

The Truth About Collier County

Barron Collier has owned Deep Lake Grove and Railway in Southern Lee County since April 1st, 1921.

He bought the G.W. ~~Stork~~ Storter and R.B. Storter property at Everglade the first of November 1921.

Hence he has had his development? under way a little over two years.

The latter part of 1921 he had consummated his purchase contract of a little over 600,000 acres from the Southern States Land and ~~Timber~~ Timber Co. and the Empire Land Co. which is a little over sixteen months ago

In Feb. 1922 he bought his location for his hunting and fishing camp from Mrs. J.M. Barfield.

At Everglade he has purchased practically all the individually owned property down to five individual owners ~~besides himself~~ of real estate within a radius of two miles, and at Caxambas he has bought out, is in process of buying, or has attempted to buy every property (Real Estate), these are the two locations of his mercantile businesses and he has no competition at either of these points having purchased all competing businesses.

Mrs. J.M. Barfield operates his Caxambas Hotel and is associated with him in preserving and canning fruits and jellies, Capt Geo. W. Storter is one of his Superintendants at Everglade, Mr. G.B. Eubanks one of his ~~competitors~~ former competitors in the mercantile business whom he has since bought out is now in Tallahassee, E.E. Damkohler owning boats employed by Mr. Collier is also in Tallahassee as is Mr. G.E. Rawls and a Mr. Watson from whom he is trying to buy certain real estate owned by them at Caxambas, Capt. Maynard now employed by Mr. Collier is also in Tallahassee in addition to a number of his New York Office force, all of whom are agitating or advocating the creation of Collier County.

Although there are only 18 voters at Everglade (9 actually residing at that point, the other 9 living on islands from three to fifteen miles from Everglade), there being no voters, owners of real estate living or residing on Deep Lake Railway (which is really a very bad tram-road with ties placed on top of ~~the~~ ground without grade almost its entire length and several townsites marked on the map presented to the committee of the House of Representatives) there is not a single ~~house~~ ~~or a shovel full of earth~~ for improvements or development between Deep Lake Terminal on Allen River to Deep Lake Grove, which by the way, is a grove that was once 200 acres and is in a very much run down condition at this time, as a matter of comparison a ten acre grove planted at Bonita Springs at the same time as Deep Lake Grove was planted has produced more boxes of fruit than has the 200 acre Deep Lake Grove both of these groves planted some twelve or thirteen years ago, this is the location that Barron Collier has the audacity to ask the Legislature to name as the County Seat on the strength of a petition signed by about five hundred people who are, or were visitors at Everglade, workmen (some negroes) and guests, boatmen and migratory visitors few of whom are even in the State of Florida at

this time, his petition was also signed by certian people at Caxambas a majority of whom have since expressed their desire that this county be not created, at Caxambas and adjacent islands there are thirty-seven voters and there are not fifteen individual owners of property except Mr. Collier at or near Caxambas (on the petition were names of residents at Immokalee which settlement was voted to go in proposed Hendry County) the eighteen voters at Evergalde and the approximate eighteen or twnty voters at Caxambas ~~xxxxxx~~ and about the same number at Marco, a total of not over seventy legal citizens (only a small part of whom own real estate) are the only legal authorities except Mr. Collier within or with-out the State of Florida who request the Legislature of Florida to create Collier County, or rather the signers of the petition are telling you that Mr. Collier should have a County for the reason that they have either sold their property to him or they expect to do so,

While Barron Collier has contracted to buy something like 650,000 acres of land at a gross cost to him of a little over a million Dollars and it is a fact that he has made certian partial payments on this acreage it is a further established fact that he does not own fifteen thousand acres of land nor anything like that acreage in proposed Collier County which is not encumbered by a mortgage in approximately two-thirds of the purchase price in other words, stating the matter in a different way he has not completed actually paying for over \$250,000 worth of ~~property~~ ^{land} within the boundries of the County which he has asked you to create for his sole benefit, and the people who think he deserves this county have less than a total tax value of \$40,000.00 on the tax books of Lee County Florida.

