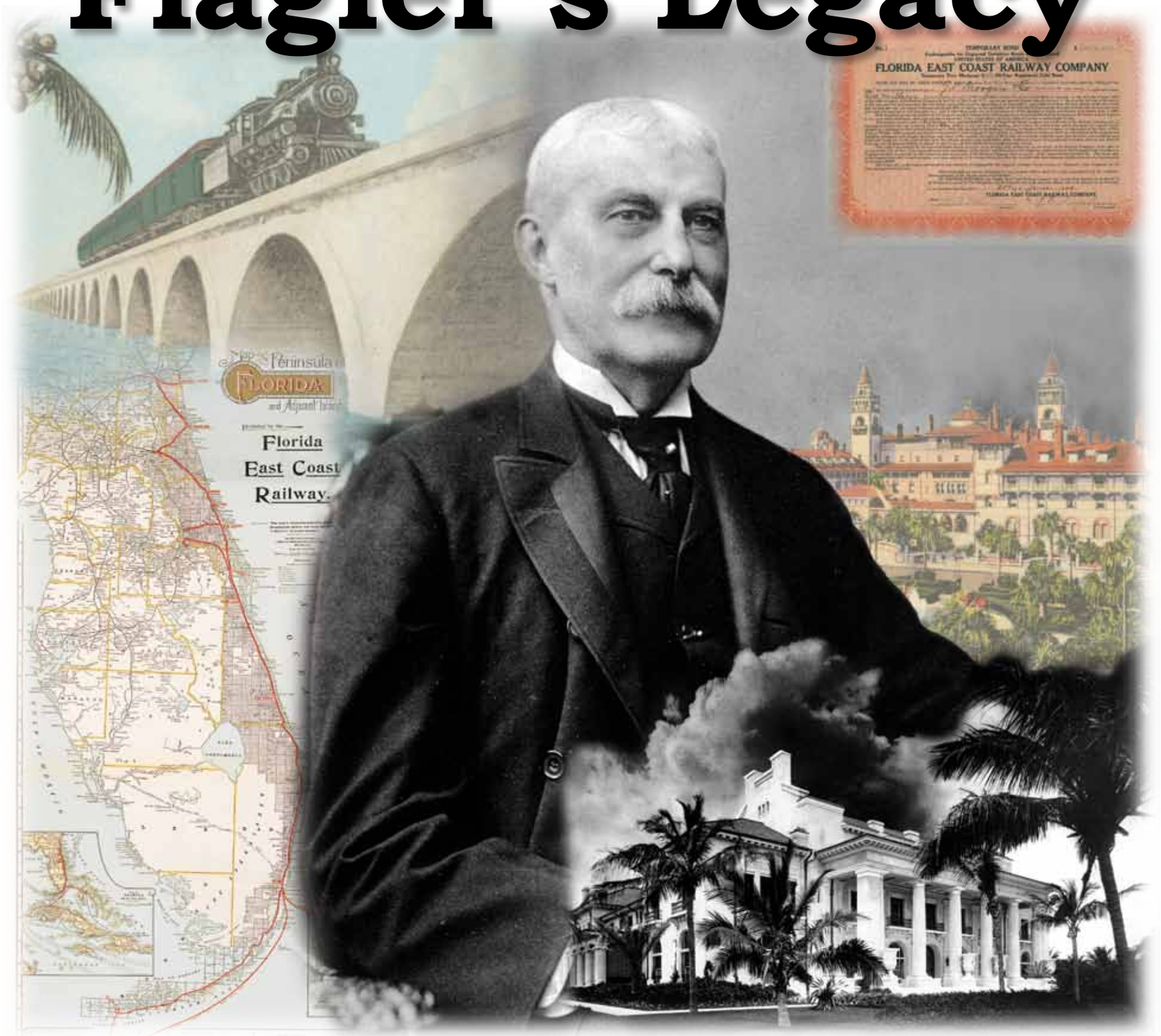
Flagler's Legacy



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Dear Teachers, Parents, and Students:

The Whitehall Society of the Flagler Museum, with the support of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the Enterprise Holdings Foundation, is very pleased to provide you with this copy of Flagler's Legacy. This Newspapers In Education tabloid tells the story of Henry Flagler's profound and enduring contributions to the development of Florida and Palm Beach County. Today, there is more than one billion dollars of Henry Flagler's fortune invested in foundations and trusts that support more than 50 million dollars in educational, charitable, and cultural programs each year.

After playing a key role in the development of the modern American corporation, as the architect of Standard Oil's corporate structure, Flagler used his fortune to develop Florida, building a railway system that connected Florida's entire east coast from Jacksonville to Key West, establishing a series of luxury hotels that created Florida's booming tourism industry, developing the State's massive agricultural industry, and building Whitehall, Florida's first museum. In a very real sense, Henry Flagler invented modern Florida.

Though Henry Flagler was a tremendously successful businessman, he remained humble and did not enjoy the spotlight. He was motivated to create opportunities for others not because doing so would burnish his image, but simply because he wanted to help, noting that, "The hardest problem a man has is how to help people. The desire to help others comes when a man has more than enough for his own needs."

We hope that *Flagler's Legacy* will serve to enrich your understanding of Henry Flagler's legacy in Florida and the many ways in which he helped to shape our community. And, we hope his legacy will inspire you to continue the American tradition of thinking big, working hard to accomplish your goals and then honoring your success by creating opportunities for others.

