

Walker Remembrances

By: Janet Anderson

My grandparents, Gussie Roddenberry and William Walker, moved to Quay (Winter Beach) around 1915. They had 11 children: Cassie V, Estelle, William Emmett, Pearl, Christine, Euretha, Allison, Dewey (D.C.), Oleta, Joe Billy, and Frank (who died as a child.) All of which grew up and stayed here with the exception of Oleta, who moved to California, and Joe Billy, who moved to North Carolina. All of the boys in the family, with the exception of Emmett, served in the armed forces during World War II. Emmett wanted to, but they were not taking men who had families. Instead he had the important job of being the bridge tender during this time.

Gussie and Will built a 2 story house on Quay Dock Road where they raised their family. They planted a grove, grew sugar cane, and farmed. They had an artesian well on the side of the road where the grove was, for irrigation; however, they had to carry water in buckets across the road to use in the house. They didn't get indoor plumbing until years later.

During one of the hurricanes, the 2nd story of the house was destroyed so they rebuilt it to a one story. It had a large front porch and rocking chairs. I remember Grandma Walker and Great-Grandma Roddenberry sitting in those rocking chairs enjoying the peace and quiet. Of course, by the time I remember Grandma Roddenberry down here, the kids had all grown up.

My dad, Emmett, was the bridge tender at the Winter Beach Bridge. When he got too sick to work, he and Grandpa made an agreement that he would move to the bridge and become the bridge tender and we would live in his house on Quay Dock Road. Our family lived there until the bridge burned down in 1946 and Grandpa moved back to his house. My dad, Emmett, had died in 1944 so we moved to a house my Grandpa Hamilton owned, near Old Dixie.

Grandpa Walker served as a member of the Indian River County School Board for 12 years. He served as a deacon of the United Pentecostal Church of Winter Beach, and the family was active in other areas of the community.