

Quotes, related info on Paul Dickman / sources: news articles, interviews

St. Pete Times 5-9-74

"Paul Dickman, the builder of today's Ruskin, fashioned the community differently than its founder envisioned but has done it successfully." (caption under photo of old and frowning PD)

"anybody there will tell you Paul Dickman built Ruskin--with his own hands, his knack for knowing the right thing to do at the right time, and his flair for making money and spending it."

"While Dr. Miller's son Willard headed North to make his fortune, young Paul Dickman stayed behind, and the depressed community was more than glad to follow his leadership. He took them through the Florida land boom in the '20s, and stayed with them through the bust a few years later. He taught them to farm, for profit, building his own cultivating machines especially suited to Florida soil. He discovered the sandy, shell-based earth was perfect for tomatoes, and led them into the vegetable industry in a big way."

Shopper-Oberver 1-1-86

Chamber of Commerce formed in 1928, PD as temporary secretary--took minutes of meetings. Esther: "'Paul was still a young man at that time, still trying to make a living.'" and investors were focusing on this area; helped bring the group together to raise money (scarce even in boom time) for the CC building--right before crash of '29 . . .

1968-69 plans for new building site because wooden structure was being eaten by termites. PD donated the site for a new CC building. (related by Jo Angst, former CC employee)

Bradenton H 12-5-65

"No longer in either vegetable production or packaging, Paul Dickman has turned his talents and energies to land development, particularly at Bahia Beach. This, he says, culminates a personal and family ambition and, also in the Dickman tradition, is a first class operation."

"Although he kids about seeking a 'city slicker 40-hour week,' there may never be one for Paul Dickman. He just happens to be cut out of different cloth and of another era. A fellow who's swung a grubbing hoe, plowed a blue-nosed Missouri mule, fired a steam boiler, and hand-set endless rows of tomatoes, just naturally has a different slant on things."

Grismer, Tampa

"[Ruskin's] transformation from a spot on the map to the thriving community it is today is due in large measure to the efforts of Paul B. Dickman, son of Alfred P. Dickman, one of the town founders."

...Grismer's account of events connected with the RVC and real estate

sales is in wrong sequence, it appears. Quote on the "second" real estate effort (the first being the Homemakers'): "He made many sales, particularly to ex-soldiers who were drawing pensions" . . .

"Profits cannot be made, quite obviously, on produce which is not sold. To make sure that everything grown would be marketed, Dickman developed a sales organization for the cooperative, called the Ruskin Vegetable Distributors, and established trade names for Ruskin-grown vegetables" (This is ambiguous as to whether RVD is the new name of the cooperative or the name of the RVC's sales organization.)



INTERVIEWS:Esther Dickman, 11-17-85

Esther objected to Paul buying the current Bahia Beach property from a man in Tampa, because it was all mangroves and swamp, and she thought it "worth nothing." Her comment now: "He could see a long way ahead."

Jim Lawler, from "A Brief History of the Community of Ruskin, Florida"

"With the return of the boys from the service, the development of the area began through the foresighted efforts of one individual--Paul B. Dickman"

Pauline Lawler, 3-27-73

(A) 400. Issue with Adeline Miller and phone operation; Paul sold phone to another (Walker??) and this broke Adeline's heart.

11-30-77

(A) 300. Paul "didn't like to work" --started to farm, then got a mule, which made the job easier with an animal--"he always got others to do all the work"

[Pauline's 6-12-80 interview brings this up again: "my brother got wise right fast . . . He got a mule. I don't know where he got a mule but a man was paid say a dollar and a half a day, and a mule and a worker was paid four dollars a day. So, Paul got himself a mule."]

(B) 230. Paul had the "long vision--he planned years and years ahead." a bill and Roosevelt vetoed it." Paul never gave up, though--he made his money and then told the Commongood that he would "dredge the Inlet for the land."

330. Paul said: "This is a men's organization; we don't want sister!" when Pauline was running for CC president and winning. (His opinion stuck.)

Jim Lawler, 11-9-85

(A) 268. "Paul was always the organizer, if he had someone to organize . . He never did anything for anyone, that he didn't profit from." Cites example of Council family's dealings with PD---need more info on this.

330. Issue with RVC turning PD out and Pete Porter quitting also out of loyalty--PD never paid Porter back and neglected him when he was dying. (??)

640. PD put in liquor at Bahia Beach (perhaps the first case of a legitimately Ruskin establishment having alcohol?)

(B) 200. PD and Lawler at the state fair looking at Brahmas: water/steak argument between PD and boy (PD was probably kidding and turned away when the joke was not appreciated by the boy).

Julia Miller, 12-2-77

(A) 100. Tower of the APD house used to be Paul's bedroom. [Mac: he used to sneak out of the house at night by climbing out the window and down the water tank.]

Noretta D. Sheffield, "Ruskin Commongood Society"

"At this time [after the college closed] the people who had bought farm plots were having trouble raising produce. On his return from the war, Paul B. Dickman, a graduate of Ruskin College, tried once more to sell the Ruskin property and convince farmers that Ruskin with its sandy soil, flowing artesian wells, and protection from the cold by Tampa Bay was an ideal farming area, but



not many were convinced. The machinery he needed and wanted could not be bought. So he invented and built the farm equipment and put approximately 1,500 acres under cultivation. He used the crop rotation plan and was then able to grow a bountiful variety of vegetables throughout three seasons of the year."

"The cooperative spirit of Paul Dickman knew few limitations." [from Florida Historic Dramatic Contemporary, 1952, p. 12] In 1941 he assisted in forming the Ruskin Vegetable Cooperative." (then she quotes Grismer on the RVC/RVD)

James Carver

~~10-26-85~~

10-26-85

"Dickman knew ahead of time that he was going to be stopped from dredging. Which they did, but he got all his channels in, and fixed up---he made a lot of improvements for a lot of people, especially Simmons Park, Shell Point, all them places."

-----  
Paul B. Dickman's "Newspaper Tape" has a lot of information as well as insights into his own personality. Basic biographical info, opinions on environmentalist concerns, etc.