



## Across the Bridge on the Way to Key West

All Aboard: History, Culture, and Innovation on the Florida East Coast Railway

### Grade Level:

Kindergarten

### Materials:

#### Map of:

- The FEC Railway
- FEC Key West Extension

#### Photos:

- Henry M. Flagler
- William J. Krome
- Joseph C. Meredith
- Train on the FEC Extension
- Photos of Each Key

#### Book:

- *Iggy Peck, Architect*, by Andrea Beaty

#### Building Materials for Bridge:

- Paper
- Popsicle Sticks
- Straws
- Cardboard
- 2 Wooden Blocks per Group
- Pennies
- Buttons
- Cotton Balls
- Tape or Glue

#### Additional Supplies:

- Toy Train
- Chart Paper
- Markers or Crayons
- 1 Large Piece of Paper per Group

### Curriculum Connections:

Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies, Florida Education

### Objectives:

Students will understand basic structural concepts related to bridge building. They will learn about the geography of the Florida East Coast Railway, Key West Extension and the human connection to the railroad in the Florida Keys.

### Standards:

MA.K.M. - Identify and compare measurable attributes of objects

SS.K.G.1: Geography

SC.K.P: Physical Science

VA.K.H: Historical and Global Connections

VA.K.F: Innovation, Technology, and the Future

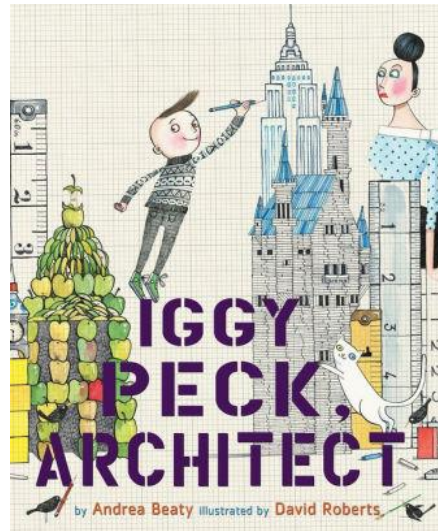
### Corresponding Map Hot Spot:

Seven Mile Bridge, FL

#### Lesson Procedure

### Introduction and Literacy Component:

Read the story, *Iggy Peck, Architect* by Andrea Beaty to introduce the lesson theme, bridge building. Use the guiding questions to begin a discussion about the bridges that the students have seen and interacted with.



### Guiding Questions:

- What do you think bridges are used for?
- Who has seen a bridge before?
- Where were you?
- How do you think you could get from one Key to another without a bridge?
- Which way would be quickest?
- Which way would be easiest?
- What materials do you think bridges are made of?

### History Connection:

Show the children the pictures of Henry M. Flagler, Joseph C. Meredith, and William J. Krome. Explain that Flagler had an idea to connect the Florida Keys to mainland Florida by building the Overseas Railway. Stemming from the guiding questions above, have a brief discussion about the benefits of being connected with the mainland (ease of bringing in supplies, traveling back and forth, etc.).

### Human Bridge:

Show the children the pictures of each Key and Homestead, Florida where the Key West Extension starts. Call up one volunteer to “be” each place by holding a picture of that location. Ask the children to name their Key to reinforce the geography of the area. Once all of the “Keys” are in place, get out “Mr. Flagler’s Train”, (a toy train) and show it to the children. Ask them to predict whether you will be able to drive that train from Homestead to Key West with no bridges. They will probably say you will not be able to do so. With lots of enthusiasm, pretend to begin driving the train at Homestead and let it fall into the “water” (the space between the Homestead volunteer and the next Key). Ask the students what you could do to be able to get the train all the way to Key West. Have the students who are playing the Keys hold out their arms and join hands. Now drive your toy train down the length of arms all the way to the end. Give the volunteers a round of applause and then discuss with the group what we learned-that we need a bridge.

**Bridge Building Exploration:**

Divide students into groups of 4. Give each group a box with two wooden blocks (these are the two ends that the students will need to build a bridge between using the other materials (paper, straws, popsicle sticks, etc.) and the bridge building materials. Ask them to work together to figure out how to build a bridge across the span between their two blocks. Give them some time to do this. When the groups have their bridges constructed, give them each a cotton ball. Ask them to test their bridges, do they hold the cotton ball? If their bridges hold the cotton ball, give them a button and repeat the test. If the bridges hold the buttons, repeat the test with one penny, then two pennies, and so on.

