Stagecoach visits Fort Lauderdale in 1893

- A Trip to Biscayne Bay
- Description of New River, Biscayne Bay and the Keys
- From the Titusville Advocate, reprinted in The Tropical Sun (Juno), March 9, 1893, page 2

Starting from Titusville on one of the through boats of the Indian River Steamboat Co., about four P.M., or on the arrival of the afternoon train of the J.T. & K. railroad, a run of about 24 hours brings one to Jupiter between 5 and 6 P.M. on the following day. At the later point close connection is made over the Jupiter and Lake Worth railway for Juno, the run being about 12 miles. At Juno steamers connect for various points on Lake Worth. Passengers for points south of Palm Beach take the mail steamer Hypoluxo, and those bound for southern Dade stay on board until Lantana is reached. This point is the most southern settlement on the west side of Lake Worth, and is the northern terminus of the hack line between Lake Worth and Biscayne

Lantana is reached three hours after leaving Juno, or at late bedtime, and the traveler finds a comfortable hotel kept by Mr. Bassett. Lantana has in addition to its hotel, which is a great convenience to those who propose to take the hack line trip, one of the best stores on Lake Worth, kept by M. B. Lyman, a very energetic and sensible man, who does a surprisingly large business. He not only commands all this custom of this his locality, but does heavy trade in the way of mail orders from points all along the Lake, and has his regular patrons as far north as Jupiter. He also runs a large boat which

transports all his merchandise from Juno, and receives orders and delivers goods to customers at all points on Lake Worth. Lantana is beautifully situated and from present indications, bids fair to become one of the most thriving settlements and one of the most important trading or business centers on Lake Worth.

After a good night's rest you are awakened at an early hour for breakfast so as to be ready to take your seat in the back, which is scheduled to leave for New River at 7 A.M. The hack is a commodious vehicle which will seat six passengers comfortably. It has a cover and is provided with side curtains which may be lowered when necessary to protect passengers from the sun or rain, Usually they are rolled up so that one has an excellent opportunity of seeing the comparatively unknown country lying between Lake Worth and New River. The distance between these points is about 40 miles and is made in about 13 hours.

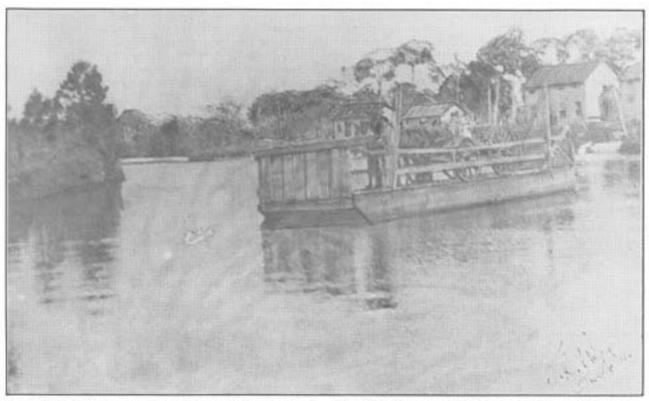
The land between the south end of Lake Worth and New River, with the exception of a small tract of beautiful hammock on the Hillsborough River, at which point we stopped for lunch about noon, is anything but attractive to either tourists or land seekers. When the railroad or canal is completed to New River or Biscayne Bay, this territory may become settled up, but to anybody who may feel disposed at present to buy or to even

accept as a gift, any of the spruce prairie or ordinary pine land between Lake Worth and New River, we would simply say, "don't."

After lunch at the bridge over the Hillsborough River, we are off again, and after about six hours riding, pull up at New River about 9 o'clock P.M. After an all day ride, which must be admitted, though rather tiresome, affords ample opportunity to see the country, or in other words to judge for yourself just what there is in the way of land.

At New River we disembark and find a good supper waiting, and after doing justice to the same, we are ready for bed, and find very comfortable quarters, a large-sized tent, which is furnished in such a way that it will compare favorably with the ordinary Florida hotel bedroom.

