the advertising campaign of the Everglades Land Sales Company were two books: John Clayton Gifford's *The Everglades*

and Other Essays Relating to Southern Florida, and Walter Waldin's *Truck Farming in the Everglades*. Gifford's book comprised a group of articles, some of them reprints from various periodicals, on a number of topics pertaining to south Florida in general. In the first article Gifford drew certain parallels between the Florida reclamation project and those of the Landes of France and the Heathland of Denmark. He estimated that it would cost a dollar an acre to drain the Everglades.¹² Gifford declared:

There are agents at work selling this land in every state in the Union . . . the money from the sales is doing the work, and the further it progresses the more the land will bring and the more eager people will be to get hold of it. The Board of Internal Improvement is wisely holding back much of the land from sale. . . . In many cases the state has sold only the alternate sections.

By the application of lime, the cultivation of legumes, etc., this soil can be kept at a maximum state of fertility, so that five acres would be ample for the support of an ordinary family.¹³

The Gifford essay comparing the Florida Everglades with the French Landes and the Danish Heathland had been submitted to *Conservation*, journal of the American Forestry Association with headquarters in Washington, District of Columbia. The article attracted the attention of Thomas Elmer Will, editor and secretary of the Association, resulting in its publication in the August, 1909, issue of the periodical.¹⁴ Gifford's description of the Florida area and its possibilities so intrigued Will that he procured all the printed matter available on the Everglades for further information. In order to determine the possibilities of this unknown land, Will left Washington in January, 1910, and

. . . made his first visit to the Everglades, going to Fort Myers, by boat to Lake Okeechobee, and back to Fort Myers; thence to New Smyrna, Miami and Ft. Lauderdale. Thence to Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Jacksonville and Washington; all in the interest of Everglades reclamation and development.¹⁵

While in Florida Will met and talked with former governors N. B. Broward and W. S. Jennings and with R. J. Bolles and others interested in the promotion of the Everglades project. Upon his return to Washington Will decided to actively participate in the Florida proposition and resigned his position with the forestry group to become a free lance writer and lecturer on the Everglades.¹⁶ For the next twenty-seven years the development of the Everglades became the motivating force of Will's life, a force which at times seemed to be an obsession. At the time of his death in 1937, the *Everglades News* reported that the region had "lost not only one of its oldest settlers

and pioneer developers, but an ardent champion for all worth while improvements, and a recognized authority on Everglades affairs".¹⁷

Thomas E. Will was, by background and training, an able opponent for any man in the struggle to uphold what he considered the decent way of life. He was essentially a crusader and

. . . had something of a reformer in him. He usually took the part of the small fellow, the 'underdog' against 'vested interests.' And as with most reformers, the small man would often turn against him, and bite the hand that was aiding him.¹⁸

Born in a log cabin, in keeping with American tradition for self-made men, on November 11, 1861, Will spent his early years on his father's farm.

His education up to his twenty-first year had been in country and village schools; he had worked on the farm, and attended school some three or four months during the mid-winter. . . . He suffered a severe setback at seventeen, in a failure of the eyes that threatened total blindness. . . . Nevertheless, he was able, by the age of nineteen, to meet the county superintendent's test and entered upon the work of teaching. . . . After two years' service in a country school he had saved up enough money to enable him to take a course of treatment by an oculist. . . .

The September of 1882 found him at the State Normal School at Normal, Ill., from which he graduated in 1885.¹⁹

After three years as teacher and principal of public schools in Illinois, he attended the University of Michigan as a special student. In the fall of 1889 he entered Harvard College as a senior, where he graduated in 1890.²⁰ At the end of this year he was appointed to a fellowship in political economy and continued his education in the Harvard Graduate School receiving a Master of Arts degree in 1891. ²¹ "Throughout his university work he specialized in education, history, economics, and sociology."²²

There is reason to believe that Will had contemplated further academic study in German universities. But in July, 1891, he married Marie Van Velsor Rogers of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and during the summer accepted the chair of history and political science in Lawrence University at Appleton, Wisconsin.²³ "Here he continued for two years, after which he returned to Boston for one year, where he helped in organizing the Union for Practical Progress, delivered courses of lectures on economics, and wrote a series of sociological articles for the *Arena*."²⁴

In the summer of 1894 Will returned to the academic world as a professor of history and political science in the Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, Kansas, a position he held for three years. In 1897 he

was elected president of this institution. One of the historians of Kansas State Agricultural College wrote, in 1909, that:

The executive office became his without an effort, but it gave him meager opportunities to test his abilities as the head of a higher institution of learning. The State was the center of a political upheaval in which he became a prominent figure. He was too warm-blooded and too young to play "hedger." He took sides and two years later his side lost. He was probably not a full blood Populist at any time, but he advocated bimetallism and state ownership of public utilities, and spoke and wrote boldly in favor of his doctrines. . . . The free silver combination lost and President Will, together with a number of his collaborators in the faculty were "resigned."

The Kansas State Agricultural College is deeply indebted to Ex-President Will for many new things and new ideas. . . . He will be given credit for greatly increasing the attendance, for diversifying the work by the organization of different courses, for habituating the legislature to the idea of appropriating liberally to the College, and for stimulating original work and research in the Experiment Station and in the many fields of abstract science.²⁵

Following the close of his work at Kansas State, Will was engaged in lecturing and writing on the principles he had taught and fought for in Manhattan. In 1900 he returned to the educational field as Dean of Ruskin College at Trenton, Missouri, and continued there until 1903. The next two years were spent in Wichita, Kansas, where he was again occupied in creative writing and speaking. Accepting a position in the federal census bureau in 1905, the Wills moved to Washington. A short time later Will received an appointment in the United States Forest Service, where under the direction of Gifford Pinchot, he toured the eastern half of the country and lectured from Chautauqua platforms in the interest of forest preservation. It was during this period that the forest service was agitating the establishment of forest reserves in the Appalachian and White Mountain areas.²⁶ At the conclusion of the forest service appointment he became secretary of the American Forestry Association and editor of *Conservation*.²⁷

When Will resigned his office as secretary of the American Forestry Association in late January, 1910, he severed a connection he had made in September, 1906.²⁸ He had been editor of the association's journal for most of those years and had written most of the editorials and a goodly number of articles that were published during the period.²⁹ In a short, farewell article Will summarized his activities as an official of the organization and noted

that although his official duties in the organization were completed he would continue to work for the conservation of the natural resources of his native land.³⁰

In 1910, when Will gave up his forestry affiliation he was in his forty-eighth year. In the prime of life he directed his efforts toward the Everglades drainage scheme with the same vigor and enthusiasm he had displayed throughout his earlier years. His son recalled that:

Physically, he was of an active, nervous disposition, full of driving energy. He was capable of extreme exertion, both physical or mental, and apparently never tired. He never did anything the easy way, even though it might have been just as good.

He was of medium height and build, and carried himself erectly. In order to counteract the effects of long hours bending over a desk, he regularly took exercises to keep him from being stooped and to keep in physical trim. He was always in excellent health almost to the time of his death at the age of 75. Early in his career he took lessons in elocution and since his speechmaking was before the days of public address systems, he developed a remarkably clear diction and a powerful voice.³¹

In the leaflet, "Where Nature Smiles," used by the Everglades Land Sales Company to advertise Will's Everglades lectures in Washington, mention was made of the careful investigation the lecturer had made of the possibilities of the soils found there. The advertising added that he had gone "thoroughly into the questions of production, transportation, and the marketing of products" and declared his belief that the Everglades offered the best "poor man's proposition" then before the public.³² "The Great West of Horace Greely's day no longer exists. . . . Were Greely alive today he would now say, 'Go South, Young Man, Go South!'"³³

The injunction to go South was not followed by Will on a permanent basis until the end of the year 1914. During the years 1910-1914 he spent most of his time in Washington agitating the sale and settlement of Everglades lands.³⁴ Early in 1910, Will was associated with E. C. Howe, General Agent in Washington for the Everglades Land Sales Company. Howe was also a former government employee, having been on the staff of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Under the auspices of Howe and Will a number of purchasers of Everglades land organized to promote their interests in the Florida peat soils. Any buyer of land in the area was eligible for membership upon payment of initiation fee and regular dues.

The organization boasted a constitution with by-laws and was named the Florida Everglades Homebuilders Association. Article II of the constitution stated that

The object of this association shall be to enlarge the knowledge, increase the effectiveness, and otherwise further the material interests of buyers of lands and builders of homes in the Everglades of Florida, and to assist them in establishing, in that territory, a community based upon the principles of justice, brotherhood and cooperation.³⁵

The homebuilders association had purchased a tract of land on the South New River Canal which was to be farmed by a manager to furnish the members information on how to "learn and earn" and "what can be done in the muck lands behind Miami."³⁶

The 1910-1912 boom in the development and sale of the Everglades and contiguous lands of South Florida was received with very decided differences of opinion in Florida and in the United States at large. As with any project in which there is a question of success, doubt as to the ultimate reclamation of the Everglades was expressed from the first attempt. The Everglades drainage operations gave rise to land selling by high pressure salesmanship with a considerable amount of speculation. The whole program was subjected to a vast amount of criticism: the methods employed in dredging, the accuracy of the surveys, the estimates of the engineers, the practicability and feasibility of drainage, and the resulting value of the soil. All of these became questions without immediate answers. In these years the enterprise became a subject of national recognition.³⁷

A series of letters and subsequent conferences between Governor N. B. Broward and his Florida officials and representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture in the spring and summer of 1906 had been climaxed by examinations by the Department's drainage division engineers of the Everglades area, beginning in January, 1907.³⁸ There was no official report of the federal drainage engineer's investigations until an abstract appeared in 1909. This abstract was part of a larger report made by a joint committee of the Florida Legislature of 1909 which had been appointed to inform the legislators on the progress of the work that was then being done by the Florida officials in the Everglades drainage program.³⁹

Data included in this excerpt was regarded by interested parties as being so favorable to this work of reclamation that it was circulated as advertising matter to stimulate the sale of Florida Everglade lands by companies who placed these lands on the market before the ditches were dug to drain. Thus with only a cursory examination in the field and no

critical review in the office, engineering plans for this vast reclamation work—the largest project in the world, was favorably recommended to the public, bearing the approval of the Department of Agriculture.⁴⁰

