# Everglades Drainage Not a Dream

## Two Practical Men Who Saw Its Possibilities Twenty-five Years Apart and Said the Same Things About Them

When Hannibal, 200 years before Christ, saw the Alps standing between his army and the rich plains and spoil laden cities of Italy, he did the seemingly impossible thing, led his army across them.

When Napoleon, another man who could see things, saw in his turn, 1900 years later, the same Alps separating HIS half starved, poorly clad army from the spoil laden cities of the same Italy, HE performed the seemingly impossible feat of crossing the Alps, even in the dead of winter.

Given two men with the capacity to grasp what lies before them and place them in position to see the same thing, and they are DEAD SURE TO SAY THE SAME THING about it and to undertake the SAME MEANS to accomplish the SAME OBJECT.

James M. Kreamer, engineer and man of affairs, who had the good fortune to hold the friendship and the confidence of capitalists, chief among whom was Hamilton Disston, made an investigation of the Everglades country, grasped the possibilities of development, and in a pamphlet bearing date June 3, 1881, addressed to the Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Co., of Florida, capital $10,000,000, said:

"Taking into consideration the great quantity and quality of lands that are to accrue to this company by providing an outlet to Lake Okeechobee—the ownership and exclusive control of a line of inland steam navigation for 300 miles—the large land grant attaching to the canal—the Directors confidently recommend the present issue of shares and accompanying land certificates as possessing not only a safe and sure investment, but offering probabilities of greater returns in the future than any enterprise that has been brought before the public for years."

Napoleon B. Broward, Governor of Florida, by virtue of being able to see and present to the people the possibilities of the development of this great area; went over, in 1905, the same ground that James M. Kreamer went over in 1881, saw the same thing that Kreamer saw, and used almost identically the same language that was used by the engineer. Kreamer had his training in colleges and universities and a practical training in the field. Broward received his training solely in the school of practice. Both of these men had minds developed sufficiently to be able to grasp the situation presented to their eyes. Kreamer said, in 1881, in the pamphlet above referred to:

'Lake Okeechobee, situate about the centre of this 8,000,000-acre tract, is upwards of 40 miles in length by 25 miles in width, or covering an area of over 1,000 square miles. It has no outlet, but receives the drainage of a number of lakes intercepted by the Kissimmee River, also the waters of Fish Eating, Taylor's and Mosquito Creeks, which vary from 20 to 150 feet in width. During very heavy falls of rain this lake rises to such a point as to not only overflow its banks, but to cause the waters of the rivers to be backed up, so that the country becomes submerged until the waters find the ocean and gulf through the tortuous and inefficient channels of widely separated streams. It is proposed to provide against these periodical overflows by the opening of canals from Okeechobee to the St. Lucie (on the Atlantic) and Caloosahatchee (on the gulf) Rivers that will not only PERMANENTLY LOWER THE LEVEL OF THE LAKE, but at all times furnish a safe outlet to the gulf and ocean for the waters of the lake and confluent streams. * * * * The vast territory included in and south of the Halpatiokee Flats is described as possessing remarkable productive powers and is PARTICULARLY ADAPTED TO THE CULTIVATION OF SUGAR CANE, which may be considered as a measure of the fertility of the fertility of the soil, as it is grown without rotation, and one of the most exhaustive crops known.

"The choice sugar lands of Louisiana are rated at from $100 to $150 per acre, similar in character to those just described, which mature the cane to perfection, and are located below the frost line.

"The terms of the contract with the Board of Internal Improvement of the State of Florida give to this company one-half of all the land reclaimed by the lowering of the waters of Lake Okeechobee."

Broward, after investigating by personal inspection on two different occasions, said:

"Lake Okeechobee is 21 feet above tide water. Fed by the streams which are swollen by the rains, this lake at different periods overflows its banks and spills the water contained in it over an area approximating 8,000,000 acres. By cutting canals from Lake Okeechobee to the sea the waters of Lake Okeechobee can be lowered so that these periodical overflows will not take place and these eight millions of acres can, by a system of cross ditches leading into the main drainage canals, be reclaimed for cultivation. The lands are similar in character to the Louisiana cane lands and are peculiarly adapted to the raising of sugar cane."

Kreamer said in 1881: "Lake Okeechobee can be lowered by cutting a canal to the St. Lucie River."

Broward, in 1906, said: "Okeechobee can be lowered by cutting a series of canals, one to the St. Lucie River, one to New River, and others to the South."

Kreamer, in 1881, said: "The import duties on sugar for manufacturing purposes from the year 1847 to 1879 varied from 2 3-4 to 4 cents per pound. We paid out for sugar and allied products, during this period, $1,800,000,000. Our western mines produced $1,700,000,000, or in other words, during a period of 32 years, as a nation, we paid out in round numbers $100,000,000 IN EXCESS OF THE TOTAL OUTPUT IN BULLION OF OUR FAMED BONANZAS OF THE WEST, FOR AN ARTICLE OF CONSUMPTION EVERY POUND OF WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN PRODUCED FROM THE SOIL OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA."