We are up at an early hour and while breakfast is being prepared we use the time in looking over the land in the neighborhood of the river and "half-way house," as it is called, although as a matter of fact the crossing at New River where we stop is forty miles from Lantana and only 26 miles from Lemon City, which is the terminus of the hack line on Biscayne Bay. The location of the camp at New River is in the midst of a beautiful hammock, which was settled upon by a man named Frank Lewis [actually Frankee Lewis, a woman] some fifty years ago, but shortly after aban-



New River, deepest stream on the stage route, was crossed by ferry rather than by bridge. It was around the ferry crossing, rather than the inlet as predicted by the "Titus-

ville Advocate," that the Fort Lauderdale settlement grew (photo courtesy of the Ft, Lauderdale Historical Society).

doned it. The property is now held by the Brickell family of Miami, who place a very high value upon this particular spot.

Close by the tent where we spent the night is an old clearing which has been cultivated more or less by the Seminoles, who have erected several rude huts or shanties close by the river, and at certain seasons of the year the red men with their squaws and papooses have been wont to come and spend a few weeks at this spot. Now that the hack line is in operation the Indians will probably drop this spot from their camping grounds and seek a substitute further removed from the white man's road.

The camp at New River is very close to that stream which at the point where coach and passengers are ferried across is about forty feet deep, although its average depth from its mouth at New River Sound, which is about a mile east of the crossing, is not more than five feet.

The New River country is undoubtedly destined to become thickly settled in
the near future, and will support quite
a large population. This neighborhood
has many attractions for the homesteader
or seeker after cheap real estate. New
River inlet is about fifty miles south of
Lake Worth inlet and about twenty-five
north of Cape Florida or the principal
entrance to Biscayne Bay. The inlet has

an average depth of about four or five feet, and connects the ocean with New River Sound, which runs parallel with the ocean and distant therefrom only about two hundred yards for five miles. On New River Sound, five miles north of the inlet, is the mouth of New River, and a few miles further north we come to the mouth of Middle River, Both of these streams are navigable for more than five miles westerly from New River Sound, and Middle River divides into a north and south fork, both of which are also navigable. Along the banks of these streams is a large amount of good land, consisting more or less of hammock and some firstclass pine land. The eye of the homesteader is already being directed to that locality, and during the next few years there is no doubt scores of families will be hard at work clearing land and building homes along the banks of these beautifully picturesque rivers.

The trading point for this territory will be located on New River Sound, somewhere near the mouth of New River, and as the banks of the several streams tributary to New River Sound become settled up the business will naturally center somewhere within a few miles of the inlet. After looking the situation over carefully, we are inclined to predict that here the largest town between the mouth of the St. Lucie

River and Biscayne Bay will be located. It cannot be otherwise.

Old Fort Lauderdale was located about four miles north of the inlet on the very narrow peninsula which separates New River Sound from the ocean. The name of this coming town of southern Dade ought to be "Lauderdale," in honor of the old fort by that name, the ruins of which are visited with so much interest.

The fishing in New River Sound, especially for tarpon, is something especial, even for Florida; and the inlet is said to be the only one on the coast which is absolutely free from sandflies at all seasons of the year. We do not youch for its freedom from these pests, and before relying upon the truth of this claim we would prefer to look into the matter ourself by spending a few weeks on the spot, during the months of July and August. We are also told that mosquitoes are very rare in this locality during the summer season. We cannot help being a little skeptical on this mosquito report, but hope someday to find out the facts in person. We have no hesitancy in saying, however, that during the only visit we have ever paid to New River we failed to come in contact with either a single sandfly or mosquito, but it was not the season to expect them; and yet we brushed away both sandflies and mos-

quitoes at a certain promising town where we stopped for a few hours between Titusville and New River, but the Advocare has too much regard for its prosperity, and the editor is not so foolhardy as to name the place referred to.

