



Caloosahatchee River 2002



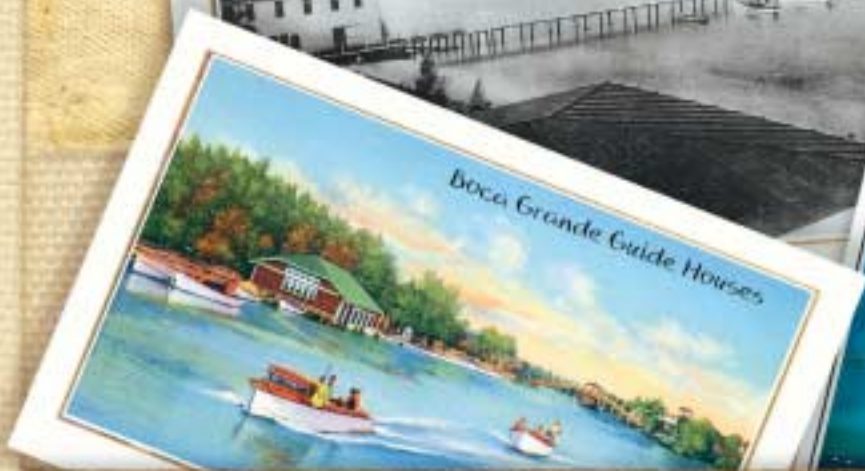
Caloosahatchee River 1958



A Historical Geography of Southwest Florida Waterways

VOLUME TWO

Florida Harbor to Marco Island



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Gasparilla Pass, looking southeast past the causeway and abandoned railroad trestle to Gasparilla Sound with Charlotte Harbor in distance.

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VOLUME TWO

Placida Harbor to Marco Island

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Chuck Listowski (Executive Director, West Coast Inland Navigation District, WCIND) inspired us to consider as our task, not only providing the public with a broader understanding of the historic roots of coastal development, but also establishing a scientific baseline needed by planners and elected officials to set policy and implement waterway resource management. The WCIND Board — elected commissioners from Manatee County (Joe McClash, Chair), Sarasota County (Nora Paterson and Shannon Staub, Alternate), Charlotte County (Mac Horton), and Lee County (Ray Judah) — provided encouragement throughout the project.

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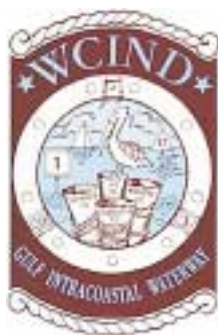
Contemporary vertical aerial photographs and digital imagery were obtained from the South Florida Water Management District, Ft. Myers (Tomma Barnes); Southwest Florida Water Management District, Tampa (David Tomasco); and the Florida Department of Transportation (Ted Harris). The University of Florida Digital Library Center (Stephanie Haas) scanned the larger photographs and maps. Contemporary oblique aerial views were provided by Gary Sibley, Aerial Photographic Services, Sarasota, Fla. Lee County Mosquito Control staff made the special effort to photograph the present day Caloosahatchee from the historic view point shown on the book's cover.

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About the Authors

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Prior to 1988, he worked mostly in the Caribbean and Latin America on natural resource and watershed management issues. Since 1988, Gus has focused on Florida coastal management and marine recreation planning projects, dealing with boat live-aboards, derelict vessel removal, hurricane recovery, artificial reef monitoring, anchoring, waterway management and boat traffic evaluations.

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When not boating or consulting on Southwest Florida waterways, Gus is training on his bike for ultra-marathon brevets or cycle-touring in some distant, exotic locale.

David A. Fann is a geographer with the Florida Sea Grant College Program, University of Florida, Gainesville. He received a B.S. in Technical Journalism and a M.S. in Geography from the University of Florida. He performs Geographic Information System (GIS) analyses, creates map-based educational publications for recreational boaters, and participates in field data collection whenever possible. Along with *A Historical Geography of Southwest Florida Waterways, Volumes One and Two*, his primary focus in recent years has been the Regional Waterway Management System project in Manatee, Sarasota, and Lee Counties. This project gathers information on waterway conditions and boat populations, analyzes both kinds of data in a GIS, and provides the results to county policy makers, facilitating an efficient, region-wide approach to waterway management.

Before returning to the University of Florida in 1993, David did rocket science with Martin Marietta Aerospace at Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. He began his career as a technical writer/editor at Martin Marietta's Orlando Division.

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La Vida, the authors aboard, with sails and sheets eased off the wind, somewhere along the Southwest Florida coast.



1941 - The Changing Sea and Earth

“ . . . the sea, too, lay restless, awaiting the time when once more it should encroach upon the coastal plain, and creep up the sides of the foothills, and lap at the bases of the mountain ranges . . . so the relation of sea and coast and mountain range was that of a moment in geologic time.

For once more the mountains would be worn away by the endless erosion of water and carried in silt to the sea, and once more all the coast would be water again, and the places of its cities and towns would belong to the sea.”

— *In Under the Sea-Wind: A Naturalist's Picture of Ocean Life*

Rachel Carson

©1940

Published by Simon and Schuster,
New York. p. 271.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Sea Grant College Program
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Coastal Southwest Florida has undergone dramatic changes in the past 120 years. The vast mangrove forests, expansive seagrass meadows and serene sawgrass tracts have been changed into housing developments and waterfront condominiums. The once-quiet towns and fishing villages have been transformed into bustling communities. Unfortunately, the new residents to the coast are all too often unaware of the region's history.

The great naturalist and ecologist, Edward O. Wilson, in remarking on man's alteration of the environment, speaks of managing the human "footprint" on natural systems as society's greatest challenge in this the new century.

Yet, there are few such places where man's footprint is more starkly visible than the coast of Southwest Florida. In little more than three decades, a blink of an eye in human history, this coastline has gone from a mostly pristine region of small towns and coastal communities to one of immense development that has markedly changed the face of Southwest Florida.

Massive dredging and fill projects have reshaped the land and waterways. We have made land where nature did not, and dug waterways in areas nature picked to be seagrass beds. It is only through understanding these changes made throughout the years that we can fully appreciate the alterations to this once-pristine landscape.

As a society, we are intensely proud of our history and progress as a nation, tend not toward retrospection and focus intensely on the future. But to truly understand the immense changes that we have wrought on scale that is not readily observable or comprehensible, we need a point of reference and historical perspective if we are to derive necessary lessons from that history.

A Historical Geography of Southwest Florida Waterways, Volume Two, Placida Harbor to Marco Island offers readers a glimpse of the changes that have occurred in the region. Visual depiction of the manmade changes that have taken place are shown through maps and photographs.

As in Volume I, the authors chronicle magnificently the magnitude of cumulative impacts of thousands of smaller actions and among many jurisdictions over a relatively short time.

Only by learning of the past can we understand the needs of the future. Dr. Antonini and colleagues unveil the complex history and geography of this interesting and beautiful area. Southwest Florida with its rare ecosystems should be managed and nurtured in the coming years.

The authors have done us all an incalculable service yet again. They have provided us with invaluable information, insight and guidance we will surely need to address the difficult issues of environment and community that lie ahead.

Ronald C. Baird
Director
National Sea Grant College Program

