

In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1

Scott F. Kenward, DMD

May, 2009

When Florida achieved statehood in 1845, Dade County was little more than a vast block of dense, mosquito-infested wilderness. Stretching from the Hillsboro Inlet at the northern edge of present-day Broward County to Indian Key, 5 miles south of Islamorada, Dade County hosted only 159 residents in 1850.

That same year, in order to encourage the development of agriculture, transportation and other productive uses for federally-owned swampland, the US Congress enacted into law the Swamp Land Act of 1850. This legislation, with its loose and ill-defined definition of what constitutes a wetland, allowed the state of Florida to eventually claim, between 1880 and 1903, all the land west of Red Road (SW 57th Avenue), between SW 104th Street and NW 7th Street. The state of Florida could then sell the land to individuals, reserve it for state use, or donate it to developers and entrepreneurs for construction of canals and railways.

By the time of the nation's Centennial in 1876, railroads had already spanned the continent and united the country in an unprecedented transportation network. The economy began a huge expansion, growing almost ten-fold in the last quarter of the 19th Century. This explosive growth required massive infusions of capital – more than Americans alone could supply – and so, European entrepreneurs invested in American railroads, mining, cattle ranches and land in prodigious amounts.

One such entrepreneur was Sir Edward James Reed, a retired Chief Constructor of warships for the Royal Navy and a member of the British Parliament, representing South Wales. Reed saw great potential in the rapidly developing railroad network of North Florida and between 1881 and 1885, was the prime mover and majority stockholder of two Florida railroad companies: The Florida Transit Railroad Company and the Florida Railway & Navigation Company. Reed's railroads crisscrossed the state, connecting Fernandina, Jacksonville, Ocala, Cedar Key and Tallahassee with over 500 miles of track.

Concurrently in 1881, Reed and a syndicate of English investors purchased two million acres of Florida land. The next year, Sir Edward formed the Florida Land and Mortgage Company, based in Bartow, Florida, to hold this property and, hopefully, to sell it off in small parcels at a profit. In 1883, under the provisions of the Swamp Act, the state of Florida sold four million acres of their recently claimed Dade County lands, between SW 88th Street and SW 104th Street, to the FL&M Company in the name of Sir Edward James Reed for the purchase price of one million dollars, or 25 cents an acre.

In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1

For the next twenty years, the Reed-acquired lands in South Dade County lay nearly dormant. Situated about halfway between the emerging communities of Coconut Grove (original spelling until incorporation in 1920) and Cutler, the region was isolated and subject to frequent flooding, discouraging settlement.

However desolate, the area was not without its inhabitants. The Seminole Indians, a renegade group of the Creek Indians from Georgia, had migrated to South Florida in the mid 1700s. Although the US Military, during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842), forced the majority of the tribe to relocate to Indian Country in Oklahoma, there were still 129 Seminole Indians living in Dade County in 1900. A Seminole Indian Village stood just west of what is now Baptist Hospital and a larger one sat on high ground at the present-day intersection of SW 107th Avenue and SW 80th Street.

In 1884, the Florida Land and Mortgage Company appointed Henry John Broughton Kendall, as one of four trustees to manage the company properties in Dade County. The son of the British Consul for Peru, Henry was born in Lima in 1841, returning as an infant with his family to their home in London the following year. The first three decades of Kendall's life remain unknown, but we do know that by age 30 he was a foreign merchant and by age 38 had followed in his father's footsteps, serving as the London Consul for Bolivia.

By the time he travelled to America in 1883, Kendall had risen to the rank of Director of the Union Bank of London, a title he would hold at four additional major British firms over the next two decades. As a trustee of the Railway Investment Company and the Farmers' Loan and Trust Company (which would eventually become Citibank), Kendall helped secure over 10 million dollars in loans for the construction of a tunnel under the Hudson River for steam trains, connecting New Jersey and New York City. Although a financial crisis ended the flow of investment capital from England, killing the project, the work would eventually resume in the 1920s, resulting in today's Holland Tunnel.