Sincerely,

Kelly Hopkins

Kelly Hopkins, Chair
The Whitehall Society of the Flagler Museum

HENRY MORRISON FLAGLER MUSEUM
A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

ONE WHITEHALL WAY, P.O. BOX 969, PALM BEACH, FL 33480
PHONE (561) 655-2833 FAX (561) 655-2826 E-MAIL WHITEHALLSOCIETY@FLAGLERMUSEUM.US WEBSITE WWW.FLAGLERMUSEUM.US

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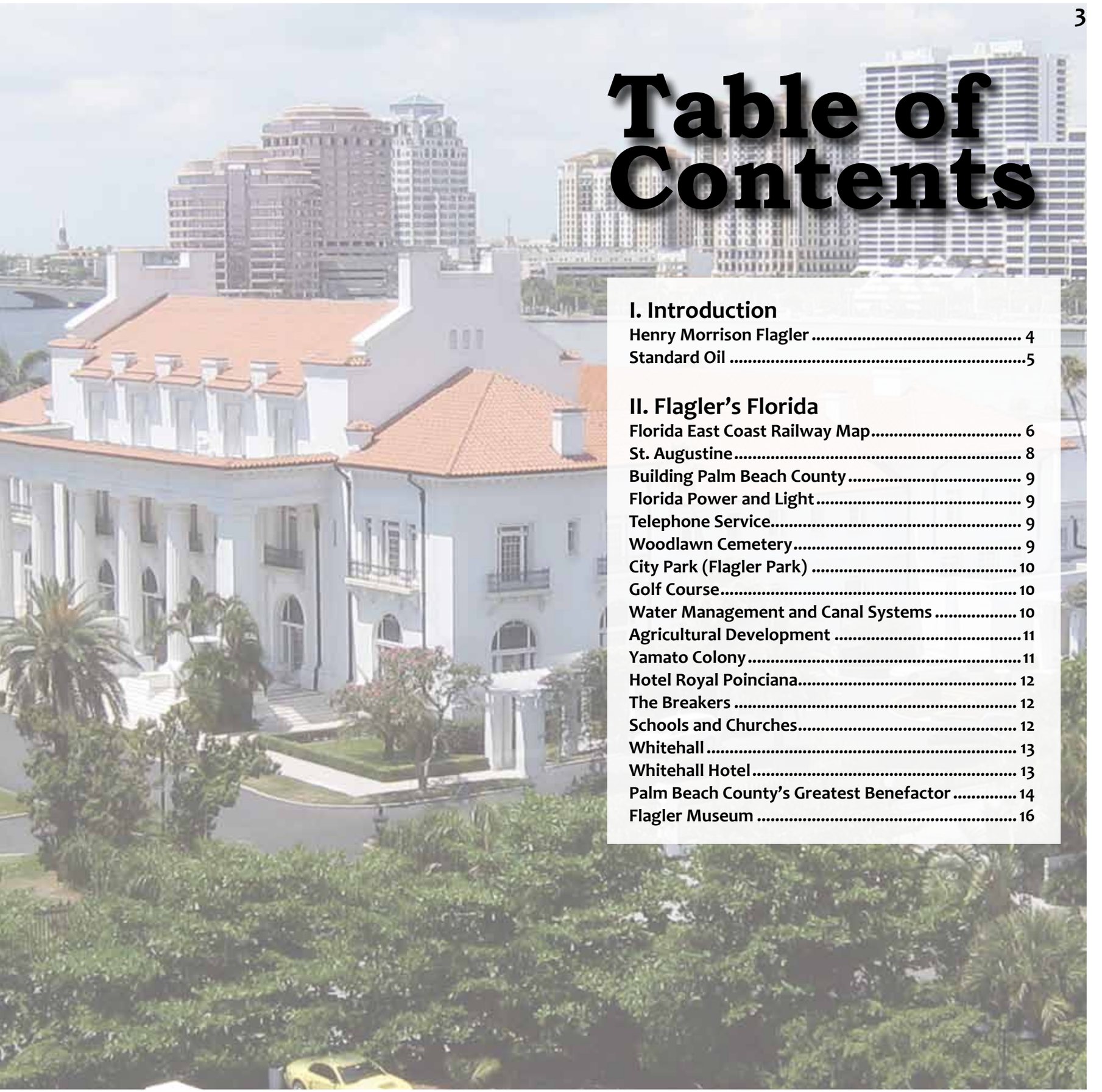

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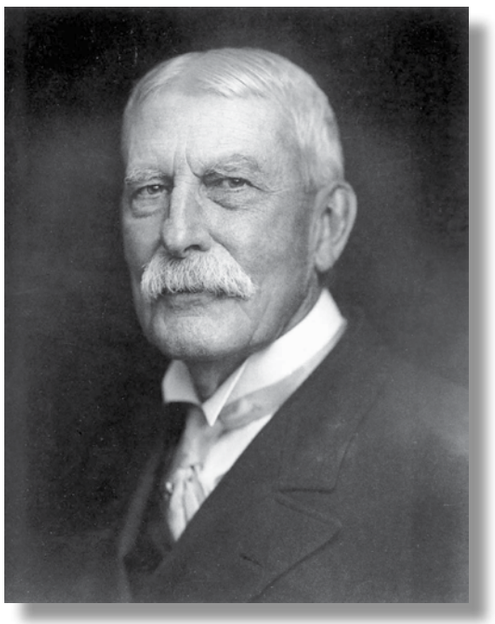
Introduction



Henry Morrison Flagler

Like many wealthy Americans of the Gilded Age, Henry Flagler invested his money in public libraries, schools, and hospitals. And he often thought about how best to use his resources, saying, "The hardest problem a man has is how to help people. The desire to help others comes when a man has more than enough for his own needs. I have come to the conclusion that the best way to help others is to help them help themselves."

