



How to do Something that's Never Been Done Before

All Aboard: History, Culture, and Innovation on the Florida East Coast Railway

Grade Level:

9th - 12th Grade

Curriculum Connections:

Social Studies
Language Arts

Materials:

Photo of:

- Henry M. Flagler
- Flagler's Hotels

Map of:

- FEC Railway
Showing the Key
West Extension
- FEC Railway Key
West Extension

Materials:

- Writing Paper
- Pen or Pencil

Objectives:

Students will be introduced to the Florida East Coast Railway's Key West Extension and the marvel of engineering that it was. They will develop an understanding of perseverance, identify examples of it in Henry Flagler's story, and relate the importance perseverance can play in their own lives.

Standards:

Grades 9th and 10th

SS.912.H: Humanities
SS.912.A: American History
LA.FS.910.SL: Standards for Speaking and Listening
LA.FS.910.W: Writing Standards

Grades 11th and 12th

SS.912.H: Humanities
SS.912.A: American History
LA.FS.1112.SL: Standards for Speaking and Listening
LA.FS.1112.W: Writing Standards

Corresponding Map Hot Spot:

The Florida Keys

Lesson Procedure

Introduce the theme of the lesson:

Have you ever had a big, crazy idea? Something so audacious no one could believe it could be done? This is exactly how the Overseas Railway started – as Henry Flagler's wild idea. This was a daunting project, and one that had many critics (some depicted as Flagler's Folly).

Use this idea to facilitate a discussion with the students about doing something that's never been done before. How do you complete your goals when they seem impossibly hard? How do you rise above the haters? By developing grit. The railroad project was not accomplished overnight. There were challenges that required regrouping (finding the best route and getting hit by multiple hurricanes, etc.) in order to finish the project. When it was finished, many people referred to it as the 8th Wonder of the World and ensured that Flagler's name would forever be known in Florida.

Critical Thinking:

Share Flagler's life story – yes, he was hugely successful with Standard Oil and amassed wealth that would enable him to complete the Florida East Coast Railway and the Key West Extension while building many hotels and becoming the father of modern Florida, but he also had his share of hardship to overcome (see additional resources below). Ask the students to help you define perseverance. Ask them to identify examples of it in the story of the Overseas Railway.

Project:

For Classroom Teachers:

Ask your students to interview a grown-up friend or family member. Ask them questions about times in their lives that they had to persevere. Write about their experiences and identify examples from their stories of perseverance to share with the class.

At the Museum:

Have a Florida East Coast Railway worker (actor) come and tell their story and be interviewed by the students. Ask them to pick out examples of perseverance from the story and write them down.

Additional Resources:

Overseas Railway Timeline

This timeline on the Key West Art & Historical Society's website provides additional information about Henry M. Flagler's life, career, history and the development of the Florida East Coast Railway and extension to Key West, Florida.

Online Collections Database

With a collecting history that extends back to 1949, the Key West Art & Historical Society has unrivaled collections of contemporary and historic art and artifacts. Its collections, which number more than 35,000 works in all media, range from historical to present-day and span the entire Florida Keys.

