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WILLIAM J. HOWEY AND HIS FLORIDA DREAMS

by MELVIN EDWARD HUGHES, JR.

WILLIAM JOHN HOWEY was a land speculator who came to Florida in 1908 and devised a unique land sales and development program on nearly 60,000 acres of land in Lake County. Howey's plan, based on the sale of undeveloped citrus land, led to the creation of Howey-in-the-Hills, a town he envisioned as the "City Inevitable."¹ In addition to this visionary enterprise Howey ran as the Republican candidate for governor of Florida in 1928, and again in 1932.

William J. Howey was born in Odin, Illinois, January 19, 1876, to Matilda Harris and William Henry Howey, a circuit riding United Brethren minister.² At the age of sixteen Howey began to sell life insurance and realized his gift of salesmanship. By 1900 he had worked very successfully for three insurance companies in the states of Indiana, Alabama, and Missouri.³ Howey then learned the land development business by developing land and towns for the railroad in Oklahoma. In 1903 he opened the Howey Automobile Company in Kansas City and, after manufacturing seven Howey automobiles, closed this business in 1905 and went back into the land development business. Howey bought a large tract of land near Perez, Mexico, and set out to colonize it with American capitalists. He sold the idea of pineapple plantations, but revolution in 1907 forced him to abandon this venture.⁴

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1. William J. Howey, *Howey-in-the-Hills* (Mt. Dora, 1927), 20.
2. Death certificate of William J. Howey, Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, Public Health Statistics Section, Jacksonville; *Pioneer Florida (Personal and Family Records)*, 3 vols. (Tampa, 1959), III, 937; *Who's Who in America* 17 (Chicago, 1932), 1183.
3. Interview with Mary Grace Howey by Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., April 14, 1977 (hereinafter Howey interview); *Pioneer Florida*, III, 937.
4. Stuart G. Mandel, "The Republican Party in Florida" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 1968), 22; *Pioneer Florida*, III, 937; interview with Westa Bryant, granddaughter of William J. Howey, by Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., October 6, 1977.



William J. Howey. Engraving courtesy of Mrs. Westa Bryant, Tallahassee.

It was then that Howey brought his land development talents to Florida. He originally settled near Winter Haven and began selling land near present-day Dundee, Lake Hamilton, and Star Lake.⁵ At Winter Haven Howey met Dr. Frederick W. Inman of Akron, Ohio, who introduced him to the science of citrus farming.⁶ Dr. Inman had produced a citrus tree from budded stock instead of seeds and developed a method of growing a root system from the seed of a lemon. When the young lemon seedling was eighteen to twenty-four months old, a bud was taken from an orange tree of high quality and budded to the rough lemon sprout by slitting the bark, inserting the bud, and transplanting the new creation to a grove. From this planting, it was expected in four years to bear fruit.⁷

In the Winter Haven area Howey refined his citrus farming and sales program. He utilized the railroad to bring buyers to Dundee where he had constructed a tent city to house them.⁸ After selling citrus lands in this fashion for several years, Howey was invited by two pioneers of citrus cultivation in Lake County, Sheriff Balton A. Cassady and Harry Duncan, a Tavares attorney, to consider development of their county.⁹ After seeing the rolling hills and sandy soil of Lake County, Howey sold his holdings near Star Lake (Bok Tower now stands on his planned homesite) and began to purchase land in Lake County.¹⁰

Howey chose a large tract lying on the southern shores of a chain of lakes adjacent to Little Lake Harris which he felt confi-

5. Josephine G. Burr, *History of Winter Haven* (Winter Haven, 1974), 31-32; interview with Glenn D. Gerke by Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., August 29, 1977 (hereinafter Gerke interview); *Pioneer Florida*, III, 937.

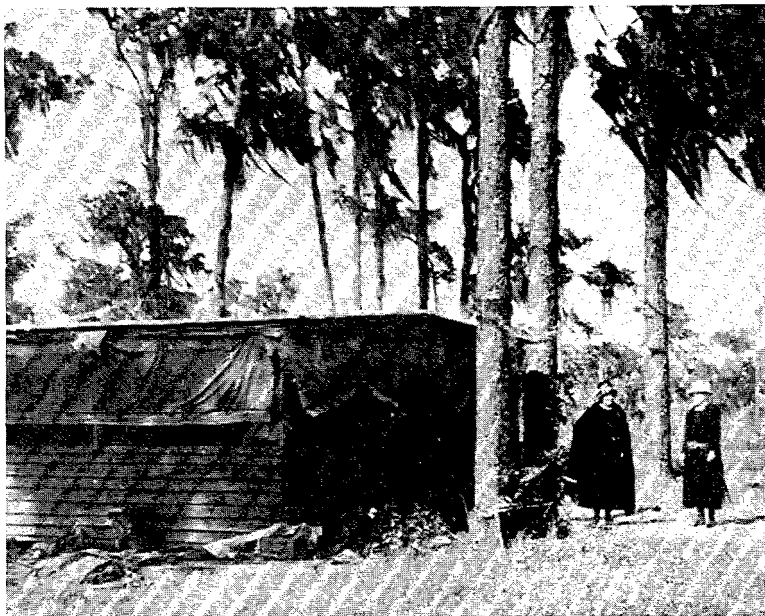
6. Howey, *Howey-in-the-Hills*, 2.

7. F. W. Inman, *Winter Haven, Florida: The Land of Sunshine* (Dayton, 1927), 3-6; Roland Phillips, Federal Writers' Project, "Winter Haven and Cypress Gardens," P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

8. Gerke interview.

9. Interview with Carl E. Duncan by Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., September 3, 1987 (hereinafter Duncan interview); interview with Claude Vaughan "C. V." Griffin by Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., June 16, 1977 (hereinafter Griffin interview); interview with Helen Buck by Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., April 10, 1984 (hereinafter Buck interview).

