

Tracking Through Florida : Florida's Railroads

Background



In the late 1800's, entrepreneurs like Hamilton Disston, Henry B. Plant, William Chipley, and Henry M. Flagler built railways across Florida, creating many historic places in and forging some of the vacation culture that surrounds the state of Florida. Railroads have left a lasting impact on Florida for industry, travel, and culture. Many of the railroad lines have changed over the years, making the connections between historic places and the spirit of the railroad harder to see despite their lasting impact.

Exploring Florida's Railroads

First, explore Tampa in the *Ephemeral Cities* interface, following these steps.

- Open the *Ephemeral Cities* webpage with a browser: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/epc/>
- Then, on the "Browse by City" view, click on the city name.
- On the next page, select a year.
- Within the *Ephemeral Cities* interface, use the map or the right-side search field to search by building use and find buildings related to railroads and find their location in the city.

With the *Ephemeral Cities* interface still open for further searching, also search *Florida Ephemera* for materials related to the Florida Railroads in Key West.

- Open the *Florida Ephemera* collection by going to the webpage for the collection: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/UFDC/?s=flep>.
- Then, enter text in the search box to search the collection.

Activity



In groups, search for materials related to Henry Plant's railroads and surrounding industries like hotels using *Ephemeral Cities* and the *Florida Ephemera* collections and discuss the following questions.

- What did you find?
- Where are your findings located?
- Are the places found in these records of the past still present on a current map (like Google Maps or Yahoo Maps)? What is still present, what isn't, and what has moved?
- What goods are associated with the railroads?
- How do the photographs, advertisements, and other materials for the railroads also shape the image of Florida as a vacation destination? As a tropical paradise? How else do the materials shape the image of Florida?

Then, search another city and another key railroad developer to discuss the development of railroads in cities in Florida and the development of Florida through those railroads.