

(Part 2, Classification of Soils Page 31)
"The Everglades"

"While the soils of this region differ little in their general characteristics from the swamp lands above considered, still, owing to their prominence as such and as the greatest reclamation undertaking in recent times, also their unique geographical position, we submit a brief description under their own heading. These lands are being rapidly and successfully drained by the State as well as by private and corporate owners."

This last statement is rather strong and to a land buyer who read it and bought land in 1909 on the strength of reading ~~xxxx~~ this public document, it would now in 1915 have the result of raising a question in the buyer's mind as to the "rapidity" and also the "success" of the State Drainage. Note that this statement is not that the State will build some canals but that the land is being "successfully drained by the State."

"The difference in level between highest and lowest stages of water is from two to three feet. The general surface of the Everglades was thus subject to great changes prior to the inauguration of the system of drainage now so successfully under way".

Note the state, ^{act} made in 1909 in a State document "now so ~~xxxx~~ successfully under way".

The quarterly Bulletin from which the above extracts were quoted, emanated from the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture. The Commissioner of Agriculture, being a member of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund having in charge the drainage work, was certainly posted as to the State policy in regard to drainage and in allowing such statements to go out of his office in official reports was rather definitely pledging the State to Drainage.

This same matter quoted above was moreover used again in 1910 and still again in 1911 in agricultural reports from the same office, so that evidently the statements made therein must have expressed the fixed policy of the State as regards drainage at that time, and any promises of drainage made at that time, certainly could not be subsequently withdrawn.

The Trustees in 1911 gave out Officially that they had sufficient funds on hand to finish The Hillsborough, North New River, South New River and Miami Canals, and that contracts were in force for their completion on July first 1913.

Witness the quotation from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, November 1, 1911.

"One half the time of the contract between the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and the Board of Drainage Commissioners of the State of Florida, and the Furst-Clark Construction Company of Baltimore, Md., having expired, it was thought proper to review the results obtained by said work.

"The following report upon said work was therefore, submitted, approved, approved and order placed of record

"This work was first begun in the spring of 1906 by the State, through the Trustees and the Board of Drainage Commissioners, with one dredge. Some months later another dredge was added to the work, and in the spring of 1919 two more dredges were added to the work, and in the spring of 1909 two more dredges were added, making a total of four dredges being operated in 1909.

"This work from the time of its inception by the State has been greatly hampered for the lack of funds with which to operate

"In the spring of 1910 a settlement was reached parties owing large sums of money to the Trustees, agreed to advance the time of payment of these sums due, and as a result the means were available as needed and it was decided to let the work by contract, with a view of hastening the completion of the work.

"A contract was accordingly let, in June 1910, to the Furst-Clark Construction Company of Baltimore, Md., for the completion of the work, approximating the cutting of 175 miles of canal, enumerated in this article, to be completed by the first day of July, 1913, about 29.08 miles having already been cut by the State.

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"It will thus be seen that the contractors have constructed 75.90 miles of canal since they began work. The amount of work done by them the first six months was far below the average required to complete the contract on time, some time being required to assemble proper equipment but the completion of the work on contract time, July 1, 1913, would seem to be assured.

(The capital are ours, Ed.)

"THE TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT FUND AND THE BOARD OF DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS HAVE FUNDS IN HAND AND AVAILABLE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE CONTRACTS MADE, AND IN ADDITION HAVE A SUFFICIENCY OF LAND TOGETHER WITH THE DRAINAGE TAX BEING COLLECTED, TO CONSTRUCT SUCH OTHER CANALS AS CONDITIONS MAY WARRANT"

This needs very little comment, except that it would seem to be an indication that the State not only was promising drainage, but had the funds to drain with, even to the construction of such "other canals as conditions may warrant" Drainage conditions by the way warrant laterals and secondary canals. It is also definitely stated that there was a sufficiency of land, the so called state land, (which should be applied to drainage purposes and the failure to ~~do~~ definitely and absolutely apply to drainage purposes causing the present apparent shortage of funds) Also here in the year 1916 and not a single canal mentioned above, as yet finished.