10. Howey interview; William T. Kennedy, *History of Lake County, Florida* (St. Augustine, 1929), 175, 195; Deed Records of Lake County, vol. 70: 386; vol. 73: 166; vol. 74: 50, 51, 53, 173, 175, 272, 469, 566, 676; vol. 75: 53, 97, 98, 182, 229, 688; vol. 77: 82, 356; vol. 78: 24, 181; vol. 79: 66, 476. These properties were bought by the W. J. Howey Land Company.



Tent City housed prospective land buyers to Howey-in-the-Hills development in the early 1920s. Photograph from *Howey-in-the-Hills* (Howey Homes Inc., publication).

dent was excellent citrus soil. This was near Yahala where the Duncans had citrus trees dating back to the 1870s.¹¹ Howey began to buy land in Lake County in 1914, and by 1920 he had about 60,000 acres for his land development project.¹²

Howey's land development had several unique characteristics which accounted for its success and durability. He thought if he took raw land and controlled its development into mature citrus groves he could guarantee investors a successful enter-

11. Howey interview; Buck interview; *Pioneer Florida*, III, 937; Duncan interview.
12. *Pioneer Florida*, III, 937; W. J. Howey Co., *The Story of Howey-in-the-Hills* (Howey-in-the-Hills, 1938), n.p.; Deed Records of Lake County, vol. 86: 122; vol. 89: 6, 9, 16, 45, 47, 53, 59, 80, 100, 133, 134, 162, 225, 264, 265, 375; vol. 100: 32, 37, 94, 100, 107, 151, 231, 274, 306, 379, 425, 489, 491; vol. 104: 152; vol. 105: 509; vol. 130: 11, 20, 347, 537, 656; vol. 132: 145; vol. 133: 91; vol. 137: 75, 184, 291, 427; vol. 138: 65, 67, 83, 162; vol. 139: 224, 392; vol. 140: 3, 72, 136, 236; vol. 142: 513. These properties were bought by Orange Belt Securities Company, Howey Hotels Company, and Ridge Holding Company.

prise while making a profit on each step of citrus cultivation. Howey bought land for \$8.00 to \$10.00 per acre and sold it for \$800 to \$2,000 per acre cleared and planted with forty-eight citrus trees per acre.¹³

Howey then took his enterprise another step and guaranteed the investor his total investment including land, planting, and grove care, plus six percent interest, if the buyer signed a maintenance contract with Howey's company, the Orange Belt Security Company. If the grove did not return the total investment by the eleventh year, Orange Belt Security Company would repurchase the property for a price equal to the original investment, cost of planting and maintenance, plus six percent interest (all proceeds from previous crops to be deducted). The warranty had to be exercised within ninety days of gathering the eighth crop.¹⁴

Because of World War I, Howey's project got off to a slow start, but in 1919 he began to market his land vigorously. In 1917 he opened his frame hotel, the Bougainvillea, which was intended to replace the tent city he utilized to house visitors.¹⁵ After the Bougainvillea burned in 1920 it was replaced four years later by the block and stucco Hotel Floridan overlooking Little Lake Harris. In 1920 Howey organized a motor car caravan which he led from Chicago to Lake County. It was his aim to attract northern capital to his citrus project, and he made an effort to affiliate with sales agents in Chicago, New York, and other northern cities.¹⁶ As his project developed he opened offices in the Florida tourist cities of Miami, Orlando, Bradenton, St. Petersburg, Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, and Palm Beach.¹⁷

13. Griffin interview; Howey Company, *Howey-in-the-Hills*, 16-30; Duncan interview. The advertised price in 1927 was \$1,199.00 per acre and the number of trees per acre was later increased to ninety-six by planting trees thirty feet by fifteen feet instead of the original twenty-five feet by twenty-five feet, *The New Citrus Era* (Howey-in-the-Hills, 1930), n.p.

14. *Ibid.*; Howey, *Howey-in-the-Hills*, 30; Howey interview. In the depression years of the 1930s the responsibilities of the grove care were transferred to Howey in the Hills Service, Inc., as Orange Belt Securities Company probably had difficulty in honoring its warranty.

15. Howey interview; Buck interview; Miss Buck remembered the name of the original hotel, the Bougainvillea; *The Florida Grower*, October 7, 1916, article by William J. Howey in microfilm collection of Mrs. W. J. Howey clippings, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.

16. Howey interview; *Florida Metropolis*, October 12, 1916; Howey clippings.

17. *Howey Tribune*, November, December 1926; February, December 1927; December, 1928; April, 1929; April, November 1930.

At the suggestion of his top sales agent, William Kenmuir of St. Petersburg, Howey named his development Howey-in-the-Hills.¹⁸ By 1925 it was incorporated, and the Howey companies began to sell town lots with the expectation of northern investors settling near their orange groves which would be yielding upwards of fifty percent annually on their investment.¹⁹ To further encourage settlement in Howey-in-the-Hills, a nine-hole golf course, designed by George O'Neal of Chicago, was opened.²⁰ Howey encouraged people to view their investment in a citrus grove as superior to a bond. He stated that, "No bond had ever been issued that represents a safer investment than does an orange or grapefruit grove properly located and properly attended."²¹

From 1915 through 1924 Howey registered 187 sales, but in 1925 the Florida land boom tripled his enterprise, and he sold sixty-nine parcels of his citrus property.²² In 1926 sales soared as he claimed \$5,000,000 in sales (which equaled the sales of the previous ten years) and sales of 117 parcels.²³ In 1926 the Howey companies shipped 28,000 boxes of fresh fruit which brought an average of \$2.58 per box on the tree. His land sales reflected both the fever of the land boom and the vigor with which he marketed his ideas.²⁴ Howey claimed contracts for citrus cultivation totaling 14,000 acres by the end of 1926, and he proceeded to make the largest single order for tractors in Florida when he purchased twelve McCormick-Deering tractors in 1927.²⁵ Howey also claimed Florida's largest single order for cover crop seed by purchasing enough seed to plant 25,000 acres.²⁶

In 1926 Howey-in-the-Hills passed a \$300,000 bond issue to finance a water works, thirty miles of hard surfaced streets, a fire department, and a 165-foot high town hall.²⁷ By the end of

18. *Ibid.*, January 1931.

