

Summary

April 28, 1926.

Mr. Albert H. Roberts,
Actuary Insurance Dept.,
Tallahassee, Florida.

My dear Mr. Roberts:

Your interesting letter of April 22nd has been forwarded to me by McCall's Magazine. Of course I do not think your suggestions "officious" or "captious". I am always grateful when anyone calls my attention to errors that I have made or to misinterpretations.

As to the length of your Florida Seacoast, of course that was a typographical error. I probably should have caught it if I had had an opportunity to read the proof. My Florida articles have been done under such pressure that it has been impossible for the magazine to let me do that.

I do not know that I quite agree with you that I give the impression that there were no railroads in Florida in 1920 except the two I mentioned. My statement was very general - intended to be so. I was speaking only of trunk lines. If I had been trying to cover the case I should have gone back before the Civil War when there were several short lines in Florida. It is true, is it not, that both Flagler and Plant based their roads on short lines in existence. I can see that since you have gotten the impression that you have, that I should have put in a qualifying word, but it did not occur to me at the time that a reader would think that I was attempting to do anything more than what the newspapers call "touch the high spots".

Now, as to the acreage and the lakes. The trouble came from the printed matter that I consulted and supposed to be reliable when I first undertook my work.

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Thirty million acres and thirty thousand lakes, I read again and again in pamphlets and circulars, but I realize now that that is not exact and I am going to take pains to call attention to the errors, and if I can get the chance, use your paragraphs.

No, I did not refer to oysters and sponge fishing - there was no attempt in my tabulation to be complete. I knew of course, that there was other game than alligators and turtles. When I put those down it rather amused me not to mention anything else. In my copy I think I put an exclamation point after the remark, thinking it would save it from misinterpretation, but I have found that it is hard to joke about anything in Florida, and I have come not to wonder at that. I found myself before I had been a fortnight in Florida, multiplying every figure by two or three, and wanting to defend everything I found, good or bad. There is something in your air that does it, I think.

Now, my dear Mr. Roberts, please believe that I appreciate what you have written and that before I get through with this work I shall take pains to confess and correct.

I have no idea of putting what I write into a book. It's too impressionistic to be of any permanent value.

Very truly yours,