Henry Flagler and other Gilded Age Captains of Industry and commerce understood their obligation to society to distribute their wealth in such a way that created opportunities for everyone. In his essay on the responsibilities of wealth, titled "The Gospel of Wealth" Andrew Carnegie warned about the moral hazards of simply making money without investing in worthy causes. **"This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: ... to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him ... in the manner which, in his judgement, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community."**

Can you list a few examples of how Gilded Age Captains of Industry may have "provided moderately for the legitimate wants" of their communities?

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A great many Gilded Age business leaders did give to causes that benefitted the public, setting a standard of philanthropy unique in history.

By the time of his death in 1913, Henry Flagler had accumulated almost unimaginable wealth from his business dealings in Standard Oil, the Florida East Coast Railway, Florida East Coast Hotel Company, Model Land Company, and his ownership of major Florida newspapers and utilities. Henry Flagler's estate was worth an estimated 100 million dollars; which is equivalent of more than two billion dollars today.

Henry Flagler was never selfish with his fortune. His contributions provided land for dozens of schools, churches, parks, courthouses, libraries, hospitals, and cemeteries throughout Florida, especially in Palm Beach County. Even after his death, Henry Flagler's Model Land Company continued to donate land to Florida communities. For example, the land upon which the West Palm Beach 1916 Courthouse was built, was donated by the Model Land Company. Today, the Richard and Pat Johnson History Museum and the Historical Society of Palm Beach County are based in the 1916 Courthouse. In fact, a century after Henry Flagler's death there is more than one billion dollars of Henry Flagler's fortune invested in endowments or trusts that support more than 50 million dollars in educational, charitable, and cultural programs nationwide each year.

Re-read the last paragraph of this section. What do you know about your community that may help support the main idea?

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Choose a historical figure from the Gilded Age (1865-1929). From reading about this person in primary and secondary sources, determine what event in his or her life made them notable. Design a biographical sketch of this person and include his or her image or portrait and some key factors in his or her personal and career history.

Teachers: Take a step further by designing a timeline of Gilded Age history-makers. You will want to include major benchmarks like births, deaths, and achievements.

Standard Oil

Standard Oil Filling Station, 1910. The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

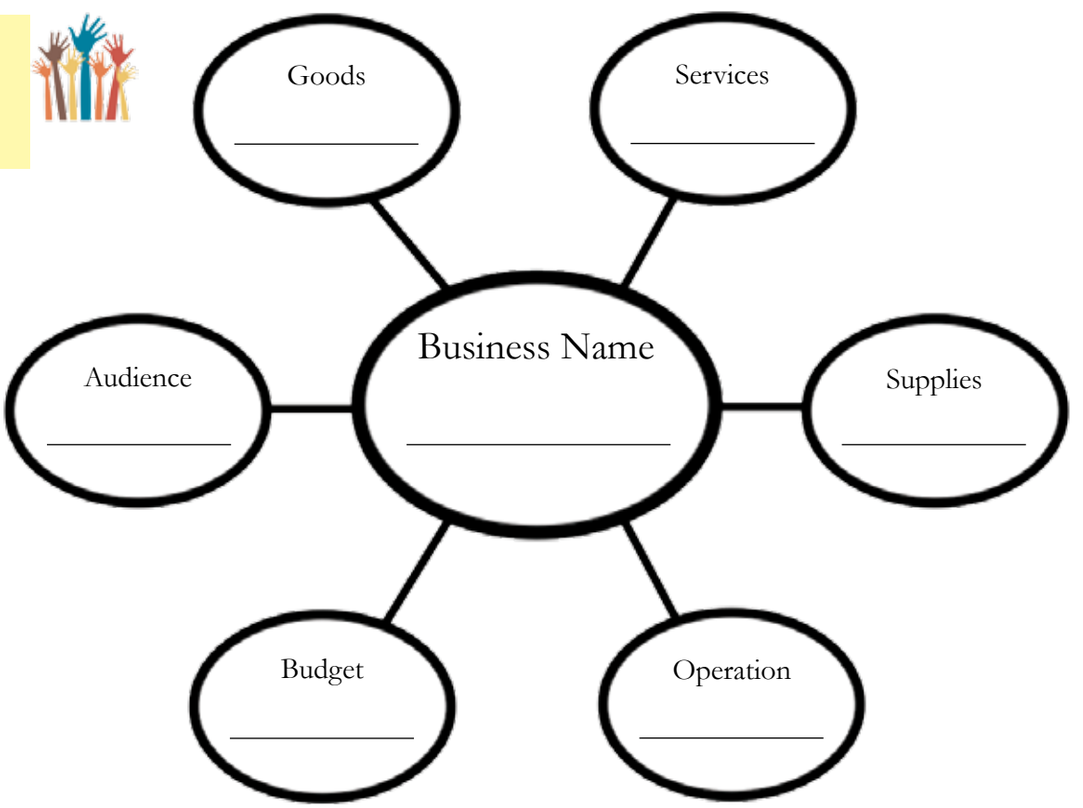
Before Henry Flagler ever visited Florida, he became a successful captain of industry and commerce and made an important contribution to the industry of American business. Standard Oil, the company he co-founded with John D. Rockefeller and Samuel Andrews in 1870, was the most profitable company in history for more than 100 years. Like many other corporations, Standard Oil built its business rapidly by acquiring competitors' operations and securing shipping discounts. Within a very short time, the company was producing massive amounts of petroleum products at lower consumer prices than ever before. However, unlike other companies at the time, Henry Flagler was the first businessman to find a way to structure Standard Oil so that it could do business in several states from one main office. Eventually, Standard Oil became the best-known business in America, due in large part to Henry Flagler. His partner John D. Rockefeller has the better-known name, but when asked about Standard Oil's multi-state corporate structure, he said, "I wish I'd had the brains to think of it. It was Henry M. Flagler."

