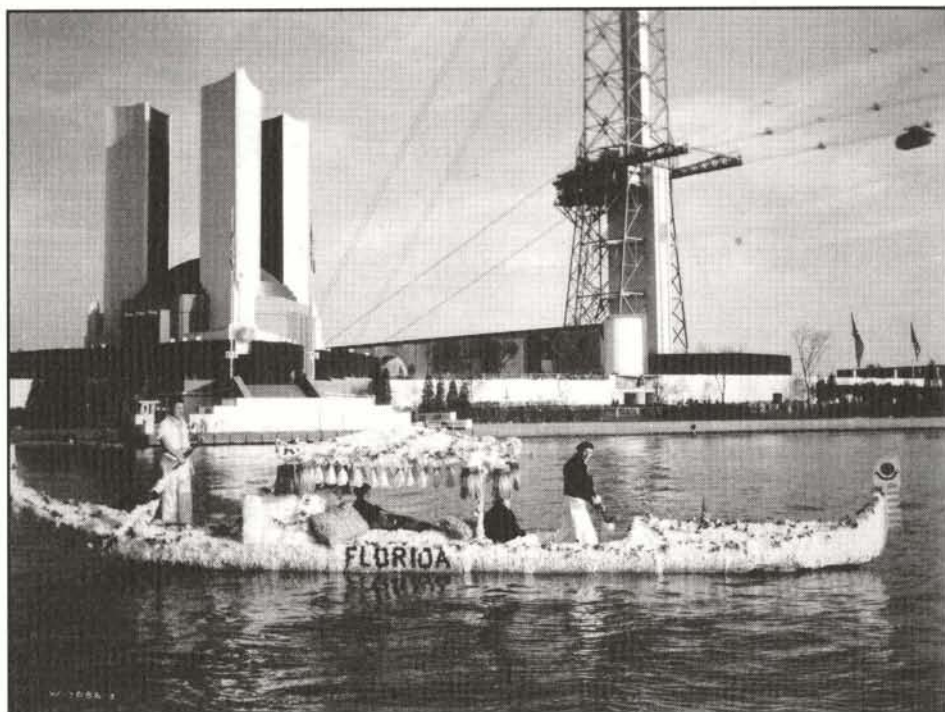


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Cover Illustration: Gondola named "Florida" crossing the lagoon at the Chicago "Century of Progress" World's Fair, 1933. *Photograph courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Library and Archives, Tallahassee.*

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When Modern Tourism Was Born: Florida at the World Fairs and on the World Stage in the 1930s

By David Nelson

More than any other moment in Florida's history, the debut of the state's exhibit at Chicago's Century of Progress world's fair in 1933 marked the beginning of modern Florida tourism. From this point until the end of the 20th century and beyond, Florida promoted and depended upon tourism more than upon any other industry. This proved to be the moment Florida ceased to be southern in the popular mind and assumed the image of a racially-and regionally-neutral land of sunshine, fun, and endless opportunity. It was at Chicago in 1933 that Florida became genuinely and definitively exotic and tropic in the public's eye. And as presented at the fair, Florida emerged as a playground devoid of class, race, unemployment lines, labor disputes, or foreign immigration. That image transformation marked a revolution from above, a civic-elite revolution—quiet and subtle, but revolutionary nonetheless—with far-reaching consequences for the state's economic, political, and social future.

The 1930s was also the start of a brief period wherein the state government and its public officials controlled the message of state advertising; the state bureaucracy was responsible for creating Florida's modern image as a natural paradise and the nation's

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playground. By the end of the decade when Florida presented its second major exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair, the private sector had begun to assume control over how the state was marketed and sold, both through commercial outlets (e.g., local media, roadside attractions, hotels, and private corporations) as well as private citizens contesting the newly created state image. Even as Florida government officials managed the state's image in the earlier period, they recognized that good advertising and clever fair exhibits were not enough to maintain tourist enthusiasm. Florida needed unique attractions to promote and sell, especially if it wanted visitors to return year after year—as did the farm crops that still dominated the state's economy in 1933. And in 1933 and 1934, there were few bona fide tourist attractions or other selling points. Over the next several years, Floridians involved in the Century of Progress exhibit worked toward the goal of increasing the number of tourist attractions in order to sell the state to the world. By 1939, the Florida Exhibit at the New York World's Fair sold more than image as exhibitors highlighted a thriving citrus industry, hundreds of hotels, newly-built roads and airports, and dozens of prospering roadside attractions. As the Florida State Planning Board announced in 1940: "The tourist industry is Florida's greatest source of revenue. . . greater than the total net income from agriculture and industry combined."¹

The first tourist attractions in the decades before 1933 were modest affairs that exploited Florida's exotic image. The upper middle classes comprised the primary target audience because few others could afford the luxury of leisure trips. The first attractions included alligator and ostrich farms, fountains of youth (which were usually simple artesian wells), horse and automobile races, fresh-water spring sanatoriums, and military forts. In addition, coastal areas developed grand resorts and hotels that catered to the elite visitors. Surprisingly, the beach itself was rarely used other than for scenic value. As Lena Lancek and Gideon Bosker have argued in their study of beaches in human culture, American (and European) elites were heliophobic during the period before World War I. "Medical science held that heat and sunshine dried up the body's necessary fluids. . .and [left the body] prone to ail-

1. State Planning Board Minutes, 13 June 1940, Box 192, folder: "Official Minutes," Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

ments."² And, of course, as much of the nation was agrarian and working class, "only elites could boast of perfectly pallid complexions. . . an instant body of superiority."³ Vacations to Florida were usually long-term excursions, often lasting entire winters. And unlike other southern states, wherein, according to Fitzhugh Brundage, "the struggle to cultivate and perpetuate historical memory in the South was incorporated into the commerce of tourism," and where "the tourist South became a stage on which southerners presented the South both as they wanted to see it and as they imagined tourists wanted," Florida boosters and promoters offered a new, regionally-neutral tropical image, closer in spirit and advertisements to the French Riviera or the Mediterranean than the romanticized Old South of Charleston or Richmond.⁴

By the 1920s, the makeup and activities of Florida tourists began to change. While the upper crust still ventured south to Florida, so did upper middle class families, who took advantage of the nation's newly found prosperity and affordable assembly line produced automobiles. Labeled "tin can tourists" by natives for the canned food they brought with them, these mobile vacationers changed forever the state's physical and economic landscape, and in doing so, altered the nature of Florida tourism.⁵

Commenting in the 1930s on modern tourists, one Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) planner said, "A generation ago, vacationers still sat on their front porches of resort hotels all summer long and enjoyed a static holiday. Today they move, they investigate, they mingle."⁶ This new breed of active, impatient tourist required new facilities. Unable to afford the large resorts and hotels that marked the Flagler era, tin can tourists demanded cheaper lodgings. Large campgrounds, "tent cities" that offered running water and sanitation facilities for tin canners, developed early in St. Petersburg, on the west coast's Hillsborough County.⁷ Before

2. Lena Lancek, and Gideon Basker, *The Beach: The History of Paradise on Earth* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1998), 200.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 184.

5. See Nick Wynne's *Tin Can Tourists in Florida, 1900-1970* (Charleston: Arcadia Press, 1999). A second theory holds that the visitors acquired their name from the metal trailers that they towed behind their cars.

