

Wakulla Beach Hotel

GPS Coordinates:
84°15.703' W ~ 30° 6.316' N



The third Walker, or Wakulla Beach, Hotel (above) as it appeared around the time the property was acquired by the Refuge and (below) part of what remains. (Above: Courtesy State Archives of Florida; below: Courtesy St. Marks Refuge files)



St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge History Trail

1	Wakulla Beach: site of Wakulla Beach Hotel and West Goose Creek Seheyard	84°15.703' W	30° 6.316' N	4	Mounds Station: site of Shell Mounds and Naval Stores	84° 9.869' W	30° 5.282' N
2	Plum Orchard: site of Port Leon	84°8.892' W	30° 9.099' N	5	St. Marks Lighthouse: site of Lighthouse, Ft. Williams, and Spanish Hole/Shipwreck	84° 10.955' W	30° 4.658' N
3	East River: site of CCC and Salt Works	84°8.710' W	30° 7.797' N	6	Mandalay: site of Aucilla River	83° 58.769' W	30° 6.985' N

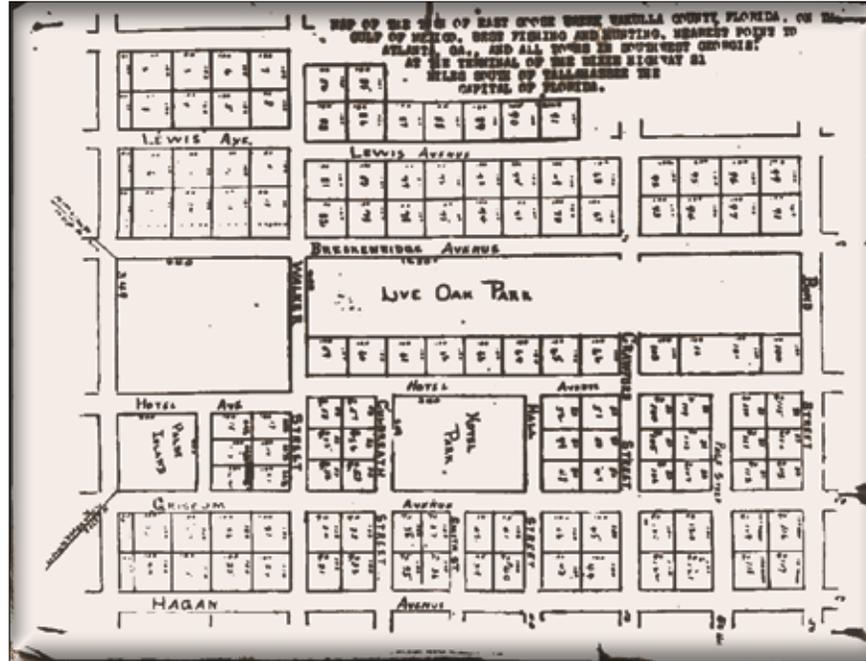


Wakulla Beach Hotel

Daisy Walker dreamed of building a town called East Goose Creek at Wakulla Beach. She and her husband, Florida State Senator Henry N. Walker, Sr., built a hotel to attract visitors to the site. Sleeping rooms and a dining room were located off of a long porch to let in cooling sea breezes.

Around 1920 the Walkers converted this hotel into their residence and built a second hotel located closer to the beach. Constructed entirely of cypress, the two-story building was probably destroyed by a strong tropical storm that caused extensive damage in Wakulla County in September 1928.

Undaunted, the Walkers built a third, even larger hotel which had fluted columns formed by pouring concrete into a mold built around



*The town was laid out around 1915.
(Courtesy Mays Leroy Gray)*

pine timbers. The kitchen and dining room were located on the ground floor with sleeping rooms on the second level. Swimming and fishing in the summer and goose hunting in the winter attracted guests year round.

Daisy Walker died in 1935. Even though the coast still draws visitors, weather seems to have conspired against the success of a permanent town.

Along with the hotel business, Senator Walker ran cattle on his property. The “Fence Law,” passed in 1949, curtailed open range grazing in Florida. Around this time, Senator Walker decided to leave the ranching business and worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to add Wakulla Beach – the lost town of East Goose Creek – to the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

The first and second Walker Hotels no longer exist. All that remains of the third hotel is a foundation at the edge of the surrounding forest.

Almost any day will find a few anglers and swimmers enjoying Wakulla Beach just as they did in Daisy’s day. The beach area is quite small, but many kayakers put in there to paddle and explore the shore and bay. (Courtesy St. Marks Refuge files)



A portion of the foundation and the fluted pillars from the third hotel can be seen near the parking area. (Courtesy St. Marks Refuge files)



The St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc., with a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, produced the signs and brochures for the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge History Trail. The association is a 501(c)(3) organization that supports educational, environmental, and biological programs of St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Visit www.stmarksrefuge.org for more information. 9/2010