



# WALTON RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 8, Issue 3

Walton County Heritage Association

February 2017

## WCHA Museum Visitor Numbers Growing

The number of visitors to the WCHA Museum has seen major increases in 2015 and 2016 and is on track for even greater numbers in 2017. There were 2,722 in 2015, up significantly from the previous year. In 2016 there were 3,124, an increase of 402 or 15% over 2015. From the first of the year to February 2016, they numbered 572. For the same time period this year, they numbered 1,021, up by 449, or 79%.

No one knows for certain what has spurred the growth, but it has been suggested that the new sign erected in December 2015 probably played a major role. The large attractive sign is highly conspicuous, readily catching the eye of those driving or walking by the Museum. It is a significant improvement over the sign above the Museum door which almost no one notices.

Another factor in the growth may have been the interior renovation of the Museum which gave it a much needed facelift. That project was completed in 2015 also.

Still another reason could be the growing numbers themselves. All those visitors are spreading by word-of-mouth positive comments about the Museum, stimulating interest in it by their friends and neighbors, bringing them in also. Whatever the reason or reasons, they are warmly welcomed.

## Upcoming Reunions

The WCHA schedule of annual reunions can be accessed by clicking the link below. If you know of reunions you would like added to the schedule, please email them to the Newsletter Editor.

<http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/genealogy.htm>

## Recent Genealogy Queries

The Walton County Genealogy Society has received the requests for information appearing on the second page of the Newsletter. If anyone can help with them, please send the information to the Newsletter editor at the email address on the last page of this newsletter.

## Featured Article

The featured article this month is on Mack Henry Busbee's Homestead Application with Genealogical and Historical Miscellanea.

### Walton County Heritage Museum

Open Tuesday – Saturday, 1:00 – 4:00 PM  
1140 Circle Drive, De Funiak Springs, FL 32435  
850-951-2127

[www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org)  
[WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net)

## Genealogy Queries

• I am trying to find records for the death/burial of Mary Gomillion w/o of J. P. Gomillion buried in Red Bay Cemetery and for Jesse Pickney Gomillion also buried in Red Bay. The information on the headstones does not match the ages on the census records. Could you direct me to someone who may have access to these records? Thank you.

**Randi Mathieu**  
**randimathieu@gmail.com**  
**Dec. 28, 2016**

• Can you provide me any history on how Camp Creek Lake in Walton County located on Scenic Route 30A was given it's name? Thank you.

**Carolyn L. Webre**  
**cwebre73@gmail.com**  
**Jan. 18, 2017**

• My name is Marissa Powell and I am currently interning at the St. Augustine Barracks helping my adviser Alison Simpson in coming up with a WW1 exhibit. My contribution to this display will be the gathered information on Florida's county guards that were organized during this time in various counties. I have been given information that on January 30th, 1918 the 6th Co. Coast Artillery was formed in DeFuniak Springs with its captain being Harley Cawthon. The 6th Co. Coast Artillery was disbanded on September 23, 1918. I didn't find anything about this when looking to your website. Would you happen to have any more information on this county guard? If you could email any information or link you come across to this email it would be greatly appreciated.

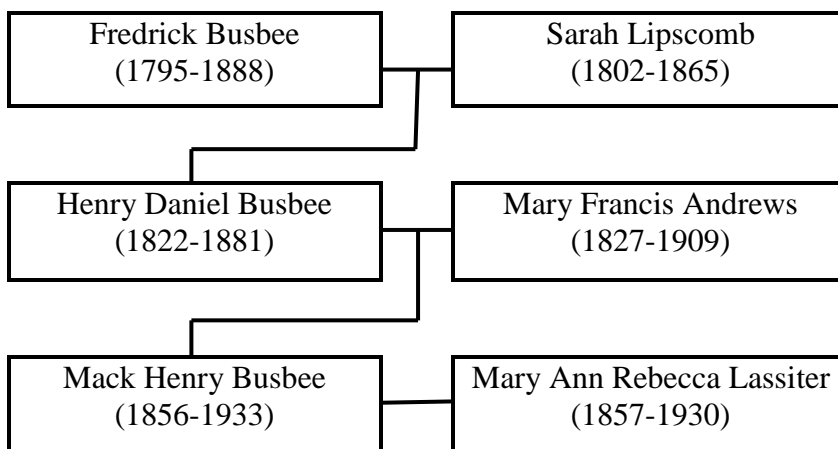
**Powell, Marissa Elizabeth**  
**MPowell817@flagler.edu**  
**Feb. 8, 2017**

