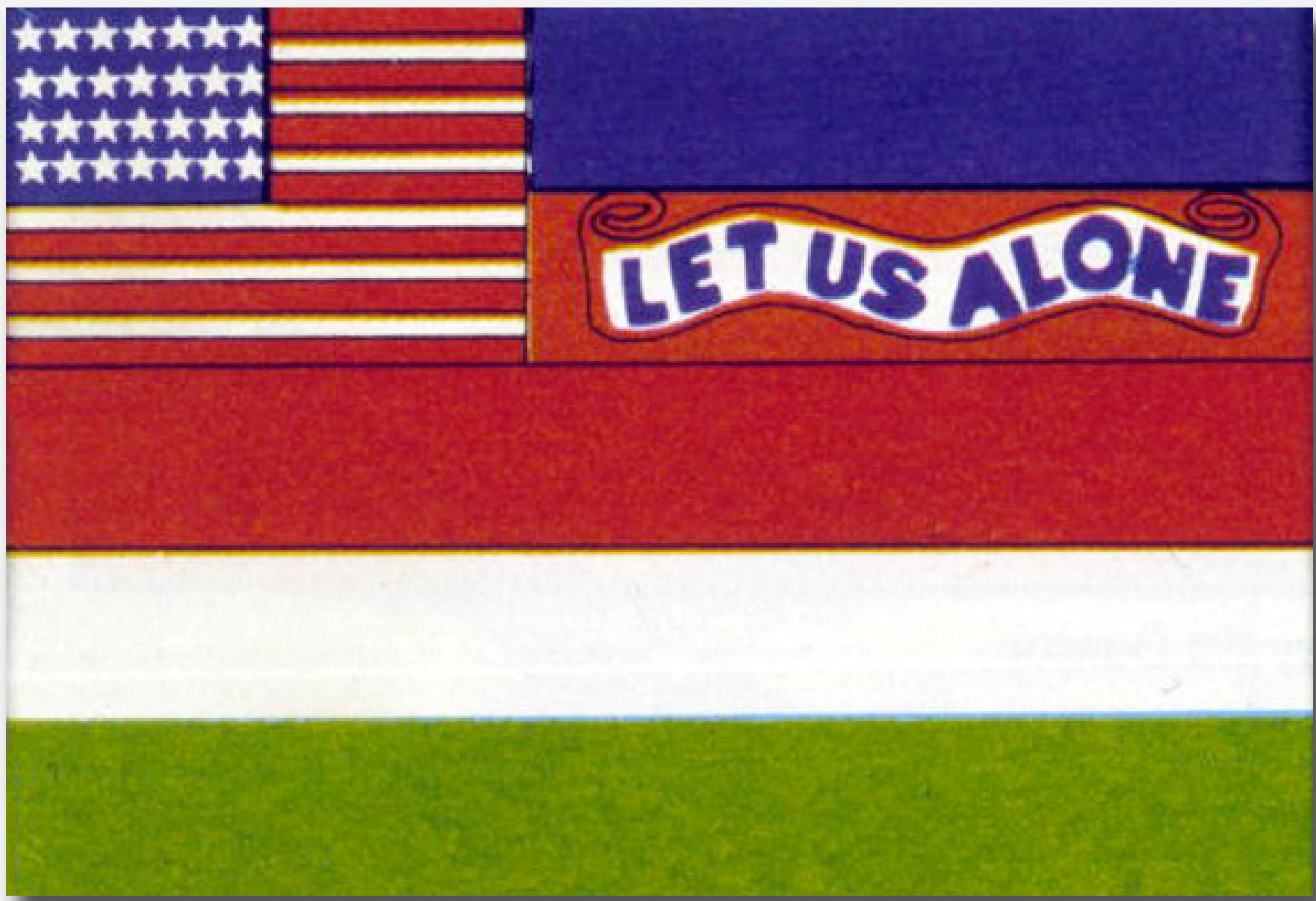


The end of a second Seminole War (1842) opens the interior of the Florida territory to new settlers. Farms and ranch lands extend into the wilds, impacting natural habitats. A call for “competent engineers” to examine and survey the “unforgiving mosquito-ridden swamp” is the new state of Florida’s first request to the U.S. Congress, in 1845. Approximately 87,500 people are state residents in 1850 (including 39,000 enslaved African-Americans working the central and northern regions’ sprawling plantations). Many Seminoles live in the interior of the Everglades, far from the encroaching settlers.