Henry M. Flagler



Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society

Map of the Florida East Coast Railway Showing the Key West Extension

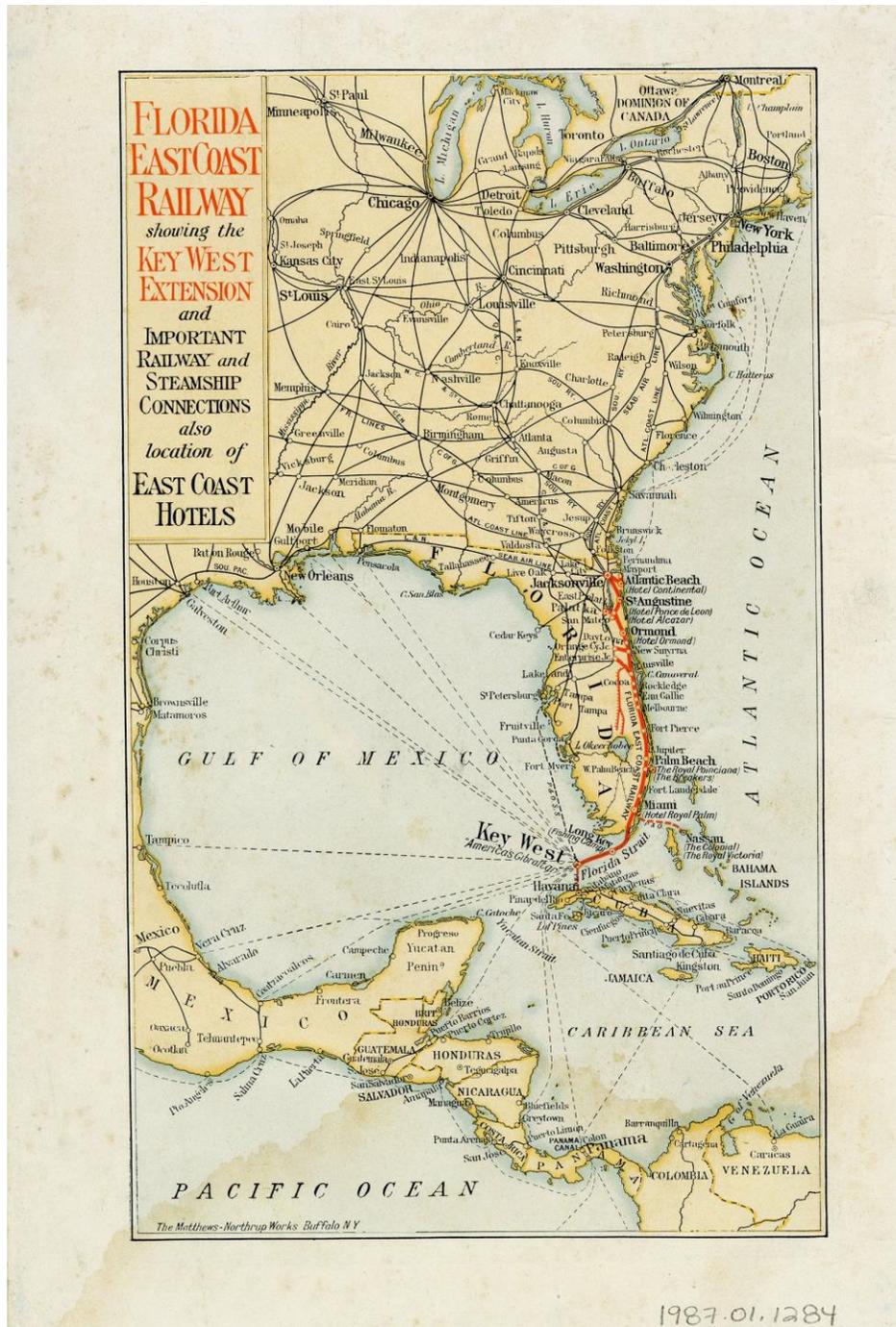


Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society

Map of the Florida East Coast Key West Extension



Photo: Florida East Coast Railway

Hotels that Henry Flagler Built

Hotel Ponce de Leon

Located in St. Augustine, Florida, the Hotel Ponce de Leon opened in January 1888.

Photo Credit: (left) Florida Memory
(right) Florida Memory



Alcazar Hotel

Located in St. Augustine, Florida, the Alcazar Hotel opened in 1889.

Photo Credit: (left) Florida Memory
(right) Florida Memory

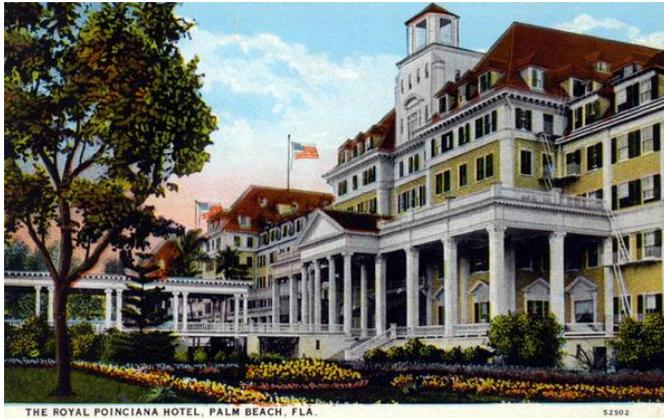


Hotels that Henry Flagler Built

The Royal Poinciana Hotel

Located in Palm Beach, Florida, The Royal Poinciana Hotel opened on February 11, 1894.

Photo Credit: (left) Florida Memory
(right) Florida Memory



Breakers Hotel

Located in Palm Beach, Florida, The Palm Beach Inn, later named the Breakers Hotel, opened on January 16, 1896. The hotel was located on the same property as the Royal Poinciana Hotel and was built on the beach.

Photo Credit: (left) Florida Memory
(right) Florida Memory



Hotels that Henry Flagler Built

Royal Palm Hotel

Located in Miami, Florida, the Royal Palm Hotel opened on January 16, 1897. In 1930, the hotel was torn down due to a lack of visitors and damage caused to the wooden structure during a 1926 hurricane.

Photo Credit: (left) Florida Memory
(right) Florida Memory



Continental Hotel

Located on Atlantic Beach in Jacksonville, Florida, the Continental Hotel, later renamed the Atlantic Beach Hotel, opened to guests in 1901. In 1919 the hotel shut down.

Photo Credit: (left) Florida Memory
(right) Florida Memory



Overseas Railway Train on Long Key Viaduct

Surveyors began expeditions for the best route for the Key West Extension as early as 1903. Construction began in 1905 and was completed at 6:30 a.m. on January 22, 1912, when the final piece of railroad track was placed. Later that day, Flagler and several other officials arrives in Key West on the very first passenger train.

Photo Credit: Key West Art & Historical Society



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