

# GUARDING THE TREASURE

## OF A NATION



Entrance to one of the new Treasury Vaults

**The Wonderfully Intricate Construction of the Eighteen Vaults in the United States Treasury—Highly Charged Electric Wires To Prevent Tampering With Uncle Sam's Treasure Trove.**

It is not generally known that the United States today holds the largest stock of gold of any nation in the world, the amount being more than three times as large as that held by Great Britain. Uncle Sam's gold equates that of Great Britain and France, Great Britain and Germany or Great Britain and Russia combined. And the greater portion of this gold, together with silver and paper money, is held in the great Treasury vaults in Washington. The hoarded treasure of the nation has become so great that it was only recently that five new vaults were built in the Treasury Building to accommodate the increasing pile.

These five new vaults are used in addition to eight other vaults containing billions of dollars in gold, silver, greenbacks and securities, while five smaller vaults all have their share of the treasure. The five new vaults were constructed on the west side of the Treasury, and at present all kinds of money in bulk is handled on that side of the building. The Treasury vaults and auto trucks discharge their freight almost at the doors of the vaults.

### How Safeguarded.

When thinking of Uncle Sam's treasure of billions of dollars, one is usually led to inquire as to what methods have been adopted to insure the safekeeping of the money, and to make it absolutely impossible for any crook, set of crooks, robber, burglar, however skilled, to break into the Treasury and carry off a single dollar of the nation's money. Although the Treasury Building is considered by leading American architects to be the most beautiful and attractive from an

artistic standpoint of all buildings belonging to the government, until a comparatively recent period no definite steps had been taken to modernize the system of the protection of all the vast millions of money stored in the building. It was during the administration of Secretary McVeigh that the protection features first received pronounced attention, and Secretary McAdoo at the present time is enlarging the old ones and working out new plans.

After an investigation, it was found that the money-handling activities in the offices of the Treasurer of the United States, the Comptroller of Currency, the Register's office and the division of loans and currency were widely scattered, and it was a common thing to see messengers and departmental laborers hauling through the open corridors of the Treasury Building large sums of money. This was necessary because there was no protection or seclusion under the arrangements then existing. An effort was made to group all these activities in order that the handling of the money in the open might be obviated. Such a grouping was made and restrictions placed on corridors and parts of the building where the work of handling money is carried on.

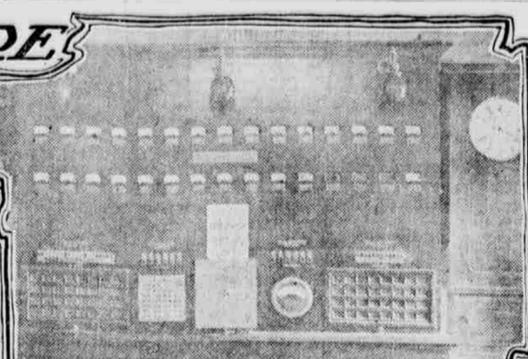
These restrictions consisted of strong, substantial grills, placed across the corridors, completely excluding the public from this class of work. The openings in the grills are closely guarded by trusted watchmen at all times, both night and day, and no one, except employees, is allowed to enter the restricted corridors. In addition to this precaution, a money lift, completely concealed from the public gaze,

has been installed. This is used in conveying money and securities from the floor of the building where it is counted, sorted and arranged to the sub-basement, where the shipping activities are carried on. So carefully is the movement of the money guarded and protected that many of the oldest employees in the Treasury know nothing whatever of the system employed or the route the money takes in coming into and being dispatched from the building.

### Visitors Now Prohibited.

It was formerly customary for the guides in conducting public visitors through the Treasury Building to lead them around where they could look in on the money in the various stages of its handling and dispatch. All this has been entirely changed. At no stage of the proceedings is any one except the employees actually engaged in the operations allowed to come in or even see the handling of the money. No outsider could possibly gain admittance to any of the divisions in any of the offices named for any purpose whatever.