19. *General Ordinances, Town of Howey, Lake County, Florida, Incorporated May 8, 1925* (Mt. Dora, 1925); *The Florida Grower*, October 7, 1916, Howey clippings.

20. *Howey Tribune*, January 1926.

21. *Ibid.*, November 1926; Howey, *Howey-in-the-Hills*, 30.

22. Deed Records of Lake County, vols. 117-130, 1926.

23. *Ibid.*; *Howey Tribune*, December 1926; January, February 1927.

24. *Ibid.*, January 1927.

25. *Ibid.*, December 1926; February, March, May 1927; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 14, 1926.

26. *Ibid.*, December 11, 1928.

27. *General Ordinances, Town of Howey, Lake County, Florida*; Kennedy, *History of Lake County*, 64.

1926 Lake County completed a toll free 7,980-foot wooden bridge across Little Lake Harris which provided Howey-in-the-Hills a more direct link to Jacksonville and the northeast tourist trade.²⁸ Howey claimed the bridge cut by fifty-two miles the trip from Jacksonville to Tampa. At the peak of the land boom in 1926, Howey purchased five forty-passenger International buses to transport prospective customers from his Florida sales offices to Howey-in-the-Hills.²⁹

The collapse of the Florida land boom in the closing months of 1926 caused Howey to scale back his dreams as the construction of the town hall was cancelled, and a bank and the Howey Savings and Loan Association failed to materialize.³⁰ Despite the constriction caused by the end of feverish land speculation, the remarkable factor in the Howey land development program was its continued success after the crash. In 1927 sales of the Howey companies fell about thirty-five percent, but they still registered 127 sales.³¹ In that same year, Howey-in-the-Hills claimed 10,000 visitors, and even though sales had declined, sales records were set in February and March 1927.³² The rooms at the Hotel Floridan were generally filled, and oranges were bringing \$3.00 per box on the tree which was a record high.³³

In 1927 Howey completed his \$250,000 mansion which was designed by Katherine Cotheal Budd, one of America's few female architects.³⁴ His interior designer, Earl Coleman, had also decorated the John Ringling mansion in Sarasota, and Howey's bill for interior furnishings was \$55,000.³⁵ The Howey mansion reflected the Mediterranean architecture which was popular in the 1920s and in its grandest moments hosted the New York Civic Opera Company, former President Calvin Coolidge, Kansas Governor Alfred Landon, and other prominent public figures.³⁶ Howey saw his mansion as the anchor for a development

28. *Howey Tribune*, November 1926; Kennedy, *History of Lake County*, 64.

29. *Howey Tribune*, November 1927.

30. *Ibid.*, February, May 1926; Duncan interview.

31. Deed Records of Lake County, vols. 130-138, 1927; *Howey Tribune*, April 1929.

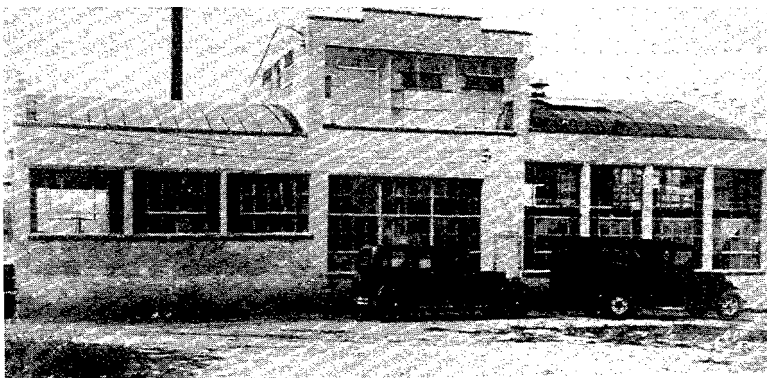
32. *Ibid.*, December 1927.

33. *Ibid.*, March, June 1928.

34. *Ibid.*, December 1926; Howey interview; *Pioneer Florida*, III, 938.

35. Interview with Carl Adams by Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., September 29, 1987. Mr. Adams was the appraiser of the Howey Mansion and supervised its sale after the death of Mrs. Howey at age ninety-two in 1981.

36. Howey interview; *Howey Tribune*, May 1926; January, February 1931.



Florida's first citrus juice plant built by Howey in 1925-1926. His canned juice was sold under the "Lifeguard" brand. Photograph from *Howey-in-the-Hills*.

of fine homes for northern capitalists similar to Mountain Lake near Lake Wales. He even named his lake front street Lake Shore Boulevard after Chicago's famed thoroughfare.³⁷

Howey's enthusiasm for citrus was manifest in his planned Howey Sanitarium which would employ citrus to aid in the cure of diabetes, influenza, and other chronic ailments.³⁸ In 1927 Howey also opened a bottle juice plant to utilize undersized and discolored fruit, and also in that year he began to open direct sales stores for his citrus products.³⁹ These were located where he had land sales offices. In his best location, St. Petersburg, he had three offices selling land, oranges, and juice.⁴⁰ It was Howey's plan to sell the fruit from his groves directly to the public to maximize profits and to eliminate "the selling agent, the commission man in the North, the wholesaler and the retailer."⁴¹

In 1928 Howey-in-the-Hills again claimed 10,000 visitors and oranges reached a high of \$3.50 per box on the tree.⁴² Howey's land sales were about one-half those of 1926, and he

37. Howey, *Howey-in-the-Hills*, 21.

38. *Howey Tribune*, March, June 1928; February, October, December 1927; January 1929.

