

A GUIDE TO THE RIPARIAN RIGHTS CASE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Finding aid created by Kingsley Kerce

Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Inc.

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Descriptive Summary

Provenance:	The Riparian Rights Case Manuscript Collection was acquired in 1997.
Title:	Riparian Rights Case Manuscript Collection
Dates:	1914-1918, 1986
Abstract:	Background information and court proceedings of the riparian rights case brought by the town of Fort Lauderdale against Mary Brickell.
Extent:	Three folders
Accession:	1997.0043

Biographical/Historical Note

In the early 1900s, Fort Lauderdale's commerce largely depended on transportation of people and goods via the New River and the Florida East Coast Railway. Business owners generally sought property close to the river and purchased or leased from the region's largest landholders, William and Mary Brickell. River sanitation and pollution issues, especially due to fish packing houses, led to disagreements between citizens and businesses. The question of riparian rights arose in 1914 and resulted in a suit filed by town attorney Jacob Bunn with the ultimate aim of designating the riverbanks as municipal property. The suit against Mary Brickell went to trial in circuit court and involved testimony from early Fort Lauderdale settlers and notables, Brickell family members, FEC railway officials, and civil engineers. Former town attorney J. L. Billingsley defended the case for Mrs. Brickell, and H. Pierce Branning served as judge. In 1916 Judge Branning ruled in favor of the town. Mary Brickell soon appealed to the state supreme court, but in 1918 a unanimous verdict affirmed the circuit court's decision: the banks of the New River are owned by the public.

Scope and Content

The Riparian Rights Case Manuscript Collection includes background material and copies of transcripts of circuit and state supreme court proceedings.

Access or Use Restrictions

Access

Collection is **open for research**.

Please contact collections@fortlauderdalehistorycenter.org to schedule an appointment.

Related or Separated Material

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Riparian Rights Case Manuscript Collection, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society

Acquisition Information

Materials acquired in 1997

Contents List

Folder: Supreme Court Proceedings 1916, 1918

Folder: Circuit Court Proceedings 1916

Folder: Background information 1914, 1986