Early Jupiter memories by Daniel Rousseau

I wasn't raised in Jupiter, but was born in West Palm Beach, and from age nine until I graduated from high school, lived on Hood Road. In 1947, my dad bought a thousand acres two miles west of the FEC tracks from a man in Jupiter named C.C. Townes. At that time, Hood Road was just a dirt logging road that dead-ended in the Loxahatchee Slough.

When my mother went to the School Board to find out where we would be going to school, they couldn't give her an answer because there had never been any children living on Hood Road. Because Jupiter was so small a community, the County wouldn't send a school bus down to pick us up, but they would send the one that serviced the kids living in Juno and all along Prosperity Farms Road and out the Lake Park Road to where it met the end of the Military Trail. (Back then the Trail only came up as far as west of Lake Park). So, we attended Lake Park Elementary through eighth grade, and then attended Central Junior High for 9th grade, and Palm Beach High (now the School for the Arts) for high school. Even then, they said the school bus would only pick us up

at the railroad crossing because they wouldn't send it down a logging road. For a year my mom took us to school and brought us home. Then the County "paved" Hood Road, making it a one-lane (with turnouts) shell-rocked road. After that, we had bus service to our house—first ones aboard in the morning and last ones off in the afternoon. When we left Hood Road in 1955, it was still a one-lane shell-rocked road. A total of eight families lived along the three and a half mile length. Eastpointe and Old Marsh occupy the land my dad sold that year for $75 an acre.

I learned to drive up and down Hood Road when I was twelve, but wasn't allowed out on Alt. A1A. When I needed to have my hair cut I would ride a horse through the woods and come out about where Walmart is today, and then ride along Center Street and across the FEC tracks to the barbershop.

It was in that vacant lot just north of Dune Dog. I would unsaddle my horse and tie him to he could graze under the trees. I'd bring my .22 rifle into the barber shop and lean it in the corner. There were two barber chairs and one barber. I would pay my quarter and get my hair cut, then stop at the grocery store on Center Street and get a Nehi drink before beginning the trek through the woods back to our land.

My dad had a dairy, and we also had beef cattle, so I worked for him from the time I was six years old until I graduated high school.

Long before my life unfolded in that area, my grandfather visited Jupiter. He was born in Clearwater in 1878, and in 1898 he was still single and looking for adventure. So he saddled his horse and rode from Clearwater, through Tante (now Okeechobee), through Indiantown and down what he called "the old telegraph road" to Jupiter. Back during the Second Seminole War the military strung telegraph wires from Ft. Jupiter to Okeechobee, and the winding trail was first dubbed "the old telegraph road." He said the first time he crossed the state from Clearwater; he came in north of Jupiter and had to take a ferry across the Loxahatchee. I asked why didn't he come across the bridge

and he said the only bridge was the new railroad bridge Flagler had built, and you can't take a horse across something like that. He also told me it took about a week to make the ride each way from Clearwater to Boynton. It wasn't so much the distance as it was the terrain. One time he camped for three days at the Kissimmee River, waiting for the water to subside. This was at the spot where Fort Bassinger once stood. A bridge wasn't built across there until 1915.

After crossing the river in Jupiter, he picked up the old Military Trail which was just a wagon road through the woods, and followed it to Boynton where he eventually bought land. He met and married my grandmother there in 1908, the same year Palm Beach County was formed. My granddad's older brother, Robert Rousseau, was already one of three County Commissioners for Dade County. Dade County stretched from south of old Fort Dallas (Miami) to Juno, and Robert represented the north end. When Palm Beach County was created, he became one of the original commissioners to serve. My dad was born in Boynton in 1912, two years after his older sister, Callie, in 1910. Aunt Callie died in 2011, age 101.

My grandfather's grandfather grew up in north Florida, Columbia County. When he turned 18 he served in the Florida Militia just as the Second Seminole War began. He served until 1842. Off and on during his lifetime he owned a total of 10,400 acres in parcels in the County. He was elected as a Representative to the Legislature where, in 1858, he sponsored the bill that created Suwannee County. He served as a State Senator for the new county. During the Civil War he held a commission in the Confederate army. His two oldest boys died early in the war and his third son (my great-grandfather) survived. During Reconstruction all former Confederates were removed from office. That's when he sold much of his land in Suwannee County and moved down to Hillsborough County to the settlement called Clear Water Harbor.

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