

COPY

ESTHER CRALLE DICKMAN-----10-5-85, interview with C. Kastner

ECD came down in 1913, already done with high school, with her family--nine brothers and sisters:

two still living, one with ECD, 13 years younger

the other in Brandon, 16 years younger

both are widows.

Father:

moved family from Minnesota, probably because of coldness in the Midwest. Belonged to the Socialist Party but later broke with it because of changes in WW I, he didn't believe in welfare, never went into debt.

"He was almost as bad as George Miller, in some ways, I mean...they were emphasizing a better life for the laboring man.

"He (Mr. Cralle) didn't have enough money for something, he went without it, and we'd just have to do things that way. This is what made our country great (etc)."

Father was the manager of co-operative store in Ruskin//what did he do

before he came here?

ECD looked forward to meeting new people, being out of school, no money for college until she could enroll at Ruskin College--tuition was a very minor problem. She did ironing and housework for teachers.

Some boys worked on college farmland to pay for schooling, but this was impractical from the start because transportation was such a problem, no RR, no hard surfaced roads:

→ RUSKIN INLET history--people had been trying to dredge it for years, this is where Paul got his dream, from the older generation--

marker? he was a "boat person"--always building boats since a young man, including the Kilcares. AP's boat docked in at the place where the bridge crosses the river, only further out toward the mouth. There is a fish house at appx. where the boat used to dock. Cralles came by train to Tampa, Kilcare to Ruskin, then travelled by mule wagon the rest of the way from the dock.

Only two automobiles in Ruskin when they first got here.

No electricity.



The inlet was finally dredge in the late '50s, around 50 years after the first attempt to dredge in 1908.

ECD met Paul Dickman before WW I--he went into the army, drafted when he was 21 ? ECD went to Washington and worked for a couple of years during the war.

Paul's parents wanted very much to develop this community, but there was just not enough ~~exp~~ capital --Paul was able to later, with the money he had made.

Some of the former marshland he developed is now Pelican, Sandpiper, Gulf W(Keys?)

ECD counts seven Kilcares in Ruskin history--#7, or the last one, is owned by her grandson.

During the last years of Pauls life, he and ECD lived on Bahia Beach, one of the places he developed. (\*\*I was wondering why she moved back to town after he died--she now lives at 103 12th St. SW--and I found later that they had been attacked and vandalized at BB, and she was afraid to live there alone.)

On the east side of Bahia Beach, Paul left a lot of natural state land as a park.

About the early days in Ruskin, ECD says, then "you knew each other better because you were thrown together for social activites."

MILLERS

connected with collége work, not as a money-making thing--GM didn't have money for Ruskin's projects, but wanted to "provide a livelihood for students." He had good intentions, but little means to realize them--no resources down here.

DICKMANS

Missouri farmers, started out near Sedalia, MO. sold homes and came here. AP wanted to help young people--esp. son and daughter--who needed schooling and had only country school background.

ECD looks on GM still as a dreamer, as many did even then.

He was well educated, tried to apply Bible studies to man as he lives now, which doesn't work in everyday practical life. Equality is all right in theory, but not in fact. <sup>his</sup> People live on a different plane from that of ordinary people, and his ideas were not conducive to living in everyday society.



→ The primary reason people moved down here was not the ideals of GM: it was cheap land. This attracted the kind of people, especially, who couldn't make a living elsewhere. (S.C.)

Old Sun City was part of the boom in Florida, when it was promoted as the site of a movie colony and studio. Many people lost money on this, but they bought land for the same reason--it was cheap. Speculators here, also.

ECD's opinion of James Lawler is that he tries to find out the history of this place, but he still doesn't know anything. "You have to live it to know." Pauline Dickman was first married to Alvin McHargue, who was her only true love. He had gone to the college here, and he died too early--maybe at the age of 50? Pauline and Lawler's marriage wasn't happy, "He wasn't her kind at all. She was just lonely."

More family history: ECD was the 3rd of nine children--the two youngest of whom are still here. The younger children went to elementary and high school here, some had to go to Tampa, and one sister went to Wimauma. There was no public transportation then.

The sister who is 13 years younger than ECD has a son who is a doctor in N.C.

Rose Dickman, AP's wife, was the sister of GM, mother-in-law to ECD. She was very devoted to ECD and Paul's son Lyle, her only grandchild. She was a "good woman." Lived long enough to see 3 great-grandsons, and died in 1956.

Lyle's widow, Marjorie, doesn't get along with the Dickman family.

└ where does she live?  
possibility of interview re Lyle?