

WHAT THEY ARE DOING AT VERO

ENGINEERING NOTES.

Resident Engineer R. P. Hayes did a fast piece of bridge building when the floating dredge "Panama," which is throwing a dike around the north half of the Indian River Farm Company's tract, crossed the Ft. Drum road. This road being a United States mail route, had to be kept open for traffic. Mr. Hayes had the bridge timbers all prepared, and as soon as the dredge passed through the road they were thrown into place and by night the forty-five foot bridge was ready for use.

About 108,000 cubic yards of excavation in March brings the grand total up to 800,000 cubic yards. Only a mile and a half section of the main canal remains to be cut and by June first it will be completed. Excavator No. 11 is due to start north on Lateral A about April 15. With the breaking of the dam at the junction of the main canal and the range line canal being cut by the floating dredge 4½ miles of canal were opened. The profiles are all in and bids will soon be asked for on Laterals B, C, D and R and 100 miles of sublaterals.

A townsite has been staked out at Oslo Station.

The Florida East Coast Railway has extended its water tank intake to the lower pool of the spillway, where there will be an abundant supply of water to keep the tank filled at all times.

A mile and a half of road has been finished on top of the main canal spoil bank.

The company has now completed 1,200 feet of concrete sidewalk, curb and gutter in the Vero townsite.

Work on the concrete house being erected by the company at Vero is progressing rapidly, and it will be ready for occupancy about June 1.

J. HILL.

J. J. Roberts came to Vero twelve years ago and purchased twenty acres of land on the sand ridge a mile from town, paying \$6.50 an acre for it.

Today, with an eight-acre orange and grape fruit grove on his farm, he values it at \$40,000 and is not anxious to sell, even at that price. Three years ago, when his oldest trees were only nine years of age, he refused an offer of \$23,000 for the place.

This year Mr. Roberts received \$4,192 for his five acres of grape fruit and has a good many boxes left to sell at high prices when the season grows late.

Although enjoying an independent income from his eight-acre grove, Mr. Roberts is setting out more trees on his home place and has purchased forty acres on the Indian River Farms Company's tract, where he will establish another grove.

Guests at Sleepy Eye Lodge can now obtain a drink of artesian water without walking to the flowing well half a block distant. The well has been connected with the hotel reservoir, providing a water system at absolutely no expense. An inch and a quarter pipe attached to the well will maintain a four-foot water level in the big tank above the hotel and furnish enough water to supply the house as well as for sprinkling purposes. The hotel water supply has been drawn from a shallow well by a gasoline engine. A good sized flow continues from the artesian well and those who prefer to drink the water as it comes from the ground can do so as in the past.

Fred W. Hamley has completed a house and barn on his forty-acre farm six miles southwest of Vero. He has four acres of flourishing tomatoes and is preparing to set out a grove. Mr. Hamley is a Toledo business man who came to Florida in February for his health. On his way south he heard of Vero and decided to go there. He was so attracted by the Indian River Farms Company's land that he purchased forty acres and began at once to improve it.

"If I should never make a cent on my land I will consider my investment a good one, says Mr. Hamley. "I have been more than repaid for every cent I have spent by the improvement in my health and the pleasure I have obtained from developing my place. However, I expect it to yield me a good financial return, too, and I believe it was a lucky day for me when I first heard of Vero."

"I believe there is more money to be made here in stock raising than any other way," says N. O. Penny, who has long been one of Vero's most successful fruit growers. "Cattle and hogs would both yield big returns to the man who goes into the business properly. In no other section of the United States can so many kinds of feed be grown so cheaply. The expense of providing shelter does not come into consideration because none is needed. Feed crops can be kept growing during the entire year and they produce prolific yields. It would not be wise to bring northern or western cattle to Florida and expect them to do well at once and the best results would probably be obtained by crossing good breeds with native cattle. But there is no doubt that cattle which are acclimated can be fattened successfully here and at a big profit. The same is true of hogs. If I had any experience with stock I should not hesitate to engage in the business on a large scale."

Winter haymaking is one of the unusual sights seen by the newcomer at Vero. Florida hay grows all the year 'round and may be cut at any time.

Haymaking was in progress on the Indian River Farms Company's demonstration farm early in March for the second time this year. A crop of Para grass was cut and stored in the barn for feed. A previous crop had been cut from a part of the land in January and the first crop was taken from the remainder.

Para grass is probably the best of the numerous hay crops that the land at Vero is capable of producing. It yields as much as twenty-four tons of hay to the acre and in the spring and summer can be cut once a month. The growth is not so rapid during the winter. Para grass rivals timothy in feeding qualities and its rapid and prolific growth makes it particularly desirable for the small farmer who does not desire to devote much ground to growing hay for feeding his stock.

After spending most of the winter at Vero, Fred M. Crane, who has the contract for the north drainage project, departed for his home in Council Bluffs, Iowa, March 18. He was accompanied by Mrs. Crane, their son, Ward, and niece, Miss Catherine Crane. Before leaving Mr. Crane made a number of improvements at his cottage, which is occupied by Mr. Frank Higgins, his superintendent. Cocconut trees, rose bushes and other shrubbery were set out in the lawn and a cement walk was built out to the sidewalk.