Evidence presented during the congressional investigations of the Everglades in 1912 showed that the 1909 excerpt had been secured through correspondence between Governor Albert W. Gilchrist of Florida and Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson and that Wilson had given Gilchrist permission to publish the extracts.⁴¹ Additional evidence was presented at the same hearings by Arthur E. Morgan who had been asked to examine the report of his associate supervising drainage engineer, James O. Wright. Morgan testified that the Wright plans were “so completely erroneous” and showed “such complete incompetency” that publication of the full report would be not only misleading, “but would be a serious reflection upon the professional character of the services performed by drainage investigations.”⁴²

The activity of the state drainage operations and the sales campaigns of the various land companies focused a good deal of attention on the Everglades. Since the United States Department of Agriculture was known to be conducting examinations in that area it was natural that many letters seeking information would be addressed to the federal agency. The delay in the appearance of the complete report aggravated the situation and to meet this demand a form letter was prepared in January, 1910, which was used to answer the requests for information on the south Florida region. The statements on the soil, agricultural value, climate, and amount of dredging and ditching necessary were of such a cautionary nature that they were objectionable to parties interested in promoting the Everglades.⁴³

On February 3, 1910, Senator Duncan U. Fletcher received a telegram from ex-Governor Broward, which read in part: “Received a telegram [from Chicago] ‘Bulletin coming out of Agricultural Department knocking Everglades.’ I earnestly ask you to investigate and prevent such action if you can.”⁴⁴ Senator Fletcher called on Secretary Wilson on the morning of February 4, read Broward’s message to him, and presented Wilson with a copy of the circular letter.⁴⁵ After some discussion Wilson called in his chief of the divisions of publications and informed him that it was the business of the department to furnish scientific data. “We are not here to give opinions or make statements otherwise than that, and I want this stopped right where it is.”⁴⁶

Within a few days after Fletcher’s visit to the Department of Agriculture, E. C. Howe and T. E. Will visited the drainage division of the federal agency and inquired as to the author of the circular letter. They were indignant at

what they termed the misinformation in the circular and sought to secure suppression of the letter and to have a retraction issued. The real estate agents were given a cool reception in the drainage division and took their case to Secretary Wilson, who had already taken action.⁴⁷

On May 10, 1910, Congressman Frank Clark of Miami, in whose district most of the Everglades lay, introduced a resolution on the floor of the House of Representatives proposing that the Secretary of Agriculture furnish the lower house with any information showing what the "Government of the United States" was doing "toward directing or supervising the drainage of any lands in the everglade region of Florida."⁴⁸ The resolution was submitted on the basis that the Everglades Land Sales Company stated in its advertisements that Everglades lands were "being drained under state and national direction and supervision."⁴⁹

Clark's resolution was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, ordered to be printed but was never reported on. Two years later at the congressional hearings Will stated that the resolution was but a part of the campaign of antagonism which the Miami congressman was waging against the Everglades project. According to Will the resolution tended to create "disquiet" in the public mind, which in Will's eye probably represented the "buying public" at that time.⁵⁰

Three days afterward, on May 17, Will and M. L. Bowen, an associate of Will's in the land company, paid a visit to Secretary Wilson in regard to the contemplated report which had been promised to the public some months previously. Will recalled that he had expressed the hope that the delayed publication would soon appear, when Wilson brought his fist down on the table and said, "I told them fellows I would not do a damned thing for them until they quit fighting among themselves."⁵¹ Wilson did not inform Will and Bowen that the revised page proof of the Everglades report had been presented for publication the previous January 28, 1910,⁵² nor did Wilson inform them, on June 14, that he had decided not to publish the disputed document.⁵³

Through 1910 and 1911 Will continued his interests in Everglades lands, particularly in the offices of the land company. The homebuilder's association was quite active, "meeting regularly, and earnestly studying all aspects of Everglades questions."⁵⁴ In addition, Will organized what he termed the "first Everglades Farming Association," a group which sponsored the transporting of a number of Everglades buyers from Washington and New Jersey to Zona, ten miles west of Ft. Lauderdale on the South New River canal. These pioneers became residents of the first true Everglades settlement.⁵⁵

David G. Fairchild recalled that "Some business men of Miami who were interested in the sale of Everglades lands had established an experiment station at a little settlement called Davie."⁵⁶ And John Newhouse, settler of the Upper Everglades, remembered Davie as "a lively place" in the fall of 1914.⁵⁷ Among the men that Will interested in joining the settlement at Davie was Felix A. Forbes of Washington. In 1912, Forbes established one of the first boat lines providing regular service from Ft. Lauderdale to Rita Island in Lake Okeechobee, and later extended from Miami to Ft. Myers.⁵⁸

No doubt a good part of Will's time in 1911 was filled with the work he did in connection with the completion of the papers and information of Senate Document 89. The two hundred page document contains all of the available major acts, reports and other papers relating to the Everglades and as late as 1933, was, according to Will, "the chief Everglades fact book to date."⁵⁹ The publication is a veritable documentary history of the Florida Everglades, containing such papers as the Florida Treaty, Congressional Acts of Admission for the State, abridged Buckingham Smith Report, Acts of the Florida Legislature, Legislative Reports, Drainage Reports, and other material on the south Florida area.

The Wright report on the Everglades lay dormant in the files of the Department of Agriculture for a full year before it was published in Senate Document 89 at the instigation of Senator Fletcher. Broward, Gilchrist and a host of others had attempted to secure copies of the government engineers' recommendations without success.⁶⁰ In June of 1911, Fletcher heard that the report had been killed, the plates melted down, and the number the paper was to have borne given to another document.

Senator Fletcher, who represented the progressive element that wanted to carry out the drainage project, figured out a plan to force its publication whether the department liked it or not. So he introduced a Senate resolution to have the whole thing published as a Senate document, along with much other matter bearing on the drainage enterprise. . . .⁶¹

This collection of assorted manuscripts pertaining to the south Florida lands became a "cause celebre" about which the gathering storm broke in the fall of 1911 when it appeared in print and played a major part in the congressional hearings which began in February, 1912. The responsibility for the idea which fathered the collection may be divided between Fletcher and Will. Fletcher stated that "The document was prepared at my instance, and under my direction . . . to state only the absolute truth in connection with that great enterprise."⁶² In an article published by Will in the *Ft. Lauderdale*

Call on June 12, 1926, Will wrote that he had conceived and compiled Senate Document 89.⁶³

Senator Fletcher began assembling the materials for the document in the late spring of 1911. George H. Carter, clerk of the Joint Committee of Congress on Printing, asserted that the material was prepared and arranged by T. E. Will. The former educator and editor went to various libraries and government offices in a search for the numerous papers and assisted Fletcher in getting the papers ready for publication. Will also managed to secure, without the Department of Agriculture's authorization, a copy of the notorious Wright Report for the printing committee.⁶⁴

At the congressional hearings in 1912 this document became a major subject in the questioning of the various witnesses. Testimony brought out the facts that the proofs were read and corrected in the late summer of 1911 in Jacksonville, Florida, by Senator Fletcher, ex-Governor Jennings, and Chief Engineer J. O. Wright of the Florida drainage commission.⁶⁵ During the course of the investigation William H. Ellis, attorney for the Florida officials, asked Henry E. Davis, attorney for the Committee, if the latter intended to attack this document. Davis replied that it was his purpose to point out the interests which its preparation served.⁶⁶ At the same hearing Chairman Ralph W. Moss read a large display advertisement from an Everglades Land Sales Company promotion into the record. It reads as follows:

United States Senate Document No. 89, regarding Everglades, now ready. Every person interested in the glades should send for this publication, compiled at the request of the Miami Board of Trade, submitted by Florida's distinguished Senator, Duncan U. Fletcher.⁶⁷

Moss questioned J. O. Wright as to the reputation of the volume in Florida as an endorsement of the Everglades project. Wright answered, "Yes, I think I could say it is an endorsement of the project."⁶⁸ When Will was asked if the Everglades Land Sales Company had used the document as a means of selling land, the latter replied, "I think so. They have used it."⁶⁹

Senate Document 89 was a very popular collection. The first edition, appearing in the late fall of 1911, was soon exhausted. On February 1, 1912, Senator Nathan P. Bryan, the junior senator from Florida, introduced a resolution providing for the printing of 4,800 additional copies of the document.⁷⁰ The printing committee reported the resolution favorably and it was adopted by unanimous senatorial consent on February 15, 1912.⁷¹

In August, 1911, Vance W. Helm, president and general agent of the Everglades Land Sales Company, wrote Will that he had received a letter from Senator Fletcher announcing the forthcoming publication of Senate Docu-

ment 89. Helm declared: "This is certainly great news and I want to congratulate you on this successful part of the program."⁷² Helm asked Will if it would be possible to secure a large number of copies of this document on the Everglades with Fletcher's wrapper "all complete for mailing with his frank."⁷³ On August 22 Helm again Wrote Will, ordering a thousand copies of the document in one, five, and ten thousand lots.⁷⁴ On August 26 Helm informed Will that the company officials were urging Senator Fletcher to persuade President William Howard Taft to stop and inspect the Everglades on a proposed trip to Florida in January, 1912.⁷⁵ Upon the appearance of this publication, Helm again wrote Will that he had "Just received a copy of the Senate Document. It is a peach. When making the big shipment to us you may keep out 25 copies for your use."⁷⁶ On December 15, 1911, Will wrote Helm that "your batch of documents, accompanied by franked envelopes start to you in the morning."⁷⁷

The high tide of the Everglades sales promotion campaign was reached in an advertisement which appeared in the February 5, 1912, issue of the *Washington (D. C.) Star*.

Business Opportunity—
United States Official Indorsement

First time in the history of the Government such a thing has been done. The Sixty-second Congress has recently issued a document of 208 pages indorsing the great reclamation, climate, healthfulness and fertility of the Everglades. The greatest opportunity of the century is offered here to the man with small capital to establish himself where the evident cooperation of the Government is sufficient to make the community rich and prosperous. Free literature. Call for some.