The fishing in New River Sound would open the eyes of Senator Quay to the fact that there are other places in Florida where fish will bite outside of St. Lucie, and sportsmen who are after big game will think we are exaggerating when we report what came to us as a fact by those who live in the vicinity that schools of no less than seven manatees are frequently seen sporting about the mouth of New River. The back-woods abound with deer and wild turkeys. The mouth of New River has many attractions to commend it to sportsmen and tourists, and as a location for a club house or camping quarters is not surpassed, if equalled, by

Very little, if any, superiority can be claimed for its climate over that of Lake Worth or Indian River, but it possesses special charms for sportsmen. The land along New River and both forks of Middle River are either government or canal lands. The latter may be had at reasonable prices, ranging from \$2.50 to \$10 per acre. Of course the fronts on New River Sound are held at much higher figures; but if our judgment is worth anything as to the future of this locality high prices are well warranted, and present figures will double or treble within the next few years - for whatever settlement is made in the extensive territory traversed by New River and Middle River with its two forks, must do its trading at some point at or near the mouth of New River.

On Middle River is located the plantation of the Florida Fiber Company of which we have read so much from time to time. Very little has been done by this concern in the way of cultivating sisal hemp; the actual area planted out being less than two acres, it is not worth talking about.

So much for New River, Breakfast being over and mules, hack and passengers safely ferried across, we are off for Lemon City. After several hours ride through what is almost a wilderness, we finally came to one of the most beautiful spots in Florida, known as Arch Creek. The county road crosses over this stream on a natural bridge. The creek is a narrow, deep clear stream, which finds its way from the everglades, and at this point it has burrowed or burst its way through, or under a ledge of solid rock. The upper strata of rock remain intact and makes a bridge which will never cost the county anything for repairs. The opening under this rocky arch is quite large, so that when the water is at its usual height boats may pass up and down the stream under the natural bridge without any

trouble; although it is said that at times in the past, after heavy, continuous rains the creek has been so swollen as to fill the entire opening under the rocky arch. It is a beautiful sight to stand on this natural bridge and look down into the clear water and see fish of all sizes gliding gracefully about its crystal depths.

Soon after leaving Arch Creek we began to pass scattering homesteads and before long it is apparent we are nearing Lemon City, Shortly before reaching that point we cross the bridge over Little River, a narrow but navigable stream, which empties into the Bay about two miles north of Lemon City. It is said there is considerable good land along the banks of Little River. This report is probably correct, for we noticed what appeared to be quite a fine body of hammock land lying about half a mile west of the bridge where the road crosses. This body of hammock land is said to contain enough wild lemon trees to set out 500 acres.

The impression received by the traveler as he approaches Biscayne Bay is anything but inviting or encouraging. A few miles before reaching our destination we pass through a settlement which twenty years ago must have been quite attractive, but at present the locality has the appearance of neglect and decay. Several once fine properties appear to be abandoned. The buildings, which all show more or less signs of decay, were no doubt quite attractive a score of years ago. Much money must have been spent on the old Sturvedent [Sturtevant] place, where a field, which appeared to have at least forty acres, is completely enclosed by a stone wall, built from the rocks which dot the surface of the land in this locality. The homes formerly occupied by ex-governor Gleason and by his friend and partner W. H. Hunt, show from the tangle of flowering vines and shrubbery which surround the old domiciles, that at one time well kept flower gardens adorned the premises.