39. *Ibid.*, December 1927; March 1928; February, April 1929.

40. *Ibid.*, December 1928.

41. *Ibid.*, November 1928.

42. *Ibid.*, April 1929.

recorded only ninety sales.⁴³ In this season he held a meeting which drew 200 sales agents to the Hotel Floridan's seventy-five rooms. He also raised the rates at the Hotel Floridan from \$3.00 to \$4.00 per day and limited stays to three days.⁴⁴

After the collapse of the stock market in late 1929, Howey's land sales began to decline. In 1930 sales reached only \$500,000 which was one-tenth of his 1926 sales.⁴⁵ A contributing factor was the discovery of the Mediterranean fruit fly in Florida, although the Howey properties were not infested.⁴⁶ The cumulative effects of bad publicity from the 1926 and 1928 hurricanes also discouraged investors.

As late as April 1930 there were five fulltime land salesmen at Howey-in-the-Hills offering free memberships in the golf course to grove purchasers, but by 1931, with the deepening of the Great Depression, Howey's land sales had nearly stopped.⁴⁷ In that year he claimed only \$250,000 in sales.⁴⁸ This was a severe jolt to his project. He had 600 employees with ten separate departments handling his enterprises in the mid-1920s generating an annual payroll over \$1,000,000; by 1931 this had dwindled to a payroll of \$101,000.⁴⁹

From 1931 to 1938 the Howey companies recorded an average of twenty-three sales per year.⁵⁰ During these Depression years Howey maintained his development primarily from the sale of fruit and the maintenance and development charges to his previous grove investors.⁵¹ These charges led to a court battle between the W. J. Howey Co. and the Securities and Exchange Commission in the 1940s. Claude Vaughan "C. V." Griffin bought all the Howey companies after Howey's death in 1938, and Howey did not live to see his unique method of selling citrus property with an accompanying maintenance and development contract declared illegal. The United States Supreme

43. Deed Records of Lake County, vols. 139-143, 1928; *Howey Tribune*, January 1929.

44. *Ibid.*, November, December 1928.

45. *Ibid.*, May 1930.

46. *Ibid.*, January, May 1930.

47. *Ibid.*, April 1930.

48. *Ibid.*, May 1931.

49. *Ibid.*, May 1927; February, April 1930.

50. General Index to Deeds, Lake County, vols. 52-59, 1931-1938.

51. Howey interview; Duncan interview; Griffin interview.

Court ruled that the Howey companies were selling an unregistered security.⁵²

It is not certain how many separate owners of grove property and homesites were purchased in Howey-in-the-Hills. There were claims as high as 2,200 grove owners and the construction of seventy-three residences.⁵³ These figures were probably high. There were about 900 sales recorded by the Howey companies from 1914 to 1940.⁵⁴ Howey developed about 14,000 acres of citrus property with probably one-half of it held by the Howey companies at the time of his death.⁵⁵ This would include the nursery stock and young groves planted in speculation of sales. Mrs. Howey retained 1,000 acres of mature groves when she turned the Howey companies over to C. V. Griffin.⁵⁶

In 1930, Howey's last good year for grove sales, his newspaper claimed service contracts for 401 grove owners reflecting a total of 3,676 acres of grove property. Forty-three of these owned only one acre or less, and only three held as many as 100 acres with 124 acres being the largest single holding other than that of Howey and his employees.⁵⁷ Before the advent of frozen concentrated citrus juice Howey pioneered canned citrus juices which were electrically pasteurized.⁵⁸ He also attempted unsuccessfully in 1931 to store citrus in three huge non-refrigerated tanks, each capable of holding 600 boxes of fruit which were supposed to preserve the citrus by creating a vacuum in the tanks.⁵⁹

Howey was always an enthusiastic pioneer in the citrus industry, and he carried this energy into Florida politics. After the incorporation of Howey-in-the-Hills in 1925, he was elected its

52. Fla 66-SCt 27; Duncan interview. Even though the two contracts were linked as a security, the Securities and Exchange Commission then ruled that the Howey companies were exempt from further responsibility as they fit an exemption provided in the law. Carl E. Duncan, *Biography of Carl E. Duncan* (Tavares, 1987), 46-49.

53. Kennedy, *History of Lake County*, 63; *Howey Tribune*, May 1930.

54. General Index to Deeds, Lake County, 1914-1940.

55. *Howey Tribune*, February 1929; February 1931; Howey interview.

56. *Ibid.*; Griffin interview. Griffin stated that Howey let his options expire on the large tracts he held and owned less than 1,200 acres "free and clear" by 1938.

57. *Howey Tribune*, March 1930.

58. *Ibid.*, January 1929.

