

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2

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While trustee, Henry Kendall was quietly managing Sir Edward Reed's property in South Dade County in the 1880s for the Florida Land & Mortgage Company, Henry Morrison Flagler was falling in love. Newly remarried to Alice Shourds after the tragic death from illness of his first wife, Mary, the 53 year-old New Yorker and co-founder of Standard Oil brought his bride to St. Augustine for a honeymoon in 1883. Flagler was smitten with the historic city, but found the hotel and transportation systems woefully inadequate. Realizing the potential of Florida to attract visitors from northern states, Flagler relinquished his day-to-day involvement with Standard Oil and set his sights on the Sunshine State.

He returned to St. Augustine in 1885 and began to build both his home and his Florida empire. Flagler purchased four North Florida railroad companies over the next four years and by 1889, could provide service from Jacksonville to Daytona Beach. By 1894, Flagler had extended his railroad system south to West Palm Beach, building luxurious hotels, planting impressive citrus groves and giving birth to new towns around the railroad stations along the way.

Henry Flagler was content to have West Palm Beach remain the southern end of his railroad line. He built two magnificent hotels, the Royal Poinciana and The Breakers in Palm Beach, near Whitehall, his 55-room, 60,000 square-foot winter home. But 70 miles to the south, a determined widow with 644 acres of land on the Miami River had plans for Mr. Flagler and his railroad.

Julia Tuttle had moved to the shores of Biscayne Bay from Cleveland, Ohio in 1891 after the death of her father, having inherited her late husband's iron foundry wealth and her father's Florida land. She had visions of a new city at her new home and wrote Flagler on several occasions over the next two years, imploring him to extend his railroad south to the Miami River. Flagler wasn't interested. But as the story goes, a hard freeze hit Florida in February of 1895, completely destroying Flagler's countless citrus groves. Julia's Miami River property was spared by the freeze and so she seized the opportunity and sent Flagler a box of orange, lime and lemon blossoms from her own grove. Henry got the message and by June, a deal was made to extend the railroad to the fledgling community in exchange for 100 acres of free land for both Flagler's Royal Palm Hotel and the new railroad station, as well as half of Tuttle's remaining 526 acres north of the Miami River.

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Flagler's newly-renamed Florida East Coast Railway reached Biscayne Bay in April, 1896. Flagler dredged a channel, built streets, instituted the first water and power systems, and financed the town's first newspaper, the *Metropolis*. When the town incorporated on July 28, 1896, its 700 citizens wanted to honor the man responsible for its growth by naming it "Flagler." He declined the honor, persuading them to use an old Indian name, "Miami." Nevertheless, through their foresight, efforts and achievements, Tuttle and Flagler owned the well-earned titles, "Mother and Father of Miami."

In January 1897, Flagler opened his opulent five-story, 450-room Royal Palm Hotel, featuring Miami's first electric lights, elevator and swimming pool. The hotel would dominate Miami social life for more than two decades, as the city grew to world-class resort status itself, surrounding its new centerpiece. The Royal Palm was severely damaged in the Category 4 hurricane that flattened Miami on September 18, 1926. Dilapidated and termite-infested, the property was condemned and torn down in 1930, later to become the site of the DuPont Plaza Hotel.

By 1901, Flagler had decided that his Florida East Coast Railway should be extended from Biscayne Bay to Key West. At the time, Key West was Florida's most populated city and it was also the United States' closest deep water port to the canal that the U.S. government proposed to build in Panama. Flagler wanted to take advantage of additional trade with Cuba and Latin America as well as the increased trade with the west that the Panama Canal would bring. As it proceeded south from the Miami River, the railroad built stations at several intervals, and in the process created a series of new communities in South Dade.

All along the route of the FEC Railway's right of way, the State of Florida awarded the railroad company thousands of acres of land for each mile of track. Henry Flagler created the Model Land Company in 1896 to market this land both as farmland and as platted town lots and in the process, became one of the county's largest land owners. In that same year, Flagler hired John J. Hinson, a resident of Cocoanut Grove, to work on the survey team that was laying out the new town of Miami. Hinson was a farm boy and carpenter from central Florida, who travelled arduously by foot, steamer and sailboat to Biscayne Bay as a young man, seeking adventure in the new frontier.

Having proved his worth on the survey team, Flagler appointed the 32 year-old Hinson as a foreman on the FEC Railroad when construction on the Homestead extension began in 1901. The newly-laid track passed through Kendall in 1903 and terminated in Homestead in 1904, the same year that the new railroad station in Kendall was completed. The Kendall railroad station no longer exists, but would now be located at the southeast intersection of SW 100th Street, also known as Smoak Road and 77th Avenue, also known as Kendal Avenue, just west of US1.