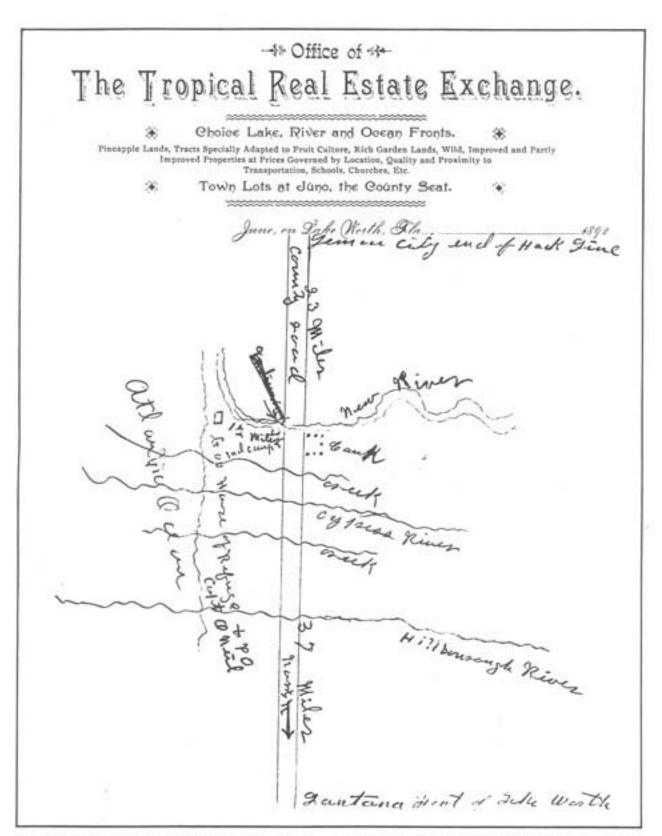
The neglected appearance of this settlement, which still boasts of a post office called "Biscayne," gives a sad and gloomy cast to our thoughts as we began to feel the breeze and realize that in a few minutes we will be in sight of the clear waters of Biscayne Bay; before this meditative mood has had time to develop into a genuine case of the blues the hack pulls up in front of the Lemon City hotel, which is kept - and by the way well kept - by Mrs. Keys, We lose no time in depositing our autograph on the register and devote the hour which remains before supper to taking a look at the Bay, and "sizing up" Lemon City, which place is known on the postal guides and maps as Motto. Why the place is generally spoken of as Lemon City and the post office should be called Motto, we did not ascertain, but such is the case.

The place boasts of about fifteen buildings, but many homesteaders have their dwellings scattered through the pine woods from one to five miles from the settlement. The hotel would probably accommodate 25 to 30 guests. It is new, the rooms are clean, and the table is fully as good as one would expect to find in a place of its size. It is, in fact, much better than some it has been our lot to sample, which were the best to be found in a town ten times the size of Lemon City, or as John Wanamaker has it, Motto.

There are two stores, in one of which, kept by William Filer, the post office is located. There is, of course, the inevitable real estate agent and land dealer, which exists in the person of E. C. Harrington, who is also deputy clerk of Dade County, and notary public of the State at large. He is enthusiastic in regard to the growth of Lemon City, of which he owns a considerable portion, and to intimate in his presence that any other point on Biscayne Bay can compare its advantages or attractions with those possessed of Motto, would be to invite a duel - of words at least. We pled ignorance as to the various ambitious settlements on Biscavne Bay; tried to be non-committal and let Mr. Harrington and Filer do the talking, while we attempted to do justice in the capacity of a listener.

There is no doubt Lemon City is a growing place; it will continue to grow, the lay of the land is admirable for a town; it rises gradually from the Bay front. The water in front of the place is a little deeper than at Cocoanut Grove, which, of course, is an advantage to any place which aspires to develop as a commercial centre. Some of the buildings are quite pretentious, but to the majority that term would not apply. It is not claimed that Lemon City is particularly noted as the resort of wealthy people, What its future will be, it would be more than we are warranted, from our observations, to say just at present. We are satisfied, however, that money invested in property at this point would pay good interest during the next few years; but that much can be said safely of almost any locality on Biscayne Bay.

Just before supper we walked to the end of the short dock at the post office to take a look at the Bay. The impression was very similar to that experienced when we saw Indian River for the first time from the railroad dock at Titusville seven years ago. A stiff southerly breeze was blowing, and the Bay looked beautiful; but just as when our eyes first rested on Indian River, the most prominent feeling was a desire to see more of it, and next morning at 9 o'clock we embarked on the mail boat Spray, Captain Sawyer, and in consideration of one dollar secured passage for Cocoanut Grove, which lies about ten miles south of Lemon City.



