



MEMORIES OF THE COFFEE CUP

Aleta Jonie Maschek

Illustrations by Everett Michaels

THE COFFEE CUP

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**Our Thanks to the Dickman and
Walker families"**

**Ruskin is known for the Coffee Cup and it's
tomatoes.**

**You will still find a lot of tomatoes in Ruskin,
but there is no longer a Coffee Cup.**

**Many tourist can't believe that there is a
vacant lot where the Coffee Cup once stood.**

**The corner of Shell Point Road and Hwy.
41 housed the Coffee Cup for 75 years.**

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Preface

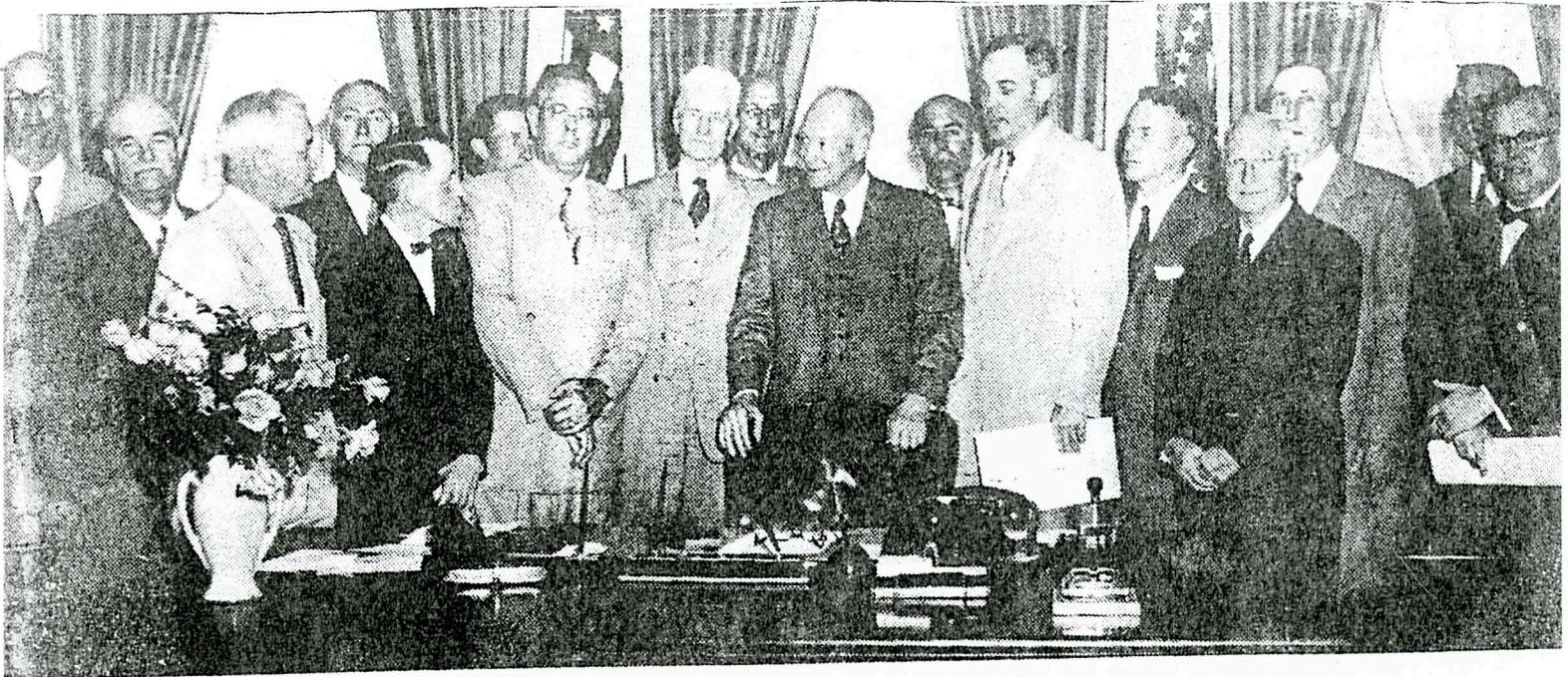
Our present roots lie deep in the past. It is from the past that we discover how our today's present became into being.

If you are a native or a winter visitor we hope to bring back memories of the days at the Coffee Cup.

With my knowledge of writing, I hope you will go along with us through the memories of the Coffee Cup.

Everett Michaels has brought you memories with his talent as an artist.

Through my six history books and this book on the Coffee Cup I am committed to preserving our heritage.



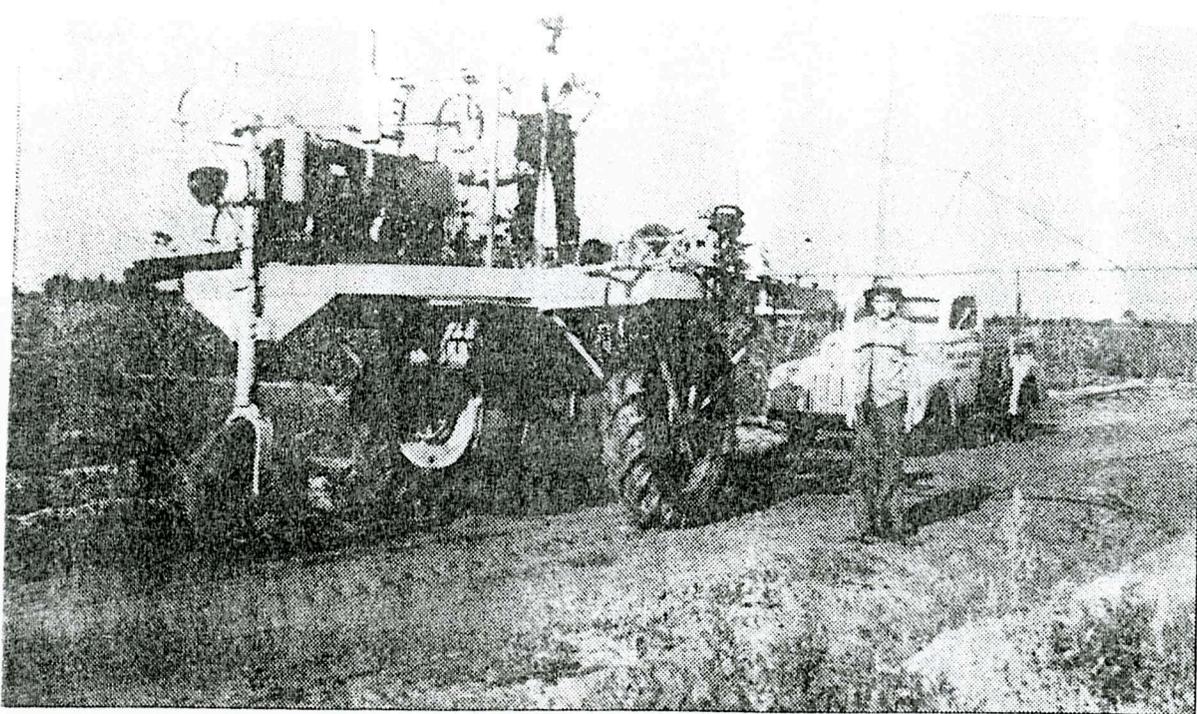
Paul B. Dickman was among an agricultural group which toured the Soviet Union. The group presented President Dwight D. Eisenhower with a farm resolution following

the tour. Dickman, with hands crossed, is shown to the left of Eisenhower.



