



# WALTON

## RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 9, Issue 3

Walton County Heritage Association

February 2018

### President's Message 2018

By Marie Hinson

Dear Members:

We would like to thank all of you that have renewed your membership. Your memberships help us keep the museum open at no charge to the public. For those of you that have not renewed it is not too late. If you have any questions as to your status, please reply to this email and we will respond.

2017 President's report:

Please note our email address has changed: [heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com](mailto:heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com).

The WCHA continues to support our mission in preserving the History of Walton County. The WCHA contributed to the new "Main Street, DeFuniak Springs" project. We have rotating exhibits in the museum to promote continued visitation. The museum had guest speakers at our January, April and July Members' meetings. Continuing our tradition... our October's Members' Meeting and Membership drive was held Twin Lakes Campground. It was a beautiful day and everyone enjoyed the lunch, tour of grounds and the music.

We have opened the museum to private tours to the military, churches and out of town groups. We extended museum hours and had Caboose tours

(Cont'd page 2)

### Upcoming Reunions

**Douglass** - The most recent reunion was on Easter Sunday, March 27, 2016, at Euchee Valley Presbyterian Church. All family relatives of Curry, John, Colen, Mac Douglass and Mary Douglass McLendon were welcome. For information about future reunions, call 850-859-2520.

**Wright/McCall** - The last reunion was on Saturday, 19 March 2016, at the First Methodist Church Fellowship Hall in DeFuniak Springs. Contact Howard Rinker at 850-892-5334 for information about future reunions.

**For a complete listing see the Reunions page at the following link:**

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

**Descendants of Walton County Pioneer, Reverend CSV Jones announce the following event scheduled for April 14, 2018:**

Grave markers dedication ceremony - Installation of marble grave markers at tombs of Ransom David Jones - John Edmond Jones Jr. Order of events, 2:30 pm, April 14, 2018, Jones Family burying ground, north of Providence Methodist Church, Alabama Hwy 85, east of Chancellor, west bank, Choctawhatchee River, Astor Stewart plantation, Geneva County, Alabama.

Contact: [Jim Martin, jimfrankmartin@gmail.com](mailto:Jim.Martin.jimfrankmartin@gmail.com)

### Walton County Heritage Museum

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

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

## **President's Message 2018**

By Marie Hinson

(Cont'd from Page 1)

for special events held by the City of DeFuniak and other local organizations. Check us out on Facebook and our Webpage "Walton County Heritage Association". See our webpage for the new calendar of city events.

The WCHA participated in Snowbird Day and the Florida Chautauqua where we sponsored a Performance Tea. We were in the Mardi Gras, 4th of July and Christmas Parades. We Sponsored the Lucky Duck at Lakefest. We also participated in Trick or Treat around the Circle. In November the "5th Annual Scottish Evening" Benefit to the WCHA was held at 4C BBQ.

Volunteer Hours recorded: 1,291.

Visitor sign-in for 2016 was 3,124. In 2017 we increased that number to 3,557.

Our Genealogy Society is continuing their work copying records at Clary Glenn. The Genealogy Society will be meeting on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm, exceptions are January, April and July.

Please join us on January 18 for our January Membership Meeting, for a presentation by Wayne Sconiers, to hear about "The Life of World War II, Bombardier Lt. Ewart T Sconiers". The city will have a parade in his honor on January 26, 2018. For over 65 years, Ewart Sconiers' name was on the Walls of the Missing at the Henri-Chapell American Cemetery in Belgium. On January 26, he is returning to Walton County for a reburial next to his Mother at Southwide Baptist Church cemetery in DeFuniak Springs.

Please join us for our Quarterly Membership Meeting at 6:00pm on the Third Thursday in April and July. We will also be having a very special Member's Meeting on Saturday, October 27, 2018.

The Board of Directors is looking forward to 2018. Please come and visit and invite your friends.

Again, thank you for your continued support, we could not do it without you.

Marie Hinson and your 2018 Board of Directors.

Walton County Heritage Association  
1140 Circle Drive  
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435  
850-951-2127  
[heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com](mailto:heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com)

## GHENTSVILLE

By Sam Carnley  
with  
Bruce Cosson and Linda Clark

Ghentsville, an early Walton County, Florida community once situated immediately south of present-day Florala, Alabama's Lake Jackson bore the name of John Ghent, who settled in the area near the end of Florida's territorial period. Throughout its brief history, Ghentsville and the lake's name were closely associated and for that reason, a short overview of the lake's history seems appropriate. Over its recorded history, the lake's name has changed several times. It is first mentioned, but not named, in reference to General Andrew Jackson whose army camped by it in May 1818 en route to Pensacola to quell Indian disturbances emanating from Spanish Florida.<sup>1</sup> On a Florida Territorial survey map dated 1826 it is labeled as Jackson's Pond.<sup>2</sup> It next acquired the name of a settler, McDavid, who arrived there before Ghent. Writing about the area in 1827, John Lee Williams identified it as McDavid's Pond around which a small settlement had formed.<sup>3</sup> Although apparently unnamed at the time, it was possibly the same settlement eventually becoming Ghentsville. Sometime later, McDavid allegedly changed his name to McDade, which then also became the pond's name and it was known as that for many decades afterwards as evidenced by census records enumerated for the area, as well as certain other records.<sup>4</sup> No consensus has been found in the records on when and why the name was changed to Lake Jackson.

It is not clear when John Ghent first settled below the lake. What seems to be the earliest known records to mention him come from the Bureau of Land Management. They show two cash sale land entries for him in Santa Rosa County, Florida dated 10 July 1844; one of which was for 39.94 acres and the other for 39.86 acres. The patents for the properties identify him as John Ghent of Escambia County, Florida Territory. A plausible explanation of this seeming inconsistency is that Santa Rosa was created from Escambia County in 1842 and Ghent likely applied to purchase the land while it was still in Escambia, but received the patent after the part of the county encompassing it became Santa Rosa.<sup>5</sup> The earliest extant record to mention him in Walton County

---

<sup>1</sup> Carswell, Elba Wilson, *On to Pensacola, Retracing the Trail Andrew Jackson Once Blazed Across Florida*, (Privately Published, 1969), 27

<sup>2</sup> Exum, James W., *Jackson's Pond, State of Florida Survey, Township 6 North, Range 21 West, Walton County, 1826*, (LABINS Survey Data for Florida, [http://www.labins.org/survey\\_data/landrecords/landrecords.cfm#general](http://www.labins.org/survey_data/landrecords/landrecords.cfm#general)), downloaded and edited by Sam Carnley 2/10/2018