Broward said in 1895:

"Then let us look at the agricultural reports of the United States. What do they show? They show that we consume in the United States 2,767,162 tons of sugar per annum. The statistics show that the total amount of sugar produced in the United States from domestic molasses is 15,000 tons; sugar cane, 232,649 tons; maple, 12,000 tons; beet, 170,135 tons; making a grand total of 521,095 tons. Imported sugar, 2,246,068 tons.

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| Domestic sugar, valued at $.03 1-2 per pound. | $ 36,476,640.00 |
| Imported sugar, valued at $.03 1-2 per pound. | 157,224,760.00 |

"Imported sugar more than equals all of the following exports, which last year amounted to:

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| Wheat | $ 47,446,921.00 |
| Wheat flour | 3,905,579.00 |
| Naval stores | 18,106,641.00 |
| Beef | 34,858,857.00 |
| Total | $144,494,154.00 |

"This is $12,730,606 less than the value of sugar brought in from foreign countries. The same papers will say, 'But what about it? We know that statement is true.' Every one that knows anything about sugar cane knows that South Florida is the home of the sugar cane in the United States. A half million acres of the Florida Everglades will produce cane enough to supply the entire amount of sugar imported here from foreign countries, without being in competition with any other cane growers in Florida, or in fact in competition with any other cane growers in the United States, until we had produced more than the total amount imported, which amount exceeds by more than twelve million dollars the amount now received by the citizens of every State in the Union, for exports of corn, flour, wheat beef, and naval stores, and, as is understood by sugar experts and others who have investigated sugar cane growing and manufacturing, to be able to economically produce sugar, the cane must be near enough to the mill, so that it can be placed in cars by machinery, run into the mill on one side as cane, and go out at the other side as granulated sugar, and the supply of cane must be great enough to furnish not less than three hundred tons per day. In the Everglades we have millions of acres of land without a tree or root upon it, that is as rich as any in the world, and millions of acres suitable for cane, where it can be grown in solid bodies to meet the requirements for sugar manufacturing. To clear and make fit for cultivation a half million acres in any other part of the United States, would require from fifteen to thirty million dollars."

To show that Mr. James M. Kreamer, engineer and man of affairs, who saw the possibilities of the Everglades country and who described them in almost the identical words used by Gov. Broward, was not an impracticable dreamer, and in order to shut off criticism which might be raised, and to satisfy all questioners who would come at this proposition with the questions, "How do we know that these things could be done as Kreamer said? Why should we accept his statements?" A little more from the pamphlet issued by Kreamer in 1881 is quoted. Mr Kreamer said:

"This company has acquired by purchase the franchise of the Atlantic Coast Steamboat, Canal & Improvement Co., for the construction of a canal suitable for commodious light-draught steamboats, commencing at the St. Johns River, extending thence in a southerly direction, connecting Pablo Creek, San Diego, Matanzas, Halifax and Hillsboro Rivers, Mosquito Lagoon, Indian River, St. Lucie Sound, Jupiter River and Lake Worth; thus affording nearly 330 miles of continuous navigable inland waters, lying adjacent to and generally parallel with the east coast of Florida."

That canal, at this writing, HAS BEEN DUG, with the exception of a nine-mile strip from the head of the North River to Pablo Creek. The only thing in the way of realizing Kreamer's prediction, made a quarter of a century ago, IS THE DIGGING OF THAT NINE-MILE STRIP OF CANAL, AND THE DREDGING OF PABLO CREEK. This shows that J. M. Kreamer was not a dreamer and if a prediction made by him twenty-five years ago has been so nearly fulfilled, it is reasonable to suppose that Mr. Kreamer's judgment was equally sound on the matter of Everglades drainage.

Gov. Broward now goes a little further than did Col. Kreamer twenty-five years ago. In explaining the plan for canals for Everglades drainage he shows that these canals will open up the whole of the southern peninsula of Florida to water transportation to the north all the way to Jacksonville. The St. Lucie cut will connect Lake Okeechobee with the canal along the East Coast. Steamboats NOW PLY through the drainage canal connecting Lake Okeechobee with Lake Hickpochee, and from Lake Hickpochee to the head of the Caloosahatchee River and down the Caloosahatchee to the gulf. This system of canals is built to the St. Lucie cut proposed by the present Trustees, and a similar cut connecting North River with Pablo Creek will connect ALL OF THE WEST COAST OF FLORIDA WITH ALL OF THE EAST COAST OF FLORIDA, and will bring about water transportation across the State and up and down almost its entire coast line. It will not be many months now before the feasibility of the drainage plan proposed by the Trustees will be tested. The dredge "Everglade" floated up New River the early part of this week, and commenced eating its way across the 23 miles of mud which separates New River from Lake Okeechobee. The work has begun and all that the critics will have to do will be to possess their souls in patience for they will soon see the actual accomplishment of the thing which they pronounce a wild dream.

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1 S. Monroe St., Tallahassee, Fla.
Fort Lauderdale, Fla., July 4,
Via Jacksonville.
Claude L"Engle, Tallahassee, Fla.--
First dredge is digging mud.
N. B. BROWARD.