The great door in the west court of the sub-basement, which is far below the street level and completely obscured and protected, is always locked and an armed watchman is stationed immediately on the inside. The only people who are permitted to enter this door are the guards and attendants of the van which conveys money and securities from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to the Treasury and the express company which has the contract for shipping money from the department. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing, where the paper money is manufactured, is located in another section of Washington, and all money is conveyed to the Treasury in locked and sealed vans. The latter are surrounded on their trips by armed



Massive Electric Board Controlling all Vaults and Doors in the Treasury. The Clock Registers by Tape the Time Each Vault is Opened or Closed



The Currency Reserve Vault where a vast store of the Nation's Wealth is kept on hand at all times

guards and District of Columbia mounted police. Under no circumstances could an outsider gain admittance to the great sub-basement door. The guard on the inside knows personally the few who are permitted to come into the building through the door. The door is used for no other purpose than for bringing in and taking out money belonging to the government.

After the money has been taken in through this door it goes into a restricted corridor, which is closely guarded at all times by capable watchmen. Then it is distributed to the proper offices and divisions by means of the concealed coin lift and restricted corridors, and is at all times under the direct supervision of a strong guard of men.

### Electricity's Part.

The system of protection and handling of money in the Treasury Department is as perfect as man's ingenuity can devise. Not only every vault but every grill door and every entrance to the building is controlled by an electric protective system, the headquarters of which are located in the office of the captain of the watch. The electric board, so far as known, is the only one of its kind in existence. It was designed and built for the Treasury.

Not a movement takes place in connection with the opening and closing of the vaults and doors of the building that is not recorded, and the system is so delicate and refined that if there is an unusual change in temperature, and especially if there is more than ordinary dampness, it will be recorded on this board.

The five new vaults are wonderful in their intricate construction. They are surrounded by thousands of highly-charged electric wires imbedded in solid concrete, any one of which will give an alarm instantly if touched by any person not intrusted with the secret combination. Each one of the five vaults is about twenty-five feet wide by thirty feet long, and all are constructed of reinforced concrete four and a half feet thick and strong in proportion. The vaults are as nearly burglar-proof as it is possible to make them. The electric wires imbedded in the concrete are placed two inches apart. The doors of the vaults being sufficiently strong to resist any attempt to enter them, it is absolutely impossible for any one to gain entrance to the treasure trove without giving an alarm that will instantly bring out the captain of the watch and his entire force of guards. The minute an electric wire is touched the alarm is



Millions of Dollars in Gold and Silver Coins. A Flashlight View of One of the Treasury Vaults

sounded and the guardians of the treasure at once get busy to discover the cause.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the doors to all the openings in the Treasury Building, except one, are closed, and the electric protection placed thereon. The same protection is placed on the doors of the building as is placed on the vaults, so that it is impossible for any door to be open so long as the protection remains without a definite alarm being turned in. So delicate is the system that the greatest care has to be exercised in opening and closing the vaults in order to prevent the occurrence of alarms. When an alarm is turned in it registers not only in the office of the captain of the watch, but automatically in the office of the Washington chief of police. Thus, a false alarm practically means the appearance of the greater part of the District of Columbia police force, armed to prevent the looting of the United States Treasury.

### \$500,000,000 in One Vault.

There is one vault in the building that has a double protection, and that is the emergency currency vault in the office of the Comptroller of Currency. This vault contains approximately five hundred million dollars. It has all the protection of the other vaults in the Treasury in addition to being so constructed with small electric wires that it would be impossible to penetrate the seals of the vault with a knife without turning in an alarm. This secondary protection is controlled by an outside office which also registers in the office of the captain of the watch on the supplemental system.