<sup>3</sup> Williams, John Lee, *A View of West Florida*, (L. R. Bailey, Printer, Philadelphia, 1827), 83

<sup>4</sup> McDades Pond, "United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6SZ9-MPP?cc=1325221&wc=9BQY-Y4Q%3A1030551201%2C1032127301%2C1032146001> : 5 August 2014), Florida > Walton > ED 121 Precincts 5-7, McDades Pond, Yellow River, Shoal River & Precinct 15, Crestview & Precinct 18 > image 40 of 49; citing NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

<sup>5</sup> John Ghent of Escambia County, Florida Territory, Pat. Certif. # 8228, 39.86 acres, Santa Rosa County, Florida 7/10/1844, BLM-GLO [https://gloreords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=FL0180\\_\\_064&docClass=STA&sid=edbvp1no.iku#patentDetailsTabIndex](https://gloreords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=FL0180__064&docClass=STA&sid=edbvp1no.iku#patentDetailsTabIndex), downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/10/2018.

seems to be the roll of voters in the County's first state-wide election on Monday, 26 May 1845.<sup>6</sup> That record gives his place of residence as Almirante, several miles south-west of the lake near Laurel Hill which was in that part of Walton lost to Okaloosa County on its creation in 1915. A later Almirante post office census enumeration however, also included residents of the area south of the lake, which explains what at first appeared to be conflicting statements. With few exceptions, any other county records in which Ghent might have appeared, including deeds and marriages, went up in smoke in 1885 when the courthouse at Eucheeanna burned down. Another settler south of the lake during the period was William Cawthon who seems to have arrived in the mid-1830s and erected a grist mill on a creek a mile or two east of what would later become Ghentsville. According to the History of Florida:

The Ghent brothers arrived early in Florida's [Florida did not exist then by that name] history, (and) it was they who made most of the spinning wheels and looms for the populace. They were master craftsmen at fine woodworking, silversmithing, and goldsmithing. There were four of these brothers, and one of them, John, married Mary Cawthon, daughter of the old mill operator. Mr. Cawthon opposed the wedding, however, and some say that Ghent never forgave him. . .<sup>7</sup>

John's household accounted for the only Ghents listed in the 1850 U. S. census of Walton County and there is no evidence that any of his brothers settled there. On the census he gave farming as his occupation, with no indication he worked as a craftsman. He was 39 years old with an estimated birth year of 1811 and was born in South Carolina.<sup>8</sup> When John died a few years later it was said that "he was buried at Milton where one of his brothers lived."<sup>9</sup> As evidenced by the 1850 census of Milton, there was indeed a Fielding Ghent living there and he had been there since the 1840 census of Escambia County, which gave his location as east of the Escambia River in that part of the county surrendered to Santa Rosa on its creation in 1842. He was forty-four years old, with an estimated birth year of 1806, was from South Carolina and was a mechanic by occupation.<sup>10</sup> The closeness of their ages, same surname and birth place, and their living in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties during the same time period strongly indicate the possibility that he and John were brothers. And Fielding's occupation as a mechanic pointed to his aptitude as a possible craftsman. In 1860, Fielding was still

---

<sup>6</sup> Ghent, John, Almirante, House of Daniel A. Wilkinson, Walton Co. Voters in the 1st Florida Election, 1845, <http://files.usgwarchives.net/fl/walton/history/1845votr.txt>, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/10/2018

<sup>7</sup> Hinson, Mike, History of Florida, <http://www.oocities.org/floralabama/>, downloaded by Sam Carnley 7/29/2017. Hereafter, Hinson, *History of Florida*.

<sup>8</sup> John Ghent Household, 1850 U. S. census, Walton County, Florida, (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MFH6-24K> : 12 April 2016), John Ghent, Walton county, Walton, Florida, United States; citing family 222, NARA microfilm publication M432 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/10/2018.

<sup>9</sup> Hinson, *History of Florida*.

<sup>10</sup> Fielding Ghent, 1850 U. S. Census, (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MFH6-FY2> : 12 April 2016), Fielding Ghent, Santa Rosa county, Santa Rosa, Florida, United States; citing family 308, NARA microfilm publication M432 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

in Milton, but his first name appeared as Ferling on the census.<sup>11</sup> Accompanying him on the census was another Ghent, whose first name was Nemrod. He was fifty-one years old with an estimated birth year of 1809, was from South Carolina and like Fielding, was a mechanic by occupation.<sup>12</sup> The particulars of his surname, age, birth year, place of birth and occupation meshed closely with those of Fielding and except for occupation, also with John. From the similarities he shared with the other two it is but a short leap to the conclusion that he was the third of the alleged four Ghent brothers. A genealogy of the Ghent family confirms these three were brothers and seems to indicate they were the only sons of this particular family who were full biological siblings. There was a fourth brother, but of a different mother:

Daniel GENT. Born 22 Feb 1777 in Culpeper Co., VA and died in Benton Co., AL in the 1840s. Circa 1805, Daniel first married UNKNOWN who died before 1820 and with whom he had several children (see further) including two daughters he buried with his first wife in Abbeville Co., SC. Among the surviving children of Daniel GENT and his first wife were **Fielding** (1806-1882), **Nimrod** (1808-) and **John** (1811-). These sons moved to Escambia Co., AL and later just over the border to an area in Escambia Co., FL that became Santa Rosa Co., FL. John later moved to Walton Co., FL. All three of these sons were known as mechanics (in those days this term meant skilled cabinetmakers and carpenters).

Sometime before 1831, Daniel second married Nancy (Wilson) ANDERSON. Among the children of Daniel and Nancy were Henry Clay GHENT, born 6 Dec 1831 in Laurens District, SC and Augusta GHENT born ca. 1834. Henry became a M.D. and moved to Texas and died in Belton, Bell Co., TX. Augusta married Elijah Teague THOMPSON in Benton Co., AL.<sup>13</sup>

The exact date of the Walton County brother's marriage to Mary Cawthon remains unknown due to the loss of the county's marriage records in the Eucheeanna fire. But an approximate date can be determined from the 1850 census. On that record, of which the place of enumeration was "The 3rd Division," their eldest child, John (Jr.), was six years old. Assuming his birth occurred within twelve months after they wed the year of their marriage would be about 1842-43. John's birth year of 1811 as stated above was calculated from his age of 39 on the census. Mary's age on the census was 31, placing her estimated birth year at about 1819, and she was

---

<sup>11</sup> Ferling Ghent Household, "United States Census, 1860", database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6CS-PJR> : 13 December 2017), Charles Gazelor in entry for Ferling Ghent, 1860.