59. *Ibid.*, March, April, May 1931.

mayor.⁶⁰ In 1928 he was approached by his old hunting companions, Glenn B. Skipper of Bartow and William C. Lawson of Orlando, to join them in restructuring the Florida Republican party as a conservative organization which would appeal to white Florida Democrats.⁶¹

Skipper and Howey engineered a revolt at the 1928 state Republican convention in Daytona Beach which defeated the traditional “black and tan” Republicans led by George Bean.⁶² The thrust of Skipper’s and Howey’s political philosophy was a southern strategy based on a new “lily white” Republican party. It was Howey’s aim to build a two-party political system in Florida by appealing to white voters. The existing Republican party in Florida was largely a patronage arm of the national Republican party. It was not even eligible to hold its own Florida primary elections until it polled at least thirty percent of the vote in a statewide race.⁶³

The “lily white” Republicans nominated Howey as their gubernatorial candidate in 1928 to oppose Doyle Carlton of Wauchula and Tampa, the eventual winner of the Democratic primaries. Howey promised to reduce taxes, eliminate waste by firing unnecessary state employees, and cut the number of state circuit court judges by one-half.⁶⁴ His promise to contribute his gubernatorial salary to a statewide advertising campaign to attract northern capital appealed to businessmen.⁶⁵ His critics, however, charged that Howey was more interested in publicity for his real estate development than in being elected governor.⁶⁶ Howey viewed traditional Florida Democrats as inherently corrupt as a consequence of one-party government, and he charged

60. *Ibid.*, January 1929.

61. *Ibid.*, Howey interview; *Lakeland Journal*, April 6, 1928; Howey clippings; *Daytona Beach Times*, May 11, 1928.

62. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 11, 1928; Peter D. Klingman, *Neither Dies nor Surrenders: A History of the Republican Party in Florida, 1867-1970* (Gainesville, 1984), 120-25; *West Palm Beach Sun*, June 22, 1928; Peter O. Knight scrapbook, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History; *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, November 1, 1928; *Lakeland Journal*, April 6, 1928; *Winter Haven Chief*, April 6, 1928; *Tampa Times*, April 6, 1928; Howey clippings.

63. Klingman, *Neither Dies nor Surrenders*, 123, 128-29.

64. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 31, 1928; *Howey Tribune*, June 1928; Howey clippings.

65. Klingman, *Neither Dies nor Surrenders*, 126.

66. *Miami Herald*, October 21, 1928.



Republican gubernatorial headquarters in Miami, 1928. Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.

that his opponent, Doyle Carlton, had received enormous fees in the sale of Tampa city bonds while serving as its attorney.⁶⁷ Howey also asserted that Carlton has mismanaged hurricane relief funds in 1928, and had gained an unwarranted exemption from service in World War I.⁶⁸ Howey wrote his own version of the Republican platform which promised Floridians “a conservative and efficient business administration” and concluded: “Howey built groves, Groves built towns, Let’s elect Howey, On these grounds.”⁶⁹

The real strength of the Howey campaign came from the presidential election of 1928. The Republicans had nominated the popular secretary of commerce, Herbert Hoover, while the Democrats nominated former New York governor, Alfred E. Smith. The nomination of Al Smith had been opposed by the Florida Democratic delegation because he was a Catholic, a

67. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 31, November 2, 3, 1928.

68. *Ibid.*, November 4, 1928.

69. “Platform of the Republican Party of Florida,” Howey clippings.

Northerner, and because of his stand on prohibition. Some Florida Democrats campaigned for Hoover, calling themselves "Hoovercrats."⁷⁰

Smith and his national campaign manager, John J. Raskob, supported the liberalization of the Volstead Act which outlawed the sale or transportation of beverages containing more than one-half of one percent alcohol.⁷¹ Smith recommended that the states be allowed to determine the issue under liberalized national legislation which would permit light wine and beer.⁷² In Florida this position aroused many Protestant clergymen, and set the Anti-Saloon League and Women's Christian Temperance Union on the campaign trail in favor of Hoover.⁷³ It also spawned an anti-Smith Democratic faction led by state senator Edgar W. Waybright of Jacksonville.⁷⁴

The Howey campaign came out with a strong endorsement of prohibition, stating: "We stand for the unqualified enforcement of all laws and deplore and condemn any vacillating policy of nullification. . . . We emphasize the support to be given to the Eighteenth Amendment and the better enforcement of the Volstead Act."⁷⁵ While Howey stated he wished he could eradicate "the entire traffic in intoxicating liquor," he maintained a secret liquor vault in his mansion where he kept his favorite Scotch whiskey.⁷⁶

Doyle Carlton was desperately trying to hold the state Democratic party together while not overtly campaigning for Smith. Carlton sought to separate himself from the national candidate, but the Florida Democratic party had not written a state plat-

70. *Miami Herald*, October 19, 26, 1928; *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, October 7, November 2, 1928; *The Groveland Graphic*, October 4, 1928; Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., "Florida and the Presidential Election of 1928," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 26 (October 1947), 176-81; Melvin Edward Hughes, Jr., "The 1928 Presidential Election in Florida" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1976), 52, 59-61, 168-69; Edgar W. Waybright, "A Southern Democrat Speaks," *Kourier Magazine* 4 (August 1928), 35; *Gainesville Evening News*, October 16, 1928.

71. Alfred E. Smith, *Campaign Addresses of Governor Alfred E. Smith, Democratic Candidate for President, 1928* (Washington, DC, 1929), 34-36; *DeLand Daily News*, October 10, 1928.

72. Smith, *Campaign Addresses*, 35.

73. Hughes, "The 1928 Presidential Election in Florida," 62-86.

74. *Ibid.*, 166-69.

75. "Florida Platform of the Republican Party," Howey clippings.

