



## Did you know that the SEWELL LOCK was the first canal lock built in 1912 in Broward County for the Everglades drainage project?

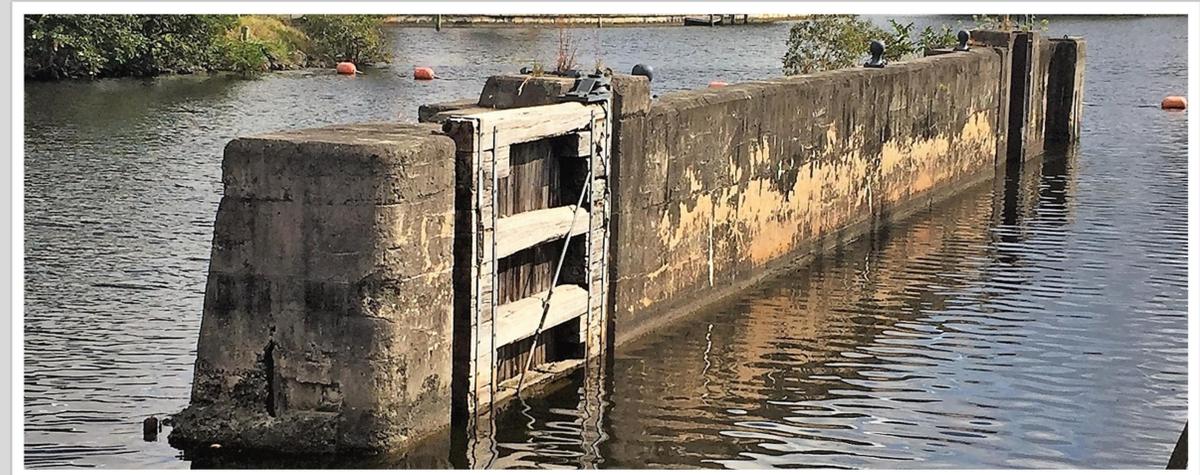
The Sewell Lock, also known as the Broward Memorial Lock, is Broward County's oldest water-control structure. It was restored and became a Broward County Historical Site in 1978. This historical lock sits on the North New River Canal which runs from Lake Okeechobee down to Interstate 595 and over to the South Fork New River near Interstate 95. Back when the lock was in operation, there was a gatekeeper's house, docks, and buildings that housed barge and boat crews.

Florida established the Everglades Drainage District in 1905. On July 4, 1906, Governor Napoleon Broward launched the project on the North New River Canal. The Sewell Lock was the first lock built to help maintain the water level of the canal and to control traffic. Construction of the lock was completed in. For 14 years (1912 to 1926), it was used by boats carrying people, vegetables and fish, lumber, and even farm equipment between the coast, the Everglades, and rural farms near Okeechobee.

The lock is 149 feet long and had two wooden gates at either end. The gates were operated by racks that were controlled by a hand-driven rack-and-pinion mechanism which opened and closed the gates.



The original hand-driven rack-and-pinion mechanism used to open and close the gates



All that remains of the Sewell Lock is the exterior concrete walls and one of the two gates

### How do canal locks work?

The floodgate on the side of the entering vessel opens to allow entry into the lock while the floodgate on the opposite side remains closed. Once the vessel is inside the lock chamber, the floodgate that the vessel entered through is also closed.

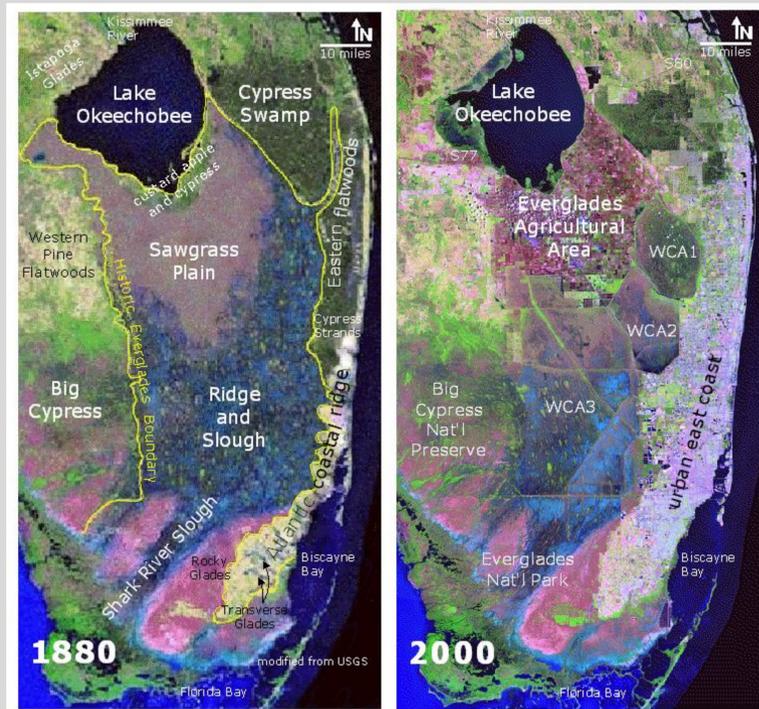
#### Elevating the boat:

The boat is fastened to the canal walls. Then channels (called *sluices*) are opened, allowing water to come into the lock from the canal. The additional water elevates the boat to the same level as the upper canal, allowing the boat to pass through the upstream gate.