<sup>12</sup> Nemrod Ghent Household, "United States Census, 1860", database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6CS-PV4> : 13 December 2017), Nemrod Ghent, 1860.

<sup>13</sup> Re: Daniel Ghent, By Cliff Gant December 07, 2002 at 04:07:23, <http://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/ghent/127/> , downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/10/2018.

born in Georgia. If their marriage occurred seven years before 1850, their respective ages at the time would have been 32 and 24. Ghent's estimated birth year suggests that he was about sixteen years old when John Lee Williams first wrote about McDavid's pond in 1827. At that young age it is highly unlikely that he would have established a residence there as the head of a household as early as McDavid or even William Cawthon.

What seems more likely is that the 1842-43 timeframe, give or take a year, in which he married was about when he first settled there. This is supported by the patents placing him in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties before 1844. It was also within that timeframe that he had to meet certain requirements in order to qualify as a voter in the 1845 state-wide election, which were as follows:

. . . Every free white male person of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, and who shall be at the time of offering to vote, a citizen of the United States; and who shall have resided, and had his habitation, domicile, home, and place of permanent abode in Florida, for two years next preceding the election at which he shall offer to vote; and who shall have at such time and for *six months immediately preceding said time*, shall have had his habitation, domicile, home and place of permanent abode *in the county in which he may offer to vote*, and who shall be enrolled in the militia thereof, (unless by law exempted from serving in the militia) shall be deemed a qualified elector, at all elections under this Constitution . . .<sup>14</sup>

In order to meet the six month county residency requirement above, he had to have established a home in Walton County on or before 29 December 1844, about five months after land records previously placed him in Santa Rosa County. In the senatorial elections which followed in October 1846 he was one of two candidates for state senator from his district. The other candidate was Daniel G. McLean who won with 145 votes to Ghent's 140.<sup>15</sup> But not being one to give up easily Ghent prevailed upon Senator George Fairbanks of St. Augustine to present a memorial to the senate on 4 December 1846 contesting McLean's seat. The matter was referred to the Committee on Elections which issued a resolution on 4 January 1847 confirming McLean's victory and bringing Ghent's quest for the seat temporarily to an end.<sup>16</sup>

Like his father-in-law William Cawthon, Ghent was a cattleman. In 1846 he secured a contract with the U. S. Navy to furnish fresh beef to its post in Pensacola. He seems to have recognized in that arrangement an

---

<sup>14</sup> Laws Governing the 1845 Election, [https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/election1845/1845\\_election\\_law.php](https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/election1845/1845_election_law.php), downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/10/2018.

<sup>15</sup> *Number of Votes for Office of Senator for 3rd District*, (Southern Journal, Tallahassee, Florida, Tuesday Nov. 24, 1846), 3, Genealogybank.com, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/10/2018.

<sup>16</sup> Fairbanks Memorial of John Ghent, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate, Second General Assembly, State of Florida at Its First Session, Nov. 23, 1846*, (Printed at the Southern Journal, Tallahassee, Florida, 1846), 48. Also, see Ghent Contest of McLean Seat not Sustained, Wed., Dec. 30, 1846, p. 165.



opportunity for even greater cattle sales in Pensacola by offering them to the public as well. He probably transported them along with shipments to the Navy at no significant increase in cost. After delivering to the Navy the number it ordered, he placed the rest on the open market. The Pensacola Gazette ran his ads offering fresh beef for sale to the public from June 3rd 1846 to about mid-June 1848.<sup>17</sup> He was not too preoccupied with the cattle business though to continue his efforts to get into the senate. That became evident in the October 1848 election cycle when he ran for the seat again and won.<sup>18</sup>

Traveling to Tallahassee to attend the fourth session of the General Assembly of the State of Florida convening on 27 November 1848, he was sworn in the same day. His first item of business was to announce his intention to introduce an act to "remove the County Site of Walton County."<sup>19</sup> With Eucheeanna then the county seat as it had been since the coming of statehood in 1845, this raises the question of where Ghent proposed to "remove" it as he failed to reveal that. His namesake, Ghentsville does not seem to have appeared in the records until the post office was established there in 1850, but possibly it already existed when Ghent was elected to the senate, and was the destination to which he proposed to relocate the site. Regardless, his fellow senators rendered the question moot when they voted it down.<sup>20</sup> As demonstrated in the past however, he was a man who refused to accept defeat on the first try. At the session of Friday, December 29, he ". . . presented the memorial of certain citizens of Walton County, Praying a change of the county site of said county," which was referred to a select committee consisting of himself and "Messrs. Floyd and Crawford."<sup>21</sup> Although he put considerable effort into it, he failed in his goal of relocating the county site before the end of the 1848-49 term.

Other bills he introduced or supported during the term included declaring East River and Yellow River as navigable streams, a House bill requiring the recording of marks and brands of cattle shipped from the State of Florida, an act authorizing the construction of a magnetic telegraph, and another for the establishment of common schools in the State. He voted in favor of a bill to provide seals for the circuit courts of the State as well as one entitled "An act supplemental to an act entitled an act to grant pre-emption rights to settlers on state lands . . ."<sup>22</sup>

If asked, he probably would have declared upholding the lofty ideal of promoting the best interests of the people of Walton County as justification for the measures he supported. But in reality, the passage of almost all of them would benefit him personally either directly or indirectly one way or another.

---

<sup>17</sup> John Ghent, Ad for Fresh Beef, Pensacola Gazette, Pensacola, Florida, June 3, 1847.

<sup>18</sup> Ghent, John, 1848-1850, Florida Senators 1845-2001, <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/fehdl/florida/Senate18452001.html>, downloaded by Sam Carnley 2/10/2018.

<sup>19</sup> John Ghent, Leave to Introduce a bill entitled "An act to remove the County Site of Walton County," *Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate, General Assembly, State of Florida at Its Fourth Session, Monday, Nov. 27, 1848*, (Office of the Floridian, Printed by Sibley & Dyke, Tallahassee, Florida, 1848), 18.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 46, 72, 76, 109, 136, 137, 141, 215.