When Paul B. Dickman shipped the vegetables he grew around the nation, he made sure he promoted the community from which they came — Ruskin, Fla. This photo,

estimated to be in the 1940s, carries a notation "loaded and ready to roll."



This 1949 photo shows the high crop spraying rig designed and used by Paul B. Dickman on his crops. It was later copied and patented by John Deere and this type of rig is still used in some areas for high crops.

A Piece Of History

Paul B. Dickman Was More Than A Realtor And Farmer

By Aleta Jonie Maschek

Paul B. Dickman had served his country in World War I and was on his way home to a sleepy little town called Ruskin.

Although Ruskin was one of the oldest settlements on the eastern shore of Tampa Bay, it was slow in developing.

After the college burned, the war took all of the men and the women had left for jobs in Washington, D.C., there wasn't much left in Ruskin.

Very few people from the college days returned to Ruskin.

In 1918 the first shell road was built to Tampa. It was a relief because before the road it took eight hours to reach Tampa by mule and four hours by the boat, Kilcare.

Ruskin was linked to Tampa by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. The railroad station was located where M & M Printing is today on Woodland Estates Drive.

Esther Cralle returned to Ruskin from her job in Washington, D.C., and married Paul B. Dickman, in 1919

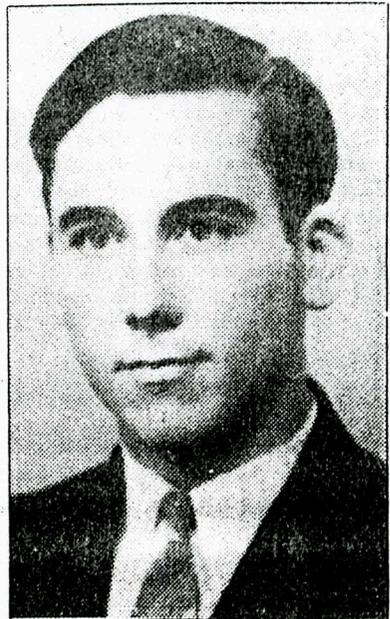
A son, Lyle Cralle Dickman, was born to the Dickmans on Dec. 13, 1920.

Paul's father, A.P. Dickman, had started a sawmill while Paul was

away to war. When he returned he started to work with his father in the mill.



PAUL B. DICKMAN
Dubbed "Father of Ruskin"



LYLE DICKMAN
When he was 16

78A 145

Dickmans Continue

Pioneering

Tradition

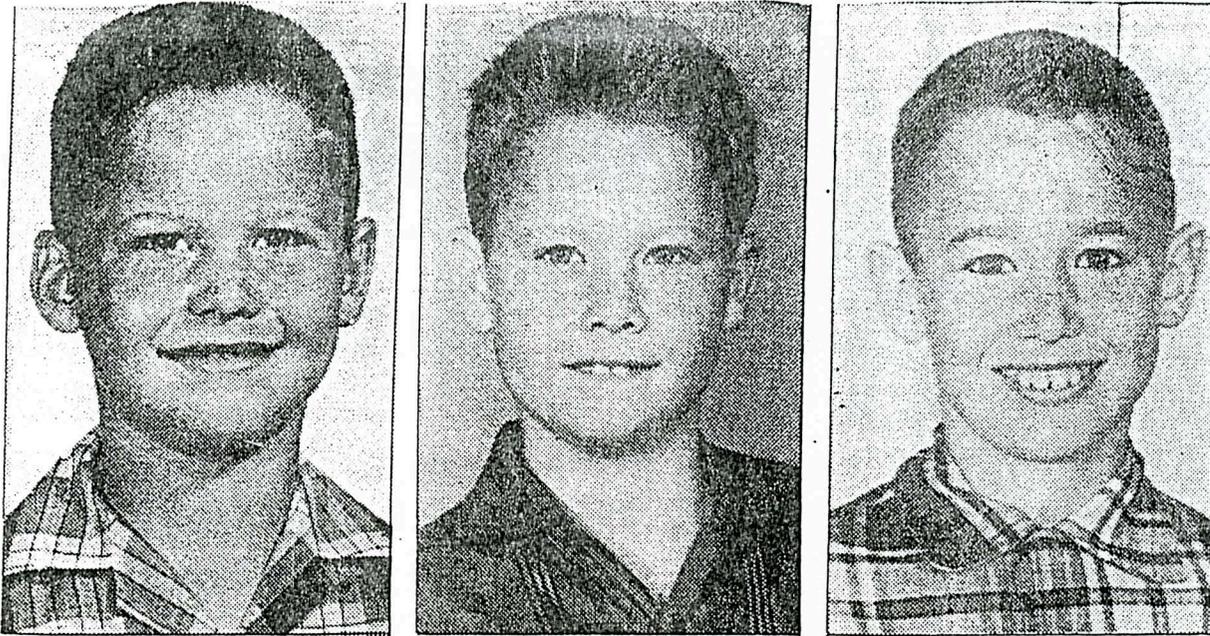


Lyle Dickman is shown in this 1949 portrait, when he was 28 years old.



This 1946 portrait of Margaret Elizabeth Ray was used with the announcement of her marriage to Lyle Dickman.





The three sons of Margy and Lyle Dickman are shown in a current photo below at the St. Petersburg Boat Show and when they were much younger, above. From left to right above and below, are Glenn, Ned and Paul.



