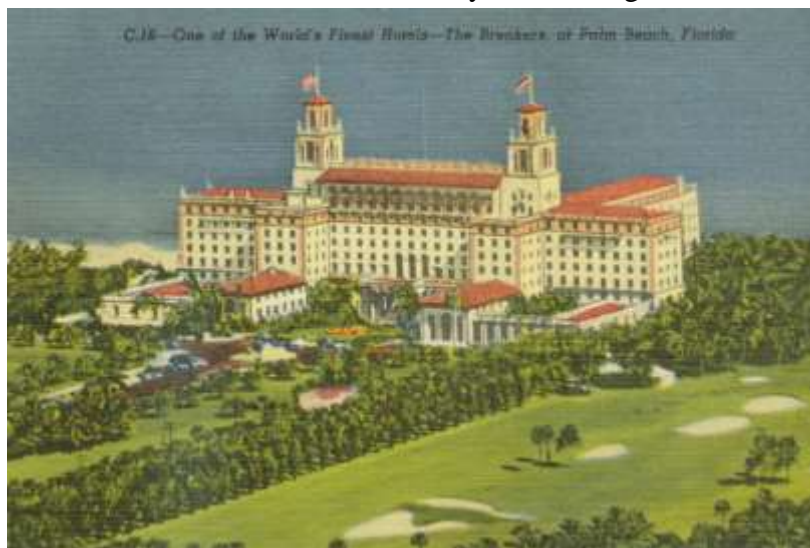


<b>SECTION-TOPIC</b>	<b>FLAGLER ERA – HOTELS</b>
<b>SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD</b>	<b>Standard 3: <i>Analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in response to the industrial Revolution.</i></b> <b>SS.912.A.3.13: <i>Examine key events and people in Florida history as they relate to United States history.</i></b>
<b>VOCABULARY</b>	<b>Gilded Age, Lavish, Industrialization, Resort, Residential, Accommodations</b>
<b>REQUIRED MATERIALS</b>	<b>3 Sections of the Reading, <i>Flagler’s Hotels</i>, The Breakers Postcard picture, Compare and Contrast Worksheet</b>
<b>DURATION</b>	<b>1 – 50 minute period</b>

**DO NOW OR PRE-READING –**

- Teacher will project the picture below of the Breakers Postcard on the whiteboard.
- Students will spend 5 minutes studying the postcard below before answering the following questions.
  1. What is the 1<sup>st</sup> thing you noticed when you looked at this postcard?
  2. From the Postcard view, what do you think makes the The Breakers, “one of the world’s finest hotels?”
  3. If you were not from Florida, what would attract you to stay at the Breakers?
  4. This postcard is economic propoganda. What are they trying to sell you in this postcard? What does the Breakers offer?
  5. What does the Breakers means? How do you think it go the name The Breakers?



## **LESSON** –

- Teacher will make copies of the following reading, *Flagler's Hotels*.
- Students will read quietly and individually the 3 sections, *Flagler's Hotels*, *The Grand Hotels: The Royal Poinciana*, and *The Grand Hotels: The Breakers*.
- Following completion of the reading, the teacher will hand out a worksheet for students to complete about the reading.

### **Flagler's Hotels**

Flagler's plan was two-fold: to build a resort hotel in Palm Beach for wealthy tourists and a new town on the west side of Lake Worth for commercial and residential purposes. He made fast work of both. In February of 1894 the Royal Poinciana Hotel opened, in March the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) tracks reached a site across the lake from Palm Beach, and a few weeks later the first train pulled in. The shores of Lake Worth would never be the same.

Most of Palm Beach County's grand hotels—in a different class than the modest inns of the pioneer era—were built in a flurry of construction between 1893 and 1925. The first two were by Henry Flagler: The Royal Poinciana Hotel in Palm Beach was located just south of the present Flagler Memorial Bridge. The Palm Beach Inn (now The Breakers) followed a few years later just across the island. James A. McGuire and Joseph E. McDonald, Flagler's contractors, had also built his Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine.

The Flagler Era evokes the grand living of the Gilded Age in the United States, a period of quick population growth from immigration, extreme industrial expansion that created great wealth, and lavish displays of that wealth, from about 1877 to 1890. But the Gilded Age did not come to Palm Beach until 1894, when the rest of America was still suffering through the Depression of 1893. Flagler not only provided a reason for wealth to come to south Florida, but also a railroad to get it here.

### **The Grand Hotels: The Royal Poinciana**

In 1893 construction began on the Royal Poinciana Hotel in Palm Beach, after Commodore Charles J. Clarke had purchased the Cocoanut Grove House from Elisha Dimick. Clarke's guests were forced to find other accommodations when he leased the entire hotel to Flagler for a hundred of his upper-level employees. Six months later the Cocoanut Grove House burned to the ground, and the employees were also seeking shelter. One thousand workers helped to build the Royal Poinciana, using 1,400 kegs of nails, 360,000 shingles, 500,000 bricks, 500,000 feet of lumber, 2,400 gallons of paint, 4,000 barrels of lime, 1,200 windows, and 1,800 doors, among other materials.

On February 11, 1894, the Royal Poinciana Hotel opened with only 17 guests in its 540 rooms on six floors, at nightly rates from \$6.00 to \$100.00. Flagler had a special railroad car built in Delaware, covered with pictures of Florida, which traveled around the northeast advertising his hotel. And come they did, in great numbers that required additions to the hotel in 1899 and 1901. Eventually the Royal Poinciana was the world's largest resort hotel, its 1,081 rooms on three miles of corridors accommodating almost 2,000 guests.

