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***Land into Water – Water into Land: A History of Water
Management in Florida* by Nelson Manfred Blake**

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Particular attention was given to the construction of the fabled Don CeSar Hotel and some of the prominent guests who stayed there during the thirties. The guest register of the Depression Era included such names as Clarence Darrow, Walter Mayo, Henry Doherty, Senator Harry Byrd, and F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. The hotel remained solvent through the depression attesting to the popularity of the gulf beaches in spite of the economic disaster that gripped the nation. World War II was a busy time on the islands as men camped on the beaches and the Don CeSar was taken over by the government to house troops. Eventually it became a convalescent hospital and later, after the war, the VA Administrative Center for the west coast of Florida.

After World War II, there was a boom as servicemen returned home and remembered the time spent, however brief, on the gulf coast. Many returned to live in Pinellas County and some, of course, on the sun drenched islands. The postwar boom created a new demand for waterfront living, and the result was a new era of dredge and fill. The more recent history of the beaches is developed thoroughly but is less interesting, particularly for those of us that have lived through the condominium era. His monograph certainly merits the attention of any serious scholar of local history, and those interested in a good story.

Ken Ford

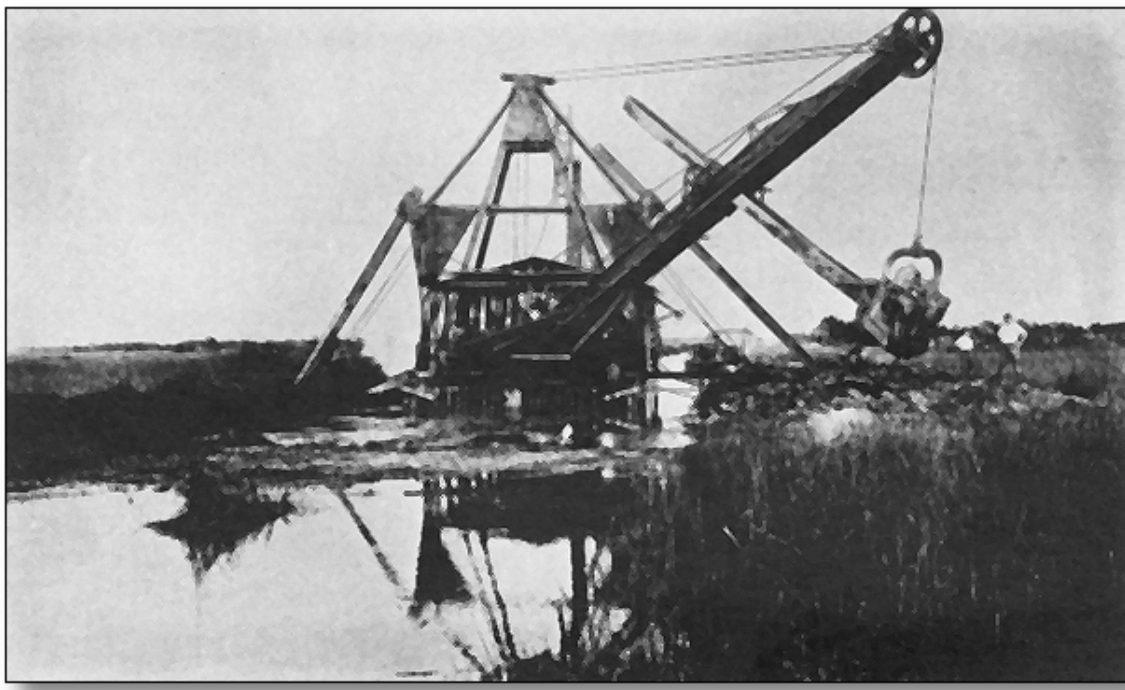
Land into Water – Water into Land: A History of Water Management in Florida. By Nelson Manfred Blake. Tallahassee, 1980. The University Presses of Florida. Pp. 344.

The growing concern about the natural environment of Florida and in particular its water resources has generated a number of studies. *Land into Water – Water into Land* provides an informative historical perspective on the management of water resources of the state. The title of the book refers to the ubiquitous developer's dream of dredge and fill operations in forging ahead in the name of progress.

According to the author, the book was written to answer a number of questions pertaining to the management of the state's water resources: "How did Florida get this way? Why and when were the waterways, canals, and the ditches dug? Why and when were the swamplands drained? What visions of progress danced before the eyes of the settlers and influenced the early politicians? What dreams of profit impelled succeeding generations of businessmen to concoct vast schemes for cutting up the landscape? [And] why did the shifting goals of the populace – private aggrandizement, agricultural expansion, reclamation, flood control, conservation, environmentalism – favor a certain public policy at one time and quite different ones during later periods?"

In coming to grips with these questions many important government reports have been used as well as outstanding books on the subject such as Carter's *The Florida Experience*. A number of maps and photographs of landscapes aid in comprehending the topic.

The twelve chapters take the reader from a discussion of the early perceptions settlers had of the state, to the beginnings of planning and development of canals and other waterways and to early outside investors in land and water projects (ch. 4).



Dredging the Tamiami Trail in 1921.

Photograph from *Land Unto Water-Water Unto Land*.

In the 1890s the first major challenge to “Florida Boosterism” so prevalent among state officials, developers, and speculators is described. Much of the book is given over to a discussion of the management of the Everglades. In addition, the Cross-Florida Canal is extensively covered. Also of special interest to Tampa Bay residents is the discussion of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (Swiftmud) and the Green Swamp.

The author properly emphasizes the leading positive role Florida began to play in the environmental field with the passage of a series of progressive environmental laws in 1972. These bills were the Florida Water Resources Act, the Florida Environmental Land and Water Management Act, the State Comprehensive Planning Act, and the Land Conservation Act. In addition, the author ably covers two familiar resource themes: the constant struggle between developers and preservationists and the structural and non-structural approaches to the management of land and water resources.

The last chapter of the book reviews the period up to the mid-1970s. The present use of water is covered, the nature of the State Water Plan as reflected in the five district plans is discussed, and the growing concern of water quality is portrayed. The book ends on the upbeat notion that Floridians may have learned from past resource management experiences to the extent that it is really better to cooperate with nature than to look upon it as another enemy to be conquered.

Roland C. Holmes