Ghent's term of office was for the two year period of 1848-50 and he was scheduled to return to Tallahassee for the fifth session of the senate convening on 25 November 1850. On 16 October, prior to his return to Tallahassee, he was appointed post master of Ghentsville.<sup>23</sup> On returning to the senate he lost little time in again taking up his mission of getting the county site moved. He gave notice on Saturday, Nov. 30th of his intention to introduce a bill to ". . . appoint five commissioners to locate and make permanent the County site of Walton County, and for other purposes."<sup>24</sup> On 14 December the senate passed his bill on relocating the county site with appointment of the commissioners and sent it to the House of Representatives. Two days later, Ghent requested and was granted a leave of absence until 30th of the month. In his absence the House passed several senate bills including his on the 19th of December which in its final form appeared as shown below (Figure 1)<sup>25</sup>

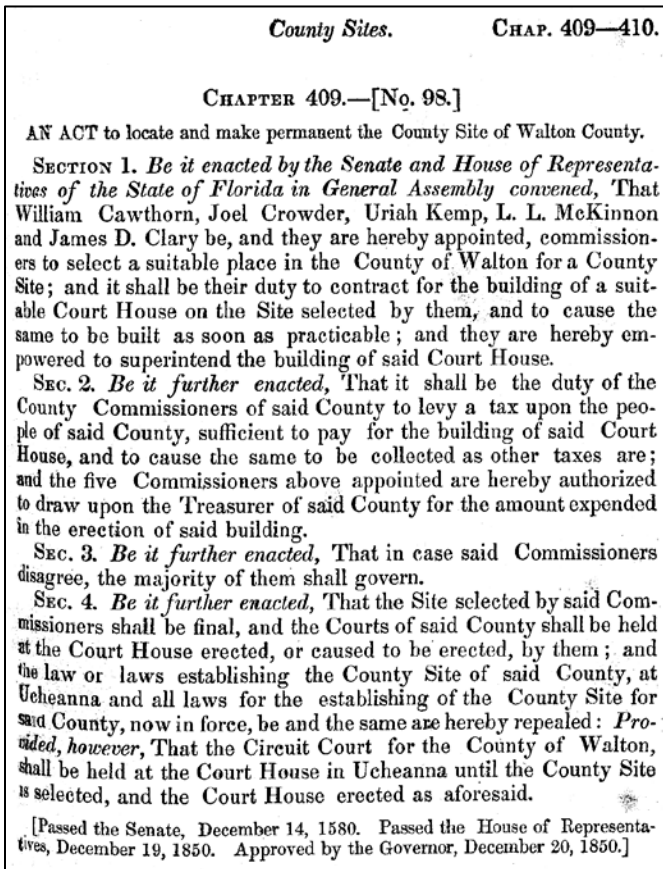


Figure 1

The bill was sent to the Governor who signed it on 20 December. Getting the law passed however and implementing it proved to be two different things.

Apparently, when word of it got out to county residents they were unhappy with the idea that the county seat could be changed without their consent. That sentiment was sufficiently strong to support a subsequent bill in the 1852-53 legislative session providing that an election be held on the first Monday of October 1853 to decide where the county seat would be and repealing all previous conflicting laws (Figure 2).<sup>26</sup> No record of the sites to be voted on has come to light, so it remains unknown whether or not Ghentsville was among them. If so the voters rejected it because the seat remained in Eucheeanna until after 1885 when it was moved to DeFuniak Springs. Ultimately Ghent's dream of moving the county site went unrealized in spite of his most ardent

<sup>23</sup> Ghentville Post Office established 16 October 1850, Florida Stampless Postal History 1763 - 1861, (David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 666 N. E. 128th Street, P.O. Box 611388, North Miami, Florida 33261-1388), p. 141.

<sup>24</sup> John Ghent, Leave to introduce a bill entitled an Act to appoint Five Commissioners, etc., *Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate, General Assembly, State of Florida, Fifth Session, Nov. 25, 1850*, (Floridian & Journal Office, Printed by Hilton & Dyke, Tallahassee, Florida, 1850), 34. [http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1850s/1850/cover\\_50.pdf](http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1850s/1850/cover_50.pdf), downloaded by Sam Carnley, 10-21-2017.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>26</sup> An Act to provide for the election of a County Site in the County of Walton, 23 January 1852, *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, Passed at its Sixth Session, November 22, 1852-January 14, 1853*, (Printed by Charles E. Dyke, Floridian & Journal Office, Tallahassee, Florida 1853), Chap. 551, pp 129-130.



efforts to change it.

After his political career ended he turned his focus back to the cattle business and running the post office but judging from subsequent events, another measure he supported in the senate, the bill to grant pre-exemption rights to settlers on State lands became another of his frustrations. This was apparent from the listing of his name on the 1855 Walton County tax roll. The names of those on the roll who owned land were followed by the abbreviation "ac." for acres, followed by the number owned.<sup>27</sup> The notation, "1sl" followed Ghent's name, meaning he owned one slave, but no acreage was shown for him, which suggests that he was unable to gain possession of the State property he occupied.

Who owned the property on which the post office stood probably mattered little to postal authorities. A reasonably well functioning mail delivery system was their priority and early on at least they apparently found the Ghentsville post office satisfactory in that regard. Its postal route connected with Bainbridge, Ga.; Chattahoochee, Marianna, Scurlock's Spring, Webville and Campbellton, Florida; Geneva, Alabama; Almirante, Milton, Floridatown and Pensacola, Florida. Mail route contractors were Wm. T. Stockton, Wm. E. Anderson, Bennett & Kerr, McMillian & Campbell, George W. McCoy, and Tillinghast & Bassett. The mail was transported by an occasional buggy or mail wagon, but primarily by 2-horse stage coach.<sup>28</sup>

CHAPTER 551.—[No. 72.]

AN ACT to provide for the election of a County Site in the County of Walton.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Florida in General Assembly convened,* That an election be held on the first Monday of October, A. D. 1853, for the purpose of locating permanently the County Site of Walton County, and it is hereby made the duty of the Judge of Probate of said County to advertise said election, in the manner provided for in the election of County Officers.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted,* That it shall be the duty of such Inspectors of said election, within five days after the same shall be held, to make out and transmit to the Judge of Probate of said County a statement of the number of votes cast at their respective precincts for each place voted for as such County Site; and it shall be the duty of the Judge of Probate, within ten days after such election, to make out a statement of the whole number of votes given for each place voted for as such County Site, and the place having the majority of the whole number of votes given at said election, shall be the County Site of said County.

SEC. 3. *Be it further enacted,* That in case of a tie between any two or more places having the highest number of votes, it shall be the duty of the Judge of Probate to order a new election, to take place immediately thereafter, by giving ten days notice of the same; and the places having the two highest number of votes at the first election, shall be the places voted for at the second election for the County Site of said County.

