



WALTON RELATIONS

Volume 2, Issue 5

Walton County Genealogy Society

April 2011

Civil War Sesquicentennial

The Civil War Trust website has a feature called "This Day in the Civil War" that has links to information about each day's events in 1861-1865 as well as links to other 150th anniversary websites. You can also get their newsletter at www.civilwar.org/150th-anniversary/.



Ancestry.com is offering free access to its Civil War era records, including the 1860 and 1870 census records, during the week of April 7- 14. Access them at www.ancestry.com/civilwar150.

The Government Printing Office has a collection of Civil War related books at very reasonable prices, and you can subscribe to their Civil War email updates at bookstore.gpo.gov/collections/civilwar.jsp.

WCGS Meetings

The Walton County Genealogy Society will meet at the Walton County Heritage Museum on **Saturday, April 9, at 10:00 AM**. Wayne Sconiers will demonstrate how to make a DVD using Windows Movie Maker using your photographs, video clips, and music. Please join us!

Our meeting on **Saturday, May 14**, will be a joint meeting with the Genealogy Society of Okaloosa County. We will meet at the **Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Avenue, Valparaiso, at 10:00 AM**. Wayne Sconiers will demonstrate how to make a DVD using Windows Movie Maker using your photographs, video clips, and music, so you will have a chance to hear this lecture again. Much of our research crosses county lines, so this joint meeting will be a great chance to meet and share genealogy ideas and information with others researching some of the same family lines you are.

Walton County Heritage Museum

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 1:00- 4:00 PM
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

850-951-2127

www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org

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The Mystery of Pasco

By Barbara McClellan Moore

Alvin, Texas

Charles Van Buren and Ella Crowder McClellan were both born in Walton County, Florida, in the late 1800s. They had eight children and lived through some very tough times. Everyone had to do their part for the family to survive. One of their sons was Pasco, and this is his story.



Pasco's Parents: Charles Van Buren McClellan and Christian Ella Crowder McClellan

No one knows a middle name for him, just Pasco. According to family stories, the four boys would team up and leave home for a while to find work during the depression. They would save every penny they could and come home periodically to bring what extra money they had managed to save. Jobs were very scarce back then; people would work any job if given an opportunity. If work wasn't available, they tried to barter for what they needed. One morning, Pasco was missing. He left a note saying he was going away, and he was never seen again. There were just a few letters received that told almost nothing about his life. He would send just a note to stay in touch with a couple of family members. Pasco was encouraged to come back home, but he said no one would see things the way he did. What he meant by that statement will never be understood.

I am Barbara McClellan Moore, a granddaughter to Charles Edward, one of Pasco's brothers. I was living in Pensacola and remember the following incident happening in September 1967. Grandma and Grandpa McClellan had retired to Lake Ella in the Dorcas Community near Crestview. This is where they had grown up. Grandma (Clara Belle McClellan) came to Pensacola to visit for the day. We went shopping, had lunch, and then drove by the houses they had lived in over the years. We even stopped to see the present owner of one. Grandma wanted to show me my shoes, bronzed and permanently fixed to the porch. The owner was glad to meet the lady who had once worn the shoes her family now treasured as part of the history of their home.

We returned to my home where I lived with my husband, Kenneth Waylon Moore, fixed dinner, and visited some more. I talked her into spending the night, so she called Grandpa to let him know she would be home the next morning. When the phone was answered, Grandma looked very worried and asked what was wrong. Grandpa told her nothing was wrong, but she needed to come on home. Now, that just wasn't like Grandpa. Grandma kept trying to get him to tell her what the problem was. She hung up the phone and told me he said nothing was wrong with him, the animals, or their home, but the sheriff was there and she needed to come home. Needless to say she left right away. I called later to make sure she was okay. I was concerned about her being so worried and driving almost an hour to Dorcas.

The next morning, I went to Lake Ella and found Uncle Dewitt with Aunt Ethel B., Uncle Ell, Aunt Ella Mae with her husband Weldon Baker, and Aunt Belle and her husband Calvin Wilkins with Grandma and Grandpa. I could see something serious was going on. I sat and listened to the strangest story I have ever heard.

The sheriff had come to Lake Ella the previous night and talked to Grandpa Ed. The sheriff said, "The police had called him from Shreveport, Louisiana. A man had died and said he was a brother of Ed McClellan."

