



For Sale American Paradise: How Our Nation Was Sold an Impossible Dream in Florida

Willie Drye

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The story of how Florida became entwined with Americans' twentieth-century hopes, dreams, and expectations is also a tale of mass delusion, real estate collapses, and catastrophic hurricanes. *For Sale--American Paradise* hones in on the experiences of American icon William Jennings Bryan, journalist Edwin Menninger, and others who shaped the image of Florida that we know today and who sold that image as America's paradise. The cast also includes the Marx Brothers, Thomas Edison, Al Capone, a pack of backwoods bandits known as the Ashley Gang, and the visionaries and businessmen who poured their dreams and their cash into Florida in the roaring, raucous 1920s.

A tale of a colorful and tragicomic era during which the allure and illusion of the American Dream was on full display—a Jazz Age period when Americans started chasing what F. Scott Fitzgerald called “the orgiastic future”—the book reveals how the 2008 collapse of Florida real estate was eerily similar to events that happened there in the 1920s What sets the mid-1920s' Florida land boom apart from more recent booms-and-busts, however, is that this was the first time that emerging new technologies, mass communications, and modern advertising techniques were used to sell the nation on the notion that prosperity and happiness are entitlements that are simply there for the taking.

Florida's image as a place where the rules of everyday life don't apply and winners go to play was formed during this dawn of the age of consumerism when Americans wanted to have fun and make lots of money, and millions of them thought Florida was the perfect place to do that.

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