SEC. 4. *Be it further enacted,* That when the County Site of said County shall have been established by vote, according to the provisions of this act, it shall be the duty of the Board of County Commissioners for said County to appropriate the County funds in erecting a suitable building for the purpose of holding Courts therein, as a Court House, and superintend the building of the same, and until said Court House is built, the Courts shall be held at Eucheeanna in said County.

SEC. 5. *Be it further enacted,* That so soon as a suitable Court House is built at the place located in said County for the Site, the Courts of said County shall be held there.

SEC. 6. *Be it further enacted,* That all laws and parts of laws conflicting with the true intent and meaning of this act, be and they are hereby repealed.

[Passed the Senate, December 10, 1852. Passed the House of Representatives December 11, 1852. Approved by the Governor, December 23, 1852.]

**Figure 2.** The above act giving Walton County voters the right to choose their county site by election and repealing John Ghent's undemocratic version was passed in 1852 after Ghent left the senate.

<sup>27</sup> 1855 Tax List of Walton County, Florida, Neal Monroe, Tax Assessor, May 28, 1855, Compiled by Helen Bartlett, Online [http://www.fl-genweb.org/waok/walton/walton\\_006.htm](http://www.fl-genweb.org/waok/walton/walton_006.htm), Ghent data downloaded by Sam Carnley, 5/23/2017.

<sup>28</sup> Ghentville Post Office established 16 October 1850, Florida Stampless Postal History 1763 - 1861, (David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 666 N. E. 128th Street, P.O. Box 611388, North Miami, Florida 33261-1388), p. 141.

In addition to the stage coach station or depot, the Ghentsville site likely included other buildings. No record of the nature and number of structures on the property has been found. But presumably, they included Ghent's residence, stage coach station/post office, and overnight lodging for transient stage coach passengers as alluded to in a 1969 Pensacola News-Journal article about Ghent.<sup>29</sup> The only other known reference to buildings on the property comes from an unverified account of what happened to them after Ghent's death and his family prepared to depart the area. According to the account, all the buildings on the place including the outbuildings were left in flames.<sup>30</sup>

Such, apparently, became the fate of the post office formerly run by a man who allegedly viewed himself as akin to a hyena, possibly his way of implying he possessed all the wiles and savagery of that animal needed to whip any man foolish enough to challenge him, of which he is said to have boasted. One source wrote of him ". . . [he] has generally been a terror to most of his neighbors. . ." <sup>31</sup> A man of such arrogance rubbed people wrong and left them wanting to believe the worst things they heard about him. Some were folklore and some were fact, and sometimes the two could not be told apart. He was accused of being everything from a gambler, horse thief and murderer to a mail robber.<sup>32</sup> The first three were what people suspected of him, apparently with good reason. Whether they were fiction or fact was never established because no evidence of any of them being presented against him has been found in the records. But the last one proved true and led to his downfall. According to the History of Florida:

. . . No one seems to know why, but for some reason Ghent began tampering with the mail that came through his hands. He would ascertain if there were valuables in letters and packages and if there were, he would transfer them to his own possessions.

Ammon Miller a young stagecoach driver whose route ran by Paxton [Ghentsville, Paxton did not then exist by that name] noticed that occasionally Ghent would weigh and otherwise calculate the mail matter. Dale Jordan and Dick Geohagen had also noticed this strange activity. As a result, Ghent was soon under suspicion especially in view of the fact that complaints were beginning to be registered with the postal authorities. An inspector by the name of Blackmon sent a marked package on the Pensacola routine (route) and Ghent fell for it. Blackmon soon had him in Tallahassee, Florida, where he was tried (and convicted) in Federal Court. He was transferred to Pensacola for safekeeping. At two o'clock one morning he removed the bars from his window and jumped leg irons and all, from the second floor.

---

<sup>29</sup> "Florida's John Ghent: Legend of Treachery," The Pensacola News-Journal (Pensacola, Florida) Sunday, July 13, 1969, Page 4, Newspapers.com, Clipped and downloaded by Linda Clark (llclark979), Thu, Mar 16, 2017. Hereafter, Ghent, Treachery.

<sup>30</sup> Hinson, *History of Florida*.

<sup>31</sup> Ghent, *Treachery*.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

The jump mortally injured him, and he died the next day. Before he died he had a last request. He asked that he be buried standing up and with his gun in his hand. This request was ignored however; he was buried at Milton, where one of his brothers lived. But old Chap, [the one slave Ghent owned] faithful even in death, went to Milton on an ox-wagon and brought his master's body home in a wooden box. After a six-day journey, Ghent's last request was fulfilled. He was put to rest in the south side of the lake, near his home, standing up, and with his gun in his hand. Later, his wife Mary, her sister, and brother-in-law left for parts unknown. But before leaving, it is said that they set fire to all the buildings on the place including the outbuildings . . .<sup>33</sup>

RESOLUTIONS.

[No. 22.]

PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTION in relation to Isaac Welch and others.

**WHEREAS**, In a certain case of criminal prosecution by the United States against John Ghent, now deceased, on a charge of robbing the United States mail, Isaac Welch and other citizens of West Florida were summoned by the United States Marshal to appear at a certain day at Tallahassee, as witnesses in said case in behalf of the United States: **AND WHEREAS**, The said witnesses, on reaching Tallahassee in obedience to said summons, were again summoned to appear in Jacksonville to give testimony in said case, and were afterwards required by recognizance to appear at the city of Pensacola: **AND WHEREAS**, Many of said witnesses were obliged to expend large sums of money above the allowance made by the United States for milage, and some of them, in order to reach Jacksonville, [at] which place they had been summoned to appear, could only avail themselves of the route which passes through the city of Savannah, Georgia, the mail line or coach in Florida being occupied by the Marshal, the prisoner and his guard: **AND WHEREAS**, The witnesses were summoned from their homes at a season when their crops required their presence and attention, and when their absence would result, as it actually did in this case, [in] serious damage and injury to their said crops: **AND WHEREAS**, The allowance of milage made to them by the United States was wholly inadequate to reimburse them for the amount they were obliged to expend in reaching the points at which they were summoned to appear—Therefore,

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Florida in General Assembly convened*, That our Senators in Congress be instructed and our Representative requested to use their best endeavors to procure the passage of a law by Congress to reimburse to the said witnesses the amounts expended by them in reaching the points at which they were summoned to appear.

[Passed the Senate December 24, 1858. Passed the House of Representatives December 29, 1858. Approved by the Governor January 7, 1859.]