6. Phoebe Cutler, *Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 84.

7. Raymond Arsenault, *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream, 1888-1950* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 189.

long, motels and motor lodges replaced most of the tourist campgrounds. Miami also began catering to this new addition to the leisure class. Often the children of immigrants, these travelers exhibited tastes strikingly different from their Gilded Age counterparts. In Miami, many of the new hotels—today hailed as icons of the Art Deco movement—were located between 5th Street and 23rd Street, painted in hues of sea foam green, flamingo pink, and sunshine yellow.⁸ In a trend that would come to fruition in the 1930s, these hotels were uniquely Florida in style, color, and effect. By 1939, there were over 300 art deco hotels in Miami alone.

The new federal highways that facilitated the movement of the tin canners provided the most profound changes. Before the 1950s, many visitors to Florida complained of cattle and other animals that roamed the poorly-maintained and primarily dirt roads.⁹ And indeed, Florida did not enact its first fence law until 1949.¹⁰ In an oral interview conducted in 1986, shrimper Albert Gufford claimed that a 1910 automobile trip from Brunswick, Georgia, (on the Florida border) to Maitland in Central Florida required seventeen days to negotiate. "The only paved road that was in this area at all was part of Main Street in Jacksonville," he stated. ". . . [driving] down the coast, you'd come to a little town and maybe you'd have about two blocks of pavement. And the rest of it was rutted roads."¹¹ As late as 1929, Edward Ball reported to his boss, Alfred DuPont, on a fact-finding mission in North Florida that, after leaving Live Oak, "the next paved highway was nine miles outside of Pensacola, 320 miles distant. . . the Old Spanish Trail (US 90) was about as the Spanish had left it."¹²

Until Florida developed a State Road Department in 1915, counties assumed the sole responsibility for maintaining roads.

8. Lancek and Bosker, *The Beach*, 207-208.

9. Lorena Hickock wrote to Harry Hopkins in 1934 that Florida roads were full of cattle. See Richard Lowitt and Maurine H. Beasley, *One Third of a Nation: Lorena Hickok Reports on the Great Depression* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 167.

10. William Rogers, "The Paradoxical Twenties," in Michael Gannon, ed., *New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 299; Ken Breslau, *Roadside Paradise: The Golden Age of Florida's Tourist Attractions, 1929-1971* (St. Petersburg, Fla.: RetroFlorida, 2000), 24.

11. Interview with Albert Gufford by folklorist David Taylor, 8 August 1986, Maritime Heritage Survey files, 1986-1987, Box 7, Tape 16, Side A, Florida State Archive.

12. Marquis James, *Alfred I. DuPont: The Family Rebel* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1941), 399.

Even after its implementation, the new state agency initially only advised counties about road construction and repair. In 1917, in order to meet the requirements of the Federal Road Act, the state began building state highways.¹³ By the 1920s, roads had become big politics, and each town vied to boast that it had the best roads in the state. For instance, Marion County billed itself as the "Good Roads County of Florida."¹⁴ An ad for Deland invited visitors to "Come, ride around our streets and learn why competent authorities have stated that this is the best-paved city per capita in the U.S."¹⁵ Building a road in one's district was a major coup for Florida politicians, but it was the federal government that provided the state with its best roads.

In 1923, US Highway 90 opened between Jacksonville and Lake City, Florida's first paved highway.¹⁶ Next came US 1, the so-called Atlantic Highway, which connected New York with Miami and intersected with the "Dixie Highway" that ran from Chicago to Miami.¹⁷ This was followed in quick succession by US 27, the "Orange Blossom Trail" through Central Florida; US 441, the "Uncle Remus Route"; US 41; and US 17, the St. Johns River Trail from Jacksonville to Miami.¹⁸ Linking the east and west coasts of South Florida required more than thirteen years to accomplish as developers struggled with lack of funding for the project and environmental concerns. The funding constraints were overcome by millionaire Baron Collier who assumed the costs in exchange for the creation of Collier County. In 1928, the Tamiami Trail opened to much fanfare and heightened expectations for the economic development that would surely follow the cross-Everglades road.¹⁹ By the end of the 1920s the majority of Florida tourists arrived by car along one of these new federal highways. Land boom observer T. H. Weigell described traffic on the Dixie Highway in 1926 as "an incredible assortment of humanity that in Fords and Rolls-Royces,

13. Rogers, "Paradoxical Twenties," 293; Breslauer, *Roadside Paradise*, 23.

14. Breslauer, 24.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Rogers, "Paradoxical Twenties," 293.

17. Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 191.

18. Breslauer, *Roadside Paradise*, 25-26; Tim Hollis, *Dixie Before Disney: 100 years of Roadside Fun* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 7; Rogers, "Paradoxical Twenties," 293.

19. Gary Garrett, "Blasting Through Paradise: The Cost and consequence of the Tamiami Trail," in Jack E. Davis, ed., *Paradise Lost?: The Environmental History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 261, 268.

on bicycle and on foot was pouring towards Miami. . . [and] most of these equipages had the family goods roped on to the rear: camp beds, washing stands. . ."²⁰ Indeed, by 1925, over 500,000 cars drove over the new roads every year as they made their way South.²¹

The sudden end of the Florida land boom, and the subsequent stock market crash of 1929, placed a damper on tourism, but did not end it. In fact, the golden age of Florida attractions began in 1929 with the opening of Bok Tower Gardens.²² Sarasota, one of the three key destinations for winter tourists in the 1920s (along with Miami and St. Petersburg), successfully shifted its advertising by appealing to the financial concerns of potential visitors. "Cancel your coal bill—and cold bills—by substituting the glorious climate of Sunny Sarasota for those bleak winter months" suggested the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce 1931 visitor guide.²³ Observers who considered Miami the barometer for Florida tourism reported the city's apparent success amidst economic depression. As editor Oswald Garrison Villard observed in the *Nation* in the 1930s, "If one were to judge Florida by the appearance of Miami, one would have to say that the depression is over in this state. The streets are thronged with tourists."²⁴ Lorena Hickok echoed the same sentiment in one of her letters to Harry Hopkins.²⁵ In his Master's thesis on Miami during the Depression, historian Vernon Leslie argued that tourism eased the city through the economic crisis. Moreover, post-1929 tourism was marked by an increase in the number of middle class (tin can) tourists, a trend that some entrepreneurs also noticed.²⁶

By the early 1930s, some businessmen embraced tourism's promise, including owners of gas stations, fruit stands, and souvenir shops.²⁷ As Stuckey's founder William Stuckey only half-jok-

20. T. H. Weigall, *Boom in Paradise* (New York: A. H. King, 1932), 27-28.

21. Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 192.

22. Hollis, *Dixie Before Disney*, 132; Breslauer, *Roadside Paradise*, 6.

23. Ruthmary Bauer, "Sarasota: Hardships and Tourism in the 1930s," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (Fall 1997), 138.

24. Merlin Cox, "David Sholtz: New Deal Governor of Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (Fall 1964), 150.

25. Hickok to Hopkins, 31 January 1934, in Lowett and Beasley, ed, *One Third of a Nation*, 167-8.

26. Vernon Leslie, "The Great Depression in Miami Beach," (Florida Atlantic University, MA Thesis, 1980).

27. Mark Derr, *Some Kind of Paradise: A Chronicle of Man and the Land in Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 1998), 318.

ingly said in the 1930s, "Thank God the North won the war. It would have been awful if there hadn't been any Yankees to sell to."²⁸ But most observers believed that Florida tourism was not realizing its full potential, and was, indeed, facing serious problems. In 1925, Florida hosted almost two million tourists; by 1932 the number had dropped to fewer than 500,000.²⁹ The success of the Century of Progress was most encouraging, but its full impact would not be realized until after the 1934-1935 season. And, as many would state throughout the decade, "Florida is within 48 hours of 90% of the people of the United States."³⁰ Therefore, although tourism did not disappear, it clearly needed assistance to attract the 90 percent of Americans within traveling distance of the state. Some state officials, including several of those behind the Florida exhibit at the Chicago fair, were prepared to provide the necessary boost.