Dickmans

THE COFFEE CUP BY

ALETA JONIE MASCHEK

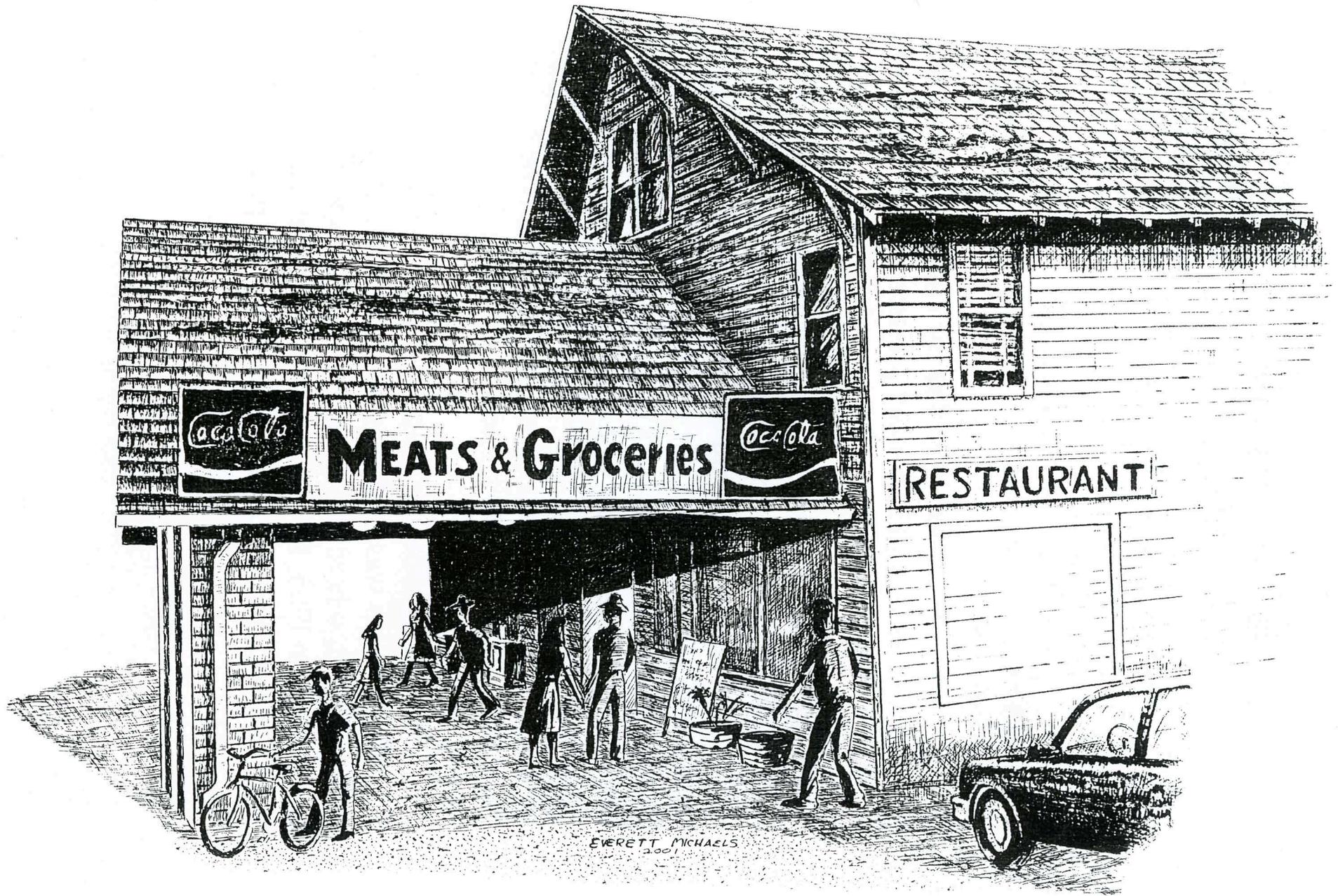
It was around the year of 1927 that Paul Dickman Sr. built a building that became famous, known as the Coffee Cup.

It was the year 1905 that the Dickman family first arrived in Ruskin, and had many projects before building of the Coffee Cup building.

The Dickmans came here with the Millers to start Ruskin College in 1905.

The Commongood Society was formed in the days of the college. Land sales were made attractive to people in the North by advertising our great climate, soil and artesian wells. If you violated your deed the Society could buy back the land. After the college burned, many people left their land and it was sold for taxes. The society did prevail until the 1940's. The history of this is in my other history books.

Ruskin Hall, was the place to stay and eat before the Coffee Cup was built. Ruskin Hall was a hotel located at Shell Point, where the bar and restaurant is now located. It was built in 1905. It had a cupola on top and balconies on second floor. It was built around swamp and palms and



most people came by boat. It too, burned to the ground in 1918 the same year that Ruskin College burnt.

Bungalow Inn, was located on U.S. highway 41 in the early 1900's. It was located on the land, about the spot where today's Ruskin Chamber of Commerce building stands. It had a fence with lots of roses and an artesian well, that looked like a huge fountain. It is now gone and is history.

As we look back in history, there are many places in Ruskin that existed before the Coffee Cup. All of these places, people of today never knew about and to many are long forgotten.

A town south of Ruskin called Ball City, was the official city for the Trailway bus stop, a country store, a fish house, and a garage owned by a famous race track driver, by the name of Buddy Rush. This city burned to the ground and became history.