## **Mack Henry Busbee**

### Homestead Application, with Genealogical and Historical Miscellanea

By Sam Carnley

Mack Henry Busbee was a direct descendant of Fredrick Busbee, who was born in Orangeburgh, South Carolina in 1792 and after migrating to Walton County, Florida, died there in 1888. The line of descent was as follows:



Mack Henry was born 6 April 1856 in Alabama, possibly in Coffee County. As of the 1860 U. S. census, he appeared in the household of his father Henry Busbee at age 7, but as the census enumeration date

was 28 June, he would have turned 4 the previous 6<sup>th</sup> of April. The place of census enumeration was the Post Office at Alamarant, which later became Laurel Hill. This probably accounts for the claim in some records that he was born in Laurel Hill. He remained in his father's household as of the 1870 census at age 14, which was closer to his actual age. The place of enumeration was shown only as Walton County. He married Mary Ann Rebecca Lassiter about 1877, when he was 21 years old. His whereabouts in 1880 has not been determined as efforts to locate him on that year's census have been unsuccessful. In 1888, he settled on a tract of land with the intention of homesteading it.

As part of his homestead application, he signed a Non-Mineral Affidavit on 4 March 1891 in which he gave his address as Lake View, later becoming Florala, Alabama. He signed the above document and all others in the application with his signature, indicating he was literate. In a second document, titled "Homestead Affidavit," he swore that he was a resident of Walton County, Florida, over 21 years of age, the head of a family, and was a native born citizen of the United States. He further stated that he commenced settlement on the property "About Dec. 1888," and had made improvements consisting of a "log dwelling house, Kitchen, Corn Crib, 1 Stable and 18 Acres improved," all valued at \$200.00. Owing to the "great distance" he was unable to appear at the District Land Office (in Gainesville) to make the affidavit, the result of which he made it before James A. McLean, Walton County Clerk of the Court.

In 1894, a little beyond the requisite five years between entering the property and making final proof of his claim, Mack Henry wrote the Land Office in Gainesville that he expected to appear before James McLean, Clerk of the Court in DeFuniak Springs to prove his residence and cultivation on 14 September 1894. He named four witnesses, but only two of which would be required to testify in proof of his claim. They were J. J. Lassiter, Ezra Lassiter, and W. J. D. Cawthon, all of Wood, Florida, and Henry Bovis, of DeFuniak Springs. Public notice of the final proof of claim was to be published in the DeFuniak Herald, designated by an official of the Land Office as the newspaper published nearest the land in the application. The notice appeared in the newspaper for 6 consecutive weeks beginning on 1 August and ending on 14 September. R. O. Allen, Editor of the Paper issued his affidavit dated 14 September certifying that the notice was published for 6 weeks prior to that date. Clerk of the Circuit Court James McLean certified receipt of the affidavit in his office on 17 September.

In his "Homestead Proof – Testimony of Claimant" form, Mack Henry stated his name, that he was 37 years old and his address was Wood, Fla. He further stated that he was a native born citizen of the United States, and was born in the State of Alabama. He built the house on the property in 1887 and moved in the next year. The house and other structures were the same as stated in a previous document. They and 25 acres of improved land were worth \$300.00. His family included himself, his wife and 9 children. They had resided on the property continuously except for about four months. During that time he rented the land out but was back and forth on the property every two or three days cultivating it. Over a period of six seasons he had cultivated and improved about 20 acres. He described the character of the land as "Ordinary piney woods land most valuable for farming."

The two witnesses he chose to prove his residence and cultivation of the land were W. J. D. Cawthon and Henry Bovis. Both were large land holders in the area of the homestead property. A long- time resident of the area, Cawthon was well acquainted with Mack Henry, as well as many of his relatives who also resided in the vicinity. Cawthon likewise was no stranger to the residents of DeFuniak Springs where he frequently visited when calling on family members and his many friends who lived there.

## Notice for Publication.

Land office at Gainsville Fla, July the 21 1894.

Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before James A. McLean Clk. Ct. Ct. at DeFuniak Springs Fla. on Sept. the 14 1894. viz: Mack Henry Busbee of Wood Fla. Hd. no' 21287.

for the w $\frac{1}{2}$  of so $\frac{1}{2}$  and e $\frac{1}{2}$  of sw $\frac{1}{4}$  sec, 32 tp. 5 n r 21 west.