76. "Platform of the Republican Party in Florida" (Howey Platform), Howey clippings; Howey interview.

form in 1928, and Carlton's candidacy was seen by some as an extension of the national election. Despite the demand that he endorse the Smith candidacy unequivocally, Carlton consistently hedged his support for Smith.⁷⁷ Carlton was aided by his Baptist friends who publicly supported him and often referred to Carlton as governor-elect much to the chagrin and dismay of Howey.⁷⁸

The incumbent United States Senator, Park Trammell, who was up for re-election in 1928, refused to appear in the state the last three weeks of the campaign so to avoid any association with Al Smith and his militant anti-prohibition statements.⁷⁹ Carlton and Trammell were joined in their restrained political behavior by Congressman Robert Alexis "Lex" Green of the Fourth District and Democratic candidate for Congress Ruth Bryan Owen of the First District.⁸⁰

Florida Republicans saw the unpopular Smith and the candidacy of William J. Howey as a great opportunity to create a two-party system in Florida for the first time since 1877. Republican strategy for the national campaign was to let the anti-Smith Democrats shake "the Democrats loose from the Demo-Tammany ticket," while concentrating their efforts on the elections of Hoover and Howey.⁸¹ The Republican campaign slogan in 1928 was "Hoover, Howey and Happiness."⁸²

Howey, as a successful businessman, stressed his business expertise and the value that the election of a Republican gover-

77. James B. Hodges to Margaret E. Thompson, April 27, 1932, James B. Hodges Papers, Box 106, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History; *DeLand Daily News*, September 7, 1928; *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, October 21, November 3, 1928; *Pensacola Journal*, November 3, 1928.

78. *Tampa Mornine Tribune*, May 23, November 1, 2, 1928.

79. *DeLand Daily News*, August 27, 1928; Park Trammell to Judge W. H. Baker, October 19, 1928; Trammell to Senator Thomas W. Hardwick of Georgia, November 14, 1928; Trammell Papers, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.

80. Robert Alexis Green to Dr. Will C. White, September 20, 1928. There are numerous letters to and from Congressman Green seeking his participation in the election. He repeatedly refused to answer while declining to come to Florida until October 31, when he made a solitary radio address on WRUF, Gainesville in which he refused to endorse Smith by name. Robert Alexis Green Papers, Box 2, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History; Herbert Felkel to James B. Hodges, April 14, 1933, Hodges Papers, Box 106.

81. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 27, 1928.

82. *Ibid.*, October 28, 1928.

nor would mean to Florida. He promised programs which would "put 100,000 new farms to work" by enacting "not a protective tariff but a prohibitive one."⁸³ Howey's suggestion that Florida's forty-two circuit court judges be reduced by one-half caused many regular Democrats to speak out for Doyle Carlton. Frequently county judges would deny Howey the right to speak from courthouse steps.⁸⁴ In return, Howey decried the "astoundingly autocratic and rabid partisanship" of these judges and campaigned against them as part of the corrupt and inefficient Democratic administration of the state's affairs.⁸⁵

In early October, six of the eight statewide Republican candidates withdrew, leaving only Howey and Barclay Warburton, the senatorial candidate, in statewide competition.⁸⁶ At the same time a number of Republicans sought to get on the ballot at the city and county level as the Smith candidacy eroded the normally solid Democratic state.⁸⁷ Howey and his fellow Republicans hoped that a Hoover victory would weaken Florida's monolithic Democratic party and be replaced with a real, two-party system. The *Tampa Morning Tribune* stated that some 75,000 Democrats had voted for Hoover.⁸⁸

Howey campaigned vigorously. He visited all of Florida's sixty-seven counties, frequently making as many as six speeches in a day.⁸⁹ He lost the election by a three to two margin while Hoover carried the state over Smith by about the same percentage. Florida was giving its vote to a Republican presidential nominee for the first time since Reconstruction, but nonetheless, the final gubernatorial vote was Carlton 148,455 and Howey 94,018.⁹⁰

Since Howey had garnered thirty-nine percent of the vote, the Republicans were qualified to hold their own primary elec-

83. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1928; *St. Petersburg Sunshine City News*, July 4, 1928; *Mulberry Press*, October 26, 1928; Knight scrapbook.

84. *Miami Florida State Republican*, August 8, 1928; Knight scrapbook.

85. *St. Petersburg Times*, October 17, 1928; *Miami Herald*, October 11, 1928; *Lacoochee Times*, November 2, 1928.

86. *St. Petersburg Times*, October 3, 1928; *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, October 3, 1928.

87. *Miami Herald*, October 19, 1928; *DeLand Daily News*, October 20, 1928; *St. Petersburg Times*, October 9, 19, November 10, 1928.

88. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 9, 1928.

89. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1928; *Howey Tribune*, December 1928.

90. Secretary of State of Florida, *Tabulation of Official Votes Cast in the General Election of 1928* (Tallahassee, 1929).

tion. Conservative Florida businessmen sought to broaden the state's appeal to northern investors by "having a republican [sic] as a Florida governor," they saw Howey's campaign as a start in that direction.⁹¹ Even Carlton's vigorous supporter, Peter O. Knight of Tampa, stated that the development of a two-party state would be the "best thing that has ever happened to Florida."⁹²

Even though Howey lost the election of 1928, he appeared to be the leader of a new progressive Republican party in Florida. Howey was one of the few Republicans elected on a local level in Florida; he served as mayor of Howey-in-the-Hills from 1925 until 1936.⁹³ In 1930 Howey attempted to take control of the party by replacing Glenn B. Skipper as national committeeman.⁹⁴ There were charges that Skipper had established a Hoover Club in Miami, that paid him a salary of \$1,000 a month and expenses of an equal amount, which Howey's group viewed as a betrayal of their progressive ideals.⁹⁵ The true motivation was probably Howey's effort to gain control of the federal patronage controlled by the national committeeman.⁹⁶

In the primary election of 1930 there were three factions, each representing Skipper, Howey, and George Bean.⁹⁷ To facilitate the choice of a united Republican party committee, it was agreed that Skipper would resign as national committeeman and Judge Elvey E. Callaway would resign as state Republican chairman.⁹⁸ Skipper immediately renounced his resignation when it became evident that Howey and his progressive Republicans were likely to replace him.⁹⁹

Leon E. Howe, editor of the *Florida State Republican*, stated the position of most Florida Republicans when he argued that

91. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 9, 1928; Knight scrapbook.