The great mystery of Henry Kendall is the 18-year period, between 1884 and 1902, during which he managed Sir Edward Reed's lands in South Dade. There is no evidence that he lived anywhere in South Florida and we know that he was quite active with his duties as a banker in New York and London at that time, particularly in the 1890s. Kendall was married, with five school-age children and maintained the family home in Hatfield, a suburban town 20 miles north of London, throughout his time in America.

In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1

Nevertheless, by the time he retired to England, the FL&M Company lands in Dade County had come to be identified with Henry Kendall. Perhaps it was due to his ever-present name on deeds to acreage purchased in the area, his personal visits to inspect the property, or his connections to local realtors and bankers. In any case, the region now had a name - Kendall - but in 1903 another Henry would bring far greater change to the area. Henry Flagler's railroad was coming, and soon Kendall's decades of isolation would be gone forever.

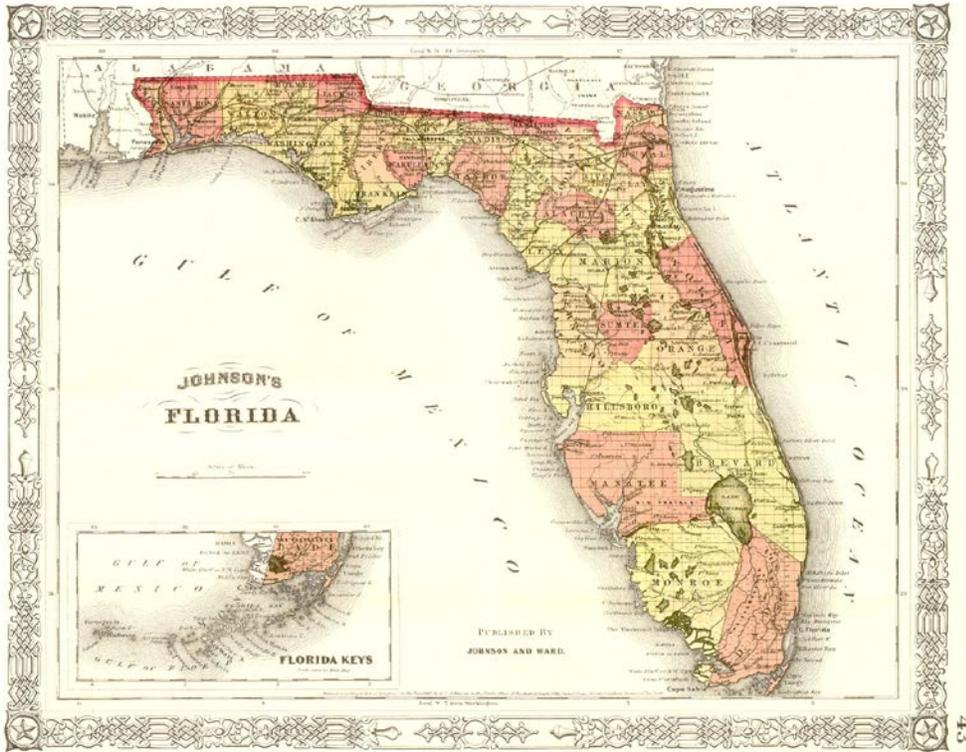
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In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1