Frank Stranahan's rough map of the hack route, sketched on the stationery of Guy Metcalf's Tropical Real Estate Exchange, 1893 (illustration courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

The first stop was made at Buena Vista post office, about two miles south of what, for sake of variety, we shall call Motto. At Buena Vista there is a store kept by Mr. Truitt, who runs his schooner regularly between the Bay and Jacksonville. A boarding school is being built at this point, which will be opened in a few months. It will be conducted by the Misses Merritt, two very worthy ladies from Kentucky, and come highly recommended. They are prepared to teach all the ordinary English branches, and will also give instruction in music, Parents who contemplate sending their children to boarding school could not send them to a more healthful or pleasant location than Buena Vista; and from what we could glean the facilities for receiving a good education will be excellent. The school will be open all the year round. As to the terms of tuition, board, etc., we are informed they will be reasonable,

Judge J. A. McCory, well-known in Brevard County, has his home at Buena Vista. He is doing what he can in the way of law and real estate. He is highly respected in this section. We did not have the pleasure of meeting our old friend, who was off on a trip down the Bay inspecting lands. We had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. McCory, however, and found her a very pleasant lady.

By this time the mail had been changed, and in a few minutes we were gliding along over the clear water for the next post office, Miami, which is three miles distant and reached the landing in less than half an hour.

The shore of Biscayne Bay, at the mouth of the Miami River, is beautiful. High banks rise to the north and south, and the land is covered with a heavy hammock growth.

A mile south of the Miami River there is a high, rock bluff, which in our opinion, is one of the finest building sites in Florida. A large tract of land lying on the north bank of the Miami River and on Biscayne, containing over 600 acres, is owned by Mrs. Julia D. Tuttle, who has a beautiful home. On this property old Fort Dallas stands. On the south bank of the Miami River, at its mouth, stands the store of William Brickell, whom we met for a few minutes while the mail was being changed.

Anybody who goes to Biscayne Bay will hear lots about Mr. Brickell. He has his friends, and those who can hardly be termed by that name. He is a somewhat eccentric character. Our acquaintance with him was not sufficient to form any marked impression, Some of the people think he has been an obstacle to the development of Biscayne Bay, on account of refusing to sell land at reasonable prices. Many wealthy people during the past few years have attempted to acquire

a few acres of front on the Bay from Mr. Brickell, but without success. Recently he has had his property surveyed and cut up into large lots. He will not sell, however, to anyone unless they will bind themselves to erect a certain class of residence, and we are told, though we cannot vouch for the truth of the report. that his price is in the neighborhood of \$1,000 per acre. Under these circumstances some of his neighbors look upon him as a detriment to the country.

For many years Mr. Brickell has done a very heavy business at Lemon City, Buena Vista and [but] Cocoanut Grove has diverted a large amount of his trade. The Indians, however, still stick to Brickell and swear by him, It is a wellknown fact that the red man is a good judge of character, and the fact that the Indians who have dealt with him for so many years think well of Brickell speaks strongly in evidence of his fair dealing, The gentleman referred to owns about 2,000 acres, which comprises three miles of the finest Bay front. This, with Mrs. Tuttle's, is land certainly embracing the cream of all that can be found in the

way of land on Biscayne Bay.

After a few minutes chat with Mr. Brickell, we are once more aboard the mail boat, and shortly after arrive at Cocoanut Grove, just in time for dinner. This settlement presents a very fine appearance from the Bay. We counted twenty-eight buildings, and, as a rule, they are of a very neat and tasteful character. There are two large stores at this point, and they do an immense business. It was a surprise on Saturday evening to witness the scene at Peacock's store. Four attendants were waiting on customers and had their hands full. The fact is, there are over one hundred homesteads taken up on the land just west of Cocoanut Grove, or in township 54. These people come in to do their trading at the settlement, and from what we could observe, the principal merchant at the place does as large a business as anybody in his line at Titusville. There is a good hotel kept by Charles Peacock and his estimable wife, at which the rates are very reasonable. There are some eight or ten northern tourists stopping at the place when we were there, and they all seemed delighted with the surroundings. During our stay we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Hon. J. W. Ewan, who has been honored with the title of "Duke of Dade." This gentleman has in the past wielded a powerful influence in South Florida politics. He is a good conversationalist, and having lived at Biscayne Bay for over seventeen years, he is very well informed on all points which might prove of interest to the tourist or land seeker. We spent several hours in his company, during which time we gleaned much valuable information.

