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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Miami 'Circle' is Railroad Turntable

From: Robert A.M. Stephens <sti3818@montana.com>
Date: Sat, 13 Feb 1999 05:04:41 -0700
Fwd Date: Sat, 13 Feb 1999 11:13:05 -0500
Subject: Miami 'Circle' is Railroad Turntable

To all,

In 1911 The Narrow Gauge Railway Co. operated by Teddy Collins and Sons, known as the Narrow Gauge Starfire Co., originally from the Oak Hill area of Pennsylvania, was contracted in May of 1910 by the operations board for the then fledging Florida East Coast Railway and Navigation Co. to begin dredging in the Miami byway area for an intended spur link from thier interchange 'Y' at mile post 289.

In so doing, since the Florida East Coast Railway was standard gauge (4' 8 1/2" as per modern AAR standards) the large road engines and the lighter switchers, were much too heavy to operate on the required light rails (30 lbs. per yard) that construction trains running on the sand based ground in an around the area were using, resorted to contracting a narrow gauge railroad builder and operator to perform the works.

Teddy Collins was the outfit. The man himself was a lumberman who fell back on railway construction work to offset the downturn in lumbering that was vexing the nation in the 1906-13 time frame. He got the contract to construct the following:

1. A 6 mile long elevated standard gauge RR bed from the FECRwy. junction in western Miami, then curve through downtown Miami proper, crossing the waterway-mud area in question, then terminating with a branch that would come to the ocean side stead.
2. A twin turntable pier structure for a low slung Howe-Truss center span bridge. (the 'Circle' in question).
3. Laid course to be with 100 per yard rail.

In 1913 Collins finished construction but the excavation of the waterway nearly broke him. The remnants of native American artifacts in the area is a result of the deep muck removal of material on the site in the attempt to form a more stable road bed. The attempt in this area failed. The FECRwy. abandoned the 6 mile spur in favor of Teamsters moving freight from the FECRwy. railhead to downtown locations. The circle in question was the standard design base at the time of building a Howe-Truss, center bearing bridge traverse.

Thought I would let you know.

References:

'The Railroad in the Sun'. The FECRwy.Co.'
Howell North Books, 1962
John T. Labbe

'Lumbering and Logging in Pennsylvania'

Veron Goe and John Kasler
1970-(out of print--collectors edition)

'The Locomotives that Baldwin built'
Coronado Press, 1969
Elgin Meeks

'Rails Through Dixie'
Peach Tree Press, 1975
John Vilden and Ennice Gregg

'The Climax Locomotive. A Geared Wonder'
Narrow Gauge Pictorial
Dann James Historical Publishers, 1980
(Pg. 133. Pict. of locomotive used in the dredging work.
Locomotive CN # 190,. Climax Locomotive Works, Corry Penny.)

'Mikado: The Locomotives of Florida'
(a trieste to the 2-8-2 Wheel Arrangement For Fast Freight on
Light Ground.' Locomotive Historical Quarterly. DoT Document
number 388.55.A (1989)

And lastly, there are far more compelling 'circles' of note that
are real, not railroad excavations, at the sound end of the
Kennedy Space Center along the Banana River. Wonder why no one
is talking about that. Perhaps a little too close to 'Space'
based subject matter?

-- sincerely,

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