



THE CROSS-FLORIDA BARGE CANAL A GUIDE TO SELECTED MATERIALS IN THE CLAUDE PEPPER COLLECTION

Florida State University Libraries

The Cross-Florida Barge Canal was an inland waterway project to be constructed *from* the St. Johns River in Florida to the Gulf of Mexico via the lower reaches of the Oklawaha and Withlacoochee River valleys. While plans to seek a route for a canal across Florida began as early as the state's Spanish Territorial Period, a complete survey of such a route was not completed until the early twentieth century. In 1935, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers was authorized to construct the "Florida Sea Level Canal," but plans were abandoned in 1943. At that time, the Corps of Engineers issued a project report, "The Cross-Florida Barge Canal," which was presented as a World War II defense measure. An appropriation was requested, but Congress did not enact it. During his years in the U.S. Senate and House, Claude Pepper played a significant role in the development of this project.

While serving on the U.S. Senate Committee on Inter-Oceanic Canals prior to U.S. involvement in World War II, Pepper noted that the "Atlantic-Gulf Ship Canal" would be an important national defense resource that would make direct and safe navigation possible from the East coast to the Gulf of Mexico. He also believed the Canal would be more economical for shippers that traditionally used the longer route through the Florida Keys. At the same time, Pepper was sensitive to the interests of agricultural and horticultural workers by supporting the construction of the Canal if it were not economically and environmentally harmful to these industries.

During the 1960s, Claude Pepper continued to believe in the economic importance of developing an integrated system of waterways in Florida, and realized that the Canal would be an economic boon to the emerging space-age industry. In late 1963, Congress approved an appropriation to start construction of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, and work began in 1964. During the mid 1960s, Pepper supported the project, but he also wanted to protect the Oklawaha Valley from a possible disaster caused by flooding, in the event that the Canal overflowed.

In 1970, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Florida Defenders of the Environment organized opposition to the canal. The Florida Defenders of the Environment presented evidence demonstrating the need for further investigation into the continued construction of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, and Pepper supported this move. Faced with a court challenge, President Nixon asked for a review of the project and its environmental impact. Then in 1971 he signed an executive order stopping the work with only one-third of the Canal completed and \$70 million spent. Congress de-authorized the canal in 1986, and four years later, the Florida Legislature approved a state de-authorization bill. In November of 1990, President Bush de-authorized the federal project and the 110-miles of Canal lands were reverted to Florida. This land became the Cross-Florida Greenway State Recreation area.

This guide will help you locate selected materials in the Claude Pepper and Robert Manning Strozier Libraries that document the history of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal and Claude Pepper's role in its development.

BACKGROUND SOURCES

Ellerson, Amy. *The Cross-Florida Barge Canal: Ideologies in Conflict*. Thesis (M.A.), Florida State University, 1995. **Strozier Library HE 396 .F6 E45 1995**

Farmer, Claude Smith. *Some consequences of operation of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal*. Thesis (M.S.), Florida State University, 1965. **Strozier Library 386.48 F233s**

Florida Defenders of the Environment. *Environmental impact of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal with special emphasis on the Oklawaha regional ecosystem*. Gainesville, 1970. **Strozier Special Collections (Florida)(non-circ) TC 625 .C76 F56**

CORRESPONDENCE AND DIARIES IN CLAUDE PEPPER LIBRARY

Florida Ship Canal. 1938-1940. Series 201, Box 53, Folders 10-15; Series 201, Box 54; Series 431 A, Box 12, Folder 4.

Cross Florida Barge Canal. 1958-1966. Series 301, Box 35, Folder 4; Series 301, Box 36, Folders 1-4.

Cross Florida Barge Canal. 1970-1974. Series 301, Box 37, Folders 1-2. Pepper, Claude. *Diaries*. 1937, 1942. Series 439, Box 1. Cross-Florida Barge Canal. 1987. Series 301, Box 386, Folder 1.

NON-PRINT MATERIALS IN CLAUDE PEPPER LIBRARY

Photograph of U.S. Senate Delegation at Silver Springs, Ocala, on Cross-State Canal Inspection Tour. Includes Claude Pepper (standing 2nd from left), Senator Kenneth McKellar (standing 4th from right), Senator Richard Brevard Russell (standing 5th from right), Senator Roy O. Woodruff (unconfirmed, standing 4th from right), Senator Guy Cordon (standing 3rd from right), Senator Dennis Chavez (standing far right), Senator Theodore Francis Green (seated 4th from left), Mildred Pepper (seated 6th from left) and Governor Fred Cone (seated to right of Mildred Pepper). Others unidentified. March 10, 1939. Photo B (182)

Photograph of Claude Pepper seated on a platform with other dignitaries as President Lyndon Johnson speaks at the ground breaking for the Cross-Florida Barge Canal. February 27, 1964. Photo B (1696)

Map of planned Florida Canal showing benefits to defense establishments. 1939. Photo H (70)

Audio recording of Claude Pepper commenting on the Cross State Canal in Florida. August 29, 1962. Audio recording. AVA(1197)

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS IN STROZIER LIBRARY

Buckman, Henry Holland. *Documentary history of the Florida canal: ten-year period, January 1927 to June 1936 /presented by Mr. Loftin*; [compiled by Henry Holland Buckman]. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936. **Strozier Documents (Shelved in Subbasement) Y1.1/2: 10013**

Cross Florida Barge Canal restudy report. Final environmental impact statement. Jacksonville Florida: Department of the Army, Jacksonville District, Corps of Engineers. 1977. **Strozier Documents (Florida) (Restricted Circ.) Fla-Doc ACE3. CIS E58/1**

Lamonds, Andrew G. *Proposed Cross-Florida Barge Canal: Water-Quality Aspects*. Tallahassee, Fla.: U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division, 1976. **Strozier Documents I 19.42/4: 76-23**

Meta Systems, Inc. *Air quality analysis for the Cross Florida Barge Canal Project: for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District*; prepared by Meta Systems, Inc. Cambridge, Mass.: Meta Systems, 1976. **Strozier Documents (Florida) (Restricted Circ.) Fla-Doc ACE3. CIS A46**

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Public Works and Transportation. Subcommittee on Water Resources. *Cross-Florida Barge Canal: hearing before the Subcommittee on Water Resources of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation, House of Representatives, Ninety-ninth Congress,*

first session, June 10, 1985, Palatka, FL. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1986. **Strozier Documents Mif Y4.P96/11: 99-34**

You may also wish to consult the *Congressional Indexes, 1789-1969, and the Indexes to Unpublished Hearings*. They are available on the Congressional Universe website, accessible from the FSU Libraries Databases webpage at <http://vwww.fsu.edu/library/search/databases/index.shtml>