Map of Florida – 1863



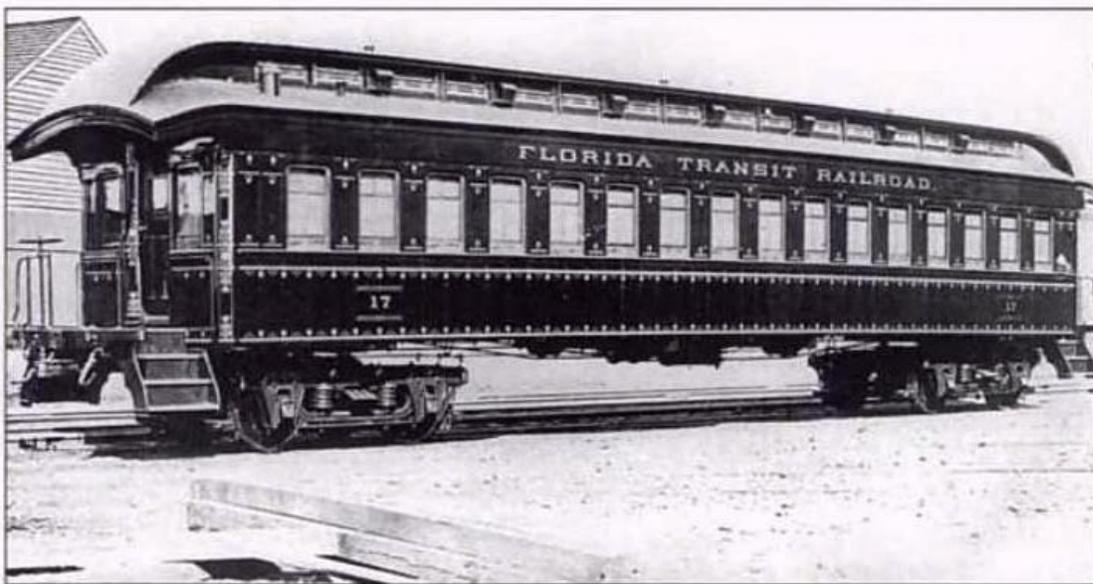
Map of South Florida - 1863

In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1



Sir Edward James Reed



Florida Transit Railroad Coach, built in 1881

In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1



Map of Sir Edward Reed's railroad empire in 1885



Engine No. 46 of the Florida Railway & Navigation Company was built in 1885

In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1



Kendall pinelands



Seminole Indian family in Kendall

In The Beginning

The Birth of Kendall – Part 1



Seminole wigwam of palm leaves built around Sabal palmetto

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2

Scott F. Kenward, DMD

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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.

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2

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 at SW 94th Street in Kendall was completed. The Kendall railroad station no longer exists, but would now be located at the intersection of the Metrorail line and the northbound onramp to the Palmetto Expressway on Old Dixie Highway, now an access road just west of US1.

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2

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.

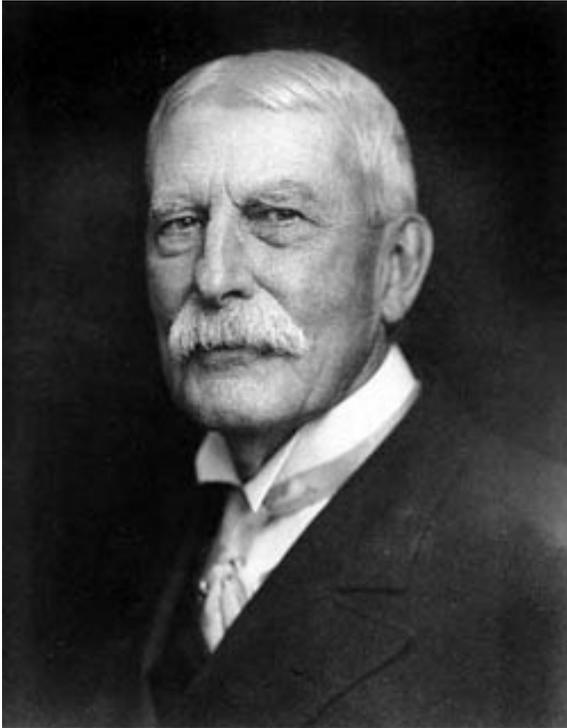
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Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2