Randall Wilkins, Aunt Belle's son, remembers his mother telling him railroad employees had found a man in a boxcar of a train who evidently was depending on the railroad for free transportation. He was trying to say he didn't feel well, but they were used to hearing that kind of story from a hobo trying to keep the police from taking them to jail. They did take him to jail, but an hour or so later they found him on the floor. Once again the man tried to tell them he was sick. They thought he was just trying to find a way to escape, but they took him to the hospital to be checked out. That is where he died. Aunt Belle always wondered if his death actually occurred just that quickly or if he had been sick for a while.

I remember this was why everyone was wondering about the next turn of events. In Pasco's pocket was a piece of paper with my grandfather's name, address, and phone number on it. Before he died, he told the nurses at the hospital to make sure they contacted his brother. The information was turned over to the police department who called the Crestview sheriff. Now our sheriff was from this area and knew about Pasco's disappearance. He was as confused as everyone else. This was a huge shock to Pasco's brothers and sisters.

The Louisiana sheriff wanted the family to send someone to identify this man who said he was related to them. There were mixed feelings of wanting to hear from Pasco all these years suddenly combined with the possibility someone may have used his name. The idea of him showing up and having the latest information on one of them simply was too much to comprehend. Some of them decided the right thing to do was to go to Louisiana and see if this could possibly be their brother who had left about 40 years before.

Grandpa Ed told the story about their arrival in Shreveport and contacting the police department there. They had to go to the morgue which was like something bad being piled onto what was already bad enough. They were shocked how dirty the man was and asked if he could be cleaned up. They were told he couldn't be cleaned up until he was identified. So how were they to try and identify him if they couldn't tell much about him?

They looked at him for a long while, trying to see any resemblance and asked about a certain scar, but they couldn't find it. His beard covered his chin, he was unshaven, and his hair was straggly and dirty. This was proving to be a difficult task. You don't want to identify someone who isn't your kin. After taking a break and trying again, they were unable to make any decision. The sheriff said perhaps they should go home and talk about any scars or anything else that might help and come back again. The drive home was full of worries, according to my grandmother. She had always been the "take charge" matriarch of the family and was totally at loose ends about how to help this situation along.



Female siblings from left: Frances McClellan Rogers, Belle McClellan Wilkins, Ella Mae McClellan Baker

McClellan brothers from left: Ed, Ell, Dewitt

After a night's rest, the family met again to talk about any and all scars from injuries. I was to hear bits and pieces of this story as time went on. The next day they repeated the trip to Shreveport, Louisiana. They were able to find several scars and other markings that matched injuries Pasco had received. The police then cleaned his hands thoroughly and ran his fingerprints. They matched the ones for a Pasco McClellan from Dorcas, Florida, on file with the F.B.I. What he had ever done to get them on file will forever remain a mystery. When I recently inquired about possible access to this information, the police department told me that those files are never revealed to family members because they are confidential information. It sure seemed the police could have run the prints and saved the family a lot of anguish, but that is how it was done in 1967.

Pasco was back. The family chose clothes and a casket; his body would be prepared and shipped home to Crestview. McLaughlin Funeral Home would handle the local arrangements. The family went home to prepare for the funeral and let everyone know the news.

This story has been one of several to resurface after my cousin Judy Cadenhead and I wrote the book *Crowder Chapel and Cemetery: A History of The Early Days*. The family has always had many questions about this wandering son of Charles and Ella Crowder McClellan. I have been trying to trace my genealogy for about 20 years and decided to see what I could piece together about Pasco. Let's go back to 1967.

Aunt Belle was one of the calmest, sweetest ladies I have ever known. Her faith was the reason for her outlook on life. She had often prayed for Pasco. This was a most trying time for her, but there was one more thing that would create even more anguish. She told a story in her family related by her son Randall. Pasco's body had been brought to Crestview and was at the funeral home. Public viewing was September 11, and the funeral would be September 12. A family member had a visit from a lady they had known for quite a while. This friend was nervous and didn't seem to know what to say, which was strange for her. She finally remarked that she was stunned while looking at the man in the casket. She declared it was the very man she and a friend had spoken to in town one day a couple of weeks before. She was told that wasn't possible. The visitor then stated, "But it was and he said he hadn't been here in a long time. He asked where the cemetery was because he wanted to see his mother's grave." He was told how to find the cemetery and he walked away with another man who was evidently with him.