The Treasury Department employs a force of sixty-seven men to guard the nation's treasure at all times. A casual observer passing the building in the evening would imagine that everything was calm and serene in connection with it, yet if he were permitted to enter the corridors and survey the long corridors he would find a strong body of men on guard whom he would be unable to pass. These guardsmen are required to make returns to the office of the captain of the watch through an annunciator system every fifteen minutes during their period of watch. Uncle Sam's stock of gold at the present time is equivalent to about

2,000 tons, which would require a train of one hundred cars to carry, each car having a carrying capacity of about 20,000 pounds. Such a comparison brings to light interesting facts concerning silver and paper money. For instance, one thousand standard new silver dollars will weigh exactly 35.92 pounds. If the country's stock of 544,604,719 silver dollars were loaded into freight cars of 20,000 pounds or thirty tons capacity, it would require more than 175 cars to carry them. If these same silver dollars could be laid flat, one on top of the other, they would make a monument 835 miles high. If placed end to end, they would make a handsome "necklace" 13,250 miles in length. Or they would make a belt that would encircle the earth twice. Another interesting fact in connection with paper money is that a million crisp, new one-dollar bills, if placed one on top of the other, would make a column about 260 feet in height.

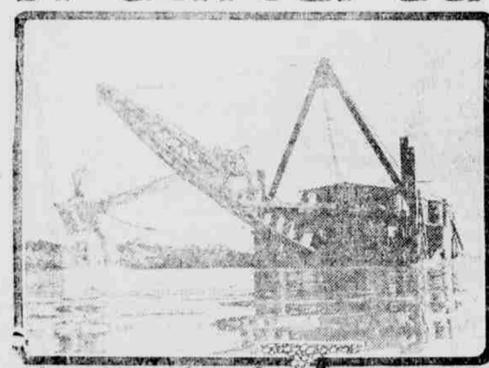
### Other Interesting Treasures.

Filed away in the vaults of the Treasury are many valuable papers, many of them of great interest. The Treasury warrant under which the Emperor of Russia received \$7,200,000 for Alaska, under the treaty of March 30, 1867, is one of the great treasures. This purchase, at an actual cost of about one and nine-tenths cents per acre, now worth several hundred times as much, was arranged by Secretary Seward.

Other warrants of more than usual interest are the four of \$5,000,000 each, which were paid to Spain for the Philippines, and the warrant for \$10,000,000, paid to J. P. Morgan & Company, acting as representatives for the French syndicate and the Republic of Panama, for the purchase of the French rights to the Panama Canal.

The original Declaration of Independence, now very worn and the writing dimmed by the years, reposes in a specially constructed vault in the Treasury. During the past decade it has rarely seen the light of day, as efforts are being made to preserve it just as long as possible. Every known method of preserving the valuable paper has been adopted, but time has eaten into it until very little of the original manuscript remains today.

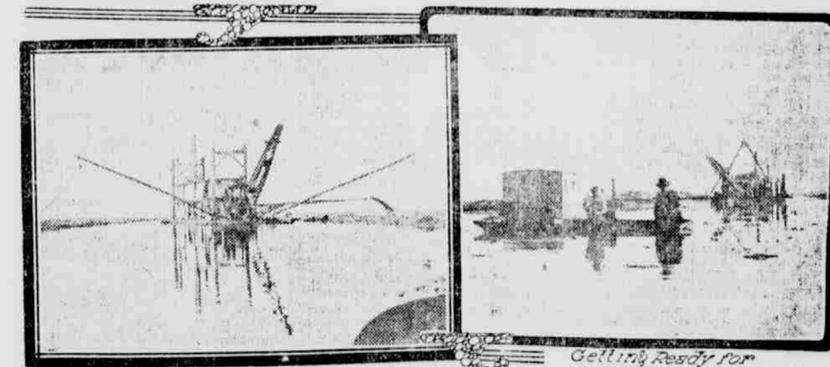
# Turning a Swamp into a Truck Garden



One of the Big Scoop Dredges



The Undrained Everglades



Suction Dredge at Work Drawing up Silt and Casting it Ashore

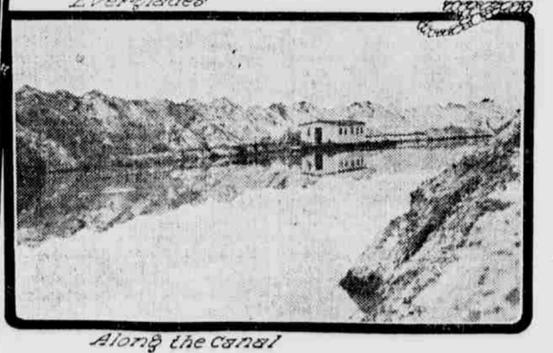
Getting Ready for a Blast of Dynamite

**Florida, Despite the Machinations of Land Swindlers, Is Carrying Out Her Great Project of Draining the Vast Everglades, and of Making the Land Available for Truck Gardening.**