About 1,400 employees operated the hotel's own bakeshop, ice cream plant, post office, incinerator, and electric power plant (added in 1901). Burkhardt Brothers sold fruit and oysters on the hotel grounds, and other shops operated in front of the hotel, such as Anthony Brothers menswear.

The train to Palm Beach carried only passengers, who went straight to the island. Their considerable luggage, however, was left at the depot in West Palm Beach to be delivered to their hotel room by a crew of four baggage handlers, including Victor McCarthy, who talked in 1962 about his ten years transferring bags to the Royal Poinciana:

All the baggage, we'd transfer it from one wing to another just by wagons [pulled] by men! ... One family probably had, I'd estimate, ten to fifteen trunks. ... I transferred trunks from one room to the other, and you had to have the guard to go along with you, because the building was so large that you'd never find your way out. [laugh] ... and sometimes he'd get shook up in there. ... No, no elevators! <sup>1</sup>

Although he only had an eighth grade education, Henry Flagler felt a responsibility as a social leader. While he did not follow his minister-father's faith, he thought churches were important to developing a community. Flagler donated a vacant lot at the south end of the hotel and built the Little Church, today's Royal Poinciana Chapel, and arranged for its financial security during his lifetime. To accommodate all his Christian guests, Flagler made the church non-denominational.

## **The Grand Hotels: The Breakers <sup>2</sup>**

In 1896 Flagler built a second hotel, this time on the oceanfront. Joseph Borman, who would become Palm Beach Town Marshal, was one of the laborers earning \$1.25 per day. Originally called the Wayside Inn, and then the Palm Beach Inn, the Georgian Revival building was renamed The Breakers after a 1901 expansion, because guests requested rooms "over by the breakers." Its guests were a virtual "Who's Who" of society that participated in a daily routine that required up to six wardrobe changes. Palm Beach resident Amy Lyman Phillips later described "The Old Breakers Hotel," including "its green-carpeted floors, its white wicker chairs, its wide porches and countless rocking chairs, its great dining room managed by a fleet of old-time darkey waiters, [and] its grass-carpeted bedrooms and baths with all plumbing visible."<sup>3</sup>

The Breakers cottage colony on the north and south ends of the hotel was occupied, often for many seasons, by notable names such as playwright Eugene O'Neill, the Vanderbilts, the Munns, and the Stotesburys before they built a home. Each of the cottages had a name: On the north side were Ocean View, Surf, Wave Crest, Reef, Nautilus, and Atlantic; and on the south side, Oceanic, Seaside, and Spray. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Victor McCarthy, Oral History (HSPBC, 1962)

<sup>2</sup> *Tropical Sun*, 7-11-03; *Chicago Daily Tribune* 3-19-25; "Breakers Fire," *Palm Beach Daily News* 3-19-25 and 3-20-1925; "30 Years Ago," *Palm Beach Post* 3-20-1955; "Opinion: 40 Years Ago," *The Miami Herald* 3-18-65; Miriam Stowers, Joseph Allen, Oral Histories (HSPBC, 1962) and Stafford Beach, Oral History (HSPBC, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Amy Lyman Phillips, "The Old Breakers Hotel," *Palm Beach Sun* (after 1947).

<sup>4</sup> Sanborn Map of West Palm Beach, July 1908, at <http://sid.fcla.edu/mrsid/bin/show.pl>, accessed 7/23/06.

The Breakers' Casino boasted a salt-water swimming pool, where guests could watch E. B. Jennison perform diving feats regularly, or participate in events such as barrel racing and relay races.

During its fourth expansion, The Breakers burned on June 9, 1903, and workmen assisted in removing artwork and furniture from the premises. Although the East Coast Fire Department was quickly joined by a crew from West Palm Beach, the hopelessness of their efforts were evident after only an hour. To save nearby buildings, they used dynamite to blow up the verandas on the north wing. The fire was visible from Fort Pierce to Miami, but it was all over in about six hours. One of the cottages, the bathing casino, and a building with shops were lost.

Just ten days after the fire, Flagler ordered James A. McGuire to build a new Breakers hotel. Eight months later, it reopened on time, despite major changes midway through construction: a four-story, Colonial-style building with 425 rooms and suites, and once again, a wood frame. The new rooms started at \$4.00 a night, including three meals a day.

#### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION** -

- Teacher will make copies of the **Compare and Contrast Worksheet (see attached)** for students to complete.
- Following completion of the reading, students will refer to the reading to complete the **Compare and Contrast Worksheet**.
- Students will use reference and research to find information from the reading to compare and contrast the Breakers Hotel and the Royal Poinciana Hotel and answer the question below.
- Student work is due before the end of the period.

# COMPARE AND CONTRAST WORKSHEET

Directions: Use the *Grand Hotel* Readings above to compare and contrast Henry Flagler's luxurious Palm Beach hotels.

	<b>Royal Poinciana</b>	<b>The Breakers</b>
<b>Construction Start Date-Year / Opening Date- Year</b>		
<b># of Rooms</b>		
<b>Cost (per night)</b>		
<b># of Employees</b>		
<b>Expansion Years</b>		
<b>Set Backs</b>		
<b>Notable Accommodations / Scenery / Amenities</b>		
<b>Notable Guests</b>		

Question – What made the 2 Flagler hotels similar? What separate them and made them unique? If you had to choose, you would have stayed in the.....?

Historical Society of Palm Beach County

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Lesson plan by Clint Kovach, Lake Worth High School

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