WAS THE STATE OF FLORIDA OR ITS OFFICERS FULLY ADVISED OF THE FACT THAT THE LAND COMPANIES WERE SELLING EVERGLADES LAND IN PARTIALLY DRAINED CONDITION TO JAMIE SMALL INVESTORS ?

WAS THE STATE OR ITS OFFICERS A PARTY TO THIS SALE ?

ABSOLUTELY YES!

HERE IS THE EVIDENCE.

Following are extracts from the official printed Minutes of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement fund of the State of Florida.

"Tallahassee, Florida,
April 10, 1912.

"The Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund met in the Office of the Executive on this date:

Present; Albert W. Gilchrist, Governor,
W. V. Knott, Comptroller,
J. D. Luning, State Treasurer,
Park Trammel, Attorney General,
W. A. McRae, Commissioner of Agriculture.
(A full board by the way)

" The following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

" Whereas, The funds for carrying on the said drainage operations have been and are being derived largely from the sales of swamp and overflowed lands under the authority granted to the said Trustees by the above mentioned Act of 1855; and

" Whereas, Owing to the magnitude of the project, it was found to be impracticable to secure sufficient funds for the carrying on of said drainage operations through the sales of small parcels of the swamp and overflowed lands; and it was also found to be impracticable to make sales of large bodies of such land for all cash payments;

" Whereas, The said Trustees in the last few years have made several such contracts for the sale of large areas of swamp or overflowed lands upon installment payments; and upon the expectation and assurance of receiving funds provided by the said contracts (contracts were let to the Furst-Clark Construction Company, including a provision for a \$50,000 forfeit for failure to meet obligations of payment) and

" Whereas, the said Trustees are almost wholly dependent for funds to make the payments required of them under the said Furst-Clark contract upon receiving (The underscores are curs. Ed.) the payments due them under the above mentioned contracts for the sale of certain large bodies of swamp and overflowed lands; and in turn the purchasers of such bodies of land are dependent for funds to make the payments due by them to the Trustees upon sales to be made by them of parcels of the lands which they have purchased, which sales to numerous to small investors throughout the country are materially influenced by the confidence or lack of confidence which the investing public may have in the value, present or prospective, of the Everglades land; and

(It is here set out that unfavorable reports have been circulated as to the practicability of the drainage scheme, the character of the soil, causing damage to the market value of the lands, spoiling the sale of the land and in general injuring the State of Florida. The confidence of the Trustees in the proposition is affirmed)

(The resolution continues)

" Whereas the investing public shall be fully informed as to the true condition existing there (please remember this phrase "true condition" in the perusing of extracts from the land selling literature evolved as the result of this resolution). and.

" Whereas, In order that the truth may be known from personal examination, it is proposed that a party of thirty or more influential ~~xx~~ representatives of the great news agencies of the country, be conveyed upon a tour of personal investigation of the existing conditions obtaining in the Everglades region; and it is suggested that the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, because of their large interests, should contribute One Thousand Dollars

towards the expenses of the said tour of investigation. Now therefore be it

" Resolved, That the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund believe it to be right and proper and to the best interests of the Internal Improvement Fund and of the State of Florida that said Trustees should contribute and they hereby agree to contribute, the sum of One Thousand Dollars towards the expenses of the above mentioned tour of investigation; and be it further

" Resolved, That the Governor of the State of Florida, as Chairman of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, and such others of the Trustees as can conveniently do so and the Chief Drainage Engineer and the State Chemist are requested to accompany the above mentioned press representatives on such tour of investigation so as to furnish such press ~~xx~~ representatives any and all accurate information with reference to the Everglades that may be requested.

The Trustees then adjourned. Albert W. Gilchrist, Governor,
Attest: J. C. Laning, Secretary.