The Empire Land Co. owning about 300,000 acres of land in Lee County indorse his ownership of the County because they feel secure in the fact that the major part of this county will become a game preserve under a plan no doubt already formed and that they will be able to secure annually a fair interest on their present investment and the taxes there-on and that the natural increase of land value and more especially the sure increase of timber value will be more than profitable to them in a county which they can have controlled

The same reasoning applies to Burton and Swartz except that any reasoning man can understand that this firm would not indorse any plan that would drain their cypress timber land because it would destroy the value of their timber, consequently they must have a very decisive knowledge that no drainage will be done as has been promised by Mr. Collier. They KNOW they need have no fear.

The Consolidated Land Co. give endorsement to Collier County because they own a large amount of timber and naturally want to hold this timber as a part of a low-tax-value game preserve.

The above are Mr. Collier's claims and endorsements for a ~~new~~ new County.

In his two years ownership in Southern Lee County he has not built a single mile ~~nor a single yard~~ of hard surface road, has not made a single permanent improvement except some addition to several houses and the building of a half dozen more and the location of a 2X4

sawmill on the Allen River and digging a channel 6 feet deep, 30 feet wide a distance of about ^{one} and one-third mile so that light draft boats can haul the fruit from Deep Lake Grove and his yacht get up to the Rod and Gun Club owned by him at Everglade .

He has purchased about \$100,000.00 worth of ^{second} hand boats and as has been said before has not built a single mile of roads nor has he graded or surfaced a ~~single mile~~ of his tram-road.

In other words he has not in the past two years demonstrated his ability nor intentions to do a single thing that he now claims (or rather his paid attorney, Mr. R.A. Henderson Jr. claims') before the house and Senate Committee and that members of the House and Senate have been told by the Hon. W.A. McRae, Commissioner of Agriculture (Mr. Collier has not made a promise to any-one) nor will any one be able to get him to make a promise)

Why all this rush? The Legislature meets two years hence

He has had the contract for fifteen miles of the Tamiami Trail since July 5th, 1922, nearly a year, and there has been \$90,000.00 available for him to spend and he nor his Company have built a single foot of grade during this time. Does this look like he wants the Tamiami Trail? He does not want roads through this country laid out for a wonderful game preserve BUT he has advertised the service of a boat line from Tampa to Useppa (where he has a hotel, The Tarpon Inn) a day-light trip of one day, thence to Caxambas or Everglade (Mrs. Barfield operates his hotel at ~~Everglade and Caxambas~~ Caxambas and Capt. Geo. W. Storter or some-one else will operate his hotel at Everglade) and thence a third daylight run to Long Key Fish Camp, another stop over night and thence a 4th, day-light run to Miami.

Any thing

No he is not going to do anything but build a few more stopping places along the coast line of a wonderful game and fish preserve He has definitely said this is what he is going to do and he did NOT tell the House Committee who heard him nor did he make them a definite promise, in fact he evaded every question put to him except he said that he would build the Tamiami from Everglade to Miami and from Everglade to Fort Meyers . He did not say when nor how nor did he tell the committee the truth which is that the Tamiami Trail's location is three miles from Everglade, that it is 80% complete from a stand -point of distance constructed, more than 80% complete from the stand-point of time necessary to complete and fully 80% of the finances either spent or on hand on this Million Dollar project ~~which is not 5% of the entire cost when he has paid for same~~ of his total holdings in proposed Collier County ~~and is about three times the amount of the actual cash he has invested in real estate in his proposed county.~~

Instead of trying to get people to settle on his option^{al} land and purchases he is and has been buying from actual settlers and developers their holdings as fast as he can find money to purchase them .

Suppose he sits down and "hangs his feet over the rails" as he ~~has~~ has threatened to do , suppose he can't "control his county" as he has said he would control it and that he gets angry and he and his friends ~~so~~