In the spring of 1933, Governor Sholtz was still awkwardly transforming himself from the champion of no taxes and smaller government to a full-fledged New Dealer. Then, an informational request set him, and Florida, on a path towards national and international aspirations. On May 3, 1933, first-time legislator Ben Wand of Duval County wrote Sholtz asking him "to secure and transmit. . . figures concerning certain expenditures of the Dept. of Agriculture. . . for the payment of advertising, the printing of booklets or pamphlets, and a breakdown of amounts advanced for the account of the Committee on the Century of Progress Exposition."³¹ The existence of such advertising funds or Florida's involvement in the upcoming Chicago World's Fair was news to the governor. He immediately wrote to both Agricultural Commissioner Nathan Mayo and State Auditor Bryan Willis for the desired information.³² Mayo responded the following day with a

28. Hollis, *Dixie Before Disney*, 21.

29. Rogers, "Paradoxical Twenties," 292 (1925 figure); William Rogers, "The Great Depression," in Michael Gannon ed., *New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 319 (1932 figure).

30. This claim could be found in much of the literature about Florida during the Depression. This quote came from a speech by L.M. Rhodes (Florida Marketing Bureau) to the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Polk County, Davenport, Florida, 15 February 1937, Governor Fred Cone Papers, Box 57, folder: "Marketing Bureau, 1937," FSA.

31. Wand to Sholtz, 3 May 1933, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Agriculture, Dept. of," FSA.

32. Sholtz to Wand, 3 May 1933; Sholtz to Mayo, 3 May 1933; Sholtz to Willis, 3 May 1933, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Agriculture, Dept. of."

copy of his department's biennial report for 1930 to 1932.³³ Again, with speed rare for a governor, Sholtz wrote to the commissioner that "this report. . . does not show the information requested [and] I have not record of any other report covering the full operation of your office."³⁴ Finally, following additional requests for the information by Sholtz and Wand, Mayo relented. He revealed to Sholtz his rather substantial, and rarely publicized, advertising fund and the large plans for its use that summer.

Traditionally, the Florida Department of Agriculture has been the state's largest agency, and its commissioner among its most powerful politicians. Elected independently of the governor, commissioners faced no term limits. Indeed, Nathan Mayo, agricultural commissioner since 1923 (appointed by Governor Cary Hardee when W.A. McRae retired from office and was then subsequently first elected in 1924) would serve in that office until his death in April 1960, becoming the state's longest serving public officer.³⁵ His successor, Doyle Connor, would serve another thirty years, from 1960 to 1990.) Born in Whitaker, North Carolina, in 1876, Mayo and his family moved to Marion County, Florida, in 1887.³⁶ By 1923, Mayo was widely recognized as an ambitious civic and economic leader; he counted among his many interests a general store, two saw mills, a cotton gin, a citrus nursery, and a turpentine still.³⁷ As commissioner in a state in which the economy was dominated by agriculture, Mayo enjoyed extensive patronage power. Moreover, powerful individuals—from citrus growers to cattle ranchers and tobacco and cotton planters—attempted to curry favor. In 1925, Mayo expanded the power of his office further.

Within the department's vast bureaucracy, the small Bureau of Immigration remained largely unnoticed. A relic of the nineteenth century when sparsely-populated Florida desperately needed residents to develop and cultivate its untamed forests, sand hills, prairies, and wetlands, the bureau was charged with attract-

33. Mayo to Sholtz, 4 May 1933, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Agriculture, Dept of."

34. Sholtz to Mayo, 4 May 1935, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Agriculture, Dept. of."

35. Martin M. LaGodna, "Agriculture and Advertising: Florida State Bureau of Immigration, 1923-1960," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (January 1968), 197; David R. Colburn and Lance deHaven-Smith, *Government in the Sunshine State* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 1999), 86.

36. *Marion County Historical Bulletin* (December 1963).

37. *Ibid.*

ing potential farmers to the state. By 1925, during the peak of the Florida land boom, luring farmers to the state was no longer a priority. Mayo used the forgotten bureau to gain 1925 legislative support to create an advertising fund for "the varied resources and possibilities of our entire State."³⁸ The original legislation included a \$25,000 budget. In what may seem a surprising move, Mayo successfully sought 1927 legislative approval to cancel the appropriation, remove the department's excess inspection fees from the General Revenue Fund, and transfer the revenues to the advertising fund.³⁹ In making the change, Mayo had provided far more extensively for the advertising department. Such an expansion had been called for at the April 1926 "Florida Takes Inventory" meeting of the Florida Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁰ The inspection fees were collected by department officials "for inspection services on gasoline, kerosene, signal oil, fertilizer, stock feed, citrus fruit, and fees collected from milk dealers" as well as poultry, packaged food, and drug stores. In 1934, inspection fees ran to more than \$300,000—an amount that exceeded the necessary operating expenses of the Inspection Bureau.⁴¹ And that surplus would otherwise be turned over to the General Fund. Therefore, funding the advertising department with inspection fees removed the advertising budget from gubernatorial and legislative regulation, as well as keeping those funds within the control of Mayo's department.⁴² In essence, Mayo enjoyed a private fund to use however he saw fit. As Sholtz (and Ben Wand) discovered in 1933, while the department's advertising activities were outlined, this fund was not reported in the Department of Agriculture's biennial report (although it would be reported in later years).

Setting aside Sholtz' and Wand's fears for the potential for abuse the presence of the fund suggested, by 1933 the Bureau of Immigration had published well over one hundred brochures,

38. Chapter 10029 (a copy of the law was included in Mayo's 11 May 1933 letter to Sholtz, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Agriculture, Dept. of," FSA); *Laws of Florida*, 1925.

39. In his 1968 article on the Dept. of Agriculture's advertising activities, LaGodna mentions that Mayo made the suggestion "because of the collapse of the [land] boom." LaGodna, "Agriculture and Advertising," 200.

40. LaGodna, "Agriculture and Advertising," 200.

41. Florida Dept. of Agriculture, *24th Biennial Report of the Dept. of Agriculture from July 1, 1934 to June 30, 1936* (Tallahassee, 1937), 44.

42. Mayo to Sholtz, 12 May 1933, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Agriculture, Dept. of," FSA. LaGodna, "Agriculture and Advertising," 200.

pamphlets and posters, as well as fair exhibits and programs. The publications and presentations discussed everything from Florida's agricultural and natural resources to its weather and real estate development potential. In the summer of 1933, however, the advertising fund was utilized to undertake the state's largest outreach project to date—a project that would awaken many, including David Sholtz, to the state's economic potential. That project was Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition.

Two days after Christmas, 1930, then governor Doyle Carlton received an invitation from Rufus Dawes, whose brother was vice president under Calvin Coolidge. In the letter Dawes described an event to "celebrate the 100th anniversary of [Chicago's] organization into a municipality." The celebration would center on an international exposition to focus on "the progress which has been achieved by mankind within the century by the use of science." Dawes intended his letter to serve as a "cordial invitation [to] Florida to participate. . ."⁴³ The Chicago fair would be the first American-sponsored world's fair since the end of the Great War in 1919. Prior to the war, world's fairs had been a semi-regular occurrence in Europe and the United States. Usually created to "measure [nations'] supposed wealth and economic output," the phenomenon started in earnest in 1851 with England's Crystal Palace Exposition in London's Hyde Park. Over the next fifty years, France and the United States (with their industrial fairs), along with England, Italy, Germany, and Spain (primarily focused on colonial possessions and wealth), sponsored numerous fairs and expositions. Present-day icons such as the Eiffel Tower (1889), the Statue of Liberty (1876), and the Ferris Wheel (1893) began as world's fair exhibits. (Although in the case of the Statue of Liberty, only the hand holding the torch was displayed at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, as the statue was not finished until 1886.) The 1889 Industrial Exposition in Paris attracted 28 million visitors, while the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis topped 50 million. Perhaps the most famous and influential fair in the United States was the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Its White City launched a new age in urban planning and Frederick Jackson Turner's presentation tied the fair with the symbolic closing of the frontier. Forty

43. Dawes to Carlton, 27 December 1930, Doyle Carlton papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress," FSA.



