



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 U.S. Route 95. Back when the lock was in operation, there was a gatekeeper's house, docks, and buildings that housed barge and boat crews.

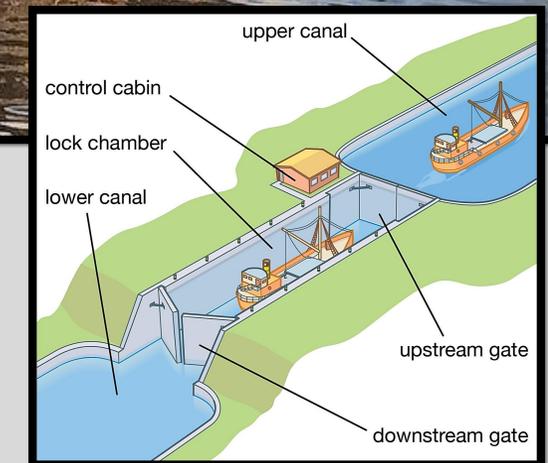
Florida established the Everglades Drainage District in 1905. On July 4, 1906, Governor Napoleon Broward launched the project on the North New River Canal. The Sewell Lock was the first lock built to help maintain the water level of the canal and to control traffic. Construction of the lock was completed in 1912 and the lock continued to be used until 1926, when it was closed to boat traffic. For 14 years, 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 floodgates in front of the vessel are closed, the vessel enters the lock, and the floodgates behind it are closed. The floodgates now keep the water inside the lock.

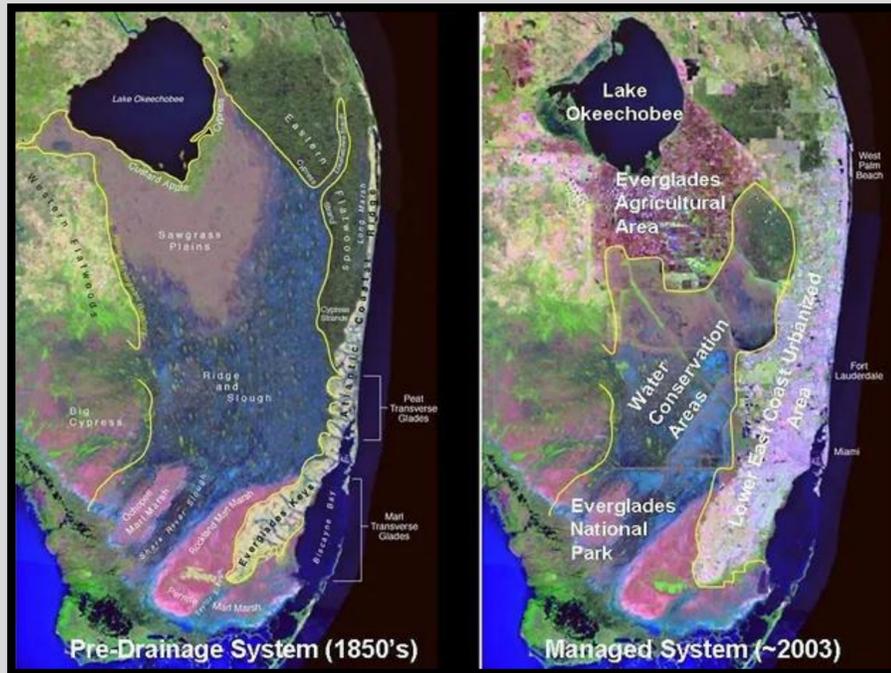
Elevating the boat:

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 boat is raised by the addition of water and will now be at the same water level as the canal it is facing. It can now pass through the floodgates.

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 canal in front. The water level is now the same, and the ship can pass through the floodgates.

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 the South Florida area. 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.

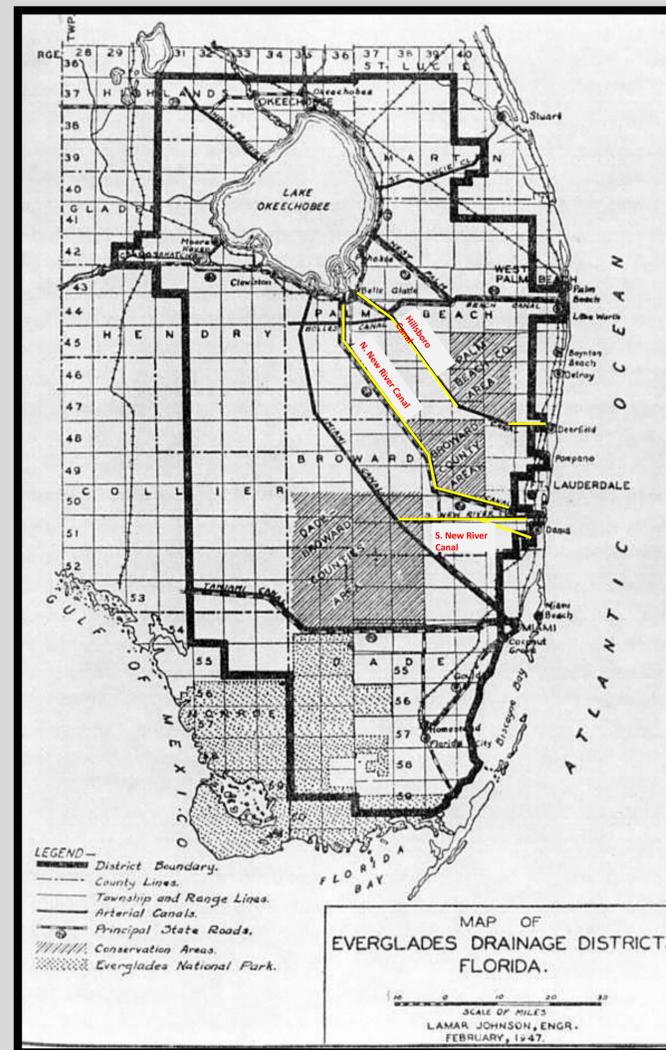
The draining of the Everglades allowed the population of Florida to go from 87,500 in 1850 to 2,810,000 in 1950.

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



Equipment Used to Dredge the Canals in the Everglades

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



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.