THE draining of any large swamp to make an arable tract that may be utilized for cultivation is no easy task, and when it comes to reclaiming four million acres of such land the project becomes a colossal one, yet this is what the State of Florida is doing, and doing with such success that already a large number of truck farms are in operation in the very heart of the famous Everglades. The scheme of draining the "Glades" is not new, for as far back as 1847 the Secretary of the Treasury acting under a resolution of Congress appointed Buckingham Smith, an eminent engineer, to procure authentic information regarding the practicability of draining the Everglades. Surveys were made again and again, and each time the engineer in charge reported favorably on the drainage idea. As early as February, 1881, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund entered into a contract with a Philadelphia firm to drain and reclaim the overflowed land. The work progressed slowly until 1893, when there were numerous controversies over the amount of money and tracts of land the Company was to receive, and the work was suspended. The problem



A Truck Farm in the Everglades in Winter



Along the Canal

of reclamation was then taken up by the Trustees themselves, and since then the work has proceeded with more or less difficulty. How the Funds Are Obtained. The fund for this great undertaking, consisting of one hundred and eighty-four miles of canals required for draining the Everglades, is to be derived from the sale of tracts of land in the "Glades." Twenty-five per cent of the money thus raised must be paid into the School Fund under a provision in the State Constitution. The area of the Everglades is about four million acres and about half of this has been sold and more than \$800,000.00 received by the State as a result. About thirty-five thousand acres in small tracts fell into the hands of promoters, some of whom unfortunately proved to be land swindlers. They at once flooded the country with literature describing with what ease life could be enjoyed there while the soil was yielding enormous profits. Some of the crookedness represented that the land was ready for occupancy and cultivation after a little cleaning up—also represented as an easy task. The settler was told that he could build a house, plant his crops and bask in the sunshine while the crooks were

ing. These statements while they contained some truth did not represent the conditions as they really are. The greater part of the Everglades will not be available for several years, and when they are sufficiently drained for the settler to be able to walk about it will require some time to clean it of the saw grass. This work being accomplished the land must be fertilized and ditched for irrigation as well as drainage. Then comes the planting and the crusade against weeds and insects. A large number of people, especially in the far North and the Middle West were caught by this persuasive literature, and after purchasing land at from twenty to sixty dollars per acre they arrived in Florida only to find their prospective truck gardens under water and in many instances impossible to reach. These facts were brought before the Federal Government and an investigation was started with the result that several of the swindlers will be compelled to spend some years in the penitentiary. The whole thing was unfortunate for Florida as it gave the land a "black eye" and the funds for the drainage work became so low that at present only one dredge is at work where four were at one time. There is little doubt that the work will

be carried out in time and that in years to come the greater part of the Everglades may become one vast truck garden—large enough to supply the northern markets with all their early vegetables. The muck lands of the great swamp have been analyzed over and over by the Agricultural Department and advice given as to the fertilizer which should be used. Experiments with this soil have been tried by agriculturists in Florida, and even under adverse conditions it has responded to man's industry and some splendid crops have been raised. Egg plants, tomatoes, beans, potatoes and peppers thrive and ripen in January and February. They are sent North and bring splendid prices. Along with what is known as the North Canal several of these farms are in operation and their owners are reaping a fine profit. On the Miami Canal, too, away up in the "Glades" are several splendid truck farms.