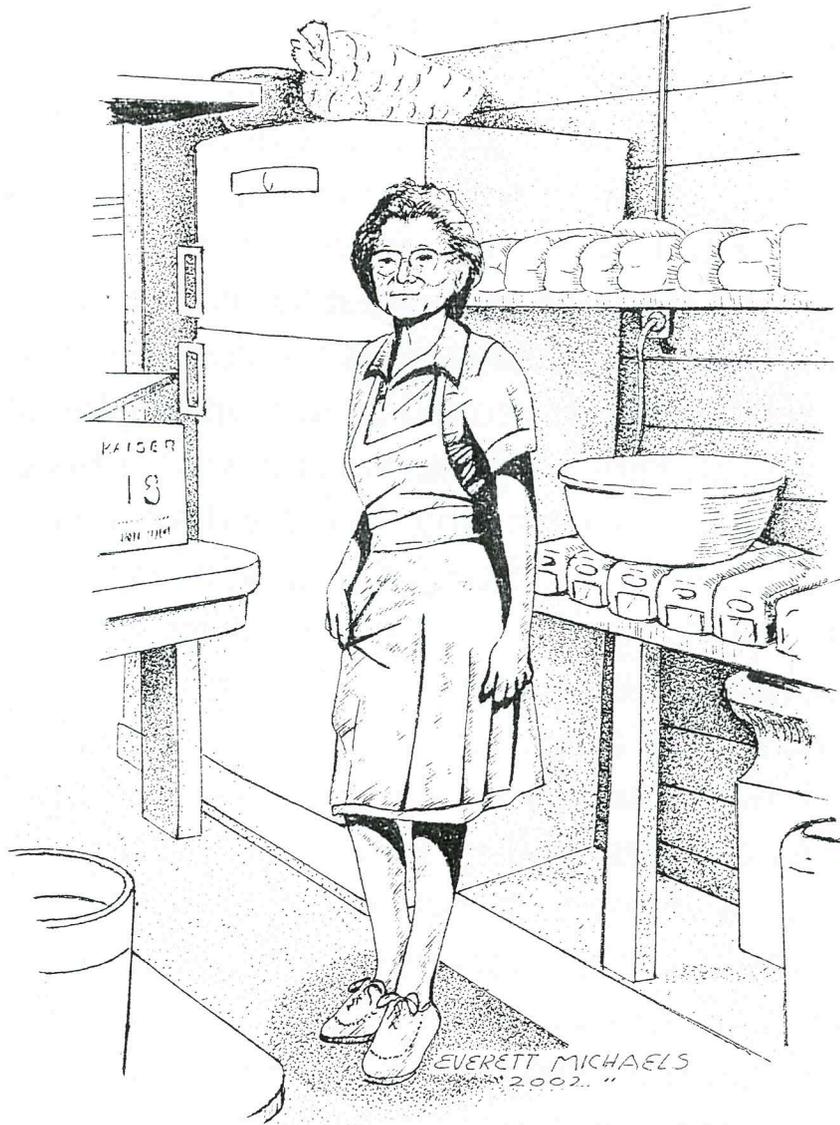
The first electric system in Ruskin was invented by Leonard Wheeler. A story from the late Paul Dickman Sr. told to me when I was with Channel Eight Television in Tampa, was :
"There were only three people connected to this electric system, it was great until Wheeler went to bed, he would turn all the lights out without giving us warning."

Around 1920 Paul Dickman was in the real estate business with lots of land and much paper work and very little cash. " Their real estate business is still in Ruskin and now a very big company run by his grandson Paul Dickman."

The Dickman's donated the land for the Ruskin Methodist Church, in 1924, the church still is on this property in 2003.

It was the year 1927 that Paul Dickman decided to build on the corner of Shell Point Road and Highway 41. He rented it out when finished for thirty dollars a month. After two years of collecting rent he decided to become a merchant himself and finally persuaded his wife Esther to run the tearoom if he ran the general store.

One story we can remember is that the tearoom, or Coffee Cup, did not have glass windows in those days. It had wooden shutters propped up and open often at night to let the air in. Paul Dickman was known for his coffee and always had a pot brewing. In these days most of the activity in Ruskin took place after dark, as many people were making their living with moonshinning. Paul had the shutters closed, but someone was knocking on one and as he opened it, they asked him if he had the coffee pot on. Of course he did and they came in for their 5 cent cup of coffee. As they drank, they were busy counting out one dollar bills, dividing them between the three of them. They had collected them from there three locations, which they sold their shine to boats from Tampa. One was Whiskey Stump, Shell Point, and Cockroach Bay. They never took more than one dollar bills in trade so that the revenueurs couldn't arrest them with a lot of money. Dickman walked



Up to them and said, "boys I see that I am in the wrong business with my 5 cent coffee. As he looked at the three stacks of dollar bills spread out on the table, Dickman said: " You are making more money than I am."

Paul Dickman, ran the general store, and his wife Ester was in charge of the tearoom.

Ester was cooking meals and had started making pies. She was the cook and the waitress. She would put on her kitchen apron and cook the food, and then when a customer would arrive, she would switch to a fancy apron and run out and become the waitress. She kept up this practice for many months and finally had built up her business and she could not handle it any longer by herself. This was the year of 1929 and she decided to hire someone to wait on customers. Paul could no longer help her as he had started a farm behind the tearoom. Paul wasn't a farmer but an engineer with a degree. He spent many hours inventing farm equipment. The farm behind the Coffee Cup was successful tho, and from that he became a very successful farmer.

The first person Ester hired was Mary Walker, to wait on tables. Ester still cooked and made the pies.

RUSKIN

RUSKIN

HAND PACKED
TOMATOES



CONTENTS
1 LB. 3 OZ.

*Full of
Florida Sunshine*

PACKED BY
PAUL B.
DICKMAN
RUSKIN,
FLA.

HAND PACKED
TOMATOES



CONTENTS
1 LB. 3 OZ.

Esther also taught Mary, about her pie making. Mary , had two teachers for the art of pie making ,Esther Dickman and her own mother Mrs. Willis, and she soon became the "Pie Queen" of Ruskin.

It was 1929 when Mary started to work for Esther. The business at the tearoom was great.

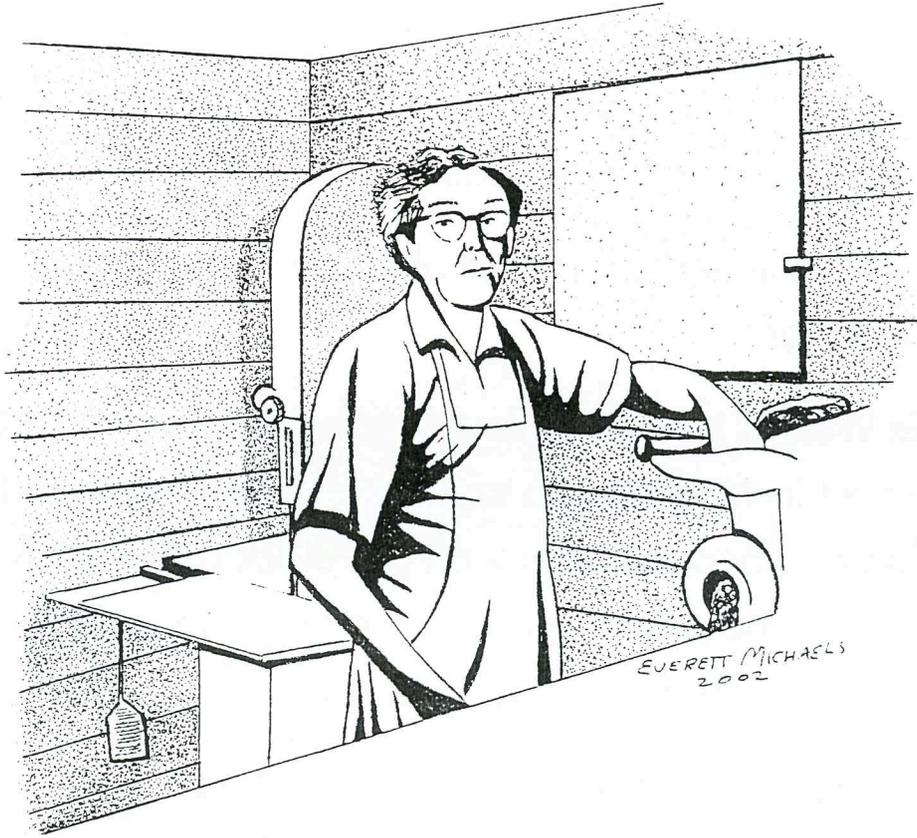
A huge room had been built above the tearoom for dances and social gathers.