Our family tried to talk and piece together everything in order to figure out this puzzle. Cousin Randall and I got to talking about the kind of small country town Crestview was. When you do genealogy, you have to sometimes take the pieces of puzzle you have, verbally lay them out on the table, and try to connect them. So that is what we did.

Okay, say Pasco did come to town and wanted to see his mother's grave. Why would that be important to a fellow? Considering he had died, maybe he was sick. Maybe he had been sick a while, knew he didn't have much time, and wanted to see his mother's grave. Perhaps he thought he might be buried there, too. How does a wanderer for over 40 years engineer such a feat? The biggest question of all was, "Why didn't Pasco contact Ed McClellan?" If he wanted him to be contacted if something happened to him, why not get in touch with somebody while he was right there at his home? Ah, life does not give us these answers.

There were several places where someone visiting town could have a bite to eat and a cup of coffee. Pasco could have simply asked someone if they knew an Ed McClellan. Lots of folks knew Grandpa, so that would have been easy. Pasco could have told any kind of story about wanting to find an old friend; after all, he had been a wanderer and managed to survive since the 1920s. He could have even asked for a phone book and copied it down. So, if this was Pasco, he would have left town with the name, address, and phone number of a brother neatly written on a piece of paper in his pocket. He and the other man evidently jumped a train and headed for Louisiana. (His obituary mentioned he had lived in Texas and Louisiana during the last 40 years.) It was very common for a hobo to develop a type of friendship with another so they could watch each other's back. Their society was one full of many hardships and dangers I have learned.

Pasco had died and was to be buried. The story should be about over, but no, not yet. I was driving to Crestview from Pensacola, about an hour's drive. Aunt Brownie Nichols, Grandma's sister-in-law, didn't like to go to funerals alone. I told her I would pick her up and we would go together. We arrived at the little country church, and I was having a problem finding a parking place under the trees. "Why, who in the world is that?" she exclaimed. There was a man walking through the churchyard, a bit unsteady. I let her out, went to park, and then joined her. "Goodness sakes alive, Uncle Ell, what are you doing out here?" I asked him. As he answered me I could smell the alcohol on his breath. "It's all my fault. We had a big fight and he left and now it's all my fault," he slurred. Uncle Ell had always liked to drink, but he had really started a binge this time. I could see I wasn't going to get anywhere trying to talk to him. "Well," I told him, "Let's get into church; they're waiting on us." Aunt Brownie and I each took an arm and tried to walk him over the uneven ground. I was just hoping he didn't go down and take us with him!

The folks inside heard the stumbling on the steps and the other brothers came to help. Aunt Brownie and I held back and straightened our clothes as the men approached the casket. Uncle Ell broke down. His long buried

conscience had risen and had to be dealt with. As they left the casket, Aunt Brownie and I went up. Neither of us had come to visitation. The feelings I had at that moment seemed to be mirrored in her expression of pure astonishment. We both could see the perfect family resemblance of the man in the casket to our men sitting in the front pew. Yes, Pasco was where he belonged. Uncle Ell never would reveal what he and Pasco had fought over; he took that secret to his grave.



How do you find someone who disappeared 40 years ago? You do blind searches. Because my brother had also been a wanderer, I wanted to know more about Pasco. Everyone had questions, but I am the genealogist. Everyone seemed to think I would have lots of answers. All I had were questions. I began by searching the census records.

So far, I have found he probably hitched a ride from the panhandle of Florida with a truck driver. He went to the Ward County town of Pyote in west Texas. It seems Pasco was certainly determined to put some distance between himself and home. He became a baker in the little town, which was recorded on the 1930 Texas Federal Census. At the same time, there was an oil boom and the town quickly expanded. The census also revealed a truck driver who worked for the oil company was living with Pasco. One letter has surfaced which had drawings of beautiful flowers, definitely a talent a baker of cakes could use in decorating. A study of the Pyote history told how the railroad that was being laid turned away from the town. The short-lived oil boom and a railroad going the wrong direction spelled the end of Pyote as a boom town. This letter had been stored in a box or drawer all these years.

From Texas I followed him to Sacramento, California, through another letter. He was probably living in the large “tent city” which actually consisted of a community of tiny shacks right near the railroad lines. In this letter, he mentioned living eleven months in Stockton, California, south of Sacramento.