Our object, however, was to learn from personal observation all we could about this region.

To carry out this purpose, we engaged a boat and started on a cruise, which lasted four days, and skirted along the shore of the entire Bay from Cocoanut Grove south, to the southern end of Card Sound, some thirty-five miles, and then crossing to Key Largo we skirted within a few feet of the shore of that large island as far north as Angel Fish Creek, then we sailed out on the ocean and southerly along the east shore of Key Largo.

There is a smooth waterway from Biscayne Bay to Key West, between the Florida reefs and the coast, averaging five miles in width. This passage, in ordinary weather, is as smooth as the Indian River or the inside of Biscayne Bay. We had often heard of the Florida reefs; we had studied them from the charts, but no one can realize what they are without seeing them. We had supposed they were submerged almost entirely, and that they had some effect in breaking the seas which sweep in from the east. We had no idea, however, that at low water thousands of these rocks are exposed, and that they break the waves entirely, so that there is no surf on the shore of Key Largo or the other islands which lie to the east of Biscayne Bay, During our cruise of four days we learned much that should be of great interest to our readers. This article, however, is already too long. At some future time we will take the opportunity to speak of the lands lying off the west shore of Biscayne Bay, south of Cocoanut Grove, and of the beautiful islands lying to the east of the Bay. We will also tell certain facts about the Seminole Indians, which will undoubtedly prove very interesting, but our present article must close with a few remarks in regard to the peculiar features of the Biscayne country.

It goes without saying that the whole East Coast of Florida possesses an healthful climate and equable temperature. The old military records kept at Fort Dallas show that the mean variation of the temperature between winter and summer is only about ten degrees; that of the winter being about 70 degrees and of the summer of about 80 degrees, It was our desire, however, to learn what advantages this section possesses, which are peculiar to itself, and not found elsewhere in South Florida. We wanted to know what there was that would especially attract the tourist and homeseeker. We think we are successful on this point.

The climate of Biscayne Bay must always be a great attraction. To say that it is superior to that of any other part of Florida, would not convey our meaning. It is simply incomparable, Indian River and Lake Worth are really land-locked waters connected by one or more narrow inlets with the ocean. The air which arises

from these waters mingling with the breezes from the ocean, produces a baimy, sunny temperature, which is restful and soothing to the invalid, to the womout man of business, and the nervous female. The breeze is restorative in its effect. Standing on the wharf at Cocoanut Grove, we felt for the first time the peculiar vitalizing effect of that indescribable breeze of Biscayne Bay. We spent five days and five nights in the vicinity, and if the breeze slackened for five minutes it must have been when we were asleep.

We tried to satisfy ourselves as to the cause of its peculiar quality. It was apparent that the Bay, ten miles wide and fifty miles long, with an inlet five miles wide, which was tide water, clear as crystal, was different from the Indian River inlet, and one would expect the breeze to be stronger, fresher and purer; but bear in mind it was far ahead of anything we had ever felt on the face of the ocean itself at Long Branch, Newport, Pablo or Cape Canaveral. There was a peculiarly exhilarating effect about it, so that one might walk for miles in the sun over the rocks and yet not feel tired. We had heard of this effect before, but had always believed it imaginary. When

we emerged on our cruise from Angel Fish Creek into the open ocean, and saw for the first time the Florida reefs, it was a revelation. The waves dashed against these thousands of rocks, and lashed into a foam and clouds of spray. The tradewinds blowing from the southeast, blows steadily in through these clouds of salt water, sparkling and glistening in the sunshine. This peculiar condition, we believe, explains the peculiar quality of the breezes which is so charming and so exhilarating at Biscayne Bay.