Henry Morrison Flagler



The Royal Poinciana Hotel – 1896

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2



The Main Hall at Whitehall, West Palm Beach



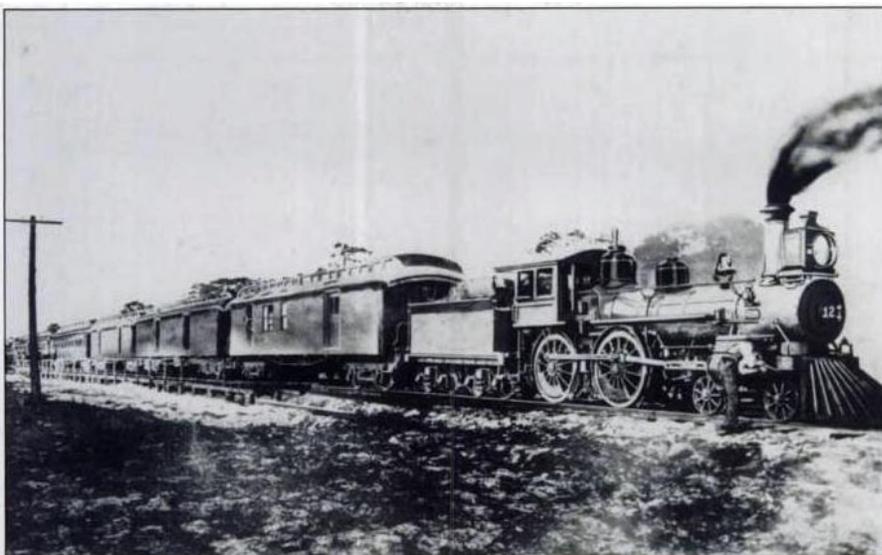
Julia Tuttle – The Mother of Miami

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2



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.

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2



Royal Palm Hotel and Grounds – 1912



Royal Palm Hotel Swimming Pool – 1912

Father & Mother

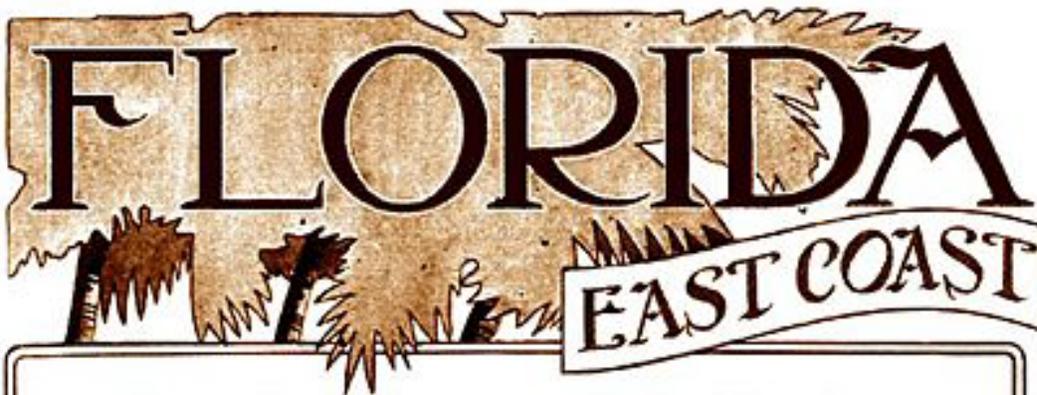
The Birth of Kendall – Part 2



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.

Father & Mother

The Birth of Kendall – Part 2



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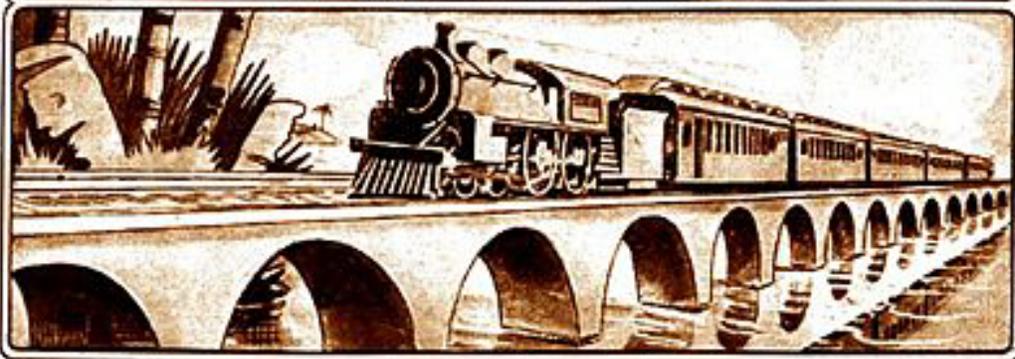
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