Willie Walker took pride in the general store and started ordering most items a person would want. Paul became a full time farmer and had a new guy on the block running his store. With his wife Esther doing great in the tearoom with the help of Mary Willis, things were looking great.

In 1936 Esther, gave up the tearoom and by that time Mary Willis had married Willie Walker, so it was Willie and Mary Walker now who ran the tearoom.

It soon became known, as the Coffee Cup, as the tearoom never caught on in the town of Ruskin.(Although in this day and age Ruskin has had two tearooms.)

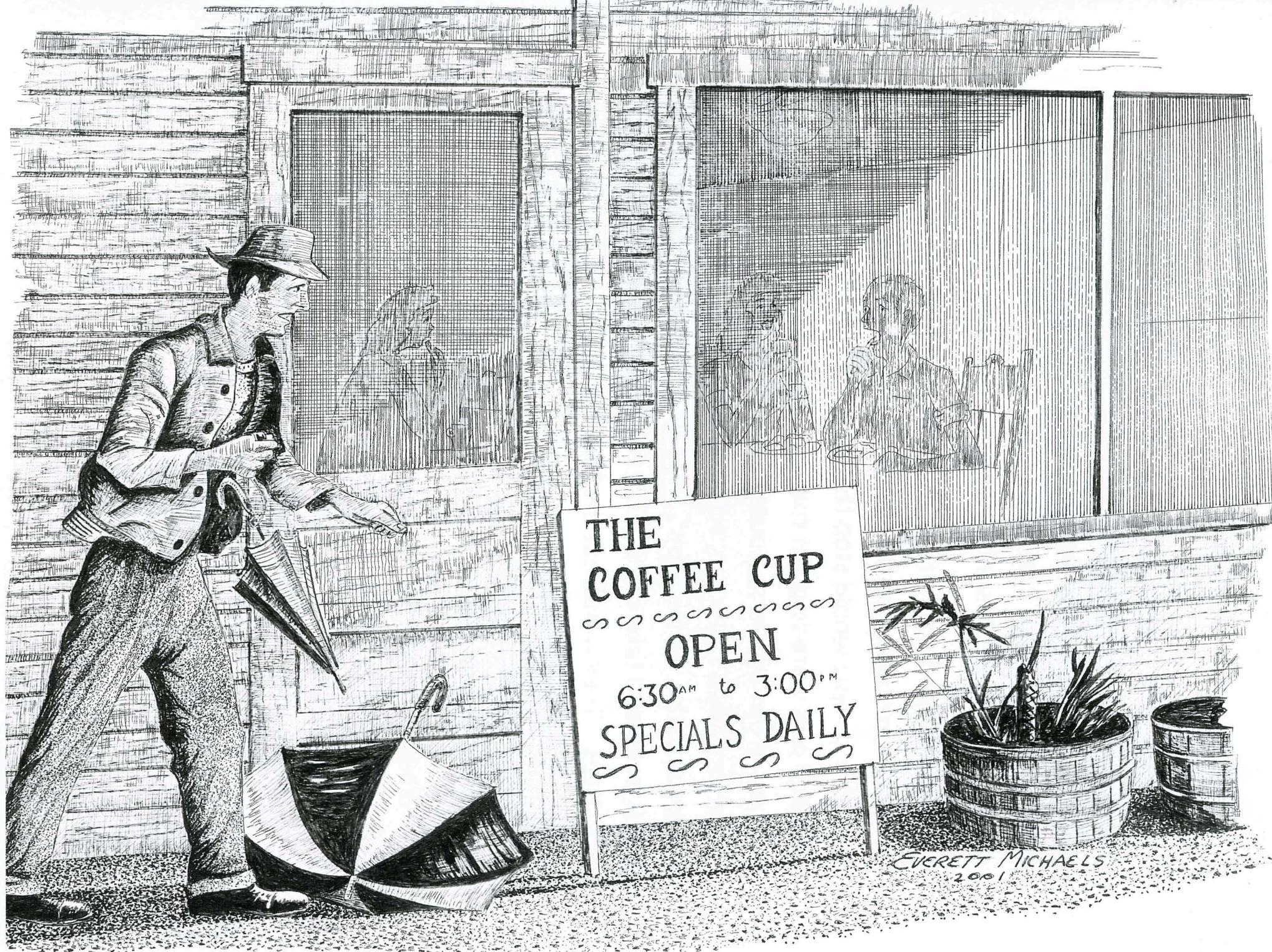
Since Esther was gone, Mary needed help and the first waitress she hired was Pearl Manning, who worked for her 17 years.



After the seventeen years working for Mary Walker , Pearl Manning , and her sister bought the "Root Beer Hut" on highway 41 in Ruskin. Pearl soon bought out her sister, and that was the start of the Mannings' Restaurants in Ruskin.

Mary soon became famous for her pies, not only in Ruskin, but in all surrounding areas. As the Coffee Cup was on highway 41, many people would stop there on their way south. The food and pies were so great that by , word of mouth, there business grew. Lawyers , County Executives, newspaper writers, TV personalities, salesmen, and many farmers , used this small place called the, "Coffee Cup", as their office away from home. It was a place to take clients, visitors, friends, bosses, and associates . They would eat the best home cooked meal in town in a quite quaint, place that served the best strawberry pie in the nation with a real whip cream topping, and the strawberries came direct from the local fields.

While you ate, you could view the help snapping green beans that had just arrived from the local farmer. Others would be husking fresh ears of corn , arriving from another farm. The Ruskin tomatoes served at the Coffee Cup, were talked about by all who ate there. With the fresh vegetables and the best pies, business boomed for the Walkers. It was a must for every newcomer or tourist to visit the Coffee Cup.



THE
COFFEE CUP
~~~~~  
OPEN  
6:30<sup>AM</sup> to 3:00<sup>PM</sup>  
SPECIALS DAILY  
~~~~~

EVERETT MICHAELS
2001

Most people who worked for "Miss Mary", as she was called, stayed for years.

