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Coral Gables, Florida  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI STUDIO

Introducing DR. CHARLES TORREY SIMPSON by PROF. H. A. GILBERT

I am to talk a little while this morning about the trees of Florida, the native trees and, more especially, about those which live within the area which we hope will be included in the proposed Everglades National Park.

Florida is exceedingly rich in trees. We have not yet worked out our entire flora but I believe we will find that we have at least 400 species of trees wild in the state.

Away back about the beginning of Pleistocene time we had a great glacial epoch, the northern part of the world covered with ice. This great cap reached down in North America to the Ohio and Missouri rivers, which proved its extreme southern boundary line. Under that cap everything was destroyed. All living forms occupying that region were entirely killed or driven to the south. Undoubtedly vegetation of Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania in 40-41 parallel latitude was driven down into the peninsula of the state of Florida.

When the cold weather was over and normal conditions returned, these trees and plants migrated back to their old homes and the previous order took place.

About sixty different species of cool temperate trees remained in the state of Florida and I think they showed extremely good taste.

We have of those sixty different species of trees at least four and possibly five species in the proposed Everglades National park area. They are (*morus rubra*) the red mulberry; (*cephalanthus occidentalis*) button bush; (*acer rubrum*) red maple; (*magnolia glauca*) swamp bay magnolia. The (*salix nigra*) black willow, may reach into the park area.

At the beginning of the Tertiary the Atlantic washed the eastern base of the Appalachians but since that time there has been a slow upheaval and an accumulation of sediment which constitutes the great atlantic and gulf penneplain. It now extends from southern New Jersey south, including Florida and west to beyond the Mississippi.

In this region developed a wonderful collection of plants, the long leafed pine flora. In that area a large number of trees almost or quite peculiar to that region came into existance, such as long leafed pine, magnolia, sweet gum, holly, bay trees and many others. 18 species of these warm temperate trees which fill the south today are found in the proposed Everglades National Park.

During the rainy season a great number of seeds of trees in western Cuba are washed into streams, carried out into the sea, caught up by Gulf stream, swept eastward. In forty-eight hours, especially if wind is from the west, they are opposite the lower end of Florida. Then there is a series of high tides here every fall, beginning the last of August, lasting through September and October, one or two feet higher than ordinarily. They carry the seeds in and deposit them on land naturally high and dry. Nearly all these seeds are from western Cuba.

I walked across the end of this great island in one day, and I saw almost every tree growing wild which we have here in lower Florida.

I understand that a part of Key Largo and Lignum Vitae Keys are included in the proposed Everglades National Park. I am very glad because on these islands are many fine trees and plants not found at all on the mainland. This opens out onto the outer reef opposite Key Largo, where there are some of the finest marine gardens we have. This will be a very great addition if we get this in with the Park.

Florida is rich in palms. There is a difference in opinion as to the validity of two or three. However, there are at least 16 species growing wild within the state. At least 13 of these grow within the limits of the proposed National Park. (*Accelorrapphe wrightii*) a lovely palm, grows in these lower Glades, the stems sometimes towering 30 feet high, and forming great clumps often 50 feet across.

The Royal is the king of palms. Nothing that grows out of the earth is more stately. It is found in several places on the south and west coasts. This palm grows in greatest numbers in the present Royal Palm State Park. This State Park is included within the area of the proposed Everglades National Park. There are considerable numbers of the Royal palm along the south shore of the mainland.

If the Royal palm is the king of palms, the coconut is the queen. They are two of the most magnificent palms on this globe.

The Royal palm is stately. The coconut is the embodiment of grace.

The Miami region is excessively rich in trees. By a rough estimate, it is impossible to be absolutely certain but I think that within ten miles of the center of the city of Miami we have had at least 140 species of trees and large shrubs growing wild. No other state in the Union has anything like so many as grow in Florida. The great state of Texas, more than four times the size of Florida, has nothing like so many. We are away ahead right in Miami. Florida can challenge all the states for number of species of trees growing wild.

In our little home and within a few rods of it I have found growing wild no less than 90 species of wild trees and large shrubs. Coconuts were not there when I came. During storms a number of nuts were washed in, sprouted, and grew up and became trees.

According to Prof. Sargent there are about 86 species of trees native in Illinois, my native state. So we have had here on an area of not more than 25 acres a greater variety of arboreal forms of plant life than in that great state. Think of it! It makes me feel very proud of Florida.

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NOTE: Dr. Charles Torrey Simpson is author of "In Lower Florida Wilds". He vividly portrays the region covered by the proposed Everglades National Park. This book is published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

The others of this series are:

THE EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK -  
Ernest F. Coe, Chairman Tropic Everglades Park Assn.  
THE BIRDS OF SOUTH FLORIDA - Mr. Harold Bailey  
THE SEMINOLE - Dr. John C. Gifford  
INSECTS AND THEIR RELATION TO FLOWERS -  
Prof. H. A. Gilbert and Dr. E. Morton Miller

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Reprint of these addresses may be obtained at the office of The Tropic Everglades National Park Association.