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Hubbard L. Hart's Influence on Stagecoach and Steamboat Travel and Commerce in Central Florida

by Thomas Lera

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By Thomas Lera
Florida Postal History Society

Hubbard L. Hart was an American entrepreneur who ran the most prominent steamboat line in Florida. He augmented his business with hotels, orange groves and lumber mills, and is noted for helping the state develop as a tourist destination.

Hart built new steamboats to take tourists along the Ocklawaha, St. Johns and Indian Rivers who, in the early days, had to share the trip with freight and livestock. Between 1878 and 1884, Hart was awarded Florida Mail Route contracts on the St. Marys River, the boundary river between Florida and Georgia, and one on the Ocklawaha River.

“Tom has tackled the task of researching the various business ventures of Hubbard L. Hart and putting them into a most interesting monograph, tied together with a postal mail route and stagecoach historical context.” Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

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