Everglades Land Co., 809 G Street, N. W.⁷⁸

But the 1910-1912 boom in the development and sale of the Everglades and contiguous lands of South Florida was received with very decided differences of opinion in the state and in the nation at large. There were many who had feelings on the subject similar to those of the Miami merchant, Isidor Cohen, who believed the reclamation of the Everglades had been a boon to Miami and that it was gratifying to note the subsequent experiments in agriculture had vindicated the attitude of the "boomers."⁷⁹ Joe Hugh Reese, a reporter on the *Miami Metropolis* (in 1909), writing in 1926, recalled that many newspapers in Florida were against the Everglades project in those early years on account of the exploitation by the land agents and the political connections which resulted. Reese felt, however, that "It was not until that time that Miami and Fort Lauderdale amounted to much. . . . At that period Miami

was pretty much of a dead town but the Everglades action woke it up, and in less than two years it was flourishing. . . .⁸⁰

Opposition to the Everglades reclamation project came from many sources. The corporate interests which had lost their grip on the bounty of state lands opposed the work from the outset and fought their way through the federal courts to stop it. Rufus E. Rose held the opposite view, when as State Chemist he wrote that an organized system of "criticism, slander, and defamation" had been started by "interested parties, citizens, and newspapers of the state, and of western states" who were envious of the emigration of capital and people to the region.⁸¹ J. C. Gifford found it hard to believe that there were hundreds of "knockers" among the "home people, who had nothing to lose and everything to gain, and who talked it down by the hour on the street corners to newcomers."⁸²

Concrete expressions of skepticism regarding the Everglades land promotion appeared in the media of articles and communications published in numerous periodicals. In a letter to the editor of *Harper's Weekly* by L. C. Parsons, citation was made of a prospectus of the Florida Fruitlands Company which offered 180,000 acres for sale, stating that "twelve hundred farms and homes are being practically given away."⁸³ Parsons said that questions of frost, fertilizer, irrigation, freight rates and profits of commission men should be settled before purchasing 'Glades land as the drainage project was many years premature. George T. Odell launched a severe assault against the promoters who sold ten acre tracts for farms. Odell asked who ever heard of making a living out of sugar on a ten acre farm. Prophesying the future trend of land holding in the Everglades, he added:

How many of those silly persons who bought their land "sight unseen" will have their tiny patches when the Florida Everglades is transformed into fertile farms?⁸⁴

For two years, Thomas Elmer Will had been busily engaged in the promotion of selling Everglades land contracts.⁸⁵ In a letter of December 16, 1911, from V. W. Helm to Will, the land company official outlined what he believed were reasons for "the present odium now attaching to the whole Everglades proposition."⁸⁶ Helm felt that if the land companies had shouldered the responsibility of supplying collateral drainage to supplement the state canals the "odium" would have been forestalled. As a means of allaying the ill-feeling Helm agreed to enter a six month contract with Will to conduct a Washington publicity bureau for the Everglades Land Sales Company. Will was to be paid \$100 a month for his services in providing mate-

rials for the press and periodicals in a campaign of education on the possibilities of the Everglades.⁸⁷

One of Will's literary productions in the interest of publicity was a six page article titled "The Everglades of Florida." The manuscript was brought out in the October, 1912, issue of the *Review of Reviews*, and differed very little from the descriptive writing that had been in common circulation. Reciting the current figures in regard to Lake Okeechobee levels, lengths of completed and proposed canals, and equipment in operation, Will noted that the state was following Broward's drainage plan of "cut and try" for the dredging of canals.⁸⁸ Significantly, in view of Will's professional background, he concluded that national public interests lay in the "bringing together of the man and the land" in the Everglades.

The odium which attached itself to the Everglades proposition, referred to in Helm's letter to Will, was not dispelled by the efforts of all the proponents of the drainage project. Throughout the fall of 1911 and early winter of 1912 references were made to probability that the House of Representatives' Committee Investigating Expenditures in the Department of Agriculture, under the Chairmanship of Representative Ralph W. Moss of Indiana, would look into federal participation in the Everglades drainage. Interest in Washington centered on the stories of the suppression of the engineering report of the drainage division, the famed circular letter, and the appearance of the Wright report in Senate Document 89 in December, 1911.⁸⁹ Meetings of the Committee were called on February 3 and 6, 1912, at which time Congressmen Frank Clark of Florida and E. R. Bathrick of Ohio came before the group and presented their reasons for asking the legislative group to investigate the Florida reclamation plans.

The Moss Committee summoned a large number of witnesses and many others became witnesses, including Florida's governor and several state officials, on a voluntary basis. The investigators wanted to determine if "public funds had been expended in the examination and survey of the Everglades" and whether reports prepared by the engineers as a result of this expenditure of public funds "had been refused publication" or "had been suppressed."⁹⁰ The committee sat through forty-three hearings from February 3 to August 9, 1912, and collected 1,759 pages of testimony and exhibits on Florida in general and the Everglades in particular. At the conclusion of the Everglades hearings the majority report of the committee found that

The vacillating course of the department in its treatment of this important project was . . . in part due to a difference of opinion among Members of Congress and the State Authorities of Florida; irrecon-

cilable differences in the opinions and conclusions among the engineers in the Division of Drainage was another contributing cause. The evidence . . . warrants the conclusion that the entire treatment of the project was most unfortunate and subjected the Department of Agriculture to much suspicion and criticism.⁹¹

The reaction to the Congressional investigation held in 1912 was expressed in several ways. Joe Hugh Reese believed the hearings had been a healthy thing for all of Florida since they had made drainage no longer an issue, but a definite policy.⁹²

Its most important consequence for the board of trustees of the internal improvement fund and for the large landholders was that they found difficulty in attracting new purchasers, and that the funds with which they expected to finance the work of drainage were seriously depleted.⁹³

Will, in an article on the history of the Everglades land owners' troubles, did not mention the investigation, but he did write that in the 'Glades slump of 1912 all the buyers deserted the market.⁹⁴ The Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund attempted to stem the tide of adverse criticisms by appropriating \$1,000 to cover the expenses of a party of representatives of the press of the mid-western states on a "Cook's Tour" of South Florida and the Everglades. The party arrived in Jacksonville on April 12, 1912, and was accompanied on the trip by Governor Gilchrist, state officials, educators, bank and railroad presidents and others including "Dr. T. E. Wills, formerly of Agricultural State College, Kansas, and editor Conservation Magazine, Washington, D. C."⁹⁵

Will's primary purpose in coming to Florida in 1912, however, had been to lead a "large delegation from Washington to the Bryant and Greenwood auction held on the present site of Lake Worth during the week of April 6-13."⁹⁶ A large majority of the persons who attended the land distribution plan were representatives of groups of land buyers who held clearance receipts and contracts issued by the Florida Everglades Land Company.⁹⁷ The Bryant and Greenwood Realty Company served as agents of the land company which in turn owned the land that was auctioned to the buyers near West Palm Beach. The representatives organized an assembly and held a number of meetings, discussing and debating matters of Everglades settlement and agriculture. The assembly appointed a committee to call on the Moss Investigating group to invite the congressmen to personally inspect the Everglades project. The assembled buyers also passed measures censuring

Congressmen Clark and Bathrick and approving the work of the Everglades Land Company.⁹⁸

The people in attendance at the West Palm Beach meeting represented 4,860 buyers of small tracts—amounting to 64,240 acres. As an inducement to purchase tracts of five and ten acres, townsite lots were thrown in free of charge.⁹⁹

A name, Okeelanta, was chosen for the townsite as the area was between the Atlantic Ocean and Lake Okeechobee. In 1914 the townsite was surveyed and staked. Altogether in the one and a half sections allotted for the townsite there were 4,800 lots, with provisions for streets and alleys, parks and public building sites, residence and business districts, and shipping and marketing districts. "Nicely painted white stakes with black numbers dotted the townsite for a couple of years afterward, but fires, decay, and squatters played havoc with the survey and soon most of the stakes disappeared. No buildings were ever located on the townsite, except squatters' shacks."¹⁰⁰

The tracts sold at auction were located in townships running from 42 South, Range 37 East to 47 South, Range 34 East. The large blocks of land which the State of Florida had sold in the 1908-1910 period had been delivered in alternate sections, thus the West Palm Beach land purchasers found themselves scattered over several different townships in the raw sawgrass lands south of Lake Okeechobee. "In transferring the land to Bolles and other purchasers, the trustees reserved alternate sections for themselves, a practice which was applauded as a shrewd means of withholding the lands from the market until drainage should appreciably increase their value."¹⁰¹ The sale of the alternate sections by the land companies and the resale in small tracts to the out-of-state purchasers posed a difficult problem to the members of the Florida Everglades Homebuilders Association which had been organized by Will in 1910 with the intention of making a cooperative settlement in the Everglades.

Will later wrote that the buyers' attendance at the 1912 meeting was an evidence of "their sincerity, preparing to start settlement."¹⁰² He added that he "drove, aggressively and incessantly, for a practical plan and an early start." The proposed Okeelanta settlement plan was abandoned because of the scattered holdings and Will returned to Washington. From that place he made several attempts to consolidate the tracts into one contiguous tract, but he was not able to interest the land companies or the State of Florida in his settlement plan.¹⁰³ As a consequence of this failure, he again visited Florida and in February, 1913, appeared before the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund in Tallahassee. On February 6, he purchased 880 acres from the

Florida trustees to add to the 120 acres he already owned.¹⁰⁴ Through this purchase Will was able to consolidate his Everglades holdings into one of roughly two sections which he laid out in small plots to be resold to settlers. The new townsite selected by Will was a mile south of the old Okeelanta townsite on the North New River (Ft. Lauderdale) Canal.¹⁰⁵

On October 24, 1913, Will launched the first planned settlement in the Upper Everglades of Florida. His son, Lawrence, now of Belle Glade, was one of the first five settlers.¹⁰⁶ "Other settlers followed the first five, many of them bachelors, but there were some families, one couple having a babe in arms."¹⁰⁷ John Newhouse (Jan Van Nijhuis), an emigrant from the Netherlands, came to Okeelanta in the fall of 1914 in a party with several other men and settled in "an old trapper's shack until a new house could be built." Newhouse wrote that many trades and professional people, not experienced farmers

. . . were easily talked into buying a tract of Everglades land on monthly payments. They could hardly wait until the land was paid for before moving to Florida, to live a life of ease, plenty, and independence.