Figure 3

No sources are cited for the above account and other more credible sources disprove many of its details although in general it conveys a sense of the chain of events leading up to Ghent's arrest and subsequent death. A Resolution passed by the State of Florida General Assembly in 1858 - 59 sheds light on some aspects of the case (Figure 3).<sup>34</sup>

It identifies Isaac Welch, Ghent's brother-in-law as one witness and although it indicates there were "others" none were named. They may have included Miller, Jordan and Geohagen mentioned in the above article but no records have been found confirming that. According to the Resolution the witnesses were summoned to Tallahassee, Jacksonville and finally to Pensacola, where Ghent was to be tried in the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida. The first hearings in the case took place on Monday, July 12, 1858 before presiding Judge McQueen McIntosh in which the Grand Jury presented a bill of indictments including numerous counts of stealing from U. S. mail coming into Ghent's possession as post master of

Ghentville. On hearing the indictments the Judge ordered the issuance of a warrant for Ghent's arrest, even

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Preamble and Resolution in relation to Isaac Welch and others, *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, Passed at its Ninth Session, Monday, Nov. 22, 1858*, (Printed by Jones & Dyke, Office of the Floridian and Journal, 1859), Resolution No. 22, 157.

*Thursday, July 15th, 1858*

*United States of America*

*vs.*

*Indictment No. 3*

*John Ghent*

*First Count. Stealing Bill of exchange of the value of five dollars drawn in the name of J. C. Maclay agent for the Bank of the State of Georgia on the Cashier of the Mechanics Bank New York for six hundred and six dollars and twenty eight cents payable to the order of E. E. Simpson Co. Numbered Two hundred and thirty Two dated 15 Sept. 1857 out of a letter that had come to the possession of John Ghent as Post Master.*

*Second Count. Taking Bill of exchange of the value of Ten dollars drawn by J. C. Maclay agent of the Bank of the State of Georgia on the Cashier of the Mechanics Bank New York for six hundred and six dollars and twenty eight cents payable to the order of E. E. Simpson Co. and Numbered Two Hundred and thirty two dated Apalachicola fifteenth September 1857 out of a mail of letters.*

*Now on this day comes the United States Attorney and suggested the death of John Ghent and it is therefore considered by the Court that the said case of the United States vs. John Ghent do abate and be dismissed.*

**Figure 4.** Transcript prepared by Sam Carnley 2/9/2018 from digital images of pages 175-176 in court documents of the case.

though he apparently was already in custody and probably had been since the Ghentsville post office was shut down on the previous 19th day of June.

On Thursday, July 15 while the Court was still in the process of presenting indictments word came of Ghent's death subsequent to which the case was dismissed without his ever actually being tried.<sup>35</sup> An example of court documents in the case appears in a transcript of an image of the page listing Indictment No. 3 and disclosing Ghent's death and dismissal of the case (Figure 4).

The court documents refute the statement in the History of Florala article that Ghent was tried and convicted in Tallahassee and by disclosing that some of the thefts occurred in September 1857 confirmed he was committing them almost a full year before he was indicted, although there was reason to believe he was pilfering the mail long before that.<sup>36</sup> Other statements in the article are at odds with the transcribed newspaper account of Ghent's death (Figure 5).

On the 1st day of September following Ghent's death, a patent for a cash sale entry on 282.37 acres in Geneva County, Alabama, was issued in the name of John Ghent of

Walton County, Florida.<sup>37</sup> The timing of this acquisition leads one to wonder if Ghent was feeling the heat of the authorities closing in on him and was about to bolt from Ghentsville to escape arrest. If that was his plan he may have failed to recognize how quickly his situation was about to deteriorate beyond his control and waited too late to act, falling victim to that old cliché about mice and men and leading to his demise.

<sup>35</sup> U. S. v. John Ghent, Vol. A, July 12th, 1858-July 15th, 1858; General Minutes, 1848-1906; Records of the U. S. Circuit Court for the Northern District of Florida, Pensacola Term. Record Group 21; National Archives at Atlanta, Morrow, GA."

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 175-176.

<sup>37</sup> John Ghent of Walton County, Florida, Pat. Certif. No. 20225, Geneva County, Alabama, 9/1/1858, 282.37 acres, 001N -019E, Section 35, [https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default\\_pf.aspx?accession=AL2420\\_.482&docClass=STA](https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default_pf.aspx?accession=AL2420_.482&docClass=STA), downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/11/2018.

He seems not to have left Mary destitute though. Two years after his death she appeared on the 1860 census as the head of her household.<sup>38</sup> The value of her personal property was 2,200 dollars but no value is shown in the "Value of Real Estate" column, once again confirming that John Ghent owned no land in the county. With regard to where he was buried, a 2002 article in the Andalusia Star tells of a member of the Steele family from Covington County who died between 1837 and 1840 and was buried in "the old John Ghent Cemetery south of Florala, which is no longer recognizable."<sup>39</sup> There is an obvious chronological problem with this claim because the time period stated preceded Ghent's death, but is probably accurate regarding the general location of his burial. Whether or not he was in fact stood rather than laid to rest as reported in the History of Florala remains unknown.

On 15 April, 1862, Mary accomplished something her late husband had not, and that was to secure ownership of the land she lived on. On that date for the sum of \$1.50 she received a deed for forty acres, more or less, from the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of the State of Florida. The property was described as the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of section 34, township 6 north and range 21 west.<sup>40</sup> Apparently the State had acquired the entire north half of section 34 from the federal government when it was put up for sale to the public, because the Bureau of Land management records contain no original land entries by private citizens for that part of section 34 and the same is true for section 27, directly north of section 34. About half of section 27 extends into Alabama, and a major portion of its land in Florida is taken up by that part of Lake Jackson south of the Alabama line. Ghent acquired title to land in other counties in Florida and Alabama before and after settling in Walton County. His acquisition of those properties suggests he valued

#### Mail Robber Terminating his Life.

Pensacola, Florida, July 15, 1858. -- John Ghent, the Postmaster, who was brought here for trial upon a charge of robbing the U. S. Mail, has terminated his existence in the following manner: The U. S. Marshal having no confidence in the security of our jail, removed him to a room in the third story of the St. Mary's Hotel, had him heavily ironed, and a guard kept night and day over him. About two o'clock this morning, while the attention of the guard was for a moment diverted, he jumped out of the window which is about 32 feet from the ground, and although he alighted on his feet, the injuries received caused his death in about three hours. He made no confession, but there was an abundance of proof to convict him on several indictments which were found against him. He was once elected to the State Senate from Walton County, but has generally been a terror to most of his neighbors. He called himself the "hyena" of West Florida, and boasted that he could whip any man in the State. The most astonishing fact is that he should have been continued as Postmaster, when it was a notorious circumstance, that he on more than one occasion has been seen by different persons, on opening the mail, when he came to what he supposed a money letter, to break it open, take its contents, and thrust it in his pocket, and exclaim, "that's mine," with an oath, and has carried on this business for years. Last winter a secret mail agent, was here and went through the country, to endeavor to detect him but without success. However, he has abruptly terminated a misspent life, and before this has appeared before that Allwise Judge, from whose decision there is no appeal.