~~They or don't pay their taxes~~

refuse or don't pay their taxes. It would be pretty tough luck on six or seven hundred good citizens of Florida who have invested their all in wonderful homes, beautiful groves, who have mortgaged their lands on the future of this wonderful section from Bonita Springs to Caxambas along which coast he only owns about one mile of coast line where magnificent sand beaches reach the beautiful blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Is the Legislature of Florida going to destroy the hopes dreams and ability of these people to develop a shore line which from the hand of God is one of Florida's most Magnificent sections to give to this one man and his whims or caprice an opportunity to establish a lot of fishing camps along the muddy shore line of the Mangrove swamps between Caxambas and Everglade, a section of Florida that is called "the misquithole" which from the shore line to four or more miles there-from has three times in the last fifteen years been covered with the waters from the sea to a depth of from three to five feet which shore line will be sure to become under Mr. Colleir's plan a retreat for the boot-legger and law-breaker, ~~a Florida Monte Carlo.~~

and General W.B. Haldeman of Louisville Ky

WHO COMPLAINS ? Over half the residents of Caxambas such men as T.C. Curry, and Mr. Goldie manager of the W.S. Burnam Clam Factory at that point, all the voters at Henderson Creek, the 77 voters and more than five hundred owners of beautiful properties at Naples, all the owners and voters of land between Naples and Bonita Springs on the blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico, who mortgaged their future in the hope that they would have a voice in what kind of a county government they preferred, and best for them, several times more than a majority of the voters of proposed Collier County, many of the m owning homes that have cost them from \$1000.00 to \$40,000.00 each. The Naples Improvement Co. who have in the past 8 years built ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ dug or opened more than twelve miles of channel from Gordon's Pass to Naples and from Gordon's Pass to Marco, purchased and paid for \$75,000.00 worth of road bonds on a 30% tax valuation to construct an automobile road from Ft. Meyers to Naples, five times more than Barron Collier has done or will ever do, one Man at Naples purchased, and paid \$300,000.00 cash and received title in fee without incumbrance on one piece of property. owes no mortgage on same now, Is the Legislature of Florida going to sell five or six hundred people to Barron Collier? are they going to discourage such men as H.H. Timkens, owner of the Timkins Roller Bearings Co. who has purchased and wants to build a \$50,000.00 home at Naples but who does not want to live in a one man county? Is the word and advice of Thomas A. Edison ~~xxxx~~ of Orange N.J. and Henry Ford of Dearborn Mich. worth any thing to the Legislature of Florida when ~~the~~ they wire and request that this county be not created? when the man who attempt to create this county has as his only reason that he wants to make a game and fish preserve of the 600,000 acres of land and water which he has purchased on credit and establish a few hunting and fishing camps and run a boat line from Uzeppa to Everglades etc, etc connecting no doubt with Bimini and Cuba.

From seven to ten thousand people at Fort Meyers are protesting against the attitude of their State Senator and Representative in proposing to create this county and who offer to put the combined resources of the tax value exceeding \$7,000,000.00 behind bonds to build main arterial highways (The Tamiami Trail is one of these) build high school buildings at Ft. Meyers pay \$10.00 per month for the upkeep of each student attending this high school from the further-most parts of the

county = *Why this Rush -*

THE REASONS WHY COLLIER COUNTY SHOULD NOT BE CREATED BY
THE LEGISLATURE OF 1923.

- First. The creation of Collier County was not an issue.
- Second. This matter should not be considered by the Legislature until it has been first submitted to the voters of the area to be created into a county at a regular Primary Election.
- Third. The tax value of the proposed county will be \$1,471,710.00 and the area will have to assume a bonded indebtedness of over \$200,000. (\$125,000 of special road District No 3. Bonds and approximately half of Road District no 1 outstanding bonds of \$177,500.00 making a total of \$200,000.00 or more.) these are special road Bonds and there is no way to avoid this debt, thus it will be seen that this proposed County will have to assume a debt of nearly 15% of its Tax value, and Bonds issued above that amount will not bring par.
- Fourth. The promise has been by those who will control Collier County if created that a road from Everglade to Immokalee will be built and its estimated cost will be surely not less than \$300,000.00 (this is a distance of forty miles.)
- Fifth. The promise has been made that the Tamiami Trail will be completed by County Bonds and the cost will be around two hundred thousand dollars thus to do these two things it will require a bonded indebtedness of more than \$700,000.00 and bonds would not be salable nor good security.
- Sixth. The population would be considerably less than a thousand.
- Seventh. There would be less than two ^{hundred} thousand voters in the proposed area (With Hendry County created on their Primary pledges and recognized lines.)
- Eighth. The county seat would be at Everglade where there are only ten registered voters and only eight in a radius of fifteen miles, and at a point where there are only seven land owners within a radius of two miles, Everglade is really an Island separated from the main land by Allens River and Halfway creek.