Usually they had a little money laid by and part of that went for traveling expenses. Another part was spent by their families living in East Coast hotels and rooming houses, while locating their land—if they could find it.

Then the hard work and sweating began. Clearing a place to build, hauling the material, often by privately hired boat or barge, doing the construction work themselves, they soon were disgusted. The women seldom liked it. The real estate company payments, and the high cost of living soon syphoned the last money out of their pockets, and before long they left, disgruntled and broke; and looking for a scapegoat. They never blamed themselves.¹⁰⁸

The difficulties which beset these pioneers were common to any frontier settlement of the nineteenth century with the differences caused by the peat soils of the overflowed lands, but this was the modern year of 1914. Problems of boating supplies sixty miles from Ft. Lauderdale, belaboring the saw grass roots from the soil by hand, fighting mosquitos and snakes, and seeding the soil beset these frontiersmen. Setbacks from frost, soil troubles and plant diseases dulled the optimism of many of the settlers and they left, but others came in to take their places. The hardier ones stuck it out and by varying their crops of beans, potatoes, cabbage and lettuce managed to live. Lawrence E. Will described the vitality of his father during a typical day

at Okeelanta after the elder Will joined the group in December, 1914, as follows:

Here he and I lived in a small shack, 12' x 16', in a rather primitive style, kerosene stove and lights, no refrigeration, and very little in the way of comforts of living.

He arose in the morning in time to get to work at 7 o'clock. Dressed in overalls, boots and big straw hat, he worked in the field as hard or harder than anyone else, planting, tractoring or surveying, often walking a mile or two to get to work, as the ground was too soft for a car. At noon he would relax a few minutes after eating. In the afternoon he would work like a steam engine till six or later, take the essential bath to remove the muck and muck itch. After supper he would sleep one hour, then he would repair to his desk and write letters or a story for publication or possibly read some accumulated newspapers. If the mail boat was due the following morning, he often wrote till one or two in the morning. However, he was always up at the regular time.

On Sundays he attended religious services, and if there was a Sunday school at the time, he taught the adult class. The remainder of the day was devoted to studying, writing and tramping around the fields to plan work for the following week.¹⁰⁹

Attempts to eliminate the manual labor necessary to prepare the Everglades soils for agriculture were made in a number of instances with the use of walking, crawling, and rolling types of tractors. S. R. Cooper tried a walking tractor at Okeelanta in the early winter of 1914 and another in the fall but both were returned to the factory for further modification.¹¹⁰ During the Christmas season of 1914 many of the Okeelanta settlers went to Ft. Lauderdale for the holidays. A number of the group, led by T. E. Will, spent December 24 in a trip to Davie to observe a wide-wheel type tractor which had been developed there. This machine, fitted with cutting knives which pulverized the soil, was later shipped to Okeelanta and employed in breaking up the raw land.¹¹¹ The interest in such machinery persisted and in 1916 Will persuaded S. W. Bollinger, a Pittsburgh manufacturer and Everglades land owner, to construct a five ton tractor equipped with a revolving cylinder armed with long teeth to comminute the soil.¹¹²

As the developer and one of the pioneer settlers at Okeelanta, Will's work was primarily that of finding crops which would thrive on the peat soils and return a profit to the farmers. He experimented continuously to determine the plants that were adaptable to the area and to determine correct methods of cultivation. ¹¹³ In the course of the search for implements for

clearing and cultivating the soft and loose earth he developed many useful machines. "One of his accomplishments was the invention of the type of turning plow and large rolling coulter, now in almost universal use in the Everglades."¹¹⁴

Located fifty-seven miles from Ft. Lauderdale, the residents of Okeelanta evidenced the news hunger common to all pioneers. Felix A. Forbes ran a regular boat to Lauderdale on Monday and Friday, returning on Tuesday and Saturday in the afternoon. On those latter days the settlers would move toward the Okeelanta landing at Bolles and North New River Canals to meet the boat for supplies and mail amid rain, cold or mosquitos. The settlers would return on Monday and Friday morning with mail and cash for their store orders.¹¹⁵ Early in 1915, V. M. Baker considered building a store at Okeelanta and Will encouraged him with the offer of a lot free of charge. Whereupon Baker accepted and started the first store in the upper Everglades.¹¹⁶ As this was the only store available settlers came from far and wide to trade, and soon a fourth class post office was established in the store.

New settlers arrived during 1915, some of the families with children of school age. A teacher was secured in the fall and a classroom with school furniture was fitted out in a building furnished by the community. In 1916 the Palm Beach County School Board built a one room school house on a lot donated by T. E. Will. The county board hired a school boat to transport the children from the lake shore and along the canals to the school site. Will was a member of the Okeelanta school board and served as school supervisor by appointment. He served as a school trustee for many years during which time other schools were begun at South Bay, Toirey Island, Kreamer Island, Rilta and several other locations.¹¹⁷

The agitation for highways and roads was one of the vital issues of the Everglades pioneers in their efforts to improve their way of life. Beginning in 1914 a canal was excavated between two townships, 44 and 45 South, across two ranges, 35 and 36 East, for the purpose of building a road bed. The canal, popularly called the Bolles Canal, extended from a point a little more than a mile east of Okeelanta to the Palm Beach County line, three miles west of the Miami Canal. The expense of the work was divided between the county and the Okeechobee Fruit Lands Company.¹¹⁸ This road bed was completed in 1916 and the Okeelanta settlers expected that the project would be continued to the east coast.

The movement for road construction as an essential factor in Everglades settlement was strongly supported by R. J. Bolles in January, 1915, when he spoke before the Palm Beach County Commissioners on the subject.¹¹⁹ When

road construction was stopped on completion of the Bolles Canal, Will organized a meeting of representatives from the Everglades. A meeting was held in Okeelanta in the winter of 1916. The group voted to renew its efforts for the construction of a highway across the state from West Palm Beach to Ft. Myers via the Bolles Canal and Okeelanta.¹²⁰ Shortly thereafter a delegation of Okeelanta residents, under the leadership of Dr. Will, journeyed to the county seat at West Palm Beach where they called upon the Chamber of Commerce and the County Commissioners. One of the results of this road promotion came in the creation of Special Road District Number Six in Palm Beach County. A bond election held in the new district in August, 1916, to issue \$150,000 in bonds was successful and the new road seemed assured.¹²¹ Differences arose as to the route of the proposed road and when the survey was made the route lay along the south shore of the lake four miles north of Okeelanta.

Will and other settlers at Okeelanta were dismayed at this turn of events. However, again under Will's leadership they were successful in securing the passage of a special act in the 1917 Florida Legislature providing for the issuance of \$50,000 in county warrants. Proceeds from these warrants were used to excavate a canal from Gladescrest, on the Hillsboro Canal, to the eastern end of the Bolles Canal. The spoil bank of this canal was used as a road to connect the Okeelanta section with the cross state highway at Six Mile Bridge, southeast of Belle Glade.¹²² As a means of expediting this road the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, on January 25, 1918, donated land to the value of \$100,000 to the Roads and Improvement Society and Commissioners of Palm Beach County to aid in the digging of a canal from the West Palm Beach canal to the Bolles Canal, thus assisting in the construction of the highway.¹²³ The Okeelanta connecting dirt road was completed in the summer of 1919, but it was never hard surfaced.

As a result of a surprise party given one of the Okeelanta families in 1915, J. F. Waters remarked that such events should happen oftener. Newhouse wrote that the settlers made good company for each other out in the wilderness. The Okeelanta Growers Association grew out of the idea, prospering for ten years as a division of the Federal Farm Bureau Federation, and was one of the prime movers in the establishment of the Everglades Experiment Station near Belle Glade in 1923.¹²⁴ Dr. Will served as Chairman of the Growers Association for many years. As an outgrowth of this Association was formed after the passage of the Federal Farm Loan Act of 1916. An Okeelanta Federal Farm Loan Association was established in 1917 at a mass meeting held in 1917 at Will's initiative. "Capital being a crying need in those

days in the 'Glades, and none available—even groceries had to be paid for in cash . . ."¹²⁵ Will was selected as one of the three appraisers, and spent a considerable number of days in looking over landholdings of persons joining the loan group. Unfortunately nothing came of the movement as the regional bank could not be interested in making loans to the Everglades Association.

After moving to Okeelanta in 1914, Will sought to make his livelihood from the sale of farm products. He owned a goodly amount of land, some of which he was able to sell from time to time. During these years he also was engaged in encouraging the original land buyers to hold on to their land and to develop their acreage for profit. Among the many papers of the massive collection which Dr. Will saved are dozens of pamphlets and brochures which he had written and published for circulation to his many correspondents. Of these years, he wrote:

Between 1913 and 1922, Okeelanta acquired a live farming population, prosperous store, school, town hall, Sunday School, church services, post office, daily mail, cooperative association, leading all forward 'Glades movements; a voting precinct, telephone to the coast, and constant cross-state traffic via Okeelanta, between Miami and Ft. Myers.¹²⁶

Will's primary object was always to make the land available to the thousands of original buyers of small plots who, like Will himself, had purchased on the promise of the land companies and the state to reclaim the area and make it fit for agriculture. He viewed the problems of the Everglades in a large way and championed the cause of those who bought lands, paid taxes for benefits never received and who finally relinquished their holdings. To further this goal he was ever in the van to secure any improvements for the benefit of the Florida Everglades.

We must organize, find an accessible, livable spot, move there, improve conditions far and near, and help each other live civilized lives. . . . Old buyers have been hit, hard, but few as hard as I. Most waited for George to do it, and I was George.¹²⁷

A visitor to Okeelanta in 1919 reported that there was evidence of activity in the Everglades soils on all sides of the settlement. He was particularly interested in the "good tomato, bean, and potato crops" that were being produced in "soil that looks like an old manure pile."¹²⁸ This tourist spent a night at the Okeelanta hotel which was crowded with guests at the time. He remarked that boat traffic was moving in the canal all night and that the next morning the Okeelanta store was serving thirty to forty customers. Such prosperity, however, was relatively shortlived, for in 1920 the upper Ever-

glades were flooded with excess water beyond the drainage capacity of the long diagonal canals to the lower east coast.