Members of the Florida National Exhibits, the organization that created exhibits for the 1933 Century of Progress world's fair and the 1939 New York World's Fair. Left to right: Lorenzo Wilson, Agricultural Commissioner Nathan Mayo, Edward Ball, Harold Colee, Senator William C. Hodges, and unidentified (Charles Plastow?). *Image courtesy of the Florida State Library and Archives, Tallahassee.*

years later, planners designed an even larger fair on the same site.⁴⁴

Carlton's initial reaction to Dawe's invitation was lukewarm: "Our state shall look forward with interest to this exposition."⁴⁵ However, as Chicago publicized the extent of its fair—over 640 acres with exhibits by the nation's top corporations, a world showcase, plus a midway area and an expected attendance of 70 million—Floridians became excited about the possible repercussions of participation in the event. In the spring of 1931, the legislature created

44. For a more complete history of world's fairs, see Udo Kulterman's "Anticipating the Future: The Origins and History of World's Fairs" in Andrew Garn, ed., *Exit to Tomorrow: World's Fair Architecture, Design, Fashion, 1933-2006* (New York, 2007), 9-27; and Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

45. Carlton to Dawes, 7 January 1931, Carlton papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

a Century of Progress (COP) commission.⁴⁶ State Senator William C. Hodges, who often supported Florida promotional efforts and who personally led the initial efforts to create the COP Commission, explained to Carlton that "this [participation] is important because this is Florida's opportunity to again put itself in the eyes of the Nation in those months just immediately preceding Florida's winter season."⁴⁷ When the commission met at Hodge's Goodwood Plantation, those in attendance included the State Forester Henry Lee Baker, who would put this experience to use later.⁴⁸

The initial plans for Florida's participation stressed agriculture, history, government, and manufacturing. The potential for tourism barely registered except for a brief mention of an exhibit on "amusements."⁴⁹ But by late fall, led in part by William Hodges and Nathan Mayo, attitudes had changed. This re-evaluation was fueled, in part, as other states, especially California, revealed their plans. Long considered a rival of Florida, California possessed similar attributes (a productive citrus industry, a dependably sunny climate, extensive sandy beaches, and a romanticized colonial Spanish past), but proved more effective in advertising its wares than the eastern Sunshine State. In fact, many Floridians argued that their state, home to the oldest European settlement in the nation, site of the famous Suwannee River, the nation's only subtropical region with its native orchids, mangroves, palm trees, and the Everglades, the largest producer of oranges and other citrus fruit in the nation, and the site of hundreds of natural springs, actually surpassed California in most respects. As one of the first press releases by the Century of Progress (COP) Commission stated, "our greatest competitor is California...Already it has recognized the magnitude and importance of the World's Fair [and] will tend to draw people to enjoy 'our unequalled climate'..."⁵⁰ Another release stated more plainly, "We must do something finer than [the other 35 states with fair exhibits], especially to fabricate and maintain a more alluring exhibit than our only competitor,

46. Senate Concurrent Resolution #9, C. Van Deventer to Carlton, 9 June 1931, Carlton Papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

47. Hodges to Carlton, 10 August 1931, Carlton Papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

48. Commission Minutes, 29 August 1931, Carlton Papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

49. *Ibid.*

50. Commission Minutes, 29 August 1931, Carlton papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

California, which is expending \$1 million."⁵¹ The COP continued to issue weekly, even at times daily, press releases designed to sell both the exposition and a full-fledged return to the promotion of Florida to a skeptical public.

After the crash of the 1920s land boom, many Floridians believed the combination of greed and a loss of the state's agrarian focus led to the financial disaster. Some interpreted the natural disasters that followed the crash—hurricanes, a drought, and the med fly infestation—as divine retribution for the state's rampant capitalistic pursuits. A return to those heady days was viewed with concern and wariness by many. Hodges, in a letter to one critic addressed this while maintaining the competitive theme, argued that the COP "will show that the State will no longer take criticism or undervaluation lying down but having shown its inherent strength by recovery from the harmful features of the boom, has come back and is ready to invite residents, investors and visitors to participate in its further development."⁵²

In the early 1930s, Florida was still very much a rural state in which agricultural cultivation and resource extraction dominated the economy. As a result, the COP strove to convince reluctant farmers and assuage potential rural and urban critics of the merits of the project through press releases and personal correspondence. One press release utilized agricultural imagery to connect rural readers with the potential economic impact of tourism: "Roger Babson [famed entrepreneur and founder of Webber College in Babson Park, Florida] states that the tourist crop is worth six times that of the citrus crop."⁵³ In a letter Hodges wrote to a critic of the project, he stated that "the idea is not new to you and it bears repeating—the more men and women living in Florida the better for every profession, every seller and every grower or producer...We are an empty state. Please regard the Century of Progress Commission as therefore directly aimed at bringing a larger dependable population into the State."⁵⁴

51. Press release, COP Commission, January 1932, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

52. Hodges to R.G. Patterson (president, N.W. Florida Assn., Pensacola), 21 March 1933, Carlton papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

53. Press release, COP Commission, January 1932, Carlton papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress."

54. Hodges to Paul Eddy (Punta Gorda), 22 March 1932, Carlton papers, box 14, folder: "Century of Progress"

In the meantime, Nathan Mayo and banker-railroad magnate Edward Ball teamed up to form the not-for-profit, quasi-governmental Florida National Exhibits (FNE). Based in Deland, Florida, and funded through private donations, a legislative appropriation, and Mayo's aforementioned advertising fund, the FNE was created to plan and construct the state's ever-growing exhibit. Earl W. Brown, Deland's mayor and former resident of Milford, Pennsylvania, was hired to oversee daily operations.⁵⁵ Exhibit plans became increasingly elaborate as Brown *et al* attempted to recreate that impression of the tropical paradise that newcomers had of the state on their first visit. As environmental historian Jack Davis has noted, "Florida is an imagined place. It has long been so, with outsiders historically acting as the creators of its image."⁵⁶ Few places offer better opportunities for creating imagined landscapes than a world's fair, which one scholar has characterized as "like a good sci-fi movie...a plausible fantasy."⁵⁷ FNE spared no expense in creating the exhibit; the total cost exceeded \$250,000, not including donated services such as free shipping, supplies, and volunteer hours.⁵⁸ More than \$100,000 came from public funds, including state revenues from the state gasoline tax, the tobacco tax and taxes on bottled drinks, and direct legislative appropriations.⁵⁹ As Earl Brown argued, "We must give the visitor beauty, color, the strange, the exotic, light, water, music, a veritable Arabian Night fairyland that will draw them again and never cease to charm and fire the imagination of the dullest. It must be the talk of the hotel lounges, vast spaces of the Fair...It must be made an outstanding attraction of the tens of thousands of attractions."⁶⁰ The COP promised that "Florida is not going to Chicago with a mediocre exhibit of fruits and flowers and fish, cabbages and cauliflower—that is only inci-

55. *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, Volume 36 (Clifton, New Jersey: J.T. White), 306-308.