In 1845, the Florida territory is bona fide in the eyes of Congress and is accepted as the nation’s 27th state

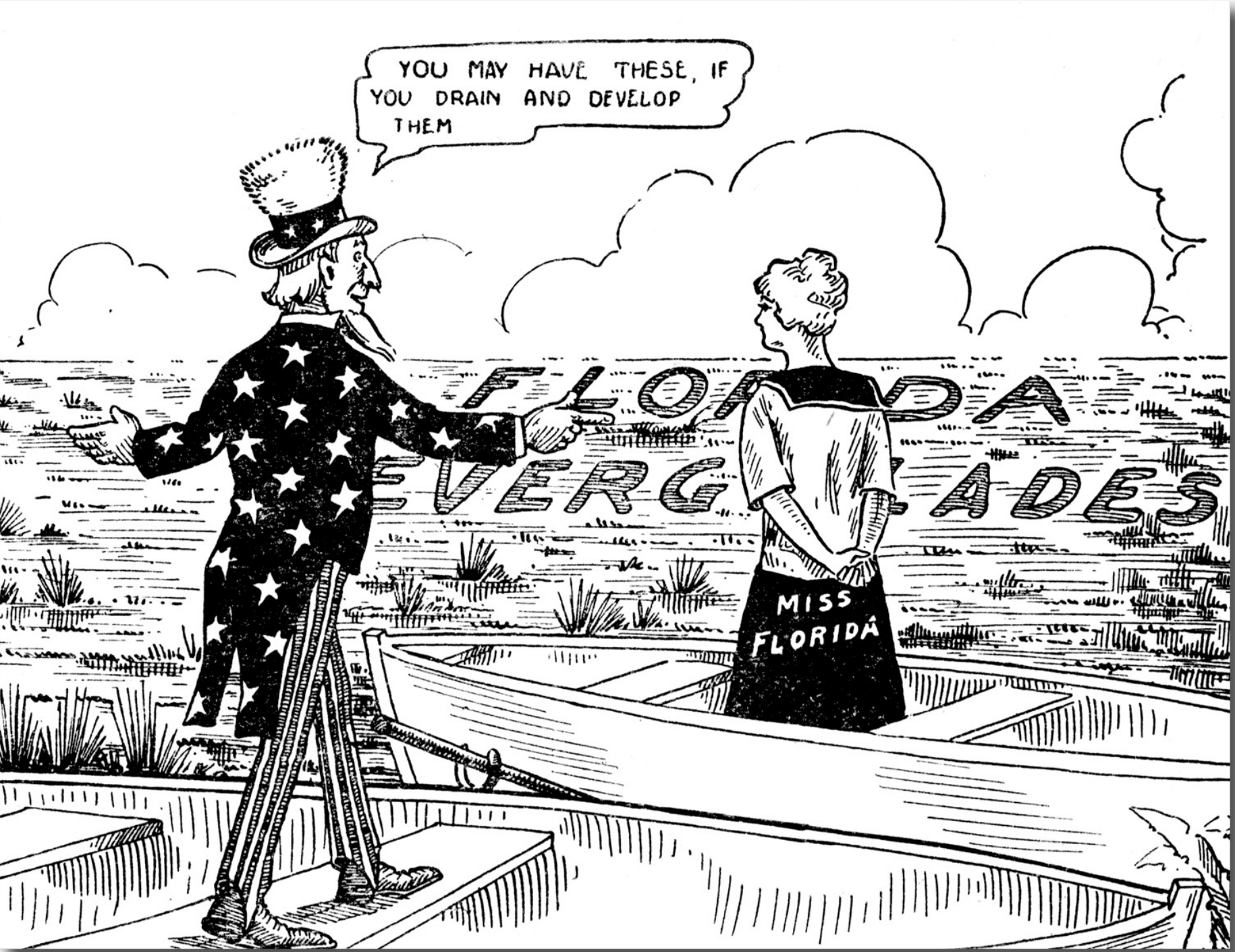
1845

Florida becomes the 27th state.
Taming the land is the first order of business as the state legislature deems the expansive Everglades as “wholly valueless in consequence of being covered with water at stated periods of the year.”



1850

U.S. Congress passes the Swamp and Overflow Act.
All swamp and overflow lands — more than 20 million acres — are now in state ownership. The Act is the result of a survey and inspection of the lower peninsula at the state’s request by federal appointee Attorney Buckingham Smith of St. Augustine. His 1848 report states that by simply digging canals and deepening streams, the Everglades can be reclaimed as viable land. Investors imagine the possibilities, and offers begin to pour in.



1850 Swamp and Overflow Act encourages buyers to purchase Everglades land and drain the swamp

1851

Florida creates the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund.
Though the Fund allows land sales to be negotiated and full-scale reclamation to be conducted, progress is slow as primitive transportation makes access very difficult.

1855

Florida passes the first Internal Improvement Act.
Cheap or free public land and other incentives are offered to those interested in developing navigable systems of railroads and canals.

1856

First detailed map and description of the Everglades is published.
Lieutenant J.C. Ives conducts a topographical survey to aid soldiers fighting the Seminoles (during the third Seminole War, 1855-1858) and produces a map highlighting the Everglades as well as Big Cypress Swamp and Lake Okeechobee. Later called “the first fine American map,” it depicts an array of soil vegetation and water fluctuating as much as 3 feet at a time.

Military map from 1856 depicts the hydrology of the Everglades and surrounding areas before major drainage efforts