As a result of the inundation of the land, agricultural operations were halted. Thomas E. Will left Okeelanta to stay with his wife and daughters in Ft. Lauderdale, temporarily, so he then believed.¹²⁹ The upper Everglades area was, however, destined for a series of alternately very wet and very dry years between 1920 and 1930. Residents of the Everglades slowly realized that the State drainage program would have to be supplemented through the establishment of sub-drainage districts. In the decade of the 20's over ten sub-districts were created and began local ditching and dyking for gravity drainage. This drainage was supplemented by the installation of pumping stations to draw off excess water from the land.¹³⁰ In the spring of both 1921 and 1922 the water table sank to very low levels, only to rise and flood the land with the advance of the rainy season. In 1922 the water sank so low that transportation on the Lauderdale Canal was brought to a stop. The boatman wanted high water; the farmers wanted low water. Thus settlers, like Will, were unable to farm with high water and unable to transport their produce under conditions of low water.

For ten years, 1921-1931, Will resided in Ft. Lauderdale. Here, during the period of the hectic Florida boom he spent a large part of his time selling real estate, specializing on large acreage projects.

. . . most of his efforts were devoted to selling land on or near the coast, since the real estate boom by-passed the Everglades, yet he continued to preach the gospel of developing the back country. He would even, on Saturday nights, mount a soap box at one of the busy corners in Ft. Lauderdale, and harangue the crowds with arguments of the possibilities of benefit to the coast, which would result from the development of the 'Glades, and of the folly of believing that Florida could prosper as a tourist resort.¹³¹

Though he was living on the east coast, his heart remained in the Everglades and until boat traffic on the canal was discontinued he conducted prospective buyers to the "Okeechobee Country."¹³² The newspapers of Ft. Lauderdale bear evidence of Will's many stories on the possibilities of the Everglades. His writing talent was expressed in numerous letters to people over the nation and to the editors and publishers of papers and magazines, and also in the preparation and publication of folders on Everglades problems.¹³³

Meanwhile conditions at Okeelanta continued to deteriorate. An observer, visiting the settlement in 1925, found that the land on the north side of the

Bolles Canal was reverting to saw grass and that water stood on the land from an inch to a foot in depth.

Okeelanta is just about deserted. There are still a few families in the community, but there principally because they do not have sufficient funds to get out, as their all is tied up in the property. Water conditions are worse than I have ever seen them. At the old hotel the ground was boggy and one sinks up to the shoe top in walking. At the bench mark at the rear of the old Tilton property the ground has settled about 5 inches in the last 4 years—three of which have been so wet that there has been practically no cultivation.¹³⁴

In 1926 and 1928 hurricanes passing across the peninsula of Florida inflicted untold damage to property along the east coast. But their real damage was felt in the loss of life on the shores of Lake Okeechobee at Moore Haven in 1926 and at South Bay and Belle Glade in 1928. These catastrophies horrified the nation and were responsible for federal participation in the construction of lake shore dikes to protect the area against another such disaster. On October 27, 1928, Will wrote that "despite hurricanes, fires, floods, and busted booms and banks, I am still fighting the Everglades battle. . . ."¹³⁵

In this year Will had organized the South Florida Development League, with a membership of 400, to push the restoration of the Everglades. As the leader of this group Will sought to influence local, state and national government officials toward adopting a rational plan for the reclamation of the Everglades. Meetings were held at Ft. Lauderdale to stimulate interest in the twenty-year-old project.¹³⁶ E. H. Andrae and Will formulated revised plans for flood control in the Okeechobee area and published them for public approval. In "The Okeechobee Question" Will urged that the drainage officials work "with nature and gravity" from the lake south through the Everglades to the tidewater at Shark River, letting the water spread over the southern part of the area until it reached the Gulf.¹³⁷ Andrae proposed an extension of the Bolles Canal, widened to one hundred feet and deepened, east to the tidewater of the Atlantic Ocean.

As president of the league Will wrote Governor Doyle Carlton on May 17, 1929, soliciting his support of a home-rule bill for the Everglades then before the Florida Legislature.

Without self-government, the *Everglades* are *Doomed*. Twenty years close-up experience ought to have taught me something. . . . Once lower East Coast ruled, robbed and ruined us. Then the Lake Shore came into action. Nature gave that little strip reclamation, the War Department

compelled maintenance of navigable conditions—that give it transportation—the two *absolute essentials* of Glades success. . . .¹³⁸

Opposition to the Everglades drainage program, alive and active since the beginning, was strong enough at this period to achieve notoriety. “Some Floridians outside the ’Glades will privately admit regarding it that it is a millstone hung around the neck of Florida by nature and misplaced zeal. . . .”¹³⁹ Another writer found that the problem of the Everglades was relegated entirely to the southern end of the state as the northern section took little interest in the Everglades.¹⁴⁰ During the flood control hearings on Florida before a committee of the House of Representatives in Washington on January 11, 1929, Frederick H. Davis, Attorney General of Florida, and a member of three Everglades state boards testified that “a vast number of people that come down into” the Everglades “from other states, and it is mighty hard to get people in other parts of the State interested in whether they perish or not. . . .”¹⁴¹ According to Will, Davis lifted the lid and exposed the “common enemy” when Davis said he had heard it advocated in certain districts of Florida that “what the people ought to do is build a wall down there and keep the military there to keep the people from coming in. . . .”¹⁴²

Will’s belief that the State of Florida and many of its citizens had treated the Everglades like an unwanted step-child was now vindicated. Such an admission from a state official was the evidence he needed to convince others that “wreckers have wrecked the ’Glades region.” He began agitating and publishing his views with renewed vigor. In 1930, he stated:

My writings here would fill volumes. From necessity they are largely didactic and polemical. They hold that South Florida is the coming world-center, with a future baffling the imagination. . . . To realize this noble destiny it must make fit and accessible its waste places, draw upon its vast resources, convert them into consumption-goods, and make them available for use.¹⁴³

In addition to “writing and agitating” for the Everglades, Dr. Will traveled to Washington and Tallahassee in order to appear in person in his efforts to promote aid for the improvement of flood control, navigation, and road building in the region.¹⁴⁴ On these trips to the state and national capitals Dr. Will would call upon the officials of the various committees, boards and commissions and present materials pertaining to the needs of the area.

An example of his labor may be found in the Minutes of the Board of Commissioners of the Everglades Drainage District for August 11, 1931. He had been working for the reconditioning of the North New River Canal to be made a part of an inland waterway from Port Everglades at Ft. Lauderdale.

dale to the headwaters of the Caloosahatchee River. Will appeared before the board on the above date in the hope that he could enlist the assistance of that body in an appeal to the army engineers to reexamine the canal with a view to improving it for navigation and flood control. He presented a two page resolution on the history and importance of the waterway, pointing out that due to soil subsidence, destruction of locks, and growth of hyacinths the inefficiency of the canal had stopped settlement which in turn had brought an end to tax payments.¹⁴⁵ As a result of Will's plea the Commissioners, by resolution, offered the Lauderdale Canal to the United States for improvement in the interest of navigation and for joint operation in the interest of drainage in the district.

When Will was in Washington in 1932 he received a letter from G. P. Allison relative to the great drought in the Everglades and the muck fires raging over the saw grass. Will answered that he had been to the Forest Service in search of aid and to Congresswoman Owen's office, but to no avail. "In Sen. Fletcher's office, talked with his Secretary, Mr. Hill. He's willing and anxious to help; but could not see how to jump the hurdles." Will concluded: "Remember, I'm on the job all the time, seeking our Glades salvation."¹⁴⁶

The work that Will did toward the furtherance of drainage, flood control and navigation in South Florida was prodigious, but an evaluation of his influence is difficult to make. Without doubt his crusades were effective in the overall improvement of the reclamation of the Everglades. In the construction of the highway from South Bay to Ft. Lauderdale and Miami, however, there is a monument that will perpetuate his name as the father of the idea behind it and the tireless worker who brought the road into being. When, in 1918, the survey of the West Palm Beach-Ft. Myers highway skirted the lake shore and by-passed Okeelanta Dr. Will launched his campaign in the upper 'Glades for a "Lauderdale-to-Lake Road."¹⁴⁷

In 1920 Dr. Will was able to interest Broward County citizens in the Okeelanta region of the upper 'Glades, especially with reference to a paved road from the lake into Ft. Lauderdale. A mass meeting on the subject was held at South Bay, but the idea did not secure any other concrete support.¹⁴⁸ For years Will continued to advocate the plan, mentioning it time and again in his articles and letters. In February, 1925, the Broward County Commissioners were granted authority to build a road on the north side of the South New River Canal and the south side of the North New River Canal from the Davie Bridge to the west boundary of Section 28 of Township 50, Range 30.¹⁴⁹ While living in Ft. Lauderdale, Will began serious efforts to enlist the

cooperation of various civic organizations and commercial companies in the road project.

With the development of the Dahlberg-Celotex and Southern sugar interests around the shore of Lake Okeechobee from Canal Point to Clewiston, beginning in 1927-1928, Miami and Dade County leaders looked toward the upper Everglades as a potential purchasing-shipping market. In March, 1927, Vance W. Helm, of the Helm real estate holding corporation, wrote the Miami Chamber of Commerce to ask if that body had taken any official action on a proposed road along the Miami Canal to the Lake.¹⁵⁰ Helm suggested that the Miami Chamber write Governor John W. Martin and Road Department Chairman Fons W. Hathaway relative to the highway department's officially adopting the project as a state road and include it in its plans for earliest consideration.

Dr. Will, however, was working on the same project for the Lauderdale Canal. On May 24, 1929, he was present at a meeting of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund at Tallahassee during which he requested that 1,500 acres of land set aside for Palm Beach County "be converted into cash and the amount realized . . . be applied on the construction of a road along the North Canal and on necessary work in the canal."¹⁵¹

In 1933, when Will was attempting to secure construction of the road along North Canal by State and Federal agencies he felt that it was essential to have additional information on the condition of the route of the proposed highway.¹⁵²

He could not find what he wanted in existing records. His solution of the problem was typical. . . . With two glades hunters, Dr. Will set out from South Bay [in an old Ford car] and followed the canal to Ft. Lauderdale. The canal had been impassable to boats for years, and there had never been even a trail along the canal. . . . As they proceeded he took notes on the depth of the muck, and of the canal, the nature of the old spoil bank, whether of muck or rock, the location of dams and locks and such other features as he considered advisable to know.¹⁵³

The three men cooked their meals on a small gasoline stove and slept on the saw grass at night. They arrived in Ft. Lauderdale on the second day and apparently suffered no ill effects from the journey.