WITH THE FOREGOING RESOLUTIONS CLEARLY IN MIND, AND THE FACT BEFORE YOU THAT THE TRIP WAS PARTIALLY PAID FOR BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF INCREASING THE SALE OF THE LANDS THROUGH PUBLICITY METHODS AND WITH THE ADDITIONAL FACT BEFORE YOU THAT THE GOVERNOR AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BOARD WERE AUTHORIZED TO ACCOMPANY THE PRESS REPRESENTATIVES, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SAMPLES OF THE "ACCURATE INFORMATION" WHICH WAS PUBLISHED AS A RESULT OF THE TRIP.

You will appreciate that the purpose of the trip was to manufacture such publicity matter as would restore confidence in the Everglades among small investors and that members of the Board accompanied the press representatives upon the trip in order to insure the obtaining by the press representatives of accurate information. The quotations from the pamphlet compiled as a result of the trip are examples of the "accurate information."

The Pamphlet was published by William L. Larkin, the cover of the Pamphlet being worded as follows:

" Souvenir

of the

Official Opening of the Gulf to Atlantic Waterway of the Everglades
Drainage Canal in Florida

by

Hon. A. W. Gilchrist, Governor, and the Board of Trustees of the
Internal Improvement Fund.

April 23rd to 27th, 1912,

Published by William L. Larkin. "

(Quotations)

" Before the Journey was ended the newspaper representatives secured every fact concerning this combined drainage and irrigation project, its progress, its feasibility and the results already secured by the engineers."

(We must remember that it was for the purpose of disseminating these "facts" that the expedition was partially financed by the State Officers.)

" Every acre within the range of vision on either side of this canal was drier than many western prairies at this season of the year."

(This statement should certainly never have been allowed to go uncensored. Some of the partially drained lands may have been temporarily above the water surface, but it conveyed a misleading idea to the thousands of land buyers who read the pamphlet.)

" Now comes man, driven by necessity to complete God's plan, and by cutting a half dozen canals from Lake Okechobee, the central reservoir, to sea level, Presto! North American's tropical winter garden is ready for the sower".

(How about this for an "accurate" piece of information ?)

" A series of locks have and are being constructed in the main canals which insured water for irrigation as well as transportation at all seasons of the year ."

(Only two locks are now in existence (Jan. 1916) both in the lower reaches of two canals where they are of little use for any purpose whatever.)

" On account of the combined drainage and irrigation methods of reclaiming the Everglades, it can be trustfully described as one of the safest reclaimed land projects, from an agricultural or investment standpoint, ever attempted.

(Mind this was in 1912, and while the project itself is a good one, it has been far from being a profitable investment either to land companies or their small investors, because still unreclaimed.)

(The pamphlet is made up of letters from Newspaper men, but the above quotations form the foreword or introduction.)

(Below are a few excerpts from the letters, which we must assume are full of the "accurate" information furnished by the Board.)

"It is an easy thing to see with the eye, but to conceive the possibilities of this vast territory of more than four million acres that has been redeemed by the great system of drainage canals it is impossible."

"The liar has no chance in Florida for the truth is more impressive than any lie that can be told".

"The Everglades can be practically reclaimed by the system of canals now (1912) in course of construction."

"Gone forever are the Everglades. In their place Florida today has 4,000,000 acres of tillable land, wonderfully fertile."

"If the facts concerning the Everglades were generally known there would be a rush of settlers to Florida and the land of the Everglades that would see this wonderfully rich area thickly populated with thriving farmers from the north within a few months."

"As an engineering feat, the Everglades drainage project stands preeminent in the world's history of reclaimed land projects."

"The Everglades which I had always supposed to be irreclaimable swamps, I found transformed into fertile farmland and showing every evidence of production and prosperity."

"Government and private land projects are as big as the ocean and as numerous as the stars, but the Everglades combined drainage and irrigation project is one of the safest investments for the new home builder I have ever seen."