The last letter we have found so far finds Pasco in Williams, California, just north of Sacramento. The first letter he had written was in pencil on unlined paper. The handwriting was not real neat, but the spelling was good. The next one was neatly written in pen on lined paper. He had included the name of the Forsythe family he was boarding with. You could tell Pasco had paid attention and learned to write while in school.

Research of the 1930 California Federal Census told me this was a family who owned their own property who had taken him in as a boarder. The property owner worked for an automobile dealership and had taken in boarders previously according to the census records. Our family breathed a sigh of relief knowing that, at least for a while, Pasco had a roof over his head, linens on a bed, good meals, and a job. There was plenty of logging in the area, and Pasco grew up around that job. Maybe he worked in a logging camp.

Okay, where do I go from here? Knowing his grandmother, Rachael Crowder, was Cherokee, I checked the U.S. Indian Census Schedules for 1885-1940. Well, that led to nowhere; he had never tried to register on tribal rolls. Since he liked to wander, I checked the Merchant Seaman records and found no Pasco McClellan. I then went online and looked for a Pasco McClellan from Dorcas, Florida, who had registered to vote from 1930-1940 to no avail.

I made a trip to Crestview from my Texas home and found the McLaughlin Funeral Home had been sold. I was told there had been another owner before the present owners had purchased the business, and a lot of records were destroyed. I had wanted to find the transportation log showing information from Louisiana and the shipping of his body. I have a former student who is a funeral director here in Texas who said he may be able to help me find a copy of those records. That will be one of my next investigations. I do remember Pasco’s hands were in rough shape. My grandparents called someone whose name was on Pasco’s papers and went to visit her. Pasco had not only been a bricklayer with this woman’s son, but he also lived with them for a while. No one can remember anything about this woman or where she was from. There are none of Grandpa Ed’s siblings living today.

Which direction now? We don’t know. All we know is that Pasco rests in peace next to his parents in the Dorcas community.

Upcoming Reunions

Saturday, April 9 – **Gone But Not Forgotten Reunion**, 11:00 AM at the Southwide Baptist Church Fellowship Hall on Millard Gainey Road, DeFuniak Springs. This group is an alliance of those families who were displaced by the Air Force from the Alice Creek/New Homes area and is part of our Genealogy Society. Bring a potluck dish and your old photographs and stories to share. They will have the first draft of their book, *Stories and Memories of Alice Creek, New Home and Surrounding Areas*, available for review at the reunion. It contains some wonderful and inspirational stories about early life's trials and tribulations. Ancestral family lines along with photos are also included. It should go on sale soon after the reunion. You can sign up early to reserve yourself a copy at the reunion. For more information about the reunion, call Maveen Bruner at 548-5353.

Saturday, May 7 – **Infinger Family Reunion** (Enos Vardiman Infinger line) at 10:00 AM at the picnic area by the Methodist Church near the cemetery at Red Bay. If it rains, the reunion will be moved to one of the three Red Bay churches. For more information, call Bertha Infinger at 836-4472.

Saturday, June 4 – **Evans/Lindsey/Brown Family Reunion**, 10:00 AM in the Euchee Valley Community Center. For more information, call Carolyn Brown at 892-9267.

Saturday, June 11 – **Cosson Family Reunion** at the Harry Cosson home in Alaquia.

Saturday, June 11 – **Nelson Family Reunion**, 10:00 AM at the DeFuniak Springs Community Center. For more information, call Marie Rhodes at 892-5255.

Please send your reunion information to Wayne Sconiers at WayneSconiers@embarqmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, April 21 – **Heritage Association Members Meeting** at 6:00 PM with guest speaker **Bruce Cosson**. Bruce will discuss the early history of the Alaquia area, including the first court session held in Walton County, the earliest settlers, and artifacts found in the area. He will have the papers and letters of Judge Brackenridge along with many documents found during his research about the area and time period of early Florida.

Sunday, May 1 – **Reception Honoring Mary Vinson**, 2:00-4:00 PM at the Chautauqua Hall of Brotherhood, 95 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs. Mary and members of her family will be present as we celebrate her life and art. Five of Mary's paintings will be donated for display in the Walton County Heritage Museum. All are welcome.

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Walton Relations is a publication of the Walton County Genealogy Society. Wayne Sconiers, President. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email its editor, Diane Merkel, at WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net or call 850-897-4505.