She worked for local high schools, with girls who were her waitress and obtain credit for on job training.

Mary soon started baking her pies in large glass pie pans that were huge. She charged an extra fee, if you took the pan home. They were not for sale, one returned them, when they came back for another pie. Using these pans made her pies plump and tasty and large enough for a crowd.

It is said that there isn't many people who grew up in Ruskin, that didn't work for Willie and Mary Walker.

They didn't take reservations and many a time one, would have to stand in a long line to get a table.

Most local families ate at the Coffee Cup on Sundays, and many also ate there during the week, as Ruskin did not have any fast food places as they do today. The Coffee Cup, and later years Mannings, were the two places to eat.

It was the place to meet and greet friends, with Ruskin, being, one big family .

It was the place to come for good news and sometimes the bad new.

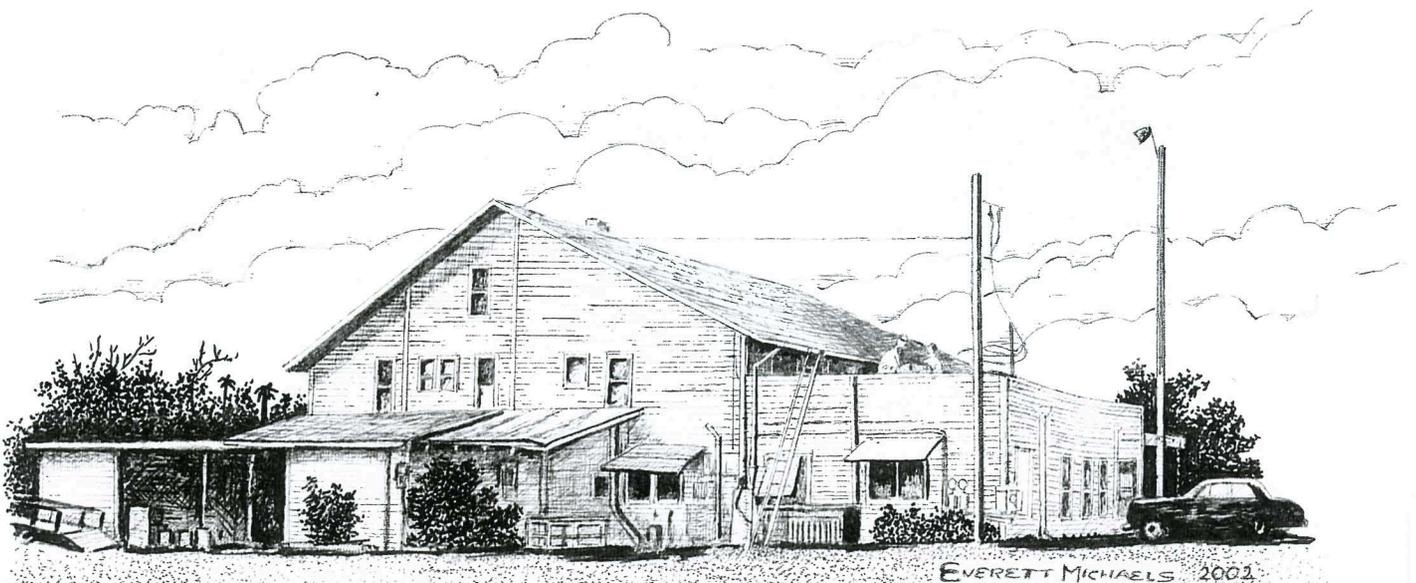


EVERETT MICHAELS
2002

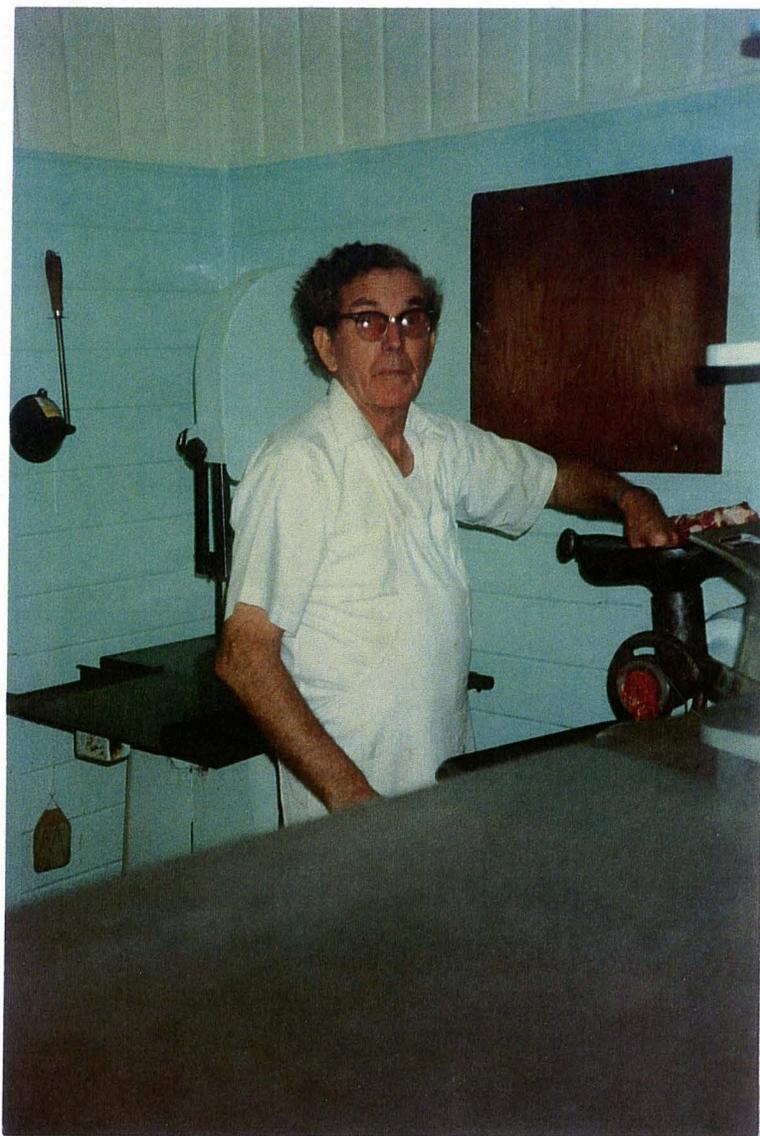
Willie
Mary

The Walkers' celebrated fifty years in business around 1998 before they closed their doors and the building was demolished, with only memories at the empty corner of Shell Point Road and Highway 41 in Ruskin.

