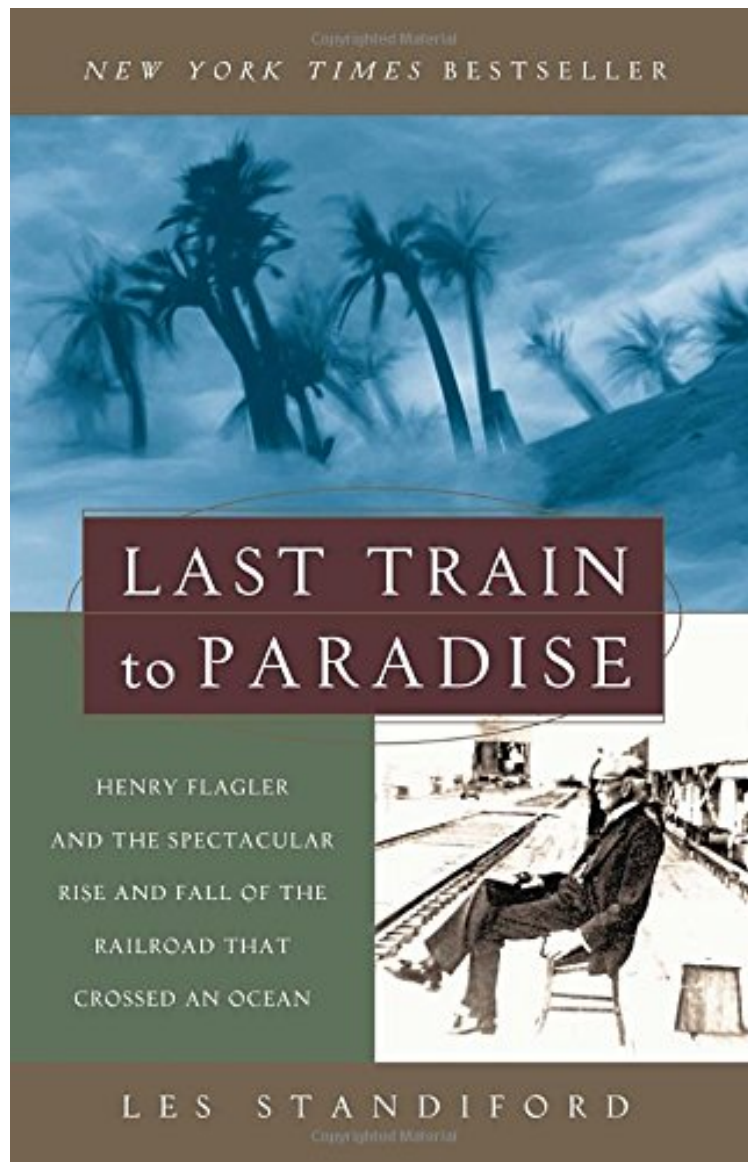


(Free and download) Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad that Crossed an Ocean

## Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad that Crossed an Ocean

*Les Standiford*

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**Les Standiford : Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad that Crossed an Ocean** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad that Crossed an Ocean:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good Read for history of Florida and especially the Keys. By LadyBug Just came back from 6 weeks in Florida and while in Key West saw the Henry Flagler exhibit at the museum there and wanted to learn more about him. This book is an interesting history of Florida and especially the Keys. We have been to the memorial for the Hurricane Victims of 1935 so this told me the complete story. Read this if you want to find out more about the beginnings of Florida and the snowbirds! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Little known historical event By Alan H. If you like historical non-fiction, this is a great read. It's amazing the kinds of projects that men took on in the early 1900's. For Henry Flagler this was an enormous project that ended in ultimate failure. I gave this book 5 stars because the story was fascinating and the book beautifully written. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This was an interesting read. Flagler is certainly a ... By The Vernier Scale This was an interesting read. Flagler is certainly a big name here in south Florida. The book chronicles Flagler's struggles to build a railroad line through the Florida Keys and on to Key West. Struggling through three hurricanes, fighting swamps and disease, Flagler's company employed engineering marvels, building new bridges across the ocean from key to key, only to have hundreds of miles of tracks torn up and buried by the relentless sea. My only criticism was the organization, as the book started out to be about Flagler the man, and moved quickly into the railroad project which was about the struggles. We never really got to look inside the man to learn more about his passion to finish, before his death, the rail line to Key West.