He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of, said lands. viz:

J. J. Lassiter	of	Wood Fla.
E. Lassiter	"	"
W. J. D. Cawthon	"	"
Henry Bovis	of	DeFuniak Springs Fla.
		Alex. Lynch, Register.

In his "Homestead Proof – Testimony of Witness" form, Cawthon stated that he was 65 years old and his address was Wood, Fla. He agreed with Mack Henry in characterizing the property as Pine wood land and that he had moved onto it in 1888. He confirmed the family had resided on the property except for temporary absences, and had cultivated the land for six seasons. He estimated an average of 10 acres was cultivated per season with a total of 21 acres improved, which along with the buildings were worth about \$100.00, considerably less than Mack Henry's valuation of \$300.00.

In his "Homestead Proof – Testimony of Witness" form however, Henry Bovis agreed with Mack Henry's valuation. Giving his age as 51 years and address as DeFuniak Springs, Bovis also characterized the property as "Common piney woods land." With regard to their continuous residence on the property, he stated "So far as I know they have, I have been there & passed there frequently and

never noticed that they were ever absent." He further stated "Don't know number of acres he has a big field in cultivation. Has cultivated some of it for six seasons." As to the improvements and their value, he identified a dwelling house, kitchen, & corn crib & several acres improved, all worth \$300.00. Bovis a native of Canada, owned 1,400 acres of timber land in the area, which he purchased in 1886.

Mack Henry received his patent, No. 11433, for 160 acres on 14 February 1895. Its location is shown on the map on the following page. About 1923, Mack Henry operated a water powered grist mill in the south-east corner of the property bordering on Pine Log Creek. A branch fed by a spring further back on the property emptied into the Creek at that point. The branch was dammed to form the mill pond which supplied the water power to operate the mill. It is unknown when it was originally built, or how long it operated after 1923.

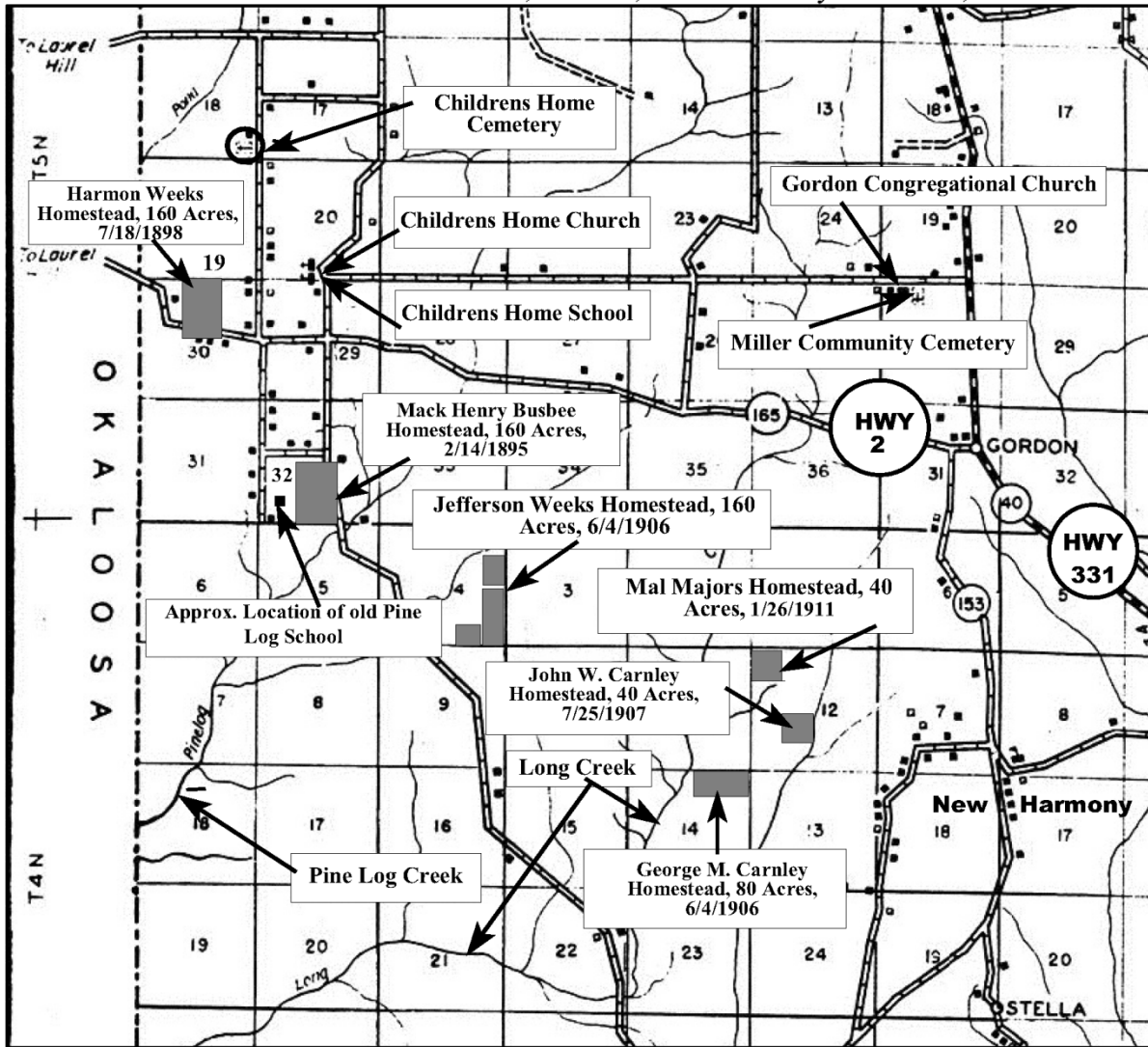
Wood, Florida, mentioned in the homestead application was the location of the post office through which the residents of the area received their mail. It was in operation between 1890 and 1896. Following its closure, the post office for the area was located in Laurel Hill. Wood was later renamed Clear Springs, which it remains today.