### The "Glades" A Gigantic Marsh.

The Everglades at first glance remind one of the prairies for as far as the eye can reach there is nothing but grass of a coarse fiber, known as saw grass. It is said to be absolutely valuable and extremely difficult to de-

stroy. The surface of the land is covered by water which makes it a gigantic marsh. In various places are a few clusters of trees like an oasis in a desert. The spots are called hammocks and are the delight of the hunter, for it is there that the deer and birds congregate. The swamp is shaped like the inside of a bowl with its rim broken in several places. Little streams of water run from these breaks, but they do not drain the swamp to any great extent. The top soil is formed like the peat of Ireland from decaying vegetable matter and is from four to six feet in depth, forming a sort of black muck. Like the Irish soil it will become very dry unless some arrangements are made for its irrigation, and this is being looked after with the drainage. Lake Okechobee—the big lake of the high "Glades," is the keystone of the proposition, and by means of the canals it will be lowered several feet and made a reservoir to collect the water during the wet weather and conserve it for use during the droughts which come every year. A system of locks has been built connected with the lake which can be opened or closed as the condition of the weather may require. With a storage basin already provided and canals built to drain when-

ever necessary a sunburnt crop is a matter of the past.

### Land Owners Gave Right Of Way.

When the canals were being laid out many of the real estate owners gave the State the right of way through their land, and the people will have the riparian rights of the canal forever, but those from whom land had to be purchased will be compelled to pay a tax per foot upon waterfront land. Several of the people who gave their land were colored men, and one of them who allowed the dredge to go through his prize bean patch now has one of the best waterfronts on the canal. His land has advanced in value and he could sell his garden for five times the amount he paid for it. A system of roads is being built along the canal and when finished they will be among the best in the United States. A tax of five cents per acre is levied on all Everglades land for the purpose of keeping up the repairs of the many miles of canal and for the working of the locks and irrigation ditches.

### Canal Digging Not Easy.

The actual canal building is very interesting. The greater part of the work was done under the direction of Captain George K. Nelson, who has long been regarded as an authority on dredging, and his work in the "Glades" was little short of marvelous. All supplies had to be carried in small boats, so oil instead of coal was used in operating the dredges, each of which consumed thirty barrels of oil per day. The work was by no means easy for rock as hard as flint was found beneath the soil in many places and dynamite had to be used in large quantities, both steam and hand drills being pressed into service. Charges were laid all the way across the canal and set off from an electric battery in a nearby boat. After the muck had been removed the blasting was done, of course, under water, and although each charge shattered a great amount of rock there was very little commotion on the surface of the water. After the rocks had been blasted the drill board moved forward and the big dredge with its huge dipper brought

up the rocks and deposited them on the side of the canal. So much of the work has been completed that it is now possible to go all the way across the State from Lauderdale on the east coast to Ft. Myers on the Caloosahatchee River near the west coast, on the canal in a motor boat, and the time is not far distant when motor boat trips over the entire system of drainage canals will be a part of the itinerary of the winter tourist in that land of sunshine.

### Indians Do Not Hesitate.

The Seminole Indian reservation is in the heart of the Everglades, and for a long time this tribe of Indians held fast in the swamp. There they hunted to their hearts' content, but that day has passed, for the white man has come to stay. The Indians did not resent the drainage of the "Glades," but on the contrary they rather welcomed the canals, and they are frequently seen sailing over the placid water in their queer looking boats. They are a peaceful tribe of red men unless they imbibe too freely of "fire water." During the early days of the work the reptiles and birds seemed disturbed, and the birds flew around the dredges in great numbers, making almost unbearable with their chatter. Then they discovered that the fresh muck brought up by the buckets contained worms and they came by the hundreds and lighted on the fresh overturned mud fighting over the spoils of insects and worms. Snakes were plentiful and many were killed by the men who worked on the dredges. The long legged cranes and the buzzards have refused to come near the dredges apparently being frightened by the dynamite explosions.

The canals are sixty feet wide and ten feet deep—plenty of water for the small boats used to carry produce and truck garden products. Altogether the project is a great one, and the State of Florida deserves to be commended by her sister States for the plain, honest, straightforward way in which she has gone about the work, and for her efforts to protect the unsuspecting settler against the debauching hand of the land swindler whose actions at one time threatened to kill the project altogether.