

CREATION OF COLLIER COUNTY FROM OLD LEE
WAS HISTORIC STEP

Collier County encompasses slightly more than one-third of the area formerly occupied by Lee County. Before the division of Lee County it was the largest county in area lying easterly of the Mississippi river. For many years the territory in what is now Collier County was largely owned by various land companies and these companies had never taken any joint or separate action for the development of the area or of its resources.

Barron Collier conceived the idea of devoting himself to the tremendous task of developing this territory. The first step was to acquire the land. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land were acquired prior to 1922 and the foundation laid for the development that is now in progress.

This territory contained perhaps the largest untouched bodies of virgin pine and cypress timber in Florida if not in the nation. Lee County had the longest sea coast of any county in the state, on which was found some ports capable of intensive development and a part of these were included territory was known and referred to as America's "Last Frontier."

For many years the construction of the Tamiami Trail and the linking of the East and West Coasts of Florida had been discussed and although slight progress had been made thereon, seemed almost as far from realization as at the time of the inception of such a program many years therefore.

The Collier holdings paid the great bulk of the taxes in the southern part of Lee County. Mr. Collier recognized that if he was to be successful in the speedier, more economical and complete development of the territory, more efficient administration of tax funds and be secure in a program of the reclamation and development of this territory, that there must be created a political subdivision that would be friendly and not antagonistic to this enterprise.