Mary has passed on and Mr. Willie is still living in Ruskin, visiting friends and taking life easy.



The Back Door To The Coffee Cup, A Few Days Before Demolition. 1998.



MARY AND WILLIE WALKER

EXCERPTS FROM THE OBSERVER NEWS BY ALETA JONIE MASCHEK



A Piece Of South County History Gone — The Coffee Cup Is Empty

By ALETA JONIE MASCHEK

Ruskin is known for its tomatoes and the Coffee Cup.

Tomatoes are still grown in Ruskin but there is no longer a Coffee Cup.

The roots of so many lie deep in the business, which has been located on the corner of U.S. 41 and Shell Point Road for the past 75 or more years.

Mary and Willie Walker are best known for the Coffee Cup. They celebrated their 50th year there in 1992.

A few people remember it before Willie and Mary Walker took it over.

With our "Piece of History," we offer the following information.

There were three buildings connected: a coffee shop, a feed store and a general grocery store. We know that at one time Bill and Francis Caruathers operated them. Bill was with Florida Power and Francis was a school teacher. Fred Linder, Ruskin postmaster, operated this building before 1928.

Paul Dickman worked in a saw mill from 1919 until 1925 and

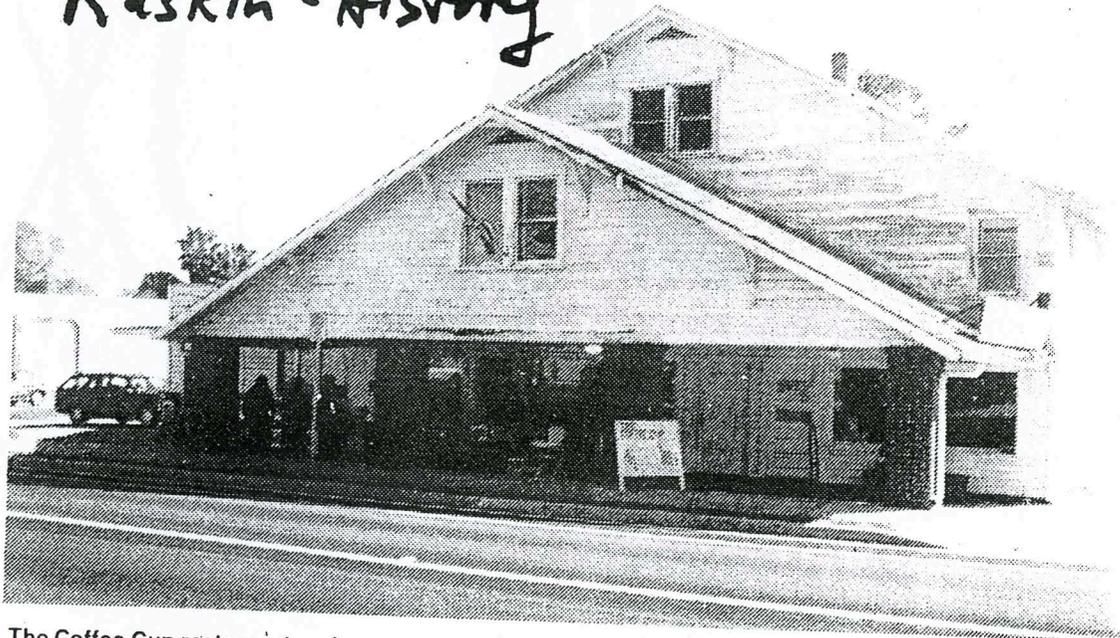
during this time they built three buildings on the corner of Shell Point Road and U.S. 41. They rented the building out for \$30 a

month. From the writings of Paul Dickman's wife, Esther: "We originally built this building for a tea room. At that time we had

plenty of land but very lit so in 1929 we took over room. I ran the tea room at

▲ See COFFEE CUP.

Ruskin - History

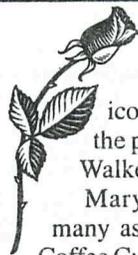


The Coffee Cup restaurant and grocery served its last meal a week ago. It now stands empty on the corner U.S. 41 and Shell Point Road in Ruskin. Demolition is the only future the historic building knows. JOE KAY PH



I SHOOT IT, YOU COOK IT, WE EAT IT.

Obituary of Mary H. Walker



Ruskin lost an icon this month with the passing of Mary H. Walker, July 11.

Mary was known to many as the owner of the Coffee Cup for more than 60 years.

Her pies brought fame to Ruskin, as people from all walks of life and from many states spread the word about her pies. TV stations, newspapers and radio announcers talked about The Coffee Cup and Mary's pies.

If a tourist passed through



Ruskin, they were told, by a resident who had been fortunate enough to experience the delightful taste and aroma of her pies. Mary's pies were baked in glass pie pans that were deep and large. She would fill those pans full of fruits and creams. Her butter-scotch pies were so rich, so creamy; the strawberry pies had real whip cream on top; the apple pies were flavored just right; her raisin pies excelled in flavor different than anyone had eaten before. Her banana pies were always fresh, creamy with real whip cream topping and she could make a pumpkin pie that would melt in your mouth.

Mary first learned to bake pies from her mother and then from Esther Dickman, when she first started at the Coffee Cup as a waitress.

Mrs. Walker was born in Palmetto but lived most of her life in Ruskin. She was a member of the First Baptist Church of Ruskin; a lifetime member of the

Ruskin Women's Club, having been a member for 47 years.

Mrs. Walker is survived by her husband, William "Willie" Walker of Ruskin; a son, J.D. Register and his wife, GERALYN of Orlando; a daughter, Jeanette Anderson and her husband Jim of Pittsburgh, Pa., a brother Joe W. Willis and his wife, Margaret and a host of grandchildren and great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Services were held July 13 at Lewers Funeral Home with interment at Ruskin Memorial Park.



