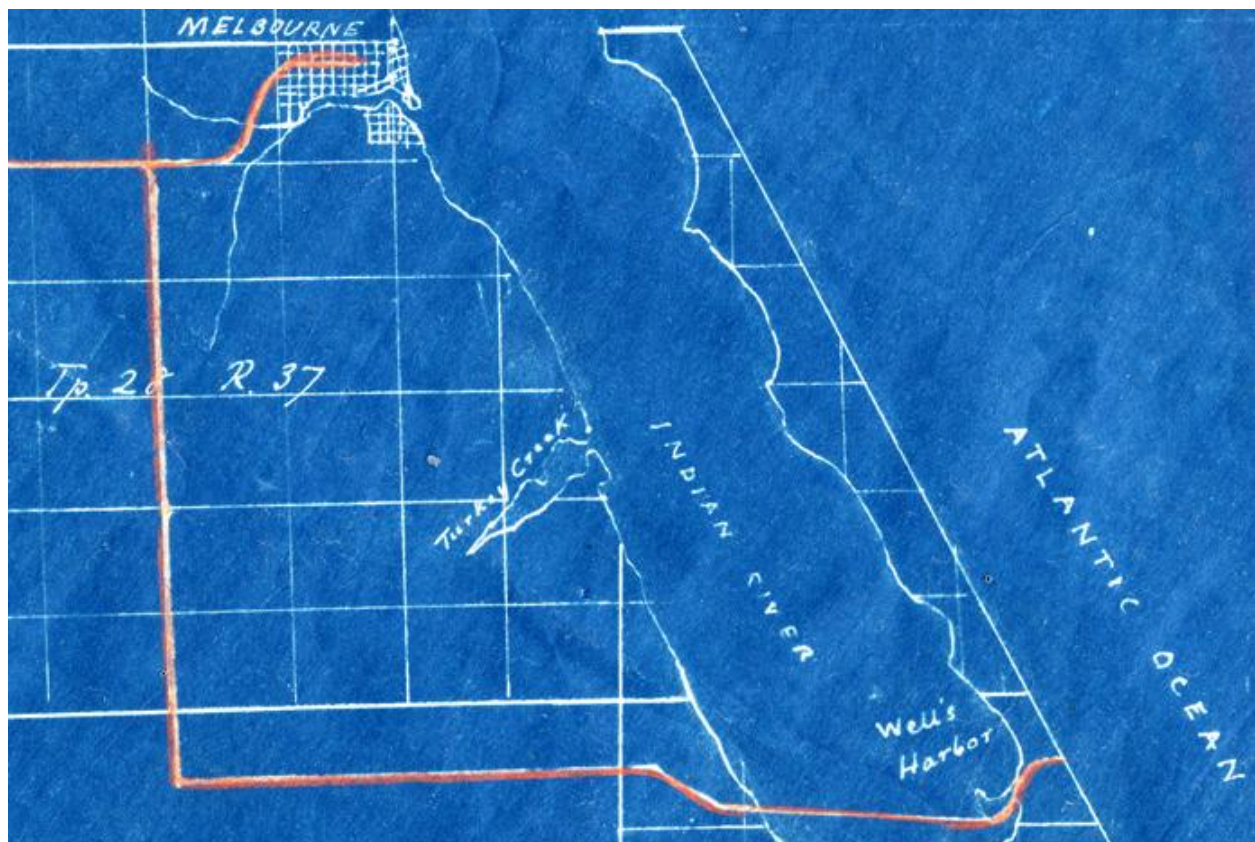




and nowhere more so than in Florida. News articles spoke of rich phosphate deposits in the central part of the state already generating half a million tons of ore to be shipped out. There were peat deposits to be mined for fuel, limitless stands of cypress to be milled, thousands of acres of land to be planted in citrus and sugar cane. If these goods could be gotten economically to a port on the east coast, the cost of shipment would be reduced and the profits would be even greater.

In May of 1903 J. O. Fries, the Chief Engineer signed an affidavit that construction had commenced on the east end of the line near the projected location of Wells Harbor. On June 10th of 1903 the Tropical Sun of West Palm Beach reported that construction had actually started and that a portion of the roadbed on the east end of the line was ready for cross ties. Sadly, this effort seems to have been premature. The next references we find to the CF & IR appears in 1906 when Mr. Wells is promoting the project across central Florida. At this point he is referred to as Vice President and General Manager. One of the big challenges is alluded to by the St. Lucie County Tribune of November 23, 1906, when they say "It may be a surprise to some to know that there is at Melbourne a feasible harbor with thirty-five feet of water, but all doubt of this was removed by the engineer's maps that Mr. Wells produced." Yes, that's a surprise. Where was this thirty five foot harbor? We have three maps produced for the CF & IR. This image is the detail survey and shows "Wells Harbor" south of Turkey Creek.



The shape of the barrier island where Well's Harbor is marked doesn't exactly match the current maps after 120 years of hurricanes, but we can correlate the position on current maps using the township and range survey lines shown in the survey. If you're into such things, J. O. Fries says the construction has started "500 feet north of the south line of Lot 2, Sec. 5, T 29 S, R 38 N. We can find that point on QGIS and with the OpenStreetMap layer and we can extend over to the barrier island and get the coordinates of 27.99, -80.53 for Wells Harbor. That would take the line into "Hog Point Cove" on current maps. I've marked that on the extract from Google Maps. The barrier island is very small at that point, I wonder if a 35 ft deep ocean harbor would be feasible here.

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Westward, the other two survey pages show the route north almost to present day University Ave, and then out through Deer Park. An article in the Kissimmee Valley Gazette, of November 30, 1906. states

"This railway begins at a point on the Atlantic ocean about eight miles south of the town of Melbourne. Thence runs through a fine agricultural country, much of the land being specially well adapted to the cultivation of sugar cane. Crossing the St. Johns just south of Lake Washington it runs through the celebrated "Jane Green" cypress swamp, which is one of the finest pieces of cypress timber in the south. The road bed is already graded through this section, to a point on the north side of the swamp near large pine forests, where will be built a large town, which will contain the mills, turpentine stills, crate factories and other works to utilize every part of the forest tree by the newest and most advanced methods,"

The 1903 article in the West Palm Beach Tropical Sun mentions that George W. Hopkins "has selected his town site where he will put up large lumber mills. Mr. Hopkins will also construct at

his own expense the road-bed ready for ties through his property.” Although the CF & IR didn’t come to fruition, in 1912 George Hopkins built the Hopkins Mill and the Cypress Union Railroad which ran over the route described for the CF & IR to Deer Park where he built facilities to harvest trees.