While in Washington, in 1933, Will was assured that the proposed road would be adopted as a part of the federal public roads program.¹⁵⁴ The following year he wrote that surveys of the route and dredging of the canal would be the next step.¹⁵⁵ In July 3, 1935, Will jubilantly noted that the Florida State Road Department had allotted \$450,000 to be spent on the high-

way to Miami. "I understand the bridge will cross the Bolles Canal . . . right by my door in Okeelanta, where I'm staying much of the time, staging a comeback."¹⁵⁶ In the fall of 1935 the Everglades Drainage District deeded a right of way of one hundred feet along the canal bank to the State Road Department and a year later the Improvement Fund Trustees granted a right of way through their lands for the same purpose.¹⁵⁷

On February 12, 1937, Will wrote a long letter to the *Everglades News* on the progress of the highway being built to Miami.¹⁵⁸ Less than a month later, March 5, 1937, death brought a close to the career of Thomas Elmer Will, of whom it was written:

A man of outstanding personality, inflexible honesty, deeply religious, and with a philosophy that would admit no defeat and knew no discouragement, his death will be a distinct loss . . . to the Everglades for which he devoted his untiring efforts."¹⁵⁹

The work of Will, covering the years from 1910 to 1937, is perhaps the best illustration of the almost futile efforts of the individual of moderate means to bring order out of chaos in the confused Everglades reclamation project. Will no doubt expressed this feeling of futility, mixed with a little satisfaction, when, in October, 1936, he wrote:

This country has a tremendous future once the cloud lifts. I figured it all out in 1909, with maps before me. I saw the Panama Canal—Theodore Roosevelt was fighting for it then—the Gulf and our position in the Western World. . . . Since then Miami has become a big aeroplane headquarters; and South America is just at our door. I watch with deep interest such things as the coming Buenos Aires round-up; initiated I think by President Roosevelt. Out of it may come a sure-enough combination for the Western World. Then when poor Europe and Asia have had their last round with killing machinery, maybe they can pattern after us. I'm all the time after a *better world*, a decent place in which to raise children.

As to my holding on. Well, a man usually has to die to get understood. I'm a sentimental sort of creature; and my parents always taught me to be square with people and I've tried to be just that. With everything down here SHOT, I've never felt that I would be justified in running off and leaving everybody in the lurch. This has cost me a professional career, and every cent of such money I had; and has meant 27 years of hard work and fierce fighting; but *IF ONLY* we can get out, and I can say with a clear conscience, "The Glades area is at last ready to occupy and use," I'll feel amply repaid.¹⁶⁰

The Thomas E. Will Memorial Highway along the west bank of the North New River Canal was opened to traffic on April 11, 1941.¹⁶¹ The 1937 Florida Legislature had resolved, by virtue of House Concurrent Resolution Number 17, that state road number 26 from South Bay to Ft. Lauderdale and Miami be designated and known under that name in recognition of Will's efforts in promoting its construction.¹⁶²

In the Everglades settlements and cities of Canal Point, Pahokee, Belle Glade, Clewiston, Moore Haven and others, life to-day is much the same as elsewhere in the United States. Throughout the area an atmosphere of optimism prevails. No one wants to remember the tragedies of 1926 and 1928, and few can recall the trials and hardships of the pioneers of forty years ago, for as usual the second and third generations reap the benefits of the pioneer effort.

NOTES

- ¹ J. E. Dovell, "A Brief History of the Florida Everglades," *The Soil Science Society of Florida, Proceedings*, IV-A (1942), 132-161; and "The Everglades—Florida's Frontier," University of Florida, *Economic Leaflets*, VII, 6 and 7, (April-May, 1947). For fuller treatments see also Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *The Everglades—River of Grass* (New York: Rhinehart and Company, 1947) and Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hannah, *Lake Okeechobee: Wellspring of the Everglades* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1948).
- ² J. E. Dovell, "The Everglades Before Reclamation," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (July, 1947), 1-43.
- ³ *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of the State of Florida*, VI, 96 et. passim. Hereinafter cited as *I. I. F. Minutes*.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 261-265, 447-448, 485-498, 502-512, 553.
- ⁵ Winthrop Packard, "The Rush for Florida," *Technical World*, XVI (March, 1910), 20-23.
- ⁶ George T. Odell, "Paradise on the Installment Plan," *Technical World*, XVII (September, 1912), 21. "Millions of dollars have gone into the pockets of land sharks for land that is eight, ten and twenty-one feet under water, land that ought to have been sold by the quart instead of the acre. . . ." Odell wrote that most of the Everglades had been parcelled out in ten acre slices and sold to "thousands of clerks and stenographers and school teachers all over the United States."
- ⁷ *I. I. F. Minutes*, VIII, 557, 587.
- ⁸ D. A. Simmons, "The Florida Everglades; How They Happened; What They Are; What They Will Be," *The World To-Day*, XIV (May, 1909), 536. "Enormous crops can be grown without any fertilizer whatsoever," he said, "and the Everglades could supply vegetables through the Winter for all the cities and towns east of the Rocky Mountains." See also Napoleon Bonaparte Broward's "Draining the Everglades," *Independent*, LXVI (June 25, 1908), 1448-1449 and "Homes for Millions: Draining the Everglades," *Collier's* XVIV (January 22, 1910), 19; S. M. Ball, "Reclaiming the Everglades," *Putnam's*, XII (April, 1910), 796-802; Day Alley Willey, "Draining the Everglades," *Scientific American*, CIV (January 21, 1911), 67-69; and A. W. Dupuy, "Air-line Across the Everglades," *World's Work*, XV (February, 1908), 9893-9897.
- ⁹ Winthrop Packard, "The Rush for Florida," *loc. cit.*, 21. See also H. Parker Willis, "Secretary Wilson's Record: 2. The Everglades," *Collier's*, XLIV (March 23, 1912), 15-16. Hereinafter cited as "Wilson's Record."

- 10 Unaddressed and unsigned promotion letter of Everglades Land Sales Company, Kansas City, Missouri. Thomas Elmer Will Collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Hereinafter referred to as Will Collection.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 John Clayton Gifford, *The Everglades and Other Essays Relating to Southern Florida*, Kansas City: Everglades Land Sales Company, 1911), 1-2.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 10-11. See also John Clayton Gifford, "The Everglades and the Landes of France," *Conservation*, XV (August, 1909), 453-460.
- 14 "Will's Work: Sketch of Everglades and other South Florida Activities of Thomas Elmer Will since July, 1909." Typed manuscript written by Will in 1934 outlining his Everglades endeavors. Will Collection. Hereinafter cited as "Will's Work."
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 "Where Nature Smiles," Advertising leaflet announcing stereopticon lectures on Florida by Dr. Thomas Elmer Will, published by the Everglades Land Sales Company. Will Collection.
- 17 *Everglades News* (Canal Point, Florida), March 12, 1937.
- 18 Letter of John Newhouse, South Bay, Florida, to the writer. May 21, 1948.
- 19 Transcript from "Lawrence University Souvenir," furnished by Lawrence E. Will, Belle Glade, Florida, son of T. E. Will.
- 20 *Miami* (Florida) *Herald*, March 16, 1937.
- 21 Typescript on "Thomas Elmer Will" from *Fortieth Anniversary Report*, Class of 1890, Harvard College. This report is in the possession of Lawrence E. Will. Hereinafter cited as "Anniversary Report."
- 22 L. D. Walters, *History of Kansas State Agricultural College*, (Manhattan: Kansas State Agricultural College, 1909), 125.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 125-126. The Will children included: Lawrence Elmer, born January 31, 1893; Marian Van Velsor, born January 27, 1894; and Gertrude Rogers, born April 28, 1903. "Anniversary Report."
- 24 *Ibid.* A check through the standard indexes to periodical literature reveals the information that beginning in 1894 and continuing through 1912, Will published at least twenty-eight articles in journals and magazines of national circulation. Through the medium of the *Arena*, published in Boston, nineteen articles were printed, four appeared in the *Review of Reviews*, two in the *Independent*, and one each in the *Journal of Political Economy*, *World's Work* and *Popular Science Monthly*. By years, eight articles were published in 1894, four in 1895, one in 1896, one in 1898, three in 1901, one in 1902, one in 1904, two in 1906, three in 1907, three in 1908 and one in 1912. The earlier articles deal with social and political problems of money, war, child labor, municipal reform, and representative government. Later articles were on the subject of conservation of natural resources, particularly forest reserves. The 1912 article was on the Everglades of Florida.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 *Miami Herald*, March 16, 1937. See also printed brochure, "Press and Other Notices of Lectures by Thomas Elmer Will." Will Collection. Ruskin College honored Will with an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree. Lawrence E. Will to J. E. Dovell, April 29, 1948.
- 27 Walters, *op. cit.*, 126. "In connection with this forestry work he has written widely for the magazines and has lectured in twenty different states, sixty-four illustrated Chautauqua lectures having been given in 1908 in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri." See also *Forestry and Irrigation*, XIV (August, 1908), 450-452.
- 28 Thomas E. Will, "A Personal Word," *American Forestry*, XVI (February, 1910), 111-112.
- 29 The original title of the journal had been *Forestry and Irrigation*. It was changed to *Conservation* in 1908 and to *American Forestry* in 1909.
- 30 T. E. Will, "A Personal Word," *loc cit.*, 112. Will pointed out that he had written many articles on conservation of resources, especially forests, and that these had appeared in *World's Work*, *Review of Reviews*, *Independent*, *Popular Science Monthly*,

McClure's, *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, *Vick's Magazine*, *Journal of American Merchants and Manufacturer's Association*, and *American Industries*.

