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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



'MOTHER OF MIAMI' LURED FLAGLER WITH ORANGE BLOSSOMS

By HAMPTON DUNN

MIAMI ---- The combination of fragrant orange blossoms and a woman's flair for dramatic public relations brought Henry Flagler and his railroad to Miami and became the turning point in history of this "Magic City."

The woman with vision was widowed Mrs. Julia Tuttle, who came here in 1891 from Cleveland, O., and bought lands of the defunct Biscayne Bay Co. She tried her best to interest the outside world in Miami. Particularly did she woo Henry Flagler to extend his railroad from Daytona Beach southward. He wasn't moved. Providence stepped in.

The Great Freeze hit in the Winter 1894-95, the worst in 100 years. North Florida suffered under a devastating 19° blast. Vegetables and cocoanut palms as far south as Palm Beach were killed. Flagler was in the depths of despair over what appeared to be nature's cancellation of his plans for a great tourist and citrus development.

The ingenious Mrs. Tuttle finally got his attention: She sent Flagler a box of orange blossoms, undamaged by frost, from Biscayne Bay, and renewed her propositions to give the developer land if he'd serve Miami with a railroad. This got action. Florida East Coast Railroad was extended to Palm Beach and Miami. Mrs. Tuttle gave Flagler much valuable land, including 100 acres on which the fabulous Royal Palm Hotel was built by Flagler.

Mrs. Tuttle, thus became known as "The Mother of Miami." This pioneer is buried in a prominent spot in the City Cemetery at N.E. 18th St. and 2nd Ave. The 36th Street Causeway, connecting Miami and Miami Beach, is named in her honor. Mrs. Tuttle died in 1898 and Miami was the one on the move -- thanks to her orange blossom "gimmick."