**Group Discussion:**

Bring the groups back together and discuss what worked and what didn't. Using a dry erase board or a piece of chart paper, record the suggestions the children give about what is important in building a solid bridge (strength of materials, etc.).

**Bridge Group Work:**

Send the groups back to their bridges. Using the group suggestions, allow them to tinker with their bridges to make them better. Give each group a large piece of paper and crayons. Ask them to imagine what it would be like to design the Key West Extension. Demonstrate how to draw the Keys and a bridge in between. Ask the children to work together to draw the islands and then link them by bridges.

**Additional Resources:**[Overseas Railway Timeline](#)

This timeline on the Key West Art & Historical Society's website provides additional information about Henry M. Flagler's life, career, history and the development of the Florida East Coast Railway and Key West Extension.

[Online Collections Database](#)

With a collecting history that extends back to 1949, the Key West Art & Historical Society has unrivaled collections of contemporary and historic art and artifacts. Its collections, which number more than 35,000 works in all media, range from historical to present-day and span the entire Florida Keys.

Henry M. Flagler

Early developer of Florida. Funded the Florida East Coast Railway and the Key West Extension



Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society

Joseph C. Meredith

Chief Engineer for the Florida East Coast Railway Key West Extension from on July 26, 1904 until his death in April 20, 1909.



Photo: Monroe County Public Library

William J. Krome

Principal Assistant Engineer of the Florida East Coast Railway Key West Extension until 1909 when he was promoted to Chief Engineer.