**Figure 5.** The above transcript prepared by Sam Carnley is of an article appearing in the Alexandria Gazette, Alexandria Va, on Monday, July 26, 1858. But judging from the first-person narrative it is a reprint originating from an unidentified Pensacola, Florida newspaper. (Source: Genealogy-bank.com downloaded by Sam Carnley 10/15/2017.)

<sup>38</sup> Mary Ghent Household, "United States Census, 1860", database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6C3-4MX> : 30 December 2015), Mary Sent (Ghent), 1860.

<sup>39</sup> "Steele Family Came to Alabama in 1817," Staff Report, the Andalusia Star, Andalusia, Alabama, Tuesday July 9, 2002, <http://www.andalusiastarnews.com/2002/07/09/steele-family-came-to-alabama-in-1817/>, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/11/2018.

<sup>40</sup> Warranty Deed, Internal Improvement Fund Trustee to Mary Ghent, Book 237, p. 240, 1862, SW1/4 of NW1/4, Sec 34-6N-21W, Court House OR books, Defuniak Springs, Walton County, Florida.

land ownership and to have knowingly settled on land that he could never own would seem inconsistent with those values and in that context seems inexplicable.

Mary on the other hand left no doubt as to her values in actively pursuing title to her property. In December following her acquisition of the land her oldest son, John, joined the Confederate Army. He enlisted on the 27th as a sergeant in Co. H., Captain (Stephen Ashley) Cawthon's Company, 6 Regiment, Florida Infantry. The Captain was a brother of Mary, and John's uncle.<sup>41</sup> In September 1863, Mary received the tragic news of John's death on the 19th in the Battle of Chickamauga Creek, Georgia. The Army owed him back pay when he died and as he was unmarried, Mary petitioned as his next of kin to claim it. To assist her with the claim, she solicited the aide of her half -brothers, W. J. D. and Murray Cawthon, both of whom owned sizable amounts of land and cattle and Murray was a justice of the peace as well. Mary submitted her written petition to Murray and W. J. D. submitted to him written certification attesting that Mary was John's mother.<sup>42</sup> The documents were submitted to the Confederate authorities who accepted them in establishing Mary's claim to the amount due her deceased son. She subsequently received a final settlement from the Confederacy of \$114.22 on 18 December 1864. By the time of the 1870 census she was living in Baldwin County, Alabama as a 47 year old head of household with her children; Mary, 22, Ellen, 20, Walker, 18, Sidney, 16 and Victorine, 14.<sup>43</sup> Whether or not she left Ghentsville in a smoldering heap on her exit as recounted in the History of Florala may be another snippet of the John Ghent folklore yet to be proven. Her reason for leaving though was not just for a change of scenery. Isaac Welch, earlier mentioned as a witness against Mary's late husband was married to Mary's sister, Martha and the two families lived next to each other as of the 1860 census. When the Civil War broke out he enlisted in the Confederate Army and managed to survive until it ended. On returning home afterwards he told of how:

. . . deserters and bushwhackers who had rendezvoused in Walton and the adjacent counties of Ala. and Florida, commenced a systematic persecution of him by seizing his cattle, destroying his property and threatening his life and that of his family until finally he was compelled to sacrifice his property and flee to Baldwin Co. Ala. for a season, in order to save his life. . .

---

<sup>41</sup> John Ghent, "Florida Civil War Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XXRD-8JL> : 25 December 2014), John Ghent, 1861; from "Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Florida," database, *Fold3.com* (<http://www.fold3.com> : n.d.); citing military unit First Infantry (G-K), NARA microfilm publication M251 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1959), roll M251\_0027.

<sup>42</sup> John Ghent, "Florida Civil War Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865," Pages 1-14, <https://www.fold3.com/image/119282588>, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/11/2018.

<sup>43</sup> Mary Ghent Household, "United States Census, 1870," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MHK4-2V1> : 12 April 2016), Mary Gent, Alabama, United States; citing p. 7, family 54, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 545,500.



Mary Ghent likely suffered those same depredations and for the same reasons as Welch decided to "flee" to Baldwin County when he did, with their exit of Ghentsville occurring between 1865 and 1870 as evidenced by relevant events and records. It would be understandable if out of anger and bitterness for all her misfortunes suffered, she felt driven to torch the place on leaving as a therapeutic release of sorts. Welch later returned to Florida and settled in Escambia County where he spent the rest of his life. The year 1880 found Mary in the Texas household of her son, Walker and that is where she remained the last of her days.<sup>44</sup> (Source: Linda Clark family history and Isaac Welch Civil War pension application files, Florida Memories (State Library & Archives of Florida) Website, <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/175095?id=16>, downloaded by Sam Carnley 2/12/2018)

During the Civil War the Confederate Army maintained a large encampment south of McDade's Pond in the vicinity of Ghentsville, likely on the portions of sections 34 and 27 under state ownership. Its troops were detached from the Confederate post at Pollard, Alabama, near present day Brewton. The forces at both locations were the subject of several reports issued to his superior officers by Brigadier General Alexander Asboth who commanded Union Army strong holds at Fort Barrancas and the Pensacola Navy Yard. Following are transcribed excerpts from his reports of April 4th, 16th and 26th, 1864, respectively:

The rebels have concentrated a considerable force at Pollard, Ala., estimated at from 8,000 to 10,000 men, principally re-enforcements sent, during General Shermans raid, from Johnstons army to mobile. They are also concentrating a force about 2,000 strong, infantry, artillery, and cavalry, in Walton County, Fla., with headquarters at McDades Pond, between Yellow and Pea Rivers . . .<sup>45</sup>

There is still a force concentrated at Pollard, about 10,000 strong, under command of General Cantey, organizing, collecting transportation, and preparing pontoon bridges. The troops which left Pollard in a southeasterly direction on the 8th of March, under General Clanton, comprising infantry, artillery, and cavalry, and numbering 2,000, are operating in Santa Rosa and Walton Counties, up to Choctawhatchee River, with headquarters at McDades Pond, between yellow and Pea Rivers . . .<sup>46</sup>

In my report to General Stone, of April 22, No. 227, I stated that the larger portion of the troops concentrated at Pollard started suddenly on railroad for Dalton or Richmond (about 7,000 in number), leaving at Pollard 3,000; at McDades Pond between the Yellow and Pea Rivers, 2,000 . . .<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Mary Ghent in Household of Walker Ghent, "United States Census, 1880," index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MFJ9-TLX> : accessed 23 Jan 2014), Mary G. Ghent in household of Walker A. Ghent, Rockdale, Milam, Texas, United States; citing sheet 274D, family 3, NARA microfilm publication T9-1319.