Almost everybody will recall the condition on a hot summer day when the sun is shining and a sudden thunder-squall comes up. While the rain is falling, with the sun shining, and a breeze is blowing through the rain, it strikes the cheek with a peculiar freshness. There is some peculiar electrical condition present. It is so with the breeze at Biscayne Bay. As the breeze passes through this cloud of spray, caused by the Florida reefs, and continues some ten miles inward until it reaches the west shore of Biscayne Bay, passing through the glorious sunlight, it acquires a peculiar quality. It is just right. It is indescribable, and whoever feels it for a few days will ever afterwards long to return to its influence. Many people have felt this breeze and yet have not realized its peculiar quality.

There are those who prefer a cup of rank, strong Rio coffee, or a cheap cigar, and there are people who, when they taste a cup of genuine Java or Mocha, properly made, know that they have found something rare. Those are the kind of people who will appreciate the incomparable breeze of Biscayne Bay. It is only a question of time when this locality will be the most noted resort in the United States.

To sum it up in a few words, the people of that section have never known what they possess, or if they have, never understood how to describe. The impressions we have given are honest. They are as they appeared to us. Other eyes may see them differently,

There are other peculiar attractions possessed by the Biscayne Bay region, but we will have to tell of them some other time. We wish, in closing, to acknowledge, with thanks, the courtesies received at the hands of Guy I. Metcalf, editor of THE TROPICAL SUN and proprietor of the hack line; and also from Mr. Frank Stranahan, manager of the half way house at New River.

—Titusville Advocate

BISCULUES BULL *

1893 TIMETABLE FOR THE BAY BISCAYNE STAGE LINE

Ho! For Bay Biscayne! A New and Novel Trip Via the Bay Biscayne Stage Line through the wonderful East Coast Region between the Everglades and the Atlantic across the many streams and inlets along the sunny sea coast from the far-famed Lake Worth to the beautiful Bay Biscayne.

There is now established a regular triweekly passenger service between Lake Worth and Bay Biscayne. Comfortable, Easy-riding, Well-equipped Covered Stages, constructed especially for this service, leave each terminus of the route three times each week.

This trip is one of the most unique and interesting ever arranged for the tourist. The road passes through a series of beautiful hummocks, spruce pine forests, heavy timber lands and prairies, crosses ten streams of wondrous scenic beauty and historic interest in the Seminole Indian War times, skirts the marvelous Everglades on one side and the numerous sounds and bayous of the Atlantic on the other, and finally terminates at the head of that noble expanse of inland water, beautiful Bay Biscayne.

Detailed Time and Rate Schedule. Stages leave Lantana, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays . . . 6 a.m. Stages arrive New River, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays . . . 6 p.m. Stages leave New River, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays . . . 6 a.m. Stages arrive Lemon City, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays . . . 5

p.m. Going North Stages leave Lemon City, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays...7 a.m. Stages arrive New River, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays...4 p.m. Stages leave New River, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays...6 a.m. Stages arrive Lantana, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays...6 p.m. Round Trip Fare \$16; One Way Fare \$10. Splendid accomodations at New River for twenty ladies and gentlemen. Rates \$3 per day. Tickets for sale by M. B. Lyman, Agent, Lantana, Fla. Guy I Metcalf, General Manager, Juno, Florida.

Leaving Lantana, at the foot of Lake Worth, early in the morning, you take dinner at Hillsborough River, pass through a long stretch of picturesque country in the afternoon, and nightfall finds you at New River, near a Seminole Indian Camp and on the banks of the finest tarpon fishing grounds in Florida.

Here you enjoy a good night's rest at a well-conducted, typical "Adirondack Camp" with every comfort and convenience provided for the accommodations of ladies and gentlemen, and at 8 o'clock next morning you are spinning along through hummocks and sait streams until at noon you halt at the wonderful Natural Bridge over Arch Creek, a spot of weird and rare beauty, have dinner, on again, and before dark you are in Lemon City in full view of Bay Biscayne. Tourists and Sportsmen should not miss this most delightful of all trips in Florida.