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In return for bringing his railroad to Kendall, the state of Florida gifted Flagler's Model Land Company 170 acres of what would someday be prime Pinecrest acreage. The area, known initially as Kendal Grove, was bounded on the north and south by SW 100th Street and SW 108th Street, on the west by Dixie Highway and on the east by SW 72nd Avenue. It is not clear if Reed's Florida Land & Mortgage Company was compensated for this appropriation of its land, but if reimbursed at the original purchase price, Sir Edward would have received a check for \$42.50.

It should be noted that the spelling, Kendal, was commonly used in the area for roads, land and even the first post office in the early days of settlement. It is believed that this was simply a common misspelling of the name Kendall – understandable because Henry Kendall's ties to the area had ceased at least a year before the construction of the railroad station.

Henry Flagler's Kendal Groves were designed to illustrate the value of the agricultural land in the area to potential investors. Flagler needed a dependable manager for his showcase Kendall property and John Hinson fit the bill.

The stage was set. After 59 years of dormant statehood, Kendall, Florida was about to begin the transition from an isolated wilderness to a thriving community.

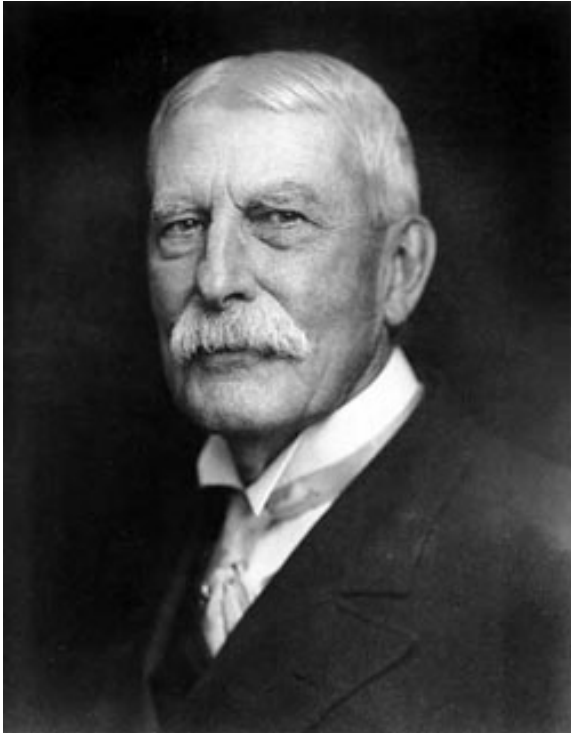
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Henry Morrison Flagler



The Royal Poinciana Hotel – 1896

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The Main Hall at Whitehall, West Palm Beach



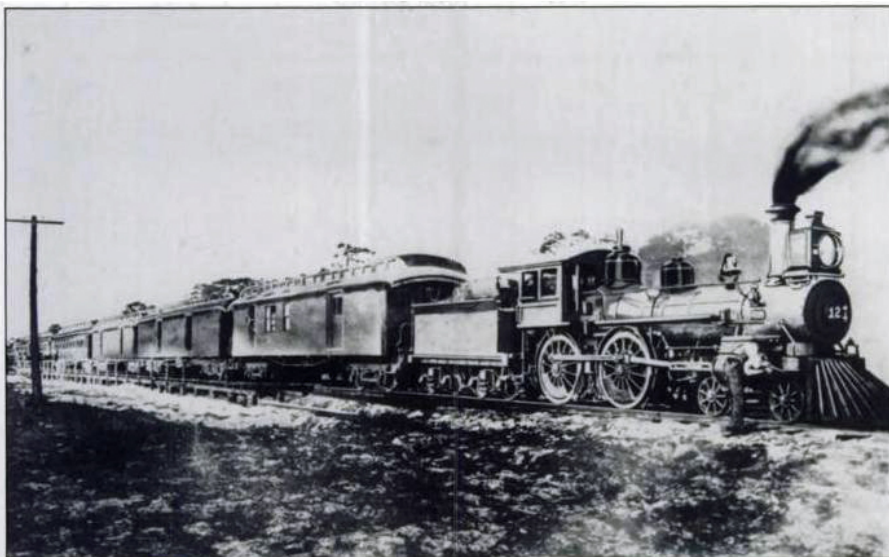
Julia Tuttle – The Mother of Miami

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Miami's first railroad station at NE 2nd Avenue & Biscayne Boulevard



Steam locomotive No. 12 with a seven-car passenger train and a post office car directly behind the engine was the first train into Miami. This famous, retouched photo shows smoke blowing the wrong way.

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Royal Palm Hotel and Grounds – 1912



Royal Palm Hotel Swimming Pool – 1912

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An FEC locomotive leaves the Larkins (South Miami) station, headed south for the next stop, Kendall. The view is to the northeast, showing the intersection of two-lane Dixie Highway and Sunset Drive.

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