

## **Twentieth Century: The Birth and Growth of Modern Florida**

*"I just got wonderful news from my real estate agent in Florida. They found land on my property."* – Milton Berle, American Comedian

The sentiment portrayed in the humor of Milton Berle was no joke to many investors in Florida real estate. People traveled to Florida in search of a quick dollar since the days of Ponce de Leon and Hernando de Soto. This interest in land extended into the 20<sup>th</sup> century as new landowners look both above and below ground for investment opportunities. Land sales became big business during the 1920s and again in the 1950s and 1960s. Maps from this era demonstrate the dramatic landscape changes brought about by dredging, drag lines and determination.

For every 1920s real estate development that succeeded, a hundred failed. Places like Palm Beach, Boca Raton, Miami Beach and Davis Islands are permanent reminders of the success of the land boom, but communities that no longer exist tell an equally compelling story.

**For centuries, people have adapted to, depended on, and modified the environment.**

Florida's population growth over hundreds of years has influenced settlement patterns, community building, development, and transportation, which have affected the environment. The AAA map and other Florida transportation charts give insight into the state's historic heritage and modern development. This wealth of cartographic material constitutes a rich resource for investigating the evolution of the state's road, rail and air transportation networks, for studying coastline changes and for documenting the growth of Florida's towns and cities.