Last Train to Paradise is acclaimed novelist Les Standiford's fast-paced and gripping true account of the extraordinary construction and spectacular demise of the Key West Railroad, one of the greatest engineering feats ever undertaken, destroyed in one fell swoop by the Labor Day hurricane of 1935. Brilliant and driven entrepreneur Henry Flagler's dream fulfilled, the Key West Railroad stood as a magnificent achievement for more than twenty-two years, heralded as the Eighth Wonder of the World. Standiford brings the full force and fury of 1935's deadly Storm of the Century and its sweeping destruction of the railroad that crossed an ocean to terrifying life. Last Train to Paradise celebrates a crowning achievement of Gilded Age ambition in a sweeping tale of the powerful forces of human ingenuity colliding with the even greater forces of nature's wrath.

.com In Last Train to Paradise novelist Les Standiford has written a lively, felicitous account of the building of the Florida East Coast Railway, which, for a little over two decades, connected mainland Florida with Key West. Henry Morrison Flagler, John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil partner and, in many eyes, the true genius behind that company, embarked on the project in 1905 when he was 74 years old. The railroad, which crossed more than 150 miles of open sea, was an engineering feat nearly equal in scale and difficulty to the digging of the Panama Canal. Standiford's narrative skillfully blends tales of construction perils (not the least of which were escadrilles of mosquitoes) with brief, illuminating travelogues and natural histories, pocket descriptions of life in early 20th-century Florida, and a truly gripping description of an epic standoff between Mother Nature, in the form of a monstrous hurricane, and a stalled, 160-ton steam locomotive. With nary a single missed note, this fascinating tale is popular history at its best. --H. O'Billovich From Publishers Weekly A good idea to have a novelist tell the story of Henry Morrison Flagler, the 19th-century mogul credited with developing Florida as a vacation paradise goes sadly astray here. Readers hoping to learn about the man will be disappointed, as will those looking for a good yarn about the engineering marvel that is this tale's centerpiece Flagler's creation, in the early 20th century, of a rail line that traversed 153 miles of open ocean to link mainland Florida with Key West. The narrative bumps along, frequently veering off into tantalizing detours that lead nowhere. Standiford presents pages about the power of hurricanes to destroy property and savage the human body, an emphasis that is the book's undoing: readers are led to believe that storm damage in 1935 was the sole reason for the railroad's abandonment. This prompts Standiford to argue that Flagler's undertaking was a "folly" from the start, as his contemporaries claimed, and that his story constitutes a classic "tragedy." In fact, the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) was undone as much, if not more, by a force Standiford never mentions: the internal combustion engine. After the hurricane of 1935, investors and the government considered rebuilding the FEC, but decided instead on a highway. The book's conclusion references Shelley's cautionary poem "Ozymandias," a gloss on the impermanence of man's works. The warning might apply to this unsatisfying book. 8 pages of bw photos. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Standiford (Done Deal, Miami: City of Dreams) brings his novelist's eye to the true-life drama of the railroad built to link Key West with mainland Florida. The book opens as one of the most powerful hurricanes in modern times rages across the Florida Keys, destroying the railroad and killing many unfortunates who sought shelter along its tracks. Standiford then follows parallel tracks, detailing the merciless progress of the storm while tracing the Key West Extension's brief and eventful existence. The brainchild of Standard Oil millionaire Henry Flagler, the railroad was considered an impossible dream because it had to cross 156 miles of water. But Flagler had the will and the millions of dollars, to make his "Folly" a reality. Begun in 1905, the railroad took nearly seven years and \$20 million to build. Three hurricanes washed away miles of track during the building, and engineers had to develop entirely new techniques for spanning deep and wide bodies of water. In the end, the track stood for only 22 years before the Labor Day hurricane of 1935 swept all but a few miles of it back into the sea. A

powerful story told by a talented writer; recommended for public libraries.- Duncan Stewart, State Historical Soc. of Iowa Lib., Iowa City Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.