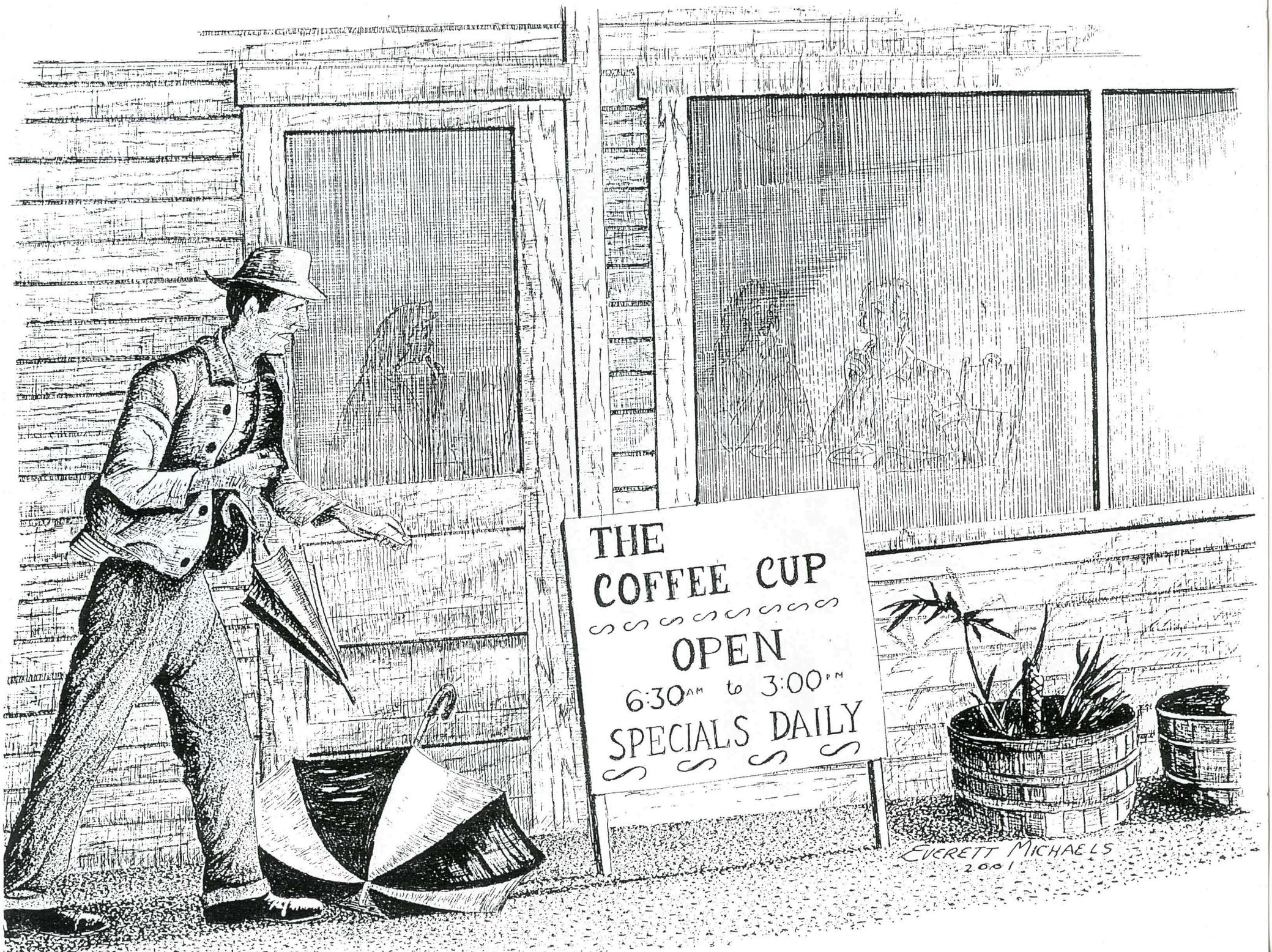
LAST WORKING EMPLOYEES BEFORE CLOSING.



Jean Zwack, Robin Luddington, Willie Walker, Marlen
Donna Davis
fawcett. Front row: Michell Morse, Trisha Peeples



BEFORE THE COCK CROWED MARYS PIES WERE IN THE
OVEN.

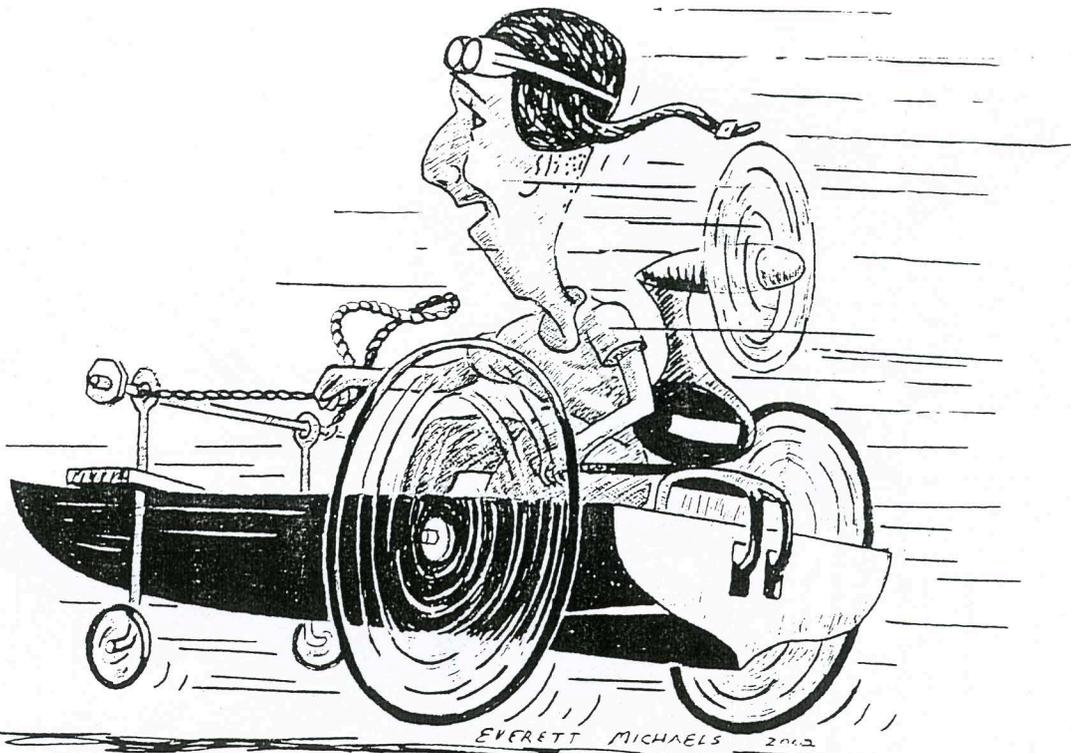


THE
COFFEE CUP
~~~~~  
OPEN  
6:30<sup>AM</sup> to 3:00<sup>PM</sup>  
SPECIALS DAILY  
~~~~~

EVERETT MICHAELS
2001



*you broke out for a piece
of mary's pie !!!!!!!*



I gotta get to the Coffee Cup while
— the Pie's a still warm.....