Photo: Florida Memory

Overseas Railway Train on Long Key Viaduct



Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society

Map of the Florida East Coast Railway showing the Key West Extension

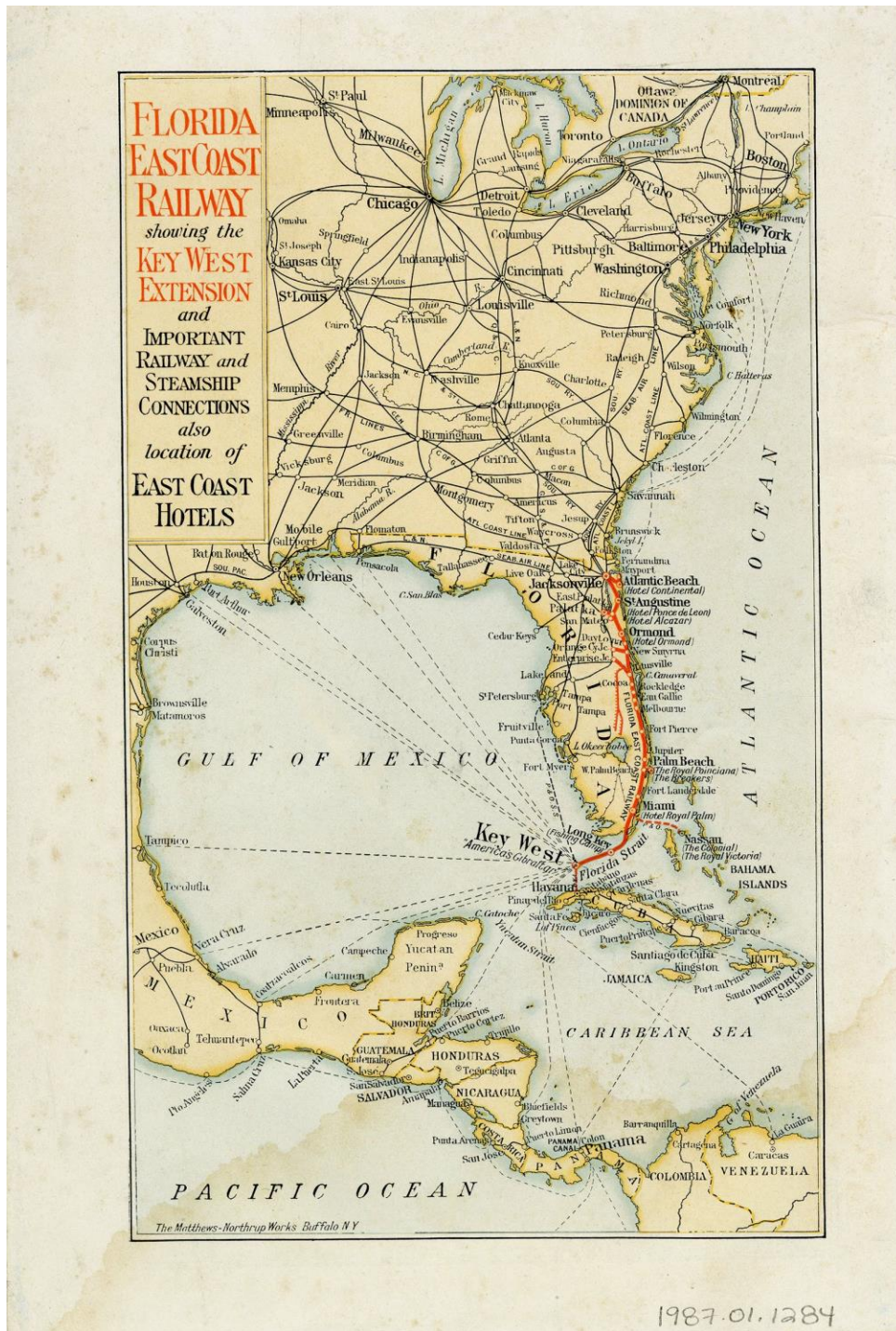


Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society



Map of the Florida East Coast Railway Key West Extension



Photo: Florida East Coast Railway

Homestead, Florida



Bird's eye view overlooking orange grove at Homestead. Not before 1914.

Photo: Florida Memory



Katherine and Mildred Gibbons biking along a dirt road, Homestead, Florida. 1910.

Photo: Florida Memory

Key Largo, Florida



Key Largo Limestone in railroad cut - Key Largo, Florida Image taken by D. Stuart Mossom. 1924.

Photo: Florida Memory



Aerial view looking north above the Overseas Highway at Key Largo, Florida. 1996.

Photo: Florida Memory

Islamorada, Florida



Long Key Fishing Camp. 1915. A view of Long Key Fishing Camp in Islamorada. Originally built as housing by Henry Flagler for his Overseas Railway, it was converted to a fishing resort once construction was completed in the Upper Keys. It was destroyed by the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935.

Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society



Aerial view of Islamorada. Photographer Anderson and Harrold. 1954.

Photo: Florida Memory

Marathon, Florida



Ted and Mary's of Marathon near the train tracks. Circa 1920s.

Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society



Aerial view of Marathon Key, Florida. Circa 1970s.

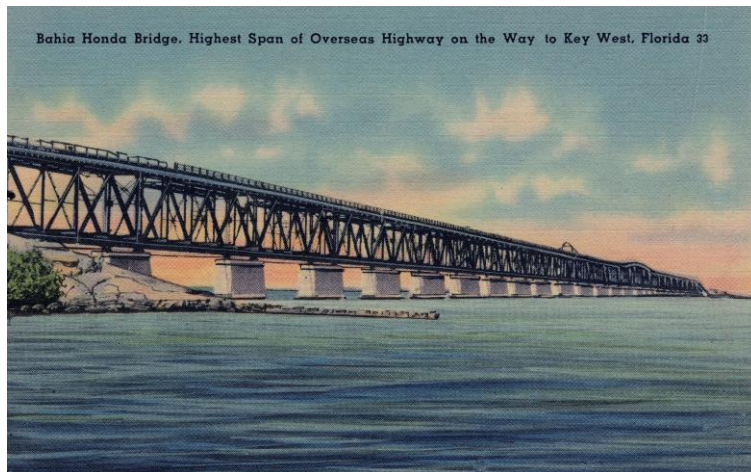
Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society

Big Pine Key, Florida



Aerial view of Seven Mile Bridge between Big Pine Key and Marathon. Circa 1900s.

Photo: Florida Memory



Bahia Honda Bridge, Highest Span of Overseas Highway on the Way to Key West, Florida. Circa 1940s.

Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society

## Key West, Florida



Map of the Overseas Railway Route and Terminus in Key West. 1912.

Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society



First Overseas Railway Train Arrival at Key West. 1912.

Photo: Key West Art & Historical Society

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