Not only does Vero have the promise of a prosperous future as a result of the development work being done by the Indian River Farms Company, but she is the possessor of a most interesting past.

A never-failing source of interest, especially to newcomers, are the shell mounds opposite Vero on the strip of land that separates the Indian river from the ocean. At this point is located the burying place of a prehistoric race of people, concerning whom local tradition tells nothing. Even the Indians can throw no light on the subject. An anthropologist should be able to find a fruitful field here.

But a small amount of digging is required to uncover the remains of the race that once had their being along the Florida coast, and selected this as one of the places to deposit their dead. Many of the skulls are in a fair state of preservation, but only fragments remain of most of the other bones. The skulls are of the Indian type and the teeth are ground flat, indicating that they subsisted largely on grain. The huge piles of oyster, mussel and clam shells near the burying mounds show the source of a part of their food supply. Tons of the shells have been hauled away for surfacing roads and tons more remain.

A few articles of baked pottery have been found among the skeletons and a stone zelt or kind of hunting knife was dug up not long ago. No other stone like that from which the zelt was fashioned now exists south of Canada.

The vicinity of Vero offers as interesting a field for the geologist as for the anthropologist. In cutting the main canal near the spillway the dredge bucket uncovered a veritable mine of geological remains, even older than the prehistoric men who lie buried on the opposite side of the river. I. M. Wild, a Vero man, has collected a large number of these bones. Some of them he forwarded to the state geologist at Tallahassee, who identified them as the remains of an elephant, a mastodon, an animal similar to the sloth and a lizard-like reptile, remains of which have been discovered in South America. All of them lived in the latter Paleozoic age, the last of the geological ages. The strangest feature of Mr. Wild's find was his discovery of a bone from a bird's wing and a deer horn mixed with the other remains. At another place Mr. Wild dug up several mastodon vertebrae and others have been found at the same place. He expects to continue his investigations and will make an effort to have the state geologist go to Vero for a personal inspection of the strange forms of animal life which formerly inhabited this part of Florida.

J. HILL.

Dr. E. E. Rollins was up from Fort Pierce Monday to examine candidates for the new Ben Hur Court organized here last week. By starting with a membership of 50 this court will receive a free set of officers' regalia.

E. B. Walker sold his fruit crop to a St. Louis concern this week, receiving \$2.75 a box for grapefruit and \$2.00 a box for oranges.

Prospects for a big fruit crop in this vicinity were never better than they are at present. Growers say they have never seen the trees so full of bloom. Fears that they would be affected by the dry weather were dissipated by the heavy rains of Saturday and Sunday, which also proved a great blessing to the vegetable growers.

J. M. Jones has received notice of his appointment as postmaster at Vero and he will succeed J. L. Knight in the office as soon as his commission arrives.

The easiest money made this year by J. L. Knight, who conducts a general store at Vero, was from his grapefruit grove. Mr. Knight received \$765 for the crop from 88 trees, covering a little less than an acre. He sold his fruit was \$2.12½ a box on the trees, which means that the purchaser picked, packed and shipped them. Mr. Knight's grove is eight years old and it now requires practically no attention.

N. O. Penny has 1,500 boxes of late grapefruit in his grove at Vero, for which he expects to receive from \$5 to \$7 a box. They will be ready to ship in June. Mr. Penny makes a specialty of off-season fruit and he has to his credit an early shipment of 100 boxes, which brought him \$556. Three acres of five-year-old grapefruit trees in Mr. Penny's grove were so full of bloom this spring that he is counting on 2,000 boxes from them next year.

W. T. Humiston has returned to his home in Cleveland, Ohio, after spending several weeks in Vero and will come back in the fall to begin developing a 120-acre tract purchased from the Indian River Farms Company. Mr. Humiston is associated with his father in the operation of large farms in Ohio and New Jersey. He is strongly impressed with the agricultural possibilities of this section and expects to engage in stock raising.

A quick piece of bridge building was performed here last week when the floating dredge, which is building a dike around the north half of the Indian River Farms Company tract, crossed the Fort Drum road. The bridge frame was put together before the dredge started to cross the road Friday morning, and by night it was open for traffic.

Eli Walker surprised Vero a few days ago by driving through town in a new automobile.

Mr. Walker's little gray pony and high buggy have long been one of the familiar sights in Vero and they are known to almost everybody who has visited the Indian River Farms Company's lands. Although about every other fruit grower in the vicinity drives an automobile, Mr. Walker declared that a horse and buggy were good enough for him. But when the company completed a hard road all the way to his farm, he succumbed, and the gray pony is now for sale.

C. V. Post of St. Louis has moved into his new house on his Vero farm. Mr. Post is a confirmed bachelor, but this did not deter him from building a house and moving onto his farm. W. E. Patton of Bedford, Ind., and J. F. Wycoff of Davenport, Ia., who own adjoining farms, are living with him.

Among the recent improvements at the company's demonstration farm are a new help house, which will house two families.

J. T. Mayfield has started development work on his forty acres four miles west of Vero. Mr. Mayfield will return to his home at Tulsa, Okla., soon to arrange to bring his family to Vero to reside.