Standard Oil Building, New York, 1885.

In a classroom think-aloud, discuss how Standard Oil changed American business practices.

Brainstorm a business plan for a classroom business. Think about what goods or services your classroom could provide to a consumer. What are the steps you will need to successfully start your classroom business? What will you charge for your product or service? Don't forget to advertise and establish a good relationship with neighboring businesses.

Teachers: Take it a step further by teaming up with a few other educators at your school or beyond.



Flagler's Florida

"How to build a hotel to meet the requirements of nineteenth-century America and have it in keeping with the character of the place- that was my hardest problem." – Henry Flagler

When Flagler first visited Florida in 1878, he recognized the state's potential for growth but noticed a lack of quality accommodations. Flagler returned to Florida in 1885 with an eye toward developing the area around St. Augustine and began building a grand hotel, the Hotel Ponce de Leon. He realized that the key to developing Florida was a solid transportation system and consequently purchased the Jacksonville, St. Augustine & Halifax Railroad. He also noticed that a major problem facing the existing Florida railway systems was that each operated on different gauge tracks, making interconnection impossible. Shortly after purchasing the Jacksonville, St. Augustine & Halifax Railroad, he converted the line to standard gauge.

The Jacksonville, St. Augustine & Halifax Railroad served the northeastern portion of the state and was the first railroad in what would eventually become a system of railroads named the Florida East Coast Railway Company. In addition to improving the railroad, Flagler built schools, a hospital and churches in St. Augustine, singlehandedly revitalizing the historic city.

Flagler soon purchased three more railroads: the St. John's Railway, the St. Augustine and Palatka Railway, and the St. John's and Halifax Railroad so that he could provide extended rail service on standard gauge tracks. With the addition of these three railroads, by spring 1889 Flagler's system offered service from Jacksonville to Daytona. Continuing to develop hotel facilities to entice northern tourists to visit Florida, Flagler bought and expanded the Hotel Ormond, located along the railroad's route north of Daytona.

Based on what you've read so far, predict what Henry Flagler would do next with his railroad business.

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Beginning in 1892, when landowners south of Daytona petitioned him to extend the railroad 80 miles south, Flagler began laying new railroad tracks; no longer did he follow his traditional practice of purchasing existing railroads and merging them into his growing rail system. Flagler obtained a charter from the state of Florida authorizing him to build a railroad along the Indian River to Fort Dallas and as the railroad progressed southward, cities such as New Smyrna and Titusville began to develop along the tracks. By 1894, Flagler's railroad system reached what is today known as West Palm Beach. Flagler constructed the Hotel Royal Poinciana on the eastern shore of Lake Worth in what is now known as Palm Beach. He also built The Breakers Hotel on the ocean side of Palm Beach, and Whitehall, his private 75-room, 100,000 square foot winter home. The building of the hotels, coupled with railroad access to them, established Palm Beach as a winter resort

Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway, ca. 1900.

Whitehall, 1903.

for the wealthy members of America's Gilded Age and the Hotel Royal Poinciana became the largest resort in the world.

Even before he extended his railroad to Daytona, Henry Flagler was seriously considering going all the way to Key West. However, he was content to wait for the right opportunity, which came as a result of the severe freezes of 1894 and 1895. The freezes affected the state as far south as Palm Beach. To further convince Flagler to continue the railroad to Fort Dallas, he was offered land from private landowners, the Florida East Coast Canal and Transportation Company, and the Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast Land Company in exchange for laying track to Fort Dallas. That was enough to induce him to begin immediately.

In September 1895, Flagler's system was incorporated as the Florida East Coast Railway Company and by 1896, it reached Biscayne Bay, the largest and most accessible harbor on Florida's east coast. Henry Flagler continued to develop the area surrounding the Fort Dallas railroad station. He dredged a channel, built streets, instituted the first water and power systems, and financed the town's first newspaper, the *Metropolis*. When the town incorporated in 1896, its citizens wanted to honor the man responsible for the City's development by naming it "Flagler." He declined the honor, persuading them instead to use the Native American name for the river running through the settlement, "Miama" or "Miami."

When the United States announced its intention to build the Panama Canal in 1905, Flagler embarked on perhaps his greatest

Henry Flagler and Mary Lily Flagler.

challenge: the extension of the Florida East Coast Railway to Key West, a city of almost 20,000 inhabitants located 128 miles beyond the end of the Florida peninsula. A railroad terminal in Key West, the United States' closest deepwater port to the Canal, could not only take advantage of Cuban and Latin American trade, but also significant shipping and trade that would result from the construction of the Panama Canal.

