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***Sun, Sand and Water: A History of the Jacksonville District, U.S.
Army Corps of Engineers* by George E. Buker**

Harry J. Schaleman Jr.
University of South Florida

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A map of Florida appears on the front and back covers. Geographic and political details are provided only for south Florida, and even here the information is inadequate. Of the thirty-seven forts listed in the text only eight appear on the maps. Two of the seventeen rivers are identified. The Seminole reserve, set aside in 1842 for the Florida Indians, is not delineated, a crucial omission. Only the more informed reader could follow this narrative without outside geographic aid.

Despite these limitations, Covington's book fills a void in Florida history. Not only will those interested in Florida history want to become acquainted with it, but also those devoted to American military history, for this study adds its might to the national military development.

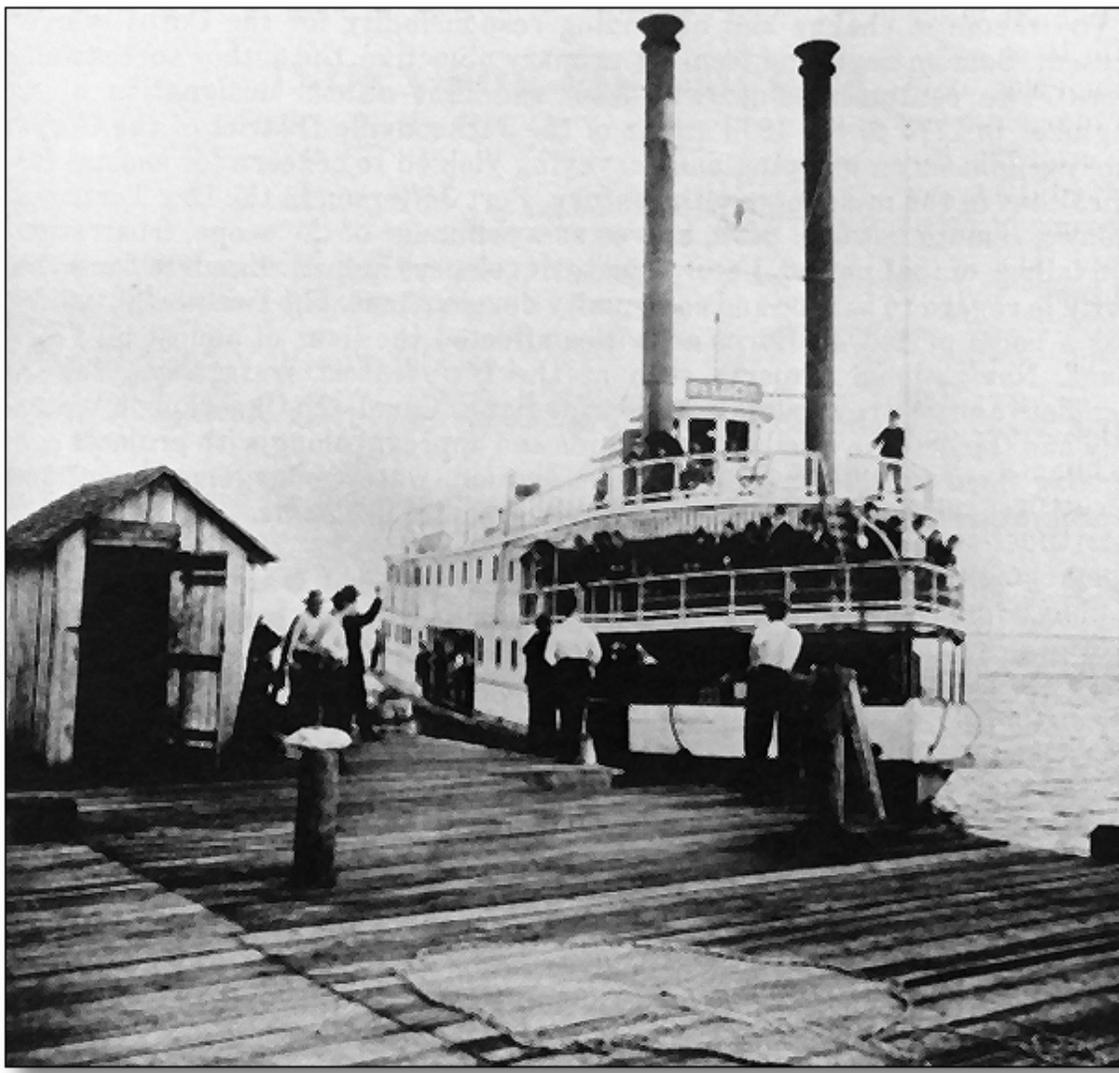
George E. Buker

Sun, Sand and Water: A History of the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. By George E. Buker. Jacksonville. n.d. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 288. Cloth. \$10.00.

Not only has George Buker masterfully captured the color, scope, and evolution of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1821 to 1975, but also has provided the historical and geographical framework so necessary for a study of this kind. The book, well-organized into fifteen chapters, reflects thoughtful research, articulate expression, and attractive graphics. An excellent bibliography, appropriate index and footnotes, as well as two appendices more than compensate for the few misspellings in this interestingly presented work.

The early history of the Corps is inextricable with that of Florida, linking numerous personalities, both familiar and obscure. James Gadsden, more noted for his Mexican activities and famed Gadsden Purchase, is recognized as a significant contributor to early Florida history and Corps development. On occasion, the author infuses such realism into his characterizations that the reader senses a loss when the figure fades from the Corps story. An excellent example is the analysis of Dr. Abel Baldwin's lengthy, aggressive, but futile, struggle to gain acceptance for his plan to enhance the port status of Jacksonville by solving the problem of shifting stream channels at the mouth of the St. Johns River.

The theme of change and expanding responsibility for the Corps is ever present. Seldom deviating from his primary objective, the author successfully traces two centuries of growth from the first official designation of an engineer in 1775 to the 1975 status of the Jacksonville District of the Corps. Early emphasis on mapping and surveying yielded to concern for coastal fortifications in the mid-nineteenth century. Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, today a remote national park, serves as a reminder of the scope, frustration, and failure of that period. Later private developers helped stimulate Corps activity in regard to harbor and community development. The twentieth century was a boom period, as Corps activities affected the lives of almost all Floridians. Navigational projects such as the Intracoastal Waterways, the incomplete and controversial Cross-Florida Barge Canal, the Okeechobee Waterway and the beltline canal vied for funds and approval along with projects concerning flood control, drainage, beach erosion, water management, wetland conservation, and a host of related environmental problems.



The *St. Lucie*, operated by Menge Brothers, on Indian River in the vicinity of Punta Rassa.

The author vividly portrays the pressures of World War II as the Corps engaged in intense military construction, primarily air bases and training facilities. The military experience blossomed later into major construction work at Cape Canaveral and nearby Patrick Air Force Base. With both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands within its jurisdiction, the Jacksonville District acquired additional responsibility for collecting data and conducting engineering studies for feasibility of an inter-oceanic canal across Central America. Consequently, focus has been expanded to several foreign political states.

The book is an excellent history and summary of Corps activities. The author shows the transition from military to civil concerns as the nature and range of involvement expanded. Simultaneously, the reader is afforded insight into Corps organization and regional responsibility. Engineers and historians should find this book rewarding and of special interest.

Harry J. Schaleman, Jr.