92. *St. Petersburg Times*, November 10, 1928; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 9, 1928; Knight scrapbook.

93. *Pioneer Florida*, III, 937; Howey clippings.

94. Klingman, *Neither Dies nor Surrenders*, 131-32; Howey clippings; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, April 16, 1930.

95. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, March 21, 25, June 2, 4, 1930.

96. Howey interview; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, March 25, 1930.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Miami Florida State Republican*, April 10, 1930; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, April 16, 1930.

99. *Ibid.*; Howey clippings; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, March 21, June 4, 1930. The *Tribune* stated that Terrell H. Smith, the editor and publisher of the Republican *Florida State Journal*, aided Howey in his struggle with Skipper.



Former President Calvin Coolidge visiting Howey in Florida during the early 1930s. Photograph from *Howey-in-the-Hills*.

it was “time to clean out the sore spots” in the party and replace them with “men who command the respect of Democrat and Republican alike.”¹⁰⁰ In an effort to create party unity John F. Harris of Palm Beach, a close friend of J. Leonard Replogle, the national committeeman before Skipper, was chosen to replace Skipper.¹⁰¹ This left the party closely tied to northern Republicans and minimized Howey’s efforts to broaden the base of the party by appealing to southern Democrats.

Howey was the best-known Republican politician in Florida, and several progressive Republican organizations worked to draft him as their gubernatorial candidate in 1932.¹⁰² Ferman A. Wilson, editor of Howey’s newspaper, *Howey Tribune*, became his campaign manager in the race for governor in 1932.¹⁰³ The

100. Miami *Florida State Republican*, April 10, 1930.

101. Klingman, *Neither Dies nor Surrenders*, 132.

102. Jacksonville *Florida Beacon*, October 30, November 20, December 3, 11, 1931; Hodges Papers, Box 106.

103. Buck interview.

problems for Howey in 1932 were the Depression, the elimination of prohibition as an issue, and the widespread support for the Democratic presidential nominee, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In 1932 the Florida Democratic candidates coalesced around Roosevelt with Congressman R. A. "Lex" Green making a pilgrimage to Warm Springs, Georgia, two weeks before the election to identify himself with Roosevelt.¹⁰⁴ Both United States Senators, Park Trammell and Duncan Fletcher, endorsed Roosevelt and the Democratic gubernatorial nominee, David Sholtz.¹⁰⁵ Democratic Congressman Thomas A. Yon from Calhoun County telegraphed Roosevelt pledging his support and issued a press release announcing that he was a "Democrat that has never voted the ticket of any other party."¹⁰⁶ Members of the State Democratic Executive Committee stated in their platform: "We endorse unreservedly the Democratic nominees for President and Vice President" and "endorse the platform" of the national Democratic party which advocated "the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment."¹⁰⁷

David Sholtz, Howey's opponent in 1932, was a remarkable political phenomenon. He was born of German-Jewish immigrant parents in Brooklyn, New York.¹⁰⁸ In later years, Sholtz was usually introduced as an Episcopalian after his marriage to a Christian.¹⁰⁹ Sholtz settled in Daytona Beach, and after serving as president of the state Chamber of Commerce, ran in 1932 against two former governors, Cary A. Hardee and John W. Martin, in the Democratic primary.¹¹⁰ Sholtz overwhelmed Martin by the largest majority to date in a Democratic primary runoff after Martin made Sholtz's Jewish ancestry a major cam-

104. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 3, 1932; James A. Farley to Green, October 19, 1932, Green to Farley, October 28, 1932, Green Papers, Box 2.

105. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 4, 6, 1932.

106. Thomas A. Yon telegram to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Thomas A. Yon Press Release to *Tallahassee Democrat*, February 2 1, 1930, Thomas A. Yon Papers, Box 1, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.

107. "State Platform Adopted by State Democratic Executive Committee, July 22, 1932," Hodges Papers, Box 106.

108. Merlin G. Cox, "David Sholtz: New Deal Governor of Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 43 (October 1964), 142-44; Gene Burnett, "Florida's Dark Horse, New Deal Governor," *Florida Trend* 20 (July 1977), 128.

109. *Ibid.*, 129.

110. *Ibid.*, 128-30.

paign issue.¹¹¹ One of Florida's most conservative newspapers concluded that much of the strength of Sholtz was a consequence of "his obedience to the teachings of his parents, who are conservative, thrifty, God-fearing people."¹¹²

In 1932 Howey ran on essentially the same issues as in 1928. He promised economy in government by reducing the number of circuit courts, abolishing county boards of public instruction in favor of an appointed superintendent, paroling convicts after serving one-third of their sentences, and refinancing of state bonds at lower interest rates.¹¹³ Howey's most dramatic economizing idea was to halt road building and use the money to pay state debts. He also urged more legal rights for women and extolled the benefits of two-party government.¹¹⁴

As Howey-in-the-Hills was one of the 150 Florida towns and cities in default on its bond obligations, Howey could not find a satisfactory means of handling this problem other than refinancing state and local debt.¹¹⁵ Deficit financing was prohibited by the state constitution, and the state had a shortfall in its tax collections which left government economy and reduced taxes as the curious solution to the new problems posed by economic depression.¹¹⁶ When Democratic newspapers charged Howey with running a business enterprise that was losing money, he noted that he still had the "highest commercial rating given by Dun's or Bradstreet's."¹¹⁷ Howey's enterprises had been severely curtailed by 1932, but he still donated \$5,000 to the American Legion to help finance the Miami Drum and Bugle Corps' trip to Portland, Oregon.¹¹⁸

The issues raised by Howey were similar to Sholtz's call for "a general reduction in all taxes now burdening citizens of Florida."¹¹⁹ Although Sholtz called for economy in government,

111. *Ibid.*, 130.

112. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 7, 1932.

113. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1932; *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, October 8, 1932; Jacksonville *Florida Beacon*, October 30, 1931.

114. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 5, 1932.

115. Cox, "David Sholtz: New Deal Governor of Florida," 146

116. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 5, 1932.

117. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 3, 1932.

118. A. Rice King to Spessard L. Holland, August 30, 1932, Spessard L. Holland Papers, Box 4 (1932 Personal Correspondence), P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.

119. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 2, 1932.

he addressed the pressing problems of Floridians by promising free school books, a nine-month school year, increased pay for teachers, and jobs for the unemployed.¹²⁰ Democrats also claimed that their candidate was the true champion of white supremacy, and they tried to minimize the “lily white” strategy of Howey and the Republicans. The State Democratic Executive Committee passed a resolution that would allow only “white persons” to qualify to vote in the Democratic primaries.¹²¹ In the meantime, the Florida Republicans had inherited a plank in their platform calling for elimination of the poll tax. Democrats argued that this idea struck at the cornerstone of Florida’s white supremacy laws.¹²²

Party loyalty was a problem for the Republicans, but not for the Democrats in 1932. It was foreseen that Hoover would lose to Roosevelt, and Howey attempted to distance himself from the national ticket by separating his campaign headquarters from the state Republican campaign office. Howey was opposed for the gubernatorial nomination by the former Republican congressional candidate, William C. Lawson of Orlando, who stated “that not one ray of hope for the relief of the tax-burdened people would be rekindled by the election” of Hoover or Howey. Lawson said that he felt Howey was “a better salesman than he is a statesman.”¹²³

Howey could also no longer depend upon the Hoovercrats of 1928 as they were scrambling in 1932 to get back on the Democratic bandwagon. Former state senator Edgar W. Waybright, who had so strongly endorsed Hoover, now concluded that the “good Democratic men and women” who refused to support Smith in 1928 “are almost unanimously enthusiastic and vigorous in their support of Governor Roosevelt and Dave Sholtz.”¹²⁴ The State Democratic Executive Committee handled Democrats like Waybright by refusing them access to speakers

120. Cox, “David Sholtz: New Deal Governor of Florida,” 147.

121. “Republican Black Stuff,” 1932 Campaign circular, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History; “Resolution of State Democratic Executive Committee,” Hodges Papers, Box 106.

122. Jacksonville *Florida Beacon*, October 30, 1931.

123. *Ibid.*, October 30, 1932; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 3, 1932.

124. *Ibid.*, November 4, 1932.

platforms and party patronage.¹²⁵ Congresswoman Ruth Bryan Owen's defeat in the 1932 party primary was seen by Democratic regulars as a consequence of her failure to support the Democratic ticket with enthusiasm in 1928.¹²⁶

The Depression was Howey's great problem in 1932. With rising unemployment and more than half the state's counties owing school teachers back pay, a Republican could not use prosperity as an issue in 1932.¹²⁷ Howey still managed to get thirty-three percent of the vote, however, but he was easily defeated by Sholtz. The final vote was Sholtz 186,270 and Howey 93,323.¹²⁸ Howey sadly concluded that the people of Florida wanted to vote a straight Democratic ticket and acknowledged the failure of his strategy to build a strong Republican party in the state.¹²⁹

In 1936 Howey, in an effort to obtain the position of Republican national committeeman from Florida, sought to have the state Republican party send a delegation to the 1936 national convention with instructions to vote for his friend, Governor Alfred Landon of Kansas.¹³⁰ When the state convention voted for only three of the twelve delegates to be instructed for Landon, Howey realized the weakness of his political position and withdrew as a candidate for committeeman.¹³¹

After the election of 1932, the ideas that gave political impetus to the progressive Republicans of Florida and to William J. Howey evaporated in the new vision of government-inspired prosperity as advanced by Roosevelt's New Deal program.¹³² Howey's economic dreams were shattered by the deep business depression of the 1930s. It would be after World War II, with the advent of frozen orange juice concentrate and renewed

125. James B. Hodges to Harry H. Wells, November 2, 1931, Hodges Papers, Box 106.

126. Herbert Felkel to James B. Hodges, April 14, 1933, Hodges Papers, Box 106.

127. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 5, 1932.

128. Secretary of State of Florida, *Tabulation of Official Votes Cast in the General Election of 1932* (Tallahassee, 1933).

129. *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, November 9, 1932.

130. *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, February 28, April 30, 1936.

131. *Ibid.*, May 1, 1936; "Biographies of Men Actively Connected with Florida," Federal Writers' Program, circa 1938, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.

132. Speech of Thomas A. Yon at Democratic Conference, Marianna, November 28, 1931, Yon Papers, Box 1.

prosperity, that his citrus lands would reach the potential he sought in the 1920s. By the time of his death on June 7, 1938, William J. Howey's economic and political dreams were unfulfilled, but he had set a foundation upon which Florida's politics and agriculture would build.