The construction of the Over-Sea Railroad required many engineering innovations as well as vast amounts of labor and monetary resources. The construction employed up to 4,000 men. During the seven years of construction, five hurricanes threatened to halt the project, with three storms causing major damage. Despite the hardships, and the engineering challenges, the Over-Sea Railroad, the final link of the Florida East Coast Railway, was completed on January 22, 1912, just weeks after Flagler's 82nd birthday.

Linking the entire east coast of Florida with a transportation system and establishing tourism and agriculture as the basis of the state's economy, which at the time was largely an uninhabited frontier, demanded a great deal of foresight and perseverance. More than a century later, Florida's economy is larger than 90% of the nations of the world, and the mainstays of Florida's economy that Flagler established are still agriculture and tourism. As a consequence, Henry Flagler's amazing legacy as the inventor of modern Florida can still clearly be seen in Florida.

Imagine you are planning a week- long trip from New York City, New York to Palm Beach, Florida. You need to decide what method of transportation you will utilize as well as where you will stay in Palm Beach once you arrive. Search online for different methods of transportation from New York to Florida. Calculate how much you will spend on travel and lodging for your trip. Remember you only have a week for your trip and some methods of transportation will take longer than others.

Teachers: Take it a step further by setting up a budget for your students' trip. Have your students itemize every cost they will encounter along the way: travel, lodging, meals, excursions, and souvenirs.

Using the clues in the section titled *Flagler's Florida*, why do you think Henry Flagler is called "the inventor of modern Florida?"

"I believe this State is the easiest place for many men to gain a living. I do not believe any one else will develop it if I do not." – Henry Flagler

It may sound strange to us today to describe Florida as America's last frontier, but that is exactly what it was when Henry Flagler first visited the state in the late 1870s. In fact, Florida may well have been the poorest state in the Union. At that time, Florida was best known as a place where chronically ill people went to recover. And it was illness that first brought Henry Flagler to Florida. His first wife, Mary Harkness, suffered from a type of lung disease and doctors recommended she spend some time in Florida to recuperate. The Flaglers spent the winter of 1878 in Jacksonville but left unimpressed with Florida. Unfortunately, Mary Harkness did not recover from her illness and died not long after returning home to New York. When Henry Flagler returned in 1883 to visit St. Augustine with his new wife, his impression was more favorable and he thought he saw an opportunity others had missed. He began investing some of his ever-growing Standard Oil fortune in Florida.

During Henry Flagler's first visit to Florida, he noticed the lack of an extensive transportation system, though there were many short railroad lines of various gauge size and private ownership. At the time, there were only a few major cities: Tampa, Tallahassee, Orlando, Pensacola, St. Augustine, and the state's second largest city, Key West. The Florida frontier did not have many population centers or convenient utilities. However, it did have undeveloped public land. Millions of acres of land were given to the state by the federal government to encourage internal improvements. This land grant was designed to entice railroad builders to the state. Henry Flagler arrived in Florida when these land grants were available. He set about transforming himself from a partner in Standard Oil to a major developer of Florida. In fact, he succeeded so well that it is not an exaggeration to say that he invented modern Florida.

Hotel Ponce de Leon, St. Augustine, 1888.

St. Augustine

Determined to build a "Newport of the South" where his associates would feel welcomed by modern amenities of the Gilded Age, Henry Flagler developed a plan to bring a sense of luxury to a town better known for its old history. So taken by the town's celebration of Ponce de Leon's historic presence, Flagler announced his plan to build a luxury hotel named after the founding patriarch. The people of St. Augustine welcomed the work that Henry Flagler's hotel projects brought to town. The bustling flow of seasonal tourism helped shift the city's reputation from one of an infirmary, or place for sick people, to one of resort-style vacationing. While living and working in St. Augustine, Henry Flagler relied on several local businessmen to help him accomplish his plan. One local businessman was asked to step in on Flagler's behalf to better persuade a landowner to sell his parcel to Flagler for the purpose of building the Hotel Ponce de Leon, and was happy to do so, commenting, " ... you are doing too much for St. Augustine for any of her people to offer an obstacle or stand in the way; we appreciate too highly the advantages to result from your investments there."

Now that you know Henry Flagler owned a lot of land in Florida, make three predictions of how this helped him to invent modern Florida.

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County Map, Florida, ca. 1880.

Building Palm Beach County

Henry Flagler is the most productive citizen in the history of Florida and Palm Beach County. Before it was even known as Palm Beach County, Henry Flagler had a plan for laying out West Palm Beach, a city that would support the growing community. By doing so, he supplied jobs for thousands of workers, encouraged tourism to the area, enhanced the local agricultural industry, and provided the necessary land for the city to take shape. There would be room for neighborhoods, shops, churches, hospitals, City Hall, and even a cemetery. The combination of his wealth acquired by business success and his vision for developing Florida insured that the legacy of his contributions to the growing community would last well beyond his death. Take a look at some of Henry Flagler's most important contributions to Palm Beach County:

Florida Power and Light

Henry Flagler's visit to St. Augustine in the early 1880s led to his desire to explore Florida as a vast and undeveloped frontier. His decision to build hotels and expand the railroad southward also led to the need for modern utilities such as electric power and indoor plumbing. Today, these types of amenities may seem more like requirements in our own homes, but in Henry Flagler's day, they were convenient luxuries that allowed hotel guests to be comfortable. There were several small electric power plants located along the east coast of Florida by the time Henry Flagler began his southward expansion from St. Augustine toward what is today Palm Beach County. However, the construction of Flagler's hotels directly affected the growth of surrounding cities, and more people meant the need to increase the power supply. By 1909, a large power plant was operating in West Palm Beach and delivering electricity to Palm Beach through underground cables across Lake Worth. Eventually, the small systems that Henry Flagler used to supply power to his luxury hotels from St. Augustine to Miami became part of what is now Florida Power & Light.