56. Jack E. Davis, "Alligators and Plume Birds: The Despoliation of Florida's Living Aesthetic," in Davis, ed., *Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 235.

57. Paola Antonelli, "Of Imagination and Concrete Fantasies," in Andrew Garn, *Exit to Tomorrow: World's Fair Architecture, Design, Fashion, 1933-2006* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2007), 6.

58. Mayo to Sholtz, 11 May 1933, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: Agriculture Dept. of," FSA. Unfortunately no financial or budgetary records survive for FNE or COP.

59. Earl Brown (COP circular letter), "To Newspaper and Magazine Editors of Florida," Carlton papers, box 1, folder: "Century of Progress."

60. *Ibid.*

dental. It will dramatize Florida to the world—Florida in all its glamour of romance, in its dignity and majesty.”⁶¹

Completed in May 1935, the exhibit exceeded anything other states presented. The exhibit was housed in the Court of States, which was described as one “immense building, shaped like an inverted U with a Federal building in the center.” Florida’s prime location was evident: “The approach to the Court of States is by a main entrance...and leads directly to the Florida exhibit, the first of the state’s exhibits.”⁶² In keeping with the exposition theme of scientific and technological progress, Florida claimed the state pioneered the “science of showmanship” with its innovative diorama exhibits. According to Brown, “the diorama is the latest science of showmanship. The whole technique of exhibiting has been revolutionized by it. Dull and monotonous displays are, as if by magic, made highly dramatic and fascinating...gives depth and color and animation to backgrounds, akin to looking through an old fashioned stereoscope.”⁶³ Charles E. Plastow of Rollins College made sixteen dioramas for the exhibit. Each diorama was 5 feet by 9 feet and two feet deep. The Bok Tower diorama featured a reproduction of the chimes that could be heard each hour. As one press release explained, “Lighting effects will further attract the people and the fidelity of details will be truly marvelous.”⁶⁴ Another release, continuing the scientific theme, explained that a “diorama is a pictorial representation in three dimensions: width, height, and depth. You have a feeling of looking into the far distance...People are beginning to realize what a tremendous psychological effect color and form have upon the well-being of the individual and how it is possible to obtain certain reactions thru [sic] the medium of the eye...All these points have a direct bearing on the making and showing of the diorama—the new science of showmanship.”⁶⁵ Exhibit promoters assured Floridians that once the Chicago fair closed, the dioramas would be placed on exhibit in Tallahassee and would be used for future exhibits to promote the state.⁶⁶

61. COP press release, n.d. [1931], Carlton papers, box 14, folder: “Century of Progress.”

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. COP press release, 1 December 1931, Carlton papers, box 1, folder: “Century of Progress.”

65. COP press release, n.d. [November 1931], Carlton papers, box 1, folder: “Century of Progress.”

66. Ibid.



Stephen Foster's "Way Down Upon the Suwannee River" diorama created for the Century of Progress fair and later housed at the Foster Memorial in White Springs, Florida. *Image courtesy of the Florida State Library and Archives, Tallahassee.*

The dramatization of Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home" (otherwise known as "Way Down Upon the Suwannee River") was a popular diorama. As publicity for the exhibit claimed: "The diorama has been animated or humanized to the extent that by the use of mechanical devices instrumental and vocal renditions of the song...and the figures of negroes [sic] gathered around the old

cabin home"⁶⁷ evoke the history of the region. (Today this diorama is on display at the Stephen Foster Memorial State Park.) Other dioramas included a turpentine camp, tropical fruit, Ybor City cigar makers, Silver Springs, St. Augustine, "Playground of the Nation (beach fishing), sea food, a citrus grove, and "Year 'Round Sports" (hunting).⁶⁸

Once the concept of science showmanship was established, the FNE proceeded to create a huge advertisement for Florida tourism. FNE divided the two-level exhibit into six sections. Each section illustrated the new focus of Florida's efforts to attract middle class tourists to Florida for summer and winter vacations. The first section, Land of Romance, featured Spanish discovery and colonization and included George E. Ganiere's Ponce De Leon to welcome the exhibit's visitors. In a shift from earlier images (aside from the Foster diorama), Florida's Southern past was nowhere in sight, replaced by the more exotic and popular Spanish past. The next section, Land of Sport, drove home the state's interest in expanding the tourist season with the following text: "Florida has been termed the 'winter playground of the nation.' The term should be changed by elimination of the word 'winter.' Florida is the all-year playground." Attracting tourists year-round meant more than expanding the season; visitors had to perceive the state as welcoming to all classes. The third section, Land of Sport, addressed that issue head-on. "An erroneous idea prevails," visitors read, "that Florida is only for those possessed of great wealth." As the previous sections suggested the state possessed attractions for the interest of all, and the exhibit continued with two additional areas labeled Land of Health and Land of Agriculture and Industry. The focus of the last two sections included citrus, strawberries, seafood, and sponge fisheries, significant contributors to the state's economy that could also become sites for tourism. The rich and exotic nature of Florida was everywhere: a live citrus grove was created on the fair grounds, Everglades muck was brought in for an exhibit of the River of Grass, and Florida fish were displayed in an aquarium.

67. COP press release, 2 November 1932, Carlton papers, box 13, folder: "Century of Progress."

68. COP, "Florida in the Court of States" (brochure), Deland, n.d. [a933]. Available in the State Library of Florida's Florida Room, FLA 606 F636c., Tallahassee, Florida.

In addition, mural paintings, statuary, an exotic lily pond, and an organic juice bar graced the Florida exhibit site.⁶⁹

Will Rogers wrote on Florida's exhibit: "If you only have one day at the COP, there are two things you must be sure to see—one is the General Motors building...and the other is the Florida Hall." In the ongoing rivalry with California, Rogers awarded this round to Florida: "If you want real oranges, get them at the Florida exhibit, if you want wax oranges get them in the California hall."⁷⁰ In 1933, with perhaps the exception of President Franklin Roosevelt, Florida could not have asked for a better recommendation.

Because the Florida exhibit was housed in the Hall of States, the language focused on specific Florida features, a shift from 1920s advertising that associated the state with the Mediterranean and the French Riviera. The general public embraced this new focus and fueled the tropical, exotic image of Florida. Alligators, hammocks, springs, citrus, Seminoles, and Spanish conquistadors moved from background decorations for ostentatious resorts and themed nightclubs to become the central attractions for the state. Florida itself was an attraction, not the architecture of hotels. This realization spurred the rise in roadside attractions that included springs, alligator wrestling shows, marine aquariums, citrus fruit stands, and Spanish mission sites.

The full extent of the effect of Florida's Chicago exhibit upon the state's economy and socio-political culture would not become apparent until the end of the 1934-1935 winter season (and not even completely then). Conservative estimates indicated that 23 million people visited the fair during the first summer, with 9 million of those touring the Florida exhibit.⁷¹ The 1935 version of the Fair attracted even larger crowds, with 13 million visitors to the Florida Hall.⁷² As early as January 1935, many observers could already detect a tangible increase in the state's visitations, the highest since 1925.⁷³ *Business Week* magazine reported on 17 February

69. COP press release, n.d. [November 1931], Carlton papers, box 1, folder: "Century of Progress," FSA; COP, "Florida in the Court of States" (brochure), (Deland, n.d. [1933]). Available in the State Library of Florida, Florida Room: FLA 606F636c, *A Century of Progress: Florida's Part in the International Exposition* (Tallahassee, 1933).

