

Robert and Zilla Ann (Moody) Hendry and a granddaughter of John and Catherine (McFail) Hendry. Rev. J. M. Hayman officiated. John and Ellen had the following children:

1. Robert Earley Whidden, born July 15, 1866; died March 26, 1951; married at Arcadia on Jan. 21, 1888, Mamie Maria Haygood, daughter of James Dugan and Mary Ann Elinora (Gillette) Haygood.
2. Adella Adelaide Whidden, born Nov. 14, 1868; died May 11, 1952; married 1st on Jan. 19, 1888, Benjamin Franklin Wood; married 2nd, William E. Robertson.
3. Francis Solon Whidden, born Jan. 11, 1870; died Nov. 24, 1873.
4. Eliza Edmonia "Chink" Whidden, born Jan. 8, 1872; died 1930; married on Jan. 9, 1890 Charles Yancey Crawford.
5. Nellie Eugenia Whidden, born Oct. 25, 1873; died June 9, 1898; married on April 1, 1895 Joseph H. Peeples.
6. Carl Tilden Whidden, born Aug. 22, 1876; died Feb. 19, 1942; married on Dec. 12, 1899 Irene Hays.
7. Daisy Lee Whidden, born Dec. 25, 1879; married on Mar. 30, 1901 Claude Lawrence Carlton.
8. John Edward Perry Whidden, born Dec. 10, 1881; died Oct. 30, 1886.
9. Smoot Louise Whidden, born Oct. 8, 1882; died 1969; married in 1901 Clarence L. Steele.

John W. Whidden was one of south Florida's early cattlemen. On Oct. 16, 1866 in Manatee County, he registered the following mark and brand: under square & under bit in one ear, under square in the other, brand C. On April 26, 1868 he registered the following additional mark and brand: crop under bit in one ear, under slope in the other (Bailey mark and brand), brand JB. There were probably others as he rapidly increased his herds. John with a number of others bought up and fenced what is now called Fisheating Creek. 1884 Manatee County records show that John W. Whidden paid taxes on 3,500 cattle, 40 hogs, 5 horses and 536 acres of land. At his greatest period of expansion, it is believed that he had over 10,000 head of cattle in DeSoto, Manatee and Polk counties. About 1900, after giving each of his children 300 to 500 head, he sold his remaining stock to W. W. Langford.

In the early 1870's the Whiddens moved from Fort Green area to the Joshua Creek area where they homesteaded and planted an orange grove. After 1885, after selling the home place to Waldell of Key West (who later sold to Avant), they moved into present day Arcadia, then called Tater Hill Bluff, built a 35' x 60' wooden building and opened a general merchandise store, called J. W. Whidden & Son. Robert E. Whidden owned a half interest and managed the store.

John Whidden as a child attended Salem Baptist Church at Ichepuck-sassa (near present day Plant City). When Maple Branch Baptist Church (later relocated as New Zion Baptist Church) was organized Sept. 29, 1866, J. W. Whidden was chosen as Church clerk. His wife, Ellen, was baptized by Rev. J. M. Hayman on Sept. 30, 1866 at Maple Branch. After