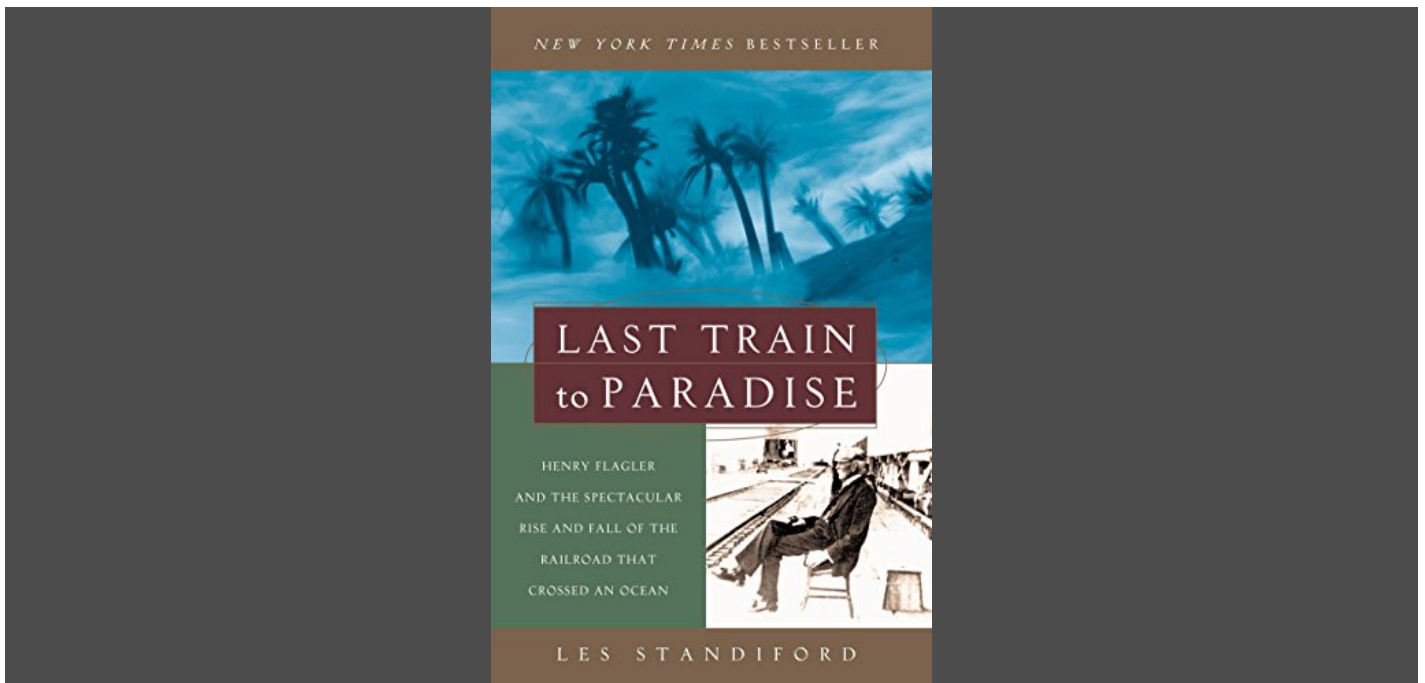


PDF | Last Train to Paradise: Henry  
Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and  
Fall of the Railroad that Crossed an  
Ocean

by Les Standiford



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**The fast-paced and gripping true account of the extraordinary construction and spectacular demise of the Key West Railroad—one of the greatest engineering feats ever undertaken, destroyed in one fell swoop by the strongest storm ever to hit U.S. shores.**

In 1904, the brilliant and driven entrepreneur Henry Flagler, partner to John D. Rockefeller, dreamed of a railway connecting the island of Key West to the Florida mainland, crossing a staggering 153 miles of open ocean—an engineering challenge beyond even that of the Panama Canal. Many considered the project impossible, but build it they did. The railroad stood as a magnificent achievement for more than twenty-two years, heralded as “the Eighth Wonder of the World,” until its total destruction in 1935’s deadly storm of the century.

In *Last Train to Paradise*, Standiford celebrates this crowning achievement of Gilded Age ambition, bringing to life a sweeping tale of the powerful forces of human ingenuity colliding with the even greater forces of nature’s wrath.

#### **Amazon.com Review**

In *Last Train to Paradise* novelist Les Standiford has written a lively, felicitous account of the building of the Florida East Coast Railway, which, for a little over two decades, connected mainland Florida with Key West. Henry Morrison Flagler, John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil partner and, in many eyes, the true genius behind that company, embarked on the project in 1905 when he was 74 years old. The railroad, which crossed more than 150 miles of open sea, was an engineering feat nearly equal in scale and difficulty to the digging of the Panama Canal. Standiford’s narrative skillfully blends tales of construction perils (not the least of which were escadrilles of mosquitoes) with brief, illuminating travelogues and natural histories, pocket descriptions of life in early 20th-century Florida, and a truly gripping description of an epic standoff between Mother Nature, in the form of a monstrous hurricane, and a stalled, 160-ton steam locomotive. With nary a single missed note, this fascinating tale is popular history at its best.

--H. O'Billovich

**Product Description**

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