

**“Map of the Plant System of Railway, Steamer and Steamship Lines and Connections.” Lithograph. Undated, but approximately 1895.**

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This detailed map shows the extent of Henry Plant’s transportation empire in 1895. The main map focuses on transportation lines throughout Florida and portions of neighboring Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. Plant entered Florida’s railroad history in 1881 and began buying smaller lines, converting them to standard gauge, and laying new track as he pushed southward. Note the map inset (left bottom) showing numerous railway, steamer, and steamship lines extending to northern states and south to Caribbean and South American countries. Florida’s central location made the state vital to the entire Plant System. The emblem to the left of the map references Plant’s interests in Nova Scotia, Cuba, and Jamaica and also hints at the growing distrust of Spain by displaying prominent American flags on the cover of the map brochure. Illustrations of plush accommodations and their schedules fill open spaces in the Gulf of Mexico – the exotic Tampa Bay Hotel (open December to April, bottom center) is now part of the University of Tampa.

**Essential Question**

Why do you think Henry Plant was interested in Florida?