70. Lorenzo Wilson, "Florida at the Century of Progress Exposition," *Proceedings of the 47th Annual Meeting of the Florida Horticultural Society* (Deland, 1934), 60.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*

73. Dunn, *New Deal & Florida Politics*, 171. Unbelievably, Dunn in his recounting of tourists, never mentioned the Century of Progress, and does not offer any other rationale for the increase in tourism revenue.

1934 that "for the first time in years, hotels were overbooked and not accepting any reservations, railroad traffic neared the peak years of 1926 and 1927 and bus lines showed a 50% increase in business."⁷⁴ The following year the same journal reported that tourists spent \$500 million in the state.⁷⁵ The State Road Department estimated that motor tourists in 1934 exceeded 1.4 million, spending well over \$90 million (averaging \$2.50 per day).⁷⁶ Inquiries to both state chambers of commerce and the Florida Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Immigration were the highest ever to date. The *New Republic* reported in March 1934 that "Florida was the first state to witness the full effect of the return of a 'feeling of optimism'."⁷⁷ And most tellingly in regard to the fair, the sale of citrus fruit to Chicago alone rose 26 percent, while sales to the surrounding Mid-West skyrocketed.⁷⁸

The high profits earned at the fair in 1933 encouraged Florida leaders to extend the state's exhibit at the Century of Progress Exposition for a second year. After two years in Chicago, the exhibit was displayed, with minor changes, at the Rockefeller Center in New York City during the winter of 1935 and the Great Lakes Exposition in Cleveland, Ohio, in the summer of 1936. The *New York Times* gave both events extensive coverage. President Franklin Roosevelt commented favorably on Florida's exhibit during his visit to the Cleveland Exposition, noting the large crowds attending the exposition and the "fine building" erected by the State of Florida.⁷⁹ Sensing that the exhibit's popularity had potential for his own career—he was already making plans for a run for the U.S. Senate—Governor Dave Sholtz decided to "up the ante."

On 11 July 1935, Sholtz arranged a statewide conference at Jacksonville, to which he invited two hundred civic and business leaders; he used the occasion to call for the organization of an "All-Florida Advertising Campaign."⁸⁰ Sholtz played on the ongoing

74. Ibid.

75. Dunn, 172.

76. Press release, 26 June 1935, Florida State Chamber of Commerce, Sholtz papers, box 4, folder 4: "Advertising," FSA.

77. Ibid.

78. Earl W. Brown to Sholtz, 19 September 1935, Sholtz papers, box 44, folder: "Florida National Exhibits," FSA.

79. *New York Times*, 10 October, 2 December, 3 December 1935. Remarks by FDR at the Great Lakes Exposition, 14 August 1936, in John T. Wooley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* (Santa Barbara: University of California) <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws?pid=15332>

rivalry with the other land of sunshine, California.⁸¹ As he pointed out, Floridians were spending nearly \$900,000 annually on tourism advertising.⁸² In his invitation letter, Sholtz claimed one of the reasons behind his idea for a Florida campaign was "the renewed activity on the part of California and its business interests" in promoting that state to the nation.⁸³ At the meeting, Sholtz stated his goal of \$500,000 to be raised for the campaign.⁸⁴ He urged "all sectional, inter-community and personal jealousies and prejudices be laid aside in the common effort...to advertise Florida nationally."⁸⁵ Of course those who harbored reservations and hostilities toward such a campaign—farmers, ranchers, turpentiners—were not part of this venture. The men present at the Jacksonville event, however, were thrilled with the plan, and it was agreed at a second, smaller meeting in Tallahassee in July that "all money raised shall be spent in recognized national advertising media outside of the State of Florida, and that all monies raised shall be spent for this purpose and for no other."⁸⁶ The campaign would target hotels, rail, ship and bus lines, realtors, banks, and the national media. Sholtz became chairman of the advertising committee, Charles Overman (Association of County Commissioners of Florida) was chosen as vice-chair, and Robert Grassfield (Florida Chamber of Commerce) was secretary.

Taking a page from Commissioner of Agriculture Nathan Mayo's playbook, Sholtz funded this new campaign with the "breaks" from the State Racing Commission. Created by the legislature in 1931—the same year that pari-mutuel betting was made

80. "Reaping Rich Harvest," *Southern Advertising and Publishing* (March 1936), 17.

81. American studies scholar Stephen J. Whitfield once wrote that considering its envy and imitative efforts regarding California, the State of Florida made an apt choice when it named the mockingbird as its state bird in 1927. Whitfield, "Florida's Fudged Identity," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 71, no. 4 (April 1993), 416.

82. Handout for the 11 July 1935 meeting, Sholtz papers, box 4, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee Misc.," FSA.

83. For example, see Sholtz to R.J. Binnecker (of Tampa), 25 July 1935, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising Campaign," FSA.

84. "A Meeting of an Organization Committee Appointed by Governor Sholtz to Discuss Plans for Raising an Advertising Fund," 11 July 1935, Sholtz papers, box 4, folder: "All Florida Advertising Campaign."

85. *Ibid.*

86. 22 July 1935 Minutes, All-Florida Advertising Campaign, Tallahassee, Florida, Sholtz papers, box 4, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee—Misc.," FSA.

legal—the Racing Commission regulated the state's popular horse and dog tracks, most of which were located in South Florida.⁸⁷ As a way to sell the gambling idea to all counties, the law required tracks to pay the state ten percent of the winnings, which were distributed equally to all 67 counties. By 1939, this amounted to roughly \$29,000 per county and was generally used to fund education.⁸⁸ The funds were derived by rounding down—and never up—a winning to the closest dime. The leftover, odd cents were called “breaks” and were also sent to the state coffers. It was these breaks, in addition to contributions by the County Boards of Commissioners, that Sholtz used to fund his advertising campaign. And as with the Agriculture Department's inspection fees, the race “breaks” were neither regulated nor subject to biennial legislative approval. The fund could not have come at a better time, as Mayo discovered his own advertising stash depleted: “For the past two years, the major part of this fund has gone toward keeping the Florida Exhibit at the Century of Progress and we still owe several thousand dollars...”⁸⁹ His department was also “depleted of booklets, bulletins, etc.”⁹⁰

By fall 1935 the All Florida Advertising Campaign was already showing signs of progress. In its first steps the committee hired a New York advertising firm, the Eastman, Scott & Company.⁹¹ Vying for such potentially lucrative business during the midst of a national depression, letters from media outlets poured into Sholtz's office, including the *New York Law Journal*, *The New Yorker*, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, *New York Daily News*, *Dynamic Pictures*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *New York Times*, General Outdoor Advertising Company, National Sportsmens, Inc, and numerous hotels and rail lines.⁹² Newspapers, hoping for future advertising sales, published complimentary stories about Florida and its promotion campaign. One such story appeared in *Town & Country* in December 1935

87. Susan Hamburger, “And They're Off! The Development of the Horse Racing Industry in Florida” (Ph.D. Dissertation: Florida State University, 1994), 114.

88. *Ibid.*, 140, 143.

89. Mayo to G.C. Blume (of Jacksonville), n.d. [1935] Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: “Agriculture Dept. of.”

90. Mayo to Sholtz, 18 June 1935, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: “Agriculture, Dept. of.”

91. “Reaping Rich Harvest,” 18.

92. Many of the inquiries can be found in Sholtz papers, box 5, folder: “All Florida Advertising Campaign.”

and another in the *Christian Science Monitor* in February 1936.⁹³ Just the idea of promoting Florida appeared to be news in 1935. Many interpreted the campaign as a sign of impending economic recovery.