#### Lowering the boat:

The boat is also fastened to the canal walls. The *sluices* are opened and the water flows out of the lock into the lower canal. The water level is now the same as the lower canal and the ship can pass through the downstream gates.





Source: GoHydrology.org

## Did you know that portions of the Everglades were drained?

In 1905, the State of Florida created the Everglades Drainage District to collect taxes in order to fund the construction of drainage canals. The purpose of draining the swamp was to both sell the drained land to cattle ranchers and to attract farmers to South Florida. Over 225 miles of canals between 1905 and 1912 were dug. Farmers settled the area south of Lake Okeechobee and used steamboats to transport their crops through the canals.

In 1948, construction under the Central and South Florida Project added more canals, levees with roads, and water control structures. This new water system was created to provide flood control and water to communities and irrigation to farms, preserve fish and wildlife habitats, enable navigation and recreation opportunities, and prevent salt water from entering into the freshwater supplies.

The draining of the Everglades assisted the population of Florida to grow from 87,500 in 1850 to 2,810,000 in 1950.

## Equipment Used to Dredge the Canals in the Everglades

The scraper dredge (aka *dragline*) uses a line attached from the front to the rear to “slice” the soil as the line is pulled along.

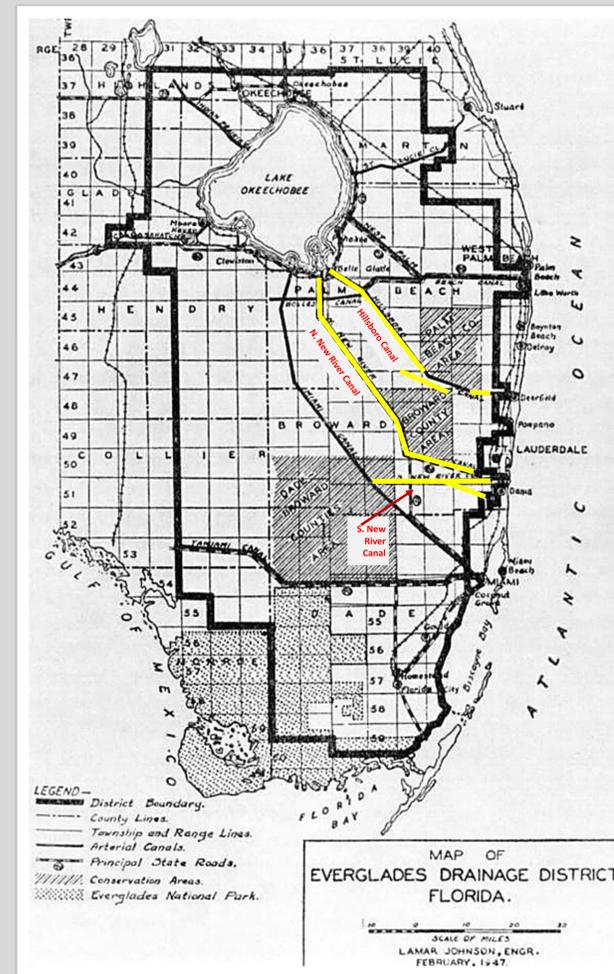


Source: Florida Memory

The dipper dredge is a barge that has a shovel mounted on an arm. The shovel scoops up the sand and mud and puts it on the banks of the waterway or transports it to another site.



Source: Florida Memory



Source: Florida Memory (updated)

## The Canals of South Florida

In the 1910s, there were four major canals built moving water south from Lake Okeechobee: West Palm Canal, Hillsboro Canal, North New River Canal, and Miami Canal. The three canals that were built in Broward County were: The North New River Canal which was completed in 1912 and ran from Lake Okeechobee to Fort Lauderdale. The South New River Canal was completed in 1913 and ran from the Miami Canal to Fort Lauderdale. The Hillsboro Canal was completed in 1915 and ran from Lake Okeechobee to Deerfield Beach.

In the mid-1910s, construction of the Tamiami Trail was started to join Tampa on the west coast and Miami on the east coast. The Tamiami Canal was formed from the adjacent dredged area.



For more information on our parks, go to: <https://www.broward.org/Parks> or scan here:

