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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## 'HURRICANE-PROOF' INN SUCCESS FROM THE START

By HAMPTON DUNN

FORT LAUDERDALE --- As visionary a man as he was, even Henry M. Flagler didn't foresee the potential for Fort Lauderdale when he extended his Florida East Coast Railroad southward to Miami in 1895.

This great developer had thought of the vast amount of land he acquired here as farming plots to be sold (later Gov. Napoleon Bonaparte Broward called this "the richest land this side of the Nile delta"). Flagler, who had built hotels all along the East Coast, didn't think of New River, as it was known then, as a prospective resort.

But the subcontractor who cleared the right-of-way for the Flagler System later capitalized on the situation. He was Philomen N. Bryan, who built the New River Inn when there were hardly more than 100 permanent residents here. Concerned about the possibility of hurricanes, Bryan ruled out a frame structure, and erected a three-story concrete block hotel, using sand from the beach to manufacture the blocks. This was about 1905.

Word about the "hurricane-proof" hotel got around and the elegant hostelry was a success from the start. So much so that Tom Bryan, son of the builder, used to meet the 2 A.M. train to warn passengers not to disembark, as there were no vacancies at the Inn.

The handsome hotel boasted carbide lights, a cold water drinking fountain in the lobby, two bathrooms for its 40 rooms, and its own water and sewage system. One of the noted guests was said to have been President Grover Cleveland. Lately, the building has been used as a City Hall annex but it is planned that it will become a historical museum.