With \$67,000 "actually on hand" by October 1935, the committee began purchasing ad space.⁹⁴ By December, Florida advertisements could be found in all the major newspapers on the East Coast.⁹⁵ Even the popular daily comic strip *Dick Tracy* mentioned Florida. In the 1 March 1936 cartoon, a young boy gives Tracy three tickets to Florida and exclaims, "Dick! Think of it! Bright sunshine, bathing in the ocean, deep sea fishing." An adult in the next panel adds, "Look at these pamphlets, Tracy. Palm trees, a southern moonsoft sea breeze—" In the third panel the hero interrupts, "Stop! I'm licked! I surrender! I give in!"⁹⁶ By early 1936, even the nation's top crime fighter was choosing sunny Florida over sunny California.

Florida's traditional tourist season ran from November to a peak in January and February before tapering off in early March. In an effort to convince travelers to extend their stay, the committee placed ads in the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. As late as mid-March, ads appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*. Committee advertising executive R. H. Scott was pleased that articles on President Roosevelt's upcoming Florida fishing trip appeared in the same issues. "The President is actually doing what we are urging thousands to do in the full-page ad, and probably because he realizes just the facts we are trying to get across..."⁹⁷ he wrote to Sholtz. Florida's inside man at the *New York Times*, Harris Sims, a Stetson University graduate and avid promoter of the state, made sure many of the committee's achievements and goals made their way into the paper. One article

93. Alvin P. Dearing (Eastman, Scott & Company) to Sholtz, 12 December, 1935; Sylvan Cox (*Christian Science Monitor*) to Sholtz, 17 February 1936, Sholtz papers, box 5, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee."

94. The figure is quoted on Dearing to Sholtz, 26 October 1935, Sholtz papers, box 5, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee."

95. See Dearing to Newell, 26 October, 1935 and R.H. Scott (Eastman, Scott) to Sholtz, 22 November 1935, Sholtz papers, box 5, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee."

96. Cartoon found in *New York News*, 1 March 1936; clipping in Sholtz papers, box 5, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee."

97. Scott to Sholtz, 21 March 1936, Sholtz papers, box 5, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee."

quoted Sholtz as proclaiming that "Florida is lovelier in March than at any other time and because of the fact that mortality rates from pneumonia are higher in March in the cold Northern areas, practical-minded vacationists will...escape into sunshine."⁹⁸

In addition to season lengthening, the committee hoped to convince people to vacation in Florida during the summer months (a tough sell in the years before widespread air conditioning and the invention of DDT), expand the number of visitors, and increase agricultural sales (although aside from citrus, always a strong selling point, this last goal was not actively pursued).⁹⁹ In 1936 the committee announced, through an internal document, that it had achieved most of its goals in some measure, and declared that "Florida is having the best summer in its entire history," with thousands of tourists traveling to the state.¹⁰⁰ The committee measured the success of its summer campaign through the redemption of cut-out coupons provided by the Florida Chamber of Commerce.¹⁰¹ Over 13,000 had been received by summer 1936.¹⁰² To handle the coupon redemptions as well as the more than 21,000 inquiries about Florida tourism, the committee received federal assistance through the Professional Service Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Relief workers created a synopsis of each inquiry that included name, address, and nature of the question or concern to produce a list of potential customers similar to modern, computer generated databases. Each person on the list received a brochure, "Florida—The March of Progress," and a letter of welcome signed (facsimile) by Governor Sholtz.¹⁰³ The winter campaign cost approximately \$30,000, while the committee risked less on the summer effort, \$5,000.¹⁰⁴

98. "Florida's Season Lengthens," *New York Times*, 22 March 1936.

99. "Summary of Objectives and Results of Governor's All Florida Advertising Campaign," n. d. [1936], Sholtz papers, box 3, folder: "Advertising," FSA.

100. *Ibid.*

101. William Wilson (Acting Director, Florida Professional Service Projects, WPA, Jacksonville) to Ralph Nicholson (All Florida Advertising Committee), 13 July 1936, Sholtz papers, box 3, folder: "Florida All State Advertising Committee."

102. Wilson to Sholtz, 13 July 1936, Sholtz papers, box 3, folder: "Florida All State Advertising Committee."

103. Memorandum, 20 December 1935, Sholtz papers, box 4, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee."

104. 102. C. H. Overman to H. L. Flowers, 16 July 1936, Sholtz papers, box 3, folder: "All Florida Advertising Committee."

Historian Kristie Lindenmeyer argues that the Great Depression witnessed a transformation of consumer culture in which film studios, candy bar makers, toy companies, and book publishers advertised directly to the recently identified youth market. If Florida was moving in new directions in promoting year-round tourism, the state remained more conservative in targeting parents and other adults.¹⁰⁵ With the possible exception of *Dick Tracy*, read by children and adults alike, promotional efforts focused on adult publications such as newspapers, news magazines, industrial journals, posters and ads on subways and buses, department store windows, newsreels, and radio programs. Hotels, citrus groves, and roadside attractions had little appeal for children. Florida advertisers believed that parents made all the travel decisions. By 1955 when Disneyland premiered, pop culture historian Kirse Granat May argues that California had solidified its status as the national symbol and geographic location for American youth.¹⁰⁶ Florida would not come close to capturing that market until October 1971, when the Walt Disney Company opened its revised and expanded version of Disneyland in Orlando. Although Florida's failure to tap the youth market caused the state's tourism industry to fall behind its western rival during the post-war boom, its future problems were not evident in the 1930s as tourism prospects soared.

With three years of national fairs under their belts and thousands of tourists responding, Sholtz and his staff decided to take their campaign international. In the fall of 1936, with the assistance of the New York advertising firm of W.H. Ranking, Florida launched a second effort to attract European tourists. One plan called for a major passenger ship, such as the luxurious *Queen Mary*, to dock at Port Everglades near Ft. Lauderdale, allowing passengers several days to motor around the state. Rankin believed the transoceanic transport of passengers and cars would be attractive to European visitors, and noted in a letter to Sholtz that "This year the *Queen Mary* brought 32 British motor cars with their owners to New York,"¹⁰⁷ Perhaps unaware of the distances and roads

105. Lindenmeyer, *The Greatest Generation Grows Up: American Childhood in the 1930s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 156-205.

106. Kirse Granat May, *Golden State, Golden Youth: The California Image in Popular Culture, 1955-1966* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

107. Rankin to Sholtz, 17 September 1936, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

between Florida cities, Rankin suggested that passengers might bring bicycles and "ride from Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, Tampa, Lakeland, Orlando, Tallahassee and thence over to Jacksonville, from there take the Clyde Line Steamer to New York and return to London via the regular Cunard White State Liners."¹⁰⁸

The new advertising campaign presented Florida as the "New World Riviera."¹⁰⁹ It was a calculated shift from the middle-class, family-oriented advertising Florida had advanced since 1933. For Rankin, one of the promotional architects of the Florida land boom, it was an attempt to "recapture the glory days of the 1920s."¹¹⁰ Oblivious to world events, Rankin convinced Sholtz that they "could not only bring tourists by the shipload from Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Sweden and Denmark to Florida," they could also get them to visit in summer when Europeans usually traveled.¹¹¹ Sholtz bombarded European travel agencies, major newspapers in London, Paris, Rome and New York and all the major steam ship companies with letters outlining his tourism plans. Recipients of his letters included the *Washington Post*, *New York Sun*, *Boston Herald*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *London Times*, *London Daily Telegraph*, London's Advertising World, the London Press Exchange, and the Victoria Hotel.¹¹² As Sholtz explained to one travel authority, "as soon as the Europeans know what we have to offer...they are sure to come in thousands." More grandiosely, he suggested that the tourist trade might even promote "world Peace."¹¹³