- 31 Lawrence E. Will, letter of April 29, 1948, to J. E. Dovell.
- 32 "Where Nature Smiles." Will Collection.
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 "Will's Work." Will Collection.
- 35 "Florida Everglades Homebuilders Association, Constitution and By-Laws." Will Collection.
- 36 *Florida Everglades Homebuilders Association*, Printed Prospectus, Will Collection. Thos. E. Will was chosen as President of the Association.
- 37 W. S. Blatchley, *In Days Agone: Notes on Fauna and Flora of Sub-Tropical Florida in the Days When Most of Its Area Was a Primeval Wilderness*, (Indianapolis: Nature Publishing Company, 1932), 99-100. "When we remember that the lake is only a great saucer 20.5 feet above tide, and that the Kissimmee drains into it, practically in four months of the year, 48 inches of rainfall from 8,000 square miles of territory, we can understand how visionary is the scheme proposed. Thousands of dollars have been spent in advertising and millions gotten back in profit by selling to widows, orphans, and poor devils in the North, this land, in five or ten acre tracts at \$50 to \$100 an acre," wrote Blatchley in 1911.
- 38 *Everglades of Florida, Acts, Reports, and Other Papers, State and National, Relating to the Everglades of the State of Florida and their Reclamation, Senate Documents*, Number 89, 62 Congress, 1 Session, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 16, 130, 140. Hereinafter cited as *Senate Document 89*. See also Committee on Expenditures in the Department of Agriculture, House of Representatives, *Everglades of Florida, Hearings before the Committee on Expenditures in the Department of Agriculture, February 3-August 9, 1912, Ralph W. Moss, Chairman*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), Number 5, 212 *et passim*. Hereinafter cited as *1912 Everglades Hearings*.
- 39 *Journal of the State Senate of Florida of the Session of 1909*, (Tallahassee, state printer, 1909), 1605-1623. James O. Wright, a supervising engineer of the Drainage Investigations Office, prepared the report on the basis of 1907 and 1908 surveys made in the Everglades and on information he had secured at Tallahassee and elsewhere. Wright's conclusions had been questioned by his associates in Washington, and as a consequence the publication of the findings of the examinations had been held up pending further investigation and revision. *1912 Everglades Hearings*, Number 9, 337-387, Number 10, 409-410, Number 21, 1039-1040; letter of Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, Yellow Springs, Ohio, to the author, March 9, 1946.
- 40 Ralph W. Moss, *Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives on Expenditures in the Department of Agriculture, House Reports*, Number 1207, 62 Congress, 2 Session, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), 2.
- 41 *1912 Everglades Hearings*, Number 12, 560.
- 42 *Ibid.*, Number 10, 409.
- 43 A copy of the circular letter appears in *1912 Everglades Hearings*, Number 5, 215-216. It was later determined that "The same interests which made . . . objection to the circular had been guilty of circulating highly extravagant statements in praise of Everglade lands, and falsely attributing the authorship to Secretary Wilson." *House of Representatives Documents*, Report Number 1207, 62 Congress, 2 Session, 3.
- 44 *House of Representatives Documents*, Report Number 1207, 62 Congress, 2 Session, 3.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 *1912 Everglades Hearings*, Number 19, 929. Fletcher stated that M. L. Bowen, an agent of the Everglades Land Sales Company in Washington, gave him the copy of the letter in question. *Ibid.*, Number 16, 757-758.
- 47 *Ibid.*, Number 13, 597, 624-625; Number 21, 1042-1043.
- 48 *House Resolution 694*, 61 Congress, 2 Session; *Congressional Record*, XLV (May 10, 1910), (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), 6317.
- 49 *Ibid.*

- ⁵⁰ 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 13, 625. Will claimed Clark had criticized the Everglades project at the door of the House of Representatives in front of a crowd on February 7, 1910, and had promised to bring the matter up on the floor of the House in a speech. *Ibid.*, Number 16, 748-749.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 627. Wilson was referring to the differences of opinion in the Florida Congressional delegation, especially between Senator Fletcher and Representative Clerk.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, Number 21, 1041. The controversy in the Department of Agriculture over the Everglades report reached a climax in February, 1910, when the original author, James O. Wright, accepted the position of chief engineer for the Board of Commissioners of the Everglades Drainage District. *Ibid.*, Number 5, 190, Number 21, 1042.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, Number 21, 1041. Wilson later stated that the Wright Report had not been published because "We had not done enough; we had not done what the people of Florida had a right to expect. . . . It was not what it should have been." *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁴ "Will's Work." Will Collection.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.* See also "Light on a Dark Subject," one of a series of articles by Will, *Ft. Lauderdale Daily News*, April 1, 1931, and John Newhouse manuscripts on the experiences of a pioneer who entered the Everglades in 1914. The Newhouse Collection consists of a number of notebooks, photographs and miscellaneous papers located in the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville. Hereinafter cited as Newhouse Collection.
- ⁵⁶ D. G. Fairchild, *The World Was My Garden*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), 388.
- ⁵⁷ Newhouse Collection, Book I, 2.
- ⁵⁸ "Will's Work." Will Collection.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ *Senate Document 89*, 17-18.
- ⁶¹ Judson C. Welliver article in the *Washington Times*, October 15, 1911, quoted in full in 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 18, 882.
- ⁶² 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 7, 282. See also Fletcher's defense of Senate Document 89 on the floor of the Senate, *Congressional Record*, XLVIII (February 15, 1912), 2084-2086.
- ⁶³ *Ft. Lauderdale (Florida) Call*, June 12, 1926.
- ⁶⁴ 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 19, 943-956, 958, 964-965, Number 21, 1029. When Will was on the witness stand in March, 1912, before the House Committee investigating the Everglades he was asked if he had had any connection with Senate Document 89. William H. Ellis, representing the Florida Internal Improvement Fund Trusttes at the hearings (later a Justice of the Florida Supreme Court), objected to the question and the objection was sustained. *Ibid.*, Number 16, 760. The Committee did not press Will to ascertain where he procured the page proof of the suppressed Wright report and Will's memory failed him as to the name of the man in the government printing office who supplied the material. *Ibid.*, Number 13, 634-635.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Number 1, 10, Number 5, 221, Number 18, 841.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Number 7, 261.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 300. Fletcher rebutted the evidence by stating that the document was not prepared "at the instance of any one board of trade or individual. . . . I thought the public interest would be subserved by a collection, compilation, and publication of public records. . . ." *Ibid.*, Number 8, 334-335.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Number 7, 299.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Number 16, 766.
- ⁷⁰ *Congressional Record*, XLVIII (February 1, 1912), 1615. "The promoters and the boomers have thus been furnished with a fresh supply of information, which they can use at will for the purpose of misleading investors." H. P. Willis, "Wilson's Record," *loc. cit.*, 16.

- 71 *Ibid.*, (February 15, 1912), 2084. The resolution authorizing the printing of the first edition had received the consent of the Senate on August 7. *Ibid.*, XLVII, (August 7, 1911), 3669.
- 72 V. W. Helm to T. E. Will, August 16, 1911. Will Collection.
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 V. W. Helm to T. E. Will, August 22, 1911. Will Collection. In the same letter Helm agreed to reduce the subscription price of the company's *Everglades Magazine* to 50c for members of Will's Everglades Homebuilder's Association.
- 75 V. W. Helm to T. E. Will, August 26, 1911, Will Collection. Helm added: "Before making the big shipment to us, please advise if it is possible for us to furnish individual addresses for all our salesman so that the bulletin can be mailed out under Senator's Franking Privilege direct from Washington." *Ibid.*
- 76 V. W. Helm to T. E. Will, December 11, 1911. Will Collection.
- 77 T. E. Will to V. W. Helm, December 15, 1911. Will Collection.
- 78 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 7, 298.
- 79 Isidor Cohen, *Historical Sketches and Sidelights of Miami, Florida*, (Miami: privately printed, 1925), 170.
- 80 Joe Reese, "Agricultural Possibilities in the Everglades," *Florida Grower* (Tampa), XXXIII (April 10, 1926), 2-3.
- 81 R. E. Rose, *The Swamp and Overflowed Lands of Florida: The Disston Drainage Company and the Disston Purchase*, (Tallahassee, T. I. Appleyard, 1916), 129.
- 82 J. C. Gifford, *op. cit.*, 99.
- 83 *Harper's Weekly*, LIV (November 12, 1910), 6.
- 84 George T. Odell, "Paradise on the Installment Plan," *Technical World*, XVII (September, 1912), 21.
- 85 Statement of Will, 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 13, 596-597.
- 86 V. W. Helm to T. E. Will, December 16, 1911. Will Collection.
- 87 *Ibid.* Will stated on February 29, 1912, that beginning with the new year he had been engaged in literary work, part of which was devoted to Everglades publicity. 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 13, 596.
- 88 T. E. Will, "The Everglades of Florida," *Review of Reviews*, XLVI (October, 1912), 451-456.
- 89 *Washington Times*, October 8, 1911, quoted in 1912 *Everglades Hearings*, Number 18, 880, 903. *Washington Times*, December 8, 1911, quoted in *Ibid.*, Number 19, 953.
- 90 *House Documents*, Report Number 1207, 62 Congress, 2 Session, 1.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 3. See also H. P. Willis, "Wilson's Record," *loc. cit.*, 16. For a full discussion of the back ground of the hearings, see J. E. Dovell, "A History of the Everglades of Florida," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1947), 269-317.
- 92 J. H. Reese, "Agricultural Opportunities in the Everglades," *loc. cit.*, 4.
- 93 Fritzie P. Manuel, "Land Development in the Everglades," *Hearings Before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration*, House of Representatives, 77 Congress, 2 Session, 12868.
- 94 "Light on a Dark Subject," *Ft. Lauderdale Daily News*, April 1, 1931. One commentator wrote that Congressman Clark had shattered at least 40,000 dreams of paradise on the installment plan and "made it plain to 40,000 people that all their savings had been thrown away." G. T. Odell, "Paradise on the Installment Plan," *loc. cit.*, 16.
- 95 *I. I. F. Minutes*, IX, 395; *Jacksonville* (Florida) *Evening Metropolis*, April 22, 1912.
- 96 "Will's Work." Will Collection.
- 97 Newhouse Collection, Book I, 3.
- 98 *Ibid.*, 16, 18. The assembly resolved to ask the State of Florida to establish an agricultural experiment station on the muck soils of the Everglades. *Ibid.*, 11.
- 99 *Ibid.*, 10.