Telephone Service

The first telephone company in West Palm Beach was established in 1905, more than a decade after Henry Flagler opened his world-class resort, Hotel Royal Poinciana, and a few years after his home Whitehall was constructed (which included telephone service to the Hotel Royal Poinciana). The first example of telephone service between Palm Beach and West Palm Beach was located in the Florida East Coast railroad station. This connection was made possible when Henry Flagler granted permission for the telephone company to extend their phone wires across the railroad bridge he had built and into the switchboard of the hotel.

Woodlawn Cemetery

In 1904, Henry Flagler purchased a large parcel of land that was once a pineapple plantation and transferred the ownership of the property to the city of West Palm Beach to be used by the city as a public cemetery. Woodlawn Cemetery soon became the most attractive cemetery in the area. The elaborate entrance gate is inscribed with: "That which is so universal as death must be a blessing." Initially, Henry Flagler himself planned to be laid to rest within the gates of Woodlawn Cemetery. However, shortly before he died in 1913, he chose instead to be laid to rest at the Flagler Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine where his wife, daughter, and granddaughter had already been laid to rest.

Woodlawn Cemetery.
(Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

While you're studying about Henry Flagler's legacy in Palm Beach County, keep a journal that documents your best visualization of a student's life between 1894 and 1913. Write about your home, the type of work your parents did, your skills, and how you contributed to your family's way of life.

Teachers: Take it a step further by designing a classroom community. Plot out streets, neighborhoods, and landmarks like bodies of water and railroads. Ask students to choose a lot on the map and develop it according to the information they wrote in their journal entries.

"Sometimes, at the close of the day, when I am fortunate enough to be alone, I come here...I look at the water and the trees yonder and at the sunset...I often wonder if there is anything in the other world as beautiful as this." – Henry Flagler

City Park (Flagler Park)

Henry Flagler worked with a determined mind to accomplish his goal of developing West Palm Beach. Among the many things he did for West Palm Beach was the gift of a park for the people of the city to enjoy. In 1899, Flagler purchased two land plots near Lake Worth and immediately transferred them to the City of West Palm Beach. He thought it was important for the people of the city to have a park. He even set a restriction on the land use; the park was to be, " ... kept, used and maintained as an ornamental public park by being planted with flowers, shrubbery and ornamental trees."

City Park, West Palm Beach.(Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

Golf Course

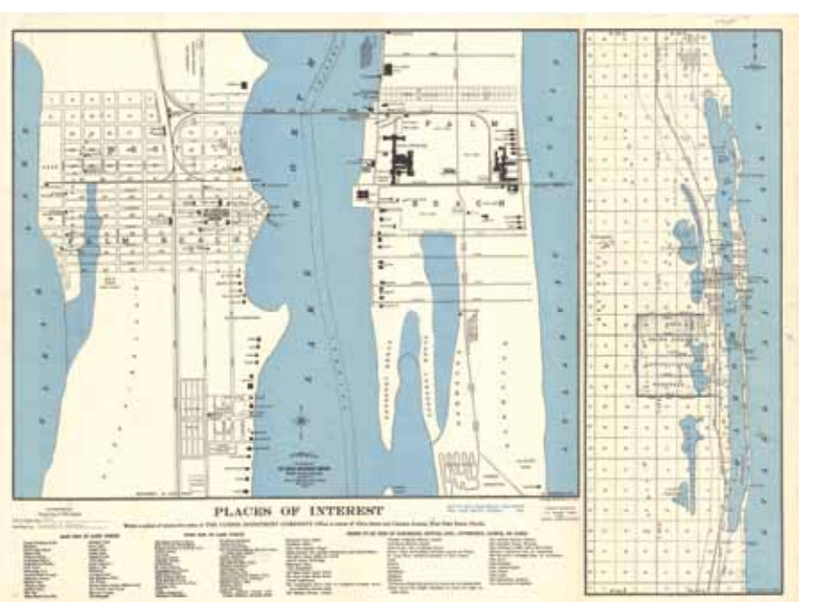
Though apparently Henry Flagler himself did not play golf, it was rapidly becoming a popular sport in America at the time he was building hotels and expanding the Florida East Coast Railway. The Hotel Royal Poinciana claimed to have the first nine-hole golf course in Florida. Later, it was expanded to 18-holes and today The Breakers Hotel maintains the historic golf course. Currently, Florida has more golf courses than any other state in the Union. With more than 140, Palm Beach County now has more golf courses than any other county in the United States.

Water Management and Canal Systems

By the mid-1880s, Henry Flagler was already thinking of continuing south with the Florida East Coast Railway. As part of Florida's state land grant program, Flagler would be granted land for every mile of railroad track laid. However, the land near the planned route of Flagler's railroad was already owned by a canal company that was responsible for dredging waterways in South Florida. Knowing he would need land to extend the railroad, Henry Flagler proposed an idea to the manager of the canal company. He requested that the canal company's state land grant be divided with the Florida East Coast Railway, or that the canal company agree to give the FEC 1,500 acres per mile to bring the railroad south about 100 miles. This agreement meant the Florida East Coast Railway would extend the railroad south, and in turn, made the canal company's remaining land accessible to prospective buyers. Flagler got the land he requested in order to extend the Florida East Coast Railway and later became president of the canal company.