In both visitation and world peace, the plan failed miserably. The first snag came with Rankin's discovery that "on account of the laws, there is no chance to have foreign ships go direct to Port Everglades." In addition, he realized that "Port Everglades could not harbor ships of the size we intended...a large ship cannot turn around in the harbor but must back out."¹¹⁴ Moreover, the free

108. Ibid. The Cunard White Star Line was a British passenger ship company most famous for the *Titanic*.

109. See Sholtz to Cooks Jones, 12 December 1936, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

110. Rankin to Sholtz, 17 September 1936, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

111. Ibid.

112. Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

113. Sholtz to Jones, 12 December 1936, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

114. Rankin to Sholtz, 20 November 1936, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

advertising through press releases that had worked so well with the All-Florida campaign was beginning to wear thin, and major publications, tired of providing the state with free publicity, pointedly suggested that Florida buy advertising. Although the Cunard White Star Line placed ads in British newspapers using the line "Come to the New World's Riviera, only a "half dozen" people "call[ed] the Cunard office" in response to the effort.¹¹⁵ One steamship agent offered Sholtz and company an insight into the limitations of their understanding of European travelers: "To sell Florida to the European," he wrote to Sholtz, "will require a little more than the cooperation of steamship lines, newspapers, etc. Today the German stays in Germany because he is not allowed to take any money out of Germany. The Italians have none. The French have but they are not spenders and they do not travel to any extent. The Russians are too busy with their 5-year plans..."¹¹⁶ A London journalist explained that English tourists traveled to well-established resorts in the Canaries and South Africa. Moreover, cruise liners had no incentive to work with Florida's tourism campaign. The purpose of a cruise was to "get people to pass as much time as possible on the boat and to spend their money there," he wrote. "You want to get the people ashore and spending their money in the State of Florida." In addition to the disincentive for cruise ships to go along with the Florida scheme, the journalist asserted, "attractions in Florida are only known here amongst a very small circle of rather wealthy people."¹¹⁷ The solution to attracting European tourists was to offer more than warm climate and sunny beaches. Although American tourists had been lured to Florida through advertising and successful fair exhibits, the European campaign fiasco illustrated the need for Florida and Floridians to build and promote attractions that would lure travelers south year-round.

From 1935 through 1938 roadside attractions popped up across the state. Monkey Jungle (Goulds), Ravine Gardens (Palatka), Eagle's Nest Gardens (Bellaire) and Sunken Gardens (St. Petersburg) opened in 1935. The following year brought Floating Islands (Orange Lake), Lewis Plantation (Brooksville), Parrott Jungle (Miami), Weeki Wachee

115. Rankin to Jim Newell, 7 December 1936, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

116. W.J. Walker (Walker & Company, New York) to Sholtz, 18 December 1936 Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

117. Fred Lawson (London's *Daily Telegraph*) to Sholtz, 12 November 1936, Sholtz papers, box 2, folder: "Advertising."

(Brooksville), and Cypress Gardens (Winter Haven). The peak year for new attractions was 1937, with Everglades Wonder Gardens (Bonita Springs), Famous Trees Botanical Gardens (Miami), Florida Wild Animal Ranch (St. Petersburg), Jungle Gardens (Brooksville), Moon Lake Gardens (Enellon), Rare Bird Farm (Miami), and Wakulla Springs (near Tallahassee). Rounding out the decade were Orchid Gardens (Ft. Myers), Homosassa Springs (Homosassa Springs), Rattlesnake Headquarters (Kendall), Tropical Hobbyland (Miami) and Marineland Studios (south of St. Augustine).

While local entrepreneurs developed roadside sites to attract tourist dollars, state leaders continued their promotion efforts at national and international expositions. In conjunction with the 150th anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington, New York opened a World's Fair in 1939. The fair, which focused on the world of the future, was designed with seven themed areas—transportation, food, government, amusements, industry, communication, and community. The individual areas were tied together at the theme center, which featured a statue of George Washington and the fair's architecture trademark, the Trylon and Perisphere. [Interestingly, as it involved a future Florida attraction, Walt Disney, who participated in the 1939 fair, was influenced by its layout when he designed both Disneyland in California and Disney World in Florida. Epcot, which opened in Orlando in 1983, was modeled even closer upon both the New York World's Fair and the Century of Progress fair in presentation and content.] Located in Flushing Meadows in Queens, the exposition proved to be one of the world's largest and most influential fairs. Over 44 million visitors passed through its gates, where they witnessed such wonders as the public premier of television, a robot who could count to five, the 36,000 square foot Futurama exhibit, and the Aquacade water show. Although designed to be educational in nature, the Amusement area was by far the most popular feature. And that was where the Florida Pavilion was located. Fair administrator Dennis Nolan wrote New York Representative A.E. MacKinnon that "we must and will have Florida... They have been key features at the [Cleveland] show and in matter of attendance of exhibits they have smashed all records, as they did at Chicago, even beating out Ford and GM presentations."¹¹⁸

118. Joel M. Hoffman, "From Augustine to Tangerine: Florida at the U.S. World's Fairs," *Journal of Design and Propaganda Arts*, Florida Theme Issue, 23 (1998) 71. The original records of the 1939 New York World's Fair are housed at the New York Public Library.

After two international fairs and a stint at the Rockefeller Center, the Florida National Exhibits were becoming quite adept at pulling off major exhibitions. For the 1939 New York World's Fair, they created their largest exhibit yet, with three levels that housed over 350,000 square feet of exhibit space and required over one hundred train car loads of materials. While recycling much of the previous exhibit material—Gaunier's "Ponce De. Leon" and the "Spirit of Florida" statues, most of the dioramas, another live citrus grove (again designed by Foster Barnes—they also added much more. Most importantly, they created their own building. Located in the Amusements Zone on the shores of Fountain Lake, the exhibit conveyed the message that Florida was an attraction and not merely a state. The theme, "Florida: Where Dreams Come True," was presented in a variety of ways.¹¹⁹ FNE created a faux Spanish Mission (albeit one based on the grander 18th century style found in California, not the waddle-and daub version of 17th century Florida) in order to "convert" fair visitors to the state. For the mission's bell tower, the FNE installed what was billed as the world's largest carillon with 75 bells. Created by J.C. Deagan Company of Chicago, the carillon was scheduled to be installed at the Stephen Foster Memorial upon the fair's completion. At the fair, it played a record number of 14,167 times in six months.¹²⁰ The Aquacade show, featuring Johnny Weismuller and other stars, was located nearby. At the conclusion of each performance, the carillon played a Stephen Foster tune and attracted a large portion of the audience. The Florida exhibit also featured a 71-foot orange juice bar made of "Georgia marble with twenty attendants serving Florida orange juice, orange sherbet and canned grapefruit juice." Six additional juice bars were scattered throughout the park, one in each zone.¹²¹ As an added attraction, "each of the new [juice] concessions...consist[ed] of a juice bar, painting, and dioramas for Florida, and a comfortably furnished lounge," for a total of 5,000 square feet.¹²² To complete the sense

119. State of Florida, *Florida: Florida State Exhibit, New York World's Fair* (Tallahassee: 1940), 5. This was a souvenir booklet sold at the fair.

120. FNE Press release, 14 October and 18 March 1939, Cone papers, box 63, folder: "New York Fair," FSA.

121. Hoffman, "From Augustine to Tangerine," 75; FNE press release, 4 August 1939, Cone papers, box 63, folder: "New York Fair," FSA; *Proceedings of the 52nd Meeting of the Florida State Horticultural Society* (Tamps, 1939), 131.

122. FNE press release, 4 August 1939, Cone papers, box 63, folder: "New York Fair."

