

## The 1910 Storm

### Grandma Carroll's Version

① On Oct. 17th, 1910, the hurricane struck Marco Island. The wind had been puffy and it had rained for a couple of days, and everyone knew it was "stormy" weather, but by nine o'clock on Sunday morning, Oct. 17th, the wind was strong enough to break limbs off the big royal poinciana trees.

Although he knew it was "stormy" weather, Granddad Carroll left Marco, Sunday morning, on the 17th, as in those days there were no radios to report on weather, and no newspaper reports either. He left on the boat "The Falcon" going to Ft. Myers and he didn't come back until Thursday of that week. This trip was on the Watson case.

My husband, Ernest, disagrees with this: He says that the day before the storm (Oct. 16th) he and his older brother, Jesse - they were 12 and 14 yrs. old at this time - were flying a kite. Or as he said "we put up a kite". It was about 3'x6' and the wind lifted it so hard it broke the center sticks, and they had to give up trying to fly it. The wind increased until early Sunday morning (the 17th) it was blowing at gale force and breaking down trees by 9:AM. It was a very broad, slow moving storm, and took long to pass, that is the reason there was so much damage done. It reached hurricane force Sunday at 2:PM and held hurricane force until about 8:AM Monday. Granddad Carroll never would have left home in a boat with such a threat of bad weather. Ernest thinks Granddad went to Ft. Myers on the "Falcon" several days previous. Possibly about the tenth or twelfth, and then when he was ready to leave Ft. Myers the storm had broken and he had to wait until it was over.

② By Sunday night the storm was terrible and it lasted until ten o'clock Monday morning. It reached its peak about midnight. The rain came in torrents, the wind blew down houses, and timbers and sunk boats, and it stripped the bark off all the mangrove trees.

During the midday the tide had gone the lowest anyone had ever seen. My husband - Ernest Carroll - told me of Capt. Bill Collier that day. The store at Marco had poured concrete walls which made it very sturdy. Capt. Collier had built the foundation of the store right in the water, and rigged up a dock along side. During this very low tide Collier was taking advantage of it, and had negroes deepening the harbor there and he told them "The Lord and I are working together - He pushes the water back to let me do this work". Before morning there was 18" of water in the store and the merchandise on the floors and under the counters was getting soaked. Frank Braman asked Capt. Collier "How come, isn't the Lord working with you?" and Capt. Collier replied "Well, He was but He forgot to tell me there was going to be a rise in the tide."

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In building the store forms were tied together with 5/4" bolts and the goles were left and the wind blew so hard right thru these holes, the plaster came off, and the women and children were scared so everyone- they had all come down to the store at dusk as it seemed to be the safest place to stay - left the store and went to Buman Key's house. He had cross braced his walls inside with lumber. There was a large gumbo limbo tree outside about 18" or 20" in diameter, and the men were afraid it might blow down so they got out and cut it down.

As said before Granddad Carroll had gone off to Ft. Myers in the boat so Grandma Carroll was home alone with her five little boys. Rosa was married then to Dan Kirkland and Hilda had not been born. They lived in the Hill House - the highest land on the island, but at dusk when the storm got so bad and everyone went to the big store Grandma Carroll took her little boys and went too. Then they went on to Buman Key's house later with the others. Grandma said each man would take a group of women and children and help them through the storm to Key's house. There they had coffee. Grandma said there were about forty people there. As the wind and tide rose after midnight, they went on to Grandma Carroll's up to the "Hill House".

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Off toward Marco Pass lived the Tomlinson's - Charlie, Walter, Will and their families and their parents. They walked up the island to the channel and headed for the Hill House when the storm got bad. They found the Carrolls gone and so made themselves at home. So when the Carrolls finally got back to their home early Monday morning, there were the Tomlinsons, dressed in the dry clothes they found at Carroll's, asleep in the dry beds. A window was blown in and Grandma's dining table was upended breaking all her dishes. No one had breakfast as everything seemed to be wet or blown away. Everyone began going to their own homes about ten o'clock Monday morning, and got whatever they could find to eat - Grandma found a few little things, flour, syrup, bacon and so was able to feed her boys until other food could be found.

The Carrolls had had a big tomato garden growing around the Hill House - about two acres of tomatoes and one acre of okra. Granddad Carroll had been told he would get about \$1,000 for it. After the storm it was wiped as clean "as a Washed slate".

On Tuesday everyone thought that Granddad and the other men on the "Falcon" were surely lost as they had no way of knowing that they did not leave Ft. Myers as planned. When Mr. Young would come to the house for his meals he would say to Grandma "Now, now don't cry any more, he'll come back! " And sure enough he did. The boat came in on Thursday noon.

On Friday Capt. Bill Collier hired Granddad to work cleaning up the road and building back the bridges. After doing this Granddad worked for Collier again - farming.

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Capt. Bill Collier pulled up boats by horse power. He had a round house - a shingled roof, eight sided. He pulled a 65' schooner up on a cradle and then he watched all the night of the storm to see that the guy lines held the boat on the cradle.

The sun came out shortly after ten o'clock Monday morning and everyone set to work to dry things out. On Tuesday Grandma Carroll went to work for Capt. Collier, drying out the store goods. She worked there about a week until it was all cleaned up.

The Mr. Young mentioned as boarding with Grandma was an old family friend - a dear old man. He was from Colorado - likable, jolly, fat. He made friends with everyone and lived first with one and then another family. He had helped Granddad clear the field for the tomato crop in July and August of 1910. Ernest and Jesse were working there too. Mr. Young hauled weeds off the shell ground with a horse and wagon and Ernest remembers that one time he threw some sheppard's needles on the wagon and broke the fork on the wagon wheel. When Granddad asked who broke the fork Mr. Young told him he broke it weeding. Mr. Young had two sons, Luke and Tony. They came to see him at Marco. Ernest remembers that Luke had a beautiful wife - Libby Young. She got interested in another man and Luke went back west. Tony was a pearl diver and went back west to his work, too.