When Henry Flagler first arrived in what later became known as Palm Beach County, shallow wells were put in place to provide drinking water to local residents. With the popularity of the Hotel Royal Poinciana and thousands of seasonal guests flooding the area each year, newer more sustainable methods for locating fresh water were necessary. Henry Flagler recognized the problem and devised a solution. A West Palm Beach water works was established at Clear Lake for the purpose of supplying clean water to the Hotel Royal Poinciana. This same water source eventually served both the City of West Palm Beach and the Town of Palm Beach. As the population of the area grew, demand for clean water increased and the West Palm Beach Water Company was incorporated in 1909. Clear Lake also served as the source for water dedicated to the organized fire department, who named themselves the *Flagler Alerts* in honor of the financial support they received from Henry Flagler.

Flagler Alerts. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)



Map of West Palm Beach, 1907. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

West Palm Beach Canal.

Pineapple Farming. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

Windella Plantation. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

Agricultural Development

Henry Flagler's contribution to the development of the east coast of Florida goes well beyond building luxury hotels and laying railroad. Today, we think of him as the inventor of modern Florida and honor his vision for supporting commerce and industry throughout Florida. Understanding that one of the best uses of the now standardized railroad was the shipment of agricultural products, Henry Flagler underwrote the 1904 startup costs of Delray Canning Company, an operation that canned local pineapples in Delray Beach and tomatoes from further south in what are now Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. Pineapples were the Lake Worth Region's biggest commercial crop, and with the Delray Canning Company, local Floridians had a way to preserve their crops and ship them to northern markets while still fresh.

Yamato Colony

In 1903, Jo Sakai, a Japanese student studying at New York University, arrived in St. Augustine, Florida, at the request of Henry Flagler's Model Land Company. At the time, the Model Land Company was interested in bringing skilled agriculturalists to Florida to cultivate and farm the land it had acquired through land grants in exchange for developing railroads. Jo Sakai toured farm land in South Florida and chose a tract in Delray Beach. He named the Japanese farming community, Yamato Colony. He then returned to Japan to organize a group of farmers, who along with their families immigrated and began farming. In the early half of the twentieth century, the people of Yamato Colony were successful at producing a variety of crops including pineapples. Today, Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens serves to educate the public on the work of the Yamato Colony.

"While I agree with you in the belief that Palm Beach 'has come to stay,' it is I think an undisputed fact that my investments have given it its permanence as a winter resort." – Henry Flagler

Hotel Royal Poinciana

In 1894, Henry Flagler built the Hotel Royal Poinciana on the eastern shore of Lake Worth in Palm Beach. The Hotel Royal Poinciana soon became the largest resort in the world. It had well over a thousand guest room accommodations, recreational facilities, and shops. The hotel even had its own dedicated post office and received mail each day.

Hotel Royal Poinciana, 1896.

The Breakers

The Breakers, 1903.

In 1896 Flagler built the Palm Beach Inn overlooking the Atlantic Ocean in Palm Beach, though it was eventually renamed The Breakers. The Breakers was built with every modern convenience: electricity, indoor plumbing, and telephone systems. Today it is the last remaining hotel of the Flagler System.

Schools and Churches

A large part of Henry Flagler's commitment throughout Florida and in Palm Beach County was to establish communities, by helping to build the necessary infrastructure. In correspondence to an associate in 1901, Henry Flagler wrote, " ... little settlements are fast springing up along the line of my railroad property South. The first needs of the people are school houses and churches, and I am assisting them all as well as I can."

Henry Flagler had the foresight to provide his community with places of religious significance. Flagler was the son of a Presbyterian minister and attended church services throughout his life. One way he helped to develop his community was to provide land, funding, and support to church parishes. In Palm Beach, he built the Royal Poinciana Chapel and attended services there. In West Palm Beach, he donated the land on which St. Ann's Catholic Church was built and also gave housing to the parish clergy. St. Ann's was the first Catholic church in Palm Beach County. Around the same time, Henry Flagler gave land to Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, the second Episcopal church in the Lake Worth Region. All three of the churches are still in operation today.

Top: Royal Poinciana Chapel, 1901.
Middle: St. Ann's Catholic Church. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)
Bottom: Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

Whitehall

When it was built in 1902, the *New York Herald* described Whitehall as, "More wonderful than any palace in Europe, grander and more magnificent than any other private dwelling in the world." The same team of young architects who designed Henry Flagler's St. Augustine hotels and churches, John Carrère and Thomas Hastings, were called upon to design the classic example of Beaux-Arts style architecture. Whitehall, like other Gilded Age homes, was built with the most modern technology of the time, including electricity, central heat, indoor plumbing, and telephones. Whitehall was not constructed to be just a home. It was much more than a waterfront mansion. One of Whitehall's architects, John Carrère said about Whitehall, "The amount of art education which a building can disseminate among the masses is far beyond what we realize." Whitehall was designed as a private museum, the first of its kind in Florida, and is an impressive example of cultural heritage for Floridians and all Americans.

Whitehall, 1903.