### Mack Henry Busbee Family Taken About 1902



Pictured above is the family of Mack Henry taken about 1902. He is seated on the left front row. It is uncertain whether the house behind them is the one built in 1887 as revealed in his homestead application because it was built of logs whereas the building shown is of clapboard siding. Possibly the siding was added over the logs, or it may be a different house built sometime later. Photo courtesy of the Busbee Family Reunion, Childrens Home Community Center, 11 June 2016.

Map  
 North Walton County, Florida  
 Communities of Childrens Home, Gordon, New Harmony and Stella, 1936<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Excerpt, North Walton County, 1936, Florida State Road Department (Tallahassee, FL : FDOT, 1936)  
 Downloaded from Maps ETC, on the web at <http://etc.usf.edu/maps> [map #f2477], annotated by Sam Carnley, 3  
 June 2013.

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 Sam Carnley, editor. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email  
 its editor at [wsamuelcarnley@gmail.com](mailto:wsamuelcarnley@gmail.com) or phone at 850-209-3778.



# Walton County Heritage Association

Membership in the Walton County Heritage Association includes  
Membership in the Museum and Genealogy Society

**2017**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM as we are updating our records**

## **Membership Benefits:**

### **The Museum Research Center:**

Members get free copies of documents and use of the Genealogy Society computer when Museum is open to the public.

### **The Museum Gift Shop:**

Members receive 10% discounts on books, special publications, postcards, photographs, CDs, DVD's Videos and Gift items.

*Membership is on a calendar year basis. Those paying in November or December will be members during those months as well as the next calendar year. SPECIAL THIS YEAR, ALL MEMBERSHIPS RECEIVED BY DEC 31 WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING FOR TWO TICKETS TO THE 2017 GRIT AND GRACE PERFORMANCE.*

**Walton County Heritage Association annual dues:** Single - \$25.00 Family - \$40

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift to the Walton County Heritage Association:

		Individual, Family	
_____ \$ _____	Dues	\$25.00    \$40.00	
_____ \$ _____	Other Cash Donations	Total Enclosed \$ _____	

- I would like to volunteer at the Walton County Heritage Museum
- I have genealogy information I would like to share with the Genealogy Society
- I would like to talk with someone about how to get started researching my family tree
- I have artifacts or photographs I wish to donate or loan to the Museum

**Please mail your check and this form to**  
**Walton County Heritage Association**  
**1140 Circle Drive**  
**De Funiak Springs, FL 32435**  
 Thank You!  
 All membership dues are tax deductible.

The Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization as defined by the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts may be tax deductible as defined by the Federal Income Tax Regulations. To request a receipt for your tax deductible membership in the WCHA please contact us.