All the above, and more, is contained in the pamphlet issued that the "INVESTING PUBLIC" "shall be fully informed as to the true conditions existing there."

The expenses of the trip were partially paid for by State money. The whole project entered into as a result of a resolution (given above in part) passed by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida on April 10, 1912.

Can any of the small investors that the Trustees were aiming to reach by means of this publicity, or hold in line after they had already bought, doubt that drainage was a State project. But what can they think of the honor of the State of Florida?

Can anything except putting forth every effort and withholding no means of credit available, redeem the honor of the State?

Is there any doubt after sanctioning such land-selling literature that the State of Florida is bound to carry the project to completion, sparing no effort in that direction.

Is the matter of relief for the small investor purely a matter between the small investor and the land company and one in which the State is not interested. (as one member of the present Board has stated).

THE RANDOLPH REPORT

Senate Document No. 379, 63rd Congress, 2nd Session.

On the 13th day of April 1913 the Board of Commissioners of the Everglades Drainage District (The five highest officers of the State of Florida), entered into a contract with Isham Randolph, an engineer of national reputation, for Mr. Randolph to organize a Board of Engineers to be known as the Florida Engineering Commission for the purpose of making an exhaustive investigation of the Everglades drainage project, covering all data, facts, information obtainable necessary to make a comprehensive report. Also for the said Commission to submit plans and specifications of the drainage works which they may deem necessary and to make comprehensive reports, maps and plats covering such recommended works.

We quote one clause from the Board's Contract with Mr. Randolph which will give an idea of the only limitations imposed upon the Commission as to the scope of the work, that is the degree of intensive drainage which the report should cover.

"Such canals and works incident or necessary thereto to be shown on said plans and specifications shall be sufficient in number and capacity to provide the system of main canals required to drain the land area embraced within the said Drainage District so far as may be accomplished without resort to pumping the water, and that will be sufficient to relieve the lands aforesaid of all surface water, but the said reports shall not deal particularly with minor subdivisions of land. Farm ditches are not to come within the purview or scope of said reports. The said Commission, in addition to reporting on the system of main canals, as herein provided, shall make a supplemental report covering the lateral canals necessary to the completion of the system."

Supplement to Florida Quarterly Bulletin of the Agricultural Department.
April 1, 1915.

(This by the way is published by authority of W.A. McRae Commissioner of Agriculture, one of the members of the Dual Board, or Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and Commissioners of the Everglades Drainage District.)

A few quotations from this public document are also in point as indicating the State's obligation to drain.

"In the campaign of 1905, the successful candidate for Governor was elected on a platform pledged to the drainage of the Everglades. And since that time, notwithstanding the many obstacles necessary to be overcome, reclamation by drainage has, on its own merits, gradually become one of the fixed policies of the State."

The question as to what constitutes RECLAMATION is a pertinent one, this is something more than main canals. It certainly means such a degree of drainage work that the land is reclaimed and capable of cultivation.

(We wish to quote this reference contained in this document:)

"See also Senate Document No. 89, entitled 'Everglades of Florida', containing much detailed information on the subject."

This reference to Senate Document No 89 is a very important point, as, from first to last this Document is a promise of State Drainage and Reclamation of the Everglades and has been the means of conveying to thousands of people the impression that the State of Florida was drainage the Everglades and would drain them to a point where the land could be cultivated, and when we are again referred in a State Public Document to this Senate Document for information, we must conclude again that the statements in the Senate Document are in line with the policy of the State.

Further in regard to Senate Document No. 89 and the State's attitude towards same as expressing the State's policy as regard to Drainage it may be stated that at a meeting of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund held August 30, 1911, the Secretary of the Board was directed to wire to Washington, for 10,000 copies of same, to be paid for by the Board. The reason given in the Minutes being that the said Document "contained "all official reports on said subject, both National and State to date"

The Statements made in Senate Document No. 89 were thus made the official utterances of the State Officers in regard to the drainage of the Everglades.