- 100 *Ibid.*, 10-11.
- 101 F. P. Manuel, "Land Development in the Everglades," *loc. cit.*, 12884.
- 102 Memorandum in Will Collection.
- 103 "Light on a Dark Subject," *Ft. Lauderdale Daily News*, April 1, 1931.
- 104 *Ibid.*; *I. I. F. Minutes*, X, 36-37. Will stated: "I had paid in full for ten Bryant and Greenwood contracts: 120 acres to occupy and cultivate. Much Glades land was sold on the scatteration plan; each for himself. This defied settlement and success." "Light on a Dark Subject."
- 105 Newhouse Collection, Book I, 11-12. The Will townsite was plotted in Section 35 of Township 44 South, Range 36 East.
- 106 Memorandum in Will Collection. Samuel R. Copper, formerly of South Bay, was another of the original five settlers. *Miami Herald*, March 16, 1937.
- 107 Newhouse Collection, Book I, 9. During the fall of 1913 the Everglades were drier than ever observed before, probably as a result of the combination of dry weather and the canal excavations. The muck soils were dry from six to eight miles back on each side of the canals near Lake Okeechobee with the water table up to three feet below the surface of the soil. "Minutes of the Board of Commissioners of the Everglades Drainage District," I, 232-233. Typed and bound manuscript located in the office of the secretary of the board, Miami, Florida. Hereinafter cited as "E. D. D. Minutes."
- 108 John Newhouse to J. E. Dovell, May 21, 1948. See also the manuscript recollections in the Newhouse Collection. According to Newhouse, the "joker" of the sales contract could be found on the reverse side of the instrument where the contract stated "that in case of failure to pay the installments, the company has the right to cancel the contract upon 30 days notice and keep the land, and the money paid on it." Newhouse to Dovell, May 18, 1947. A "Purchaser's Receipt" of the Okeechobee Fruit Lands Company, issued for five acres in Sec. 36, Tnp. 44, S. R. 36 E. in Palm Beach County is in the Newhouse Collection and substantiates the above statement.
- 109 L. E. Will to J. E. Dovell, April 29, 1948.
- 110 Newhouse Collection, Book I, 25, 27, 43.
- 111 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 112 *Ibid.*, 43; *Tropical Sun* (Lake Worth), May 18, 1916. The machine was too heavy for the soft earth although it did succeed in breaking up a considerable amount of land.
- 113 Memoranda in Will Collection.
- 114 *Miami Herald*, March 16, 1937.
- 115 Newhouse Collection, Book I, 30-31.
- 116 John Newhouse to J. L. Dovell, May 21, 1948; Gertrude M. Winne, "Early Days on Lake Okeechobee," *Everglades News*, March 7, 1930.
- 117 See Will Collection for correspondence and other memoranda on teacher appointments, elections, hiring of school boat pilots and so forth.
- 118 *Ibid.* See also Newhouse Collection, Book II, 45-49 and John Newhouse letter of May 18, 1947.
- 119 *Ft. Lauderdale Sentinel*, January 15, 1915. Bolles stated that he paid an annual tax bill of \$100,000 in Palm Beach County alone. On the subject of roads see also *Palm Beach Post*, October 23, 1915; *Miami Metropolis*, November 31, 1915; and *Ft. Lauderdale Tropical Sun*, January 1, 1916.
- 120 L. E. Will to J. E. Dovell, April 29, 1948. See also Will and Newhouse Collections.
- 121 Newhouse Collection, Book II, 45-46.
- 122 *Ibid.*, 49.
- 123 *I. I. F. Minutes*, XII, 163-164. One of the troubles of the pioneers "was that localities along the east coast were not adverse to using the Glades territory as a milk cow. . . . In early 1915 Palm Beach County decided to improve the Dixie Highway, an \$800,000 bond issue was voted on the whole county." But special road district No. 6 consisted of Everglades lands on both sides of the Okeelanta road and the city of West Palm Beach only. "Other towns along the east coast stayed out." Newhouse letter of May 21, 1948. "At the same time that the establishing of an Everglades road district and bond issue was voted—and approved—in August, 1916, an east coast inlet district was voted, and laid out somewhat on top of the road district." *Ibid.*
- 124 Newhouse Collection, Books I, 28-29; IV, 154-155.

- 125 Newhouse letter of May 21, 1948.
- 126 Memorandum in Will Collection. The pamphlets of this period include: An appeal Purchasers of Florida Everglades Land to their Fellow Purchasers, Everglades Owners of Idle Lands, Listen! Eureka! We Have Found the Saw Grass Crop—Dasheens, A Home and Independence, Okeelanta Poultry Farms, The Sugar Famine: Help End It, Insure Your Living, and To the Lost Tribes of Israel—the Buyers of Scattered Everglades Land.
- 127 T. E. Will, "Light on a Dark Subject," *Ft. Lauderdale Daily News*, April 1, 1931.
- 128 Edward Howe, "Looking About in the Everglades," *Country Gentleman*, XXXIV (August 23, 1919), 10-11. Howe had reached Okeelanta as a member of a weekly excursion from Miami, conducted by H. H. Hart, now of Belle Glade, Florida. The trip was made at a cost of \$9.50 for three days, which included "bed and board."
- 129 Lawrence E. Will letter of April 29, 1948. Dr. Will wrote in 1927 that he was driven from the Everglades by the high water, but that he continued to fight for water control and roads to be followed by settlement and development. "Confessions of a Conservationist." Will Collection.
- 130 *Everglades News*, May 1, 1925; July 16, 30, 1926. Newhouse Collection, Book 4, 166 *et passim*.
- 131 Lawrence E. Will letter of April 29, 1948.
- 132 Advertisements and memoranda. Will Collection.
- 133 Correspondence between Will and Gifford Pinchot, Governor of Pennsylvania in 1925, relating to conservation and between Will and Senator D. U. Fletcher, in 1922-1923, relating to flood control are but two examples of the interests he followed. The folders include "South Florida, Land of Destiny" and "Settle or Sell: A Statement, Appeal, and Opportunity for Old Everglades Buyers." Will Collection.
- 134 O. A. Kay, "Conditions at Fellsmere, Dave and Okeelanta," 7. Manuscript in the Arthur E. Morgan Collection of Everglades materials, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.
- 135 T. E. Will to Addison F. South. Will Collection. A grass fire had consumed a house belonging to Will at Okeelanta. *Everglades News*, February 26, 1926.
- 136 Printed announcement in Will Collection; see also *Miami Herald*, July 6, 1928.
- 137 "The Okeechobee Question;" E. H. Andrae, "Plan For Flood Control in the Everglades." See also T. E. Will to Governor David Sholtz, July 12, 1934. Will Collection.
- 138 T. E. Will to Doyle E. Carlton, May 17, 1929. Will Collection.
- 139 E. H. Taylor, "Florida's Question Marks," *Country Gentleman*, XC (October, 1927), 20.
- 140 Edward Howe, "Looking About in the Everglades," *loc. cit.*, 11.
- 141 *Hearings before the Committee on Flood Control in Florida and Elsewhere*, House of Representatives, 70 Congress, 1 Session, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1929), 145-146.
- 142 *Ibid.*
- 143 "Anniversary Report." Dozens of published and unpublished manuscripts are found in the Will Collection. Titles include: "Killing Everglades Settlement," "The Paramount Issues of the Florida Everglades," "Federal Aid for the Everglades," and "Fred H. Davis Exposed the Glades Foes." See also letters to Will from Congresswoman Ruth Bryan Owen of September 15, 21, 1931; Will to Senator Fletcher, January 10, 1929; and Will to Captain S. E. Lawrence, U. S. Army Engineers, December 8, 1930. Will Collection.
- 144 In 1929 and 1931 Will visited Tallahassee and in 1931 and 1932 he spent several months in Washington. "Will's Work." Will Collection.
- 145 "E. D. D. Minutes," August 11, 1931. On his visits to the state and national capitals Will received support from such organizations as the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the Port Everglades Authority. ". . . the funds furnished him by the sponsoring organizations would have been sufficient to enable the usual lobbyist to have remained only a few days. He had no funds of his own, save the small dues he collected from friends and interested persons in the South Florida Development League." L. E. Will letter of April 29, 1948. On one trip to Washington he remained for three months on a little more than \$200, part of the time subsisting on 46c per day. *Ibid.*
- 146 G. P. Allison to T. E. Will, February 23, 1932. T. E. Will to G. P. Allison, February 25, 1932. Will Collection.

- 147 "Will's Work," Will Collection.
- 148 John Newhouse letter of May 21, 1948.
- 149 "E. D. D. Minutes," V, 34.
- 150 Vance W. Helm to Miami Chamber of Commerce, March 11, 1927. Morgan Collection.
See also *Miami News*, June 10, 1928.
- 151 *I. I. F. Minutes*, XVIII, 111.
- 152 "Will's Work." Will Collection.
- 153 L. E. Will to J. E. Dovell, April 29, 1948. Dr. Will was 72 years old when the 60 mile trip was made through the dense weeds and sawgrass of the Everglades.
- 154 "Will's Work." Will Collection.
- 155 *Everglades News*, July 27, 1934. It was finally agreed that the lake to coast roads desired by Miami and Ft. Lauderdale should be combined, with a road to Miami continuing from the Lauderdale road at a point west of the Broward County city.
- 156 *Ibid.*, July 3, 1935. See also *Miami Herald*, July 2, 1935. The first construction on the road was in 1935, a strip of about two miles from Okeelanta south.
- 157 *Ibid.*, September 27, 1935; *I. I. F. Minutes*, XXI, 16-19.
- 158 *Everglades News*, February 12, 1937.
- 159 *Miami Herald*, March 16, 1937.
- 160 T. E. Will to W. L. Alexander, September 24, 1936. Will Collection.
- 161 *Palm Beach Post*, April 12, 1941.
- 162 House Concurrent Resolution Number 17, *Laws of Florida*, 1937.

This Page Blank in Original
Source Document