

Summary: The Lure of Florida

A Land of Opportunity

In 1900, Florida had a population of 500,000 people. The state was mostly rural with few urban areas. Florida leaders wanted the state to grow. They kept Florida taxes low. This meant Floridians spent less money to live there. Florida also started public works projects, such as building roads and bridges. These projects created jobs for many people and helped businesses grow.

Many immigrants came to Florida to find freedom, jobs, and a safe place to live. Most of Florida's immigrant workers came from nearby islands, such as the Bahamas. Many of them settled in Key West and Miami.

Many older people who did not work also came to Florida. They were already retired. It did not cost them much to live in Florida and they liked its warm climate. By 1910, more than 750,000 people lived in Florida.

The Growth of Cities

The urbanization of Florida began in the 20th century. Florida's businesses began to grow. More people came to work in and near the cities. Soon the cities needed more houses, roads, schools, and hospitals. This meant cities had more jobs to offer. As a result, more people came to the cities to find jobs. The cities grew even bigger!

In 1910, Miami was a small city of about 5,000 people. Soon Miami started to grow. By 1925, more than 140,000 people lived there. By 1930, more than 100,000 people lived in Tampa. Many of these people moved to Tampa to work in the cigar-making industry.

In 1901, Jacksonville was Florida's largest city. That year a fire destroyed most of the city. City leaders rebuilt it as a modern city. Jacksonville's harbor was deepened so that ocean ships could use it. Jacksonville became an important port city. By 1920, it was once again Florida's largest city.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

rural *adjective*, country-like

urban *adjective*, city-like

public works *noun*, special government projects that help people

urbanization *noun*, the process of changing from a rural way of life to a city way of life



After You Read

REVIEW What are some reasons that people came to Florida? Underline two sentences that tell why immigrants and older people came to Florida.

REVIEW How did urbanization change Florida? Draw a box around the paragraph that describes what happened after urbanization began in the 20th century.