In small groups, discuss what the author meant when they wrote, "Whitehall was built as a private museum, the first of its kind in Florida."

Whitehall Hotel.

Whitehall Hotel

After Mary Lily Kenan Flagler Bingham's death in 1917, Whitehall was inherited by her niece, Louise Wise Lewis. In 1924, she sold the estate to an investor who was interested in turning the property into a private club. Later, construction was completed to add 10 stories and 300 hotel rooms, a dining room, a beauty salon, and retail shops. The Whitehall Hotel saw most of its visitors during the winter season from December to April. Parts of the Flaglers' home were used in the operation of Whitehall Hotel. For instance, the Grand Hall was turned into a lounge, the Library and Music Room were used for playing cards, and the Courtyard was the location for afternoon tea. Whitehall Hotel attracted many celebrities and other notables. Actress Greta Garbo and illustrator Walt Disney both stayed at Whitehall Hotel. By the late 1950s, the Hotel was in financial distress and was put up for sale. Henry Flagler's granddaughter, Jean Flagler Matthews, purchased the property and began efforts to restore Whitehall to its original condition.

Founder Jean Flagler Matthews.

Palm Beach County's Greatest Benefactor

Henry Flagler was the most important visionary and successful businessman in Florida's history. One hundred years after his death, Floridians continue to honor him and his contributions to our communities, especially in Palm Beach County. Henry Flagler invested himself and his fortune in the development of Florida, and literally invented modern Florida. The transportation infrastructure and the tourism and agricultural industries he established are even today, the very foundation of Florida's economy. The building of the Over-Sea Railroad remains the most ambitious engineering feat ever undertaken by a private citizen. When Henry Flagler began his work in Florida, it was perhaps the poorest state in the Union. Today, thanks in large part to Henry Flagler, Florida is the third largest state in the Union with an economy larger than 90% of the world's nations. Indeed, no individual has had a greater or more lasting impact on a state than Henry Flagler has had in Florida.

In December 2010, the Town of Palm Beach celebrated its centennial and honored Henry Flagler's contributions by dedicating a statue of Mr. Flagler at the historic entrance to Palm Beach, along Royal Poinciana Way. The statue was donated to the Town by the Flagler Museum and underwritten by G. F. Robert Hanke, Henry Flagler's great-grandson. The statue serves to welcome visitors to Palm Beach as they arrive via the Flagler Memorial Bridge, the town's historical entrance. The statue reminds future generations of Henry Flagler's contributions as Palm Beach County's most prominent citizen and greatest benefactor. One of Henry Flagler biographers wrote, "If Henry Flagler has a business claim to immortality, it is his development of the east coast of Florida - that land which, from the time of Ponce de Leon, allowed people to dream - and Flagler made his a reality."

Statue of Henry Flagler in the median of Royal Poinciana Way, Palm Beach. Dedicated December 2010.

How would you summarize Henry Flagler's contributions to Florida? Using clues from the reading, what are some ways in which Floridians have celebrated Henry Flagler, both locally, and around the state?

Conduct online research to locate as many cities, counties, bridges, and other landmarks that reference Henry Morrison Flagler. Once you have found a few examples pinpoint them on a map. Take the information you gather from your research to create a travel brochure that highlights Henry Flagler's contribution to that area on the map.

Teachers: Take it a step further by using these brochures to create a travel resource center in your classroom. Offer credit to students who travel to the locations pinpointed on student maps.

Floridians continue to honor Henry Flagler for his generous contributions to our state's communities. Now it's your turn to leave a legacy!

As a class, decide how you can contribute to your community. Below are a few examples to get you started, or create your own.

Brainstorm a list of random acts of kindness. Choose 12 from the list and assign each one to a month. Challenge each other to accomplish each act throughout the year. Be sure to choose a list of acts that will make a significant positive difference in someone's life.

Have a classroom fundraiser! Make a charitable donation in someone's honor or memory with money collected from friends, family, and community members.

Organize a school-wide charitable drive. Collect clothing, nonperishable foods, or school supplies. Donate the items to a family or organization in need.

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Share with us how you are helping your classroom create a legacy of its own. Tweet us at #FlaglerLegacy.

Whitehall, 1910.

Whitehall, 2009.

Breslford Point, looking North on Lake Trail. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County)

Flagler Museum

The mission of the Flagler Museum is to preserve, research, and interpret Whitehall, its associated collections, and materials related to the life of Henry Morrison Flagler as unique and important elements of Florida's history and America's Gilded Age. Today the Flagler Museum is a National Historic Landmark and the museum is open year-round, offering audio tours and self-guide brochures in English, Spanish, French, and German, and Docent-led tours offered several times each day.

Whitehall, 2013.

Designed in the style of a nineteenth-century Beaux-Arts railway palace, the Flagler Kenan Pavilion provides guests with spectacular panoramic views of Lake Worth. Café des Beaux-Arts is located in the beautiful Flagler Kenan Pavilion. There, Visitors may enjoy a selection of gourmet tea sandwiches, traditional scones, and sweets complemented by the Flagler Museum's own Whitehall Special Blend™ tea, and served on exquisite Whitehall Collection™ china.

Flagler Kenan Pavilion, 2013.

Grand Ballrom, 2013.

HENRY MORRISON
FLAGLER MUSEUM
PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

One Whitehall Way
Palm Beach, FL 33480
(561) 655-2833

To learn more about the Flagler Museum please visit
www.flaglermuseum.us