<sup>45</sup> Asboth, Alexander A., report dated April 4, 1864. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, ser. 1, vol. XXXV, p. 386. [ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moawar/text/waro0065.txt](http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moawar/text/waro0065.txt), downloaded by Sam Carnley, 7/27/2017.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

The Confederates, probably leery of alerting the Union Army of their movements seemed less inclined to report openly on their activities in the region. The newspapers however, showed less restraint in their reporting as the Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register demonstrated in the following transcribed excerpt of its edition of April 17, 1864:

**Colonel Holland's Florida Expedition. Camp Section of Tarrant's Battery. McDade's Pond, Florida, April 7, 1864.** Just one month ago, Mr. Editor, we left Pollard Alabama, on a scout to the bayous and bays of the Gulf of Mexico, forming the Florida coast east of Pensacola. The command consisted of about 400, to-wit: a part of the 37th Mississippi Regiment of Infantry, one company of Cavalry and a section of Tarrant's Battery - Sergts Turner's and Lawrence's pieces under Lieutenant Tarrant. The cavalry was commanded by Lieuts. McCurdy and Fitzpatrick, and the whole command under the orders of Col. Holland of the Infantry. Our first day's march was by rails to Sparta, the county town of Conecuh where we met with a most hospitable reception; the ladies manifesting their joy and sympathies for our cause by an invitation, "to trip the light fantastic toe" at an evening party. Our soldiers accepted the honor with becoming grace. I was "a looker on in Vienna," and, judging from that position, all were exceedingly happy. Our next march brought us to Brooklyn, on the Sepulga River, where we were welcomed amid bright faces, the waving of white kerchiefs and miniature flags. The evening of the next march was through rain, in an unsettled region, and we bivouacked the night of the 9th of March in a storm which drenched us so thoroughly that most of the night was spent drying ourselves and our baggage by great heaps of fat pine logs; for we were without tents, making the ground and blankets our bed, and the canopy of heaven our shelter. The country through which we marched next day is poor barren piney woods, with now and then a hut. We reached Yellow River next morning, which was so swollen that we were detained 21 hours. On the night of the 12th, by a forced march, we arrived at Ghentsville, on McDade's Pond . . .<sup>48</sup>

The author signed the article "Blondel," obviously fictitious, possibly because he feared disciplinary action from his superiors for revealing the Army's movements to the enemy. Col. Holland mentioned in the article was Colonel Orlando S. Holland, commander of the 37th Mississippi Infantry Regiment. He went to Ghentsville prior to the expedition as evidenced by a requisition for stationary he signed on March 10th, two days before the expedition arrived. According to the requisition, he was stationed at "Gentsville," Florida for the month, "commencing on the 10th of March, and ending on the 31st of March, 1864."<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Provided by Mark Curenton, Apalachicola, Florida.

<sup>49</sup> Col. Orlando S. Holland, "Mississippi, Civil War Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XFL7-6LS : 4 December 2014>), Orlando S Holland, 1862; from "Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Mississippi," database, *Fold3.com* (<http://www.fold3.com : n.d.>); citing military unit Thirty-seventh Infantry, H-La, NARA microfilm publication M269 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1960), roll 374. <https://www.fold3.com/image/20/84632492, p. 41, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 2/11/2018>.

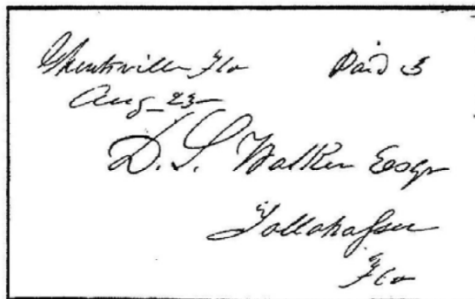
Ghentsville as a place name faded away after the Civil War. Census records enumerated for the area identified it as McDade's Pond for several more decades until superseded by Paxton after 1900.

**SCHEDULE I. Free Inhabitants in** *the 5<sup>th</sup> Division* **in the County of** *Waltow* **State** *of Florida* **enumerated by me, on the** *13<sup>th</sup>* **day of** *Nov* **1850.** *C. H. Kibbe* Ass't Marshal

1	2	3	4			7	8	9	10			12
			Age	Sex	Color				Value of Real Estate owned	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict		
The Name of every Person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1850, was in this family.												
DESCRIPTION.												
Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age.												
Place of Birth. Naming the State, Territory, or Country.												
		<i>Eliza Johnson</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Abelard</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Marie</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
<i>221</i>	<i>221</i>	<i>Nancy Colburn</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Lucia</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
<i>222</i>	<i>222</i>	<i>John Ghent</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>W</i>		<i>Farmer</i>		<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Mary</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>John</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Mary</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Ellen</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Walker</i>	<i>7/8</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
<i>223</i>	<i>223</i>	<i>Louis Miller</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>W</i>		<i>Farmer</i>		<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>William</i>	<i>7/8</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
<i>224</i>	<i>224</i>	<i>William Colburn</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				
		<i>Louisa</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>Fla</i>				

Illustrated above is the top half of the 1850 U. S. census page showing the household of John Ghent. His family as of that year, in addition to himself, included his wife, Mary (Cawthon), 31, b. Georgia; son-John, 6, b. Florida; daughter-Mary, 4, b. Florida; daughter-Ellen, 3, b. Florida; and son-Walker, 8 mos., b. Florida.

**GHENTSVILLE**  
16 October 1850 - 19 June 1858<sup>1</sup>

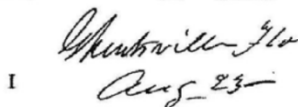


Ghentsville was established in northern Walton County near the town of Almirante just below the Alabama line. Mail was handled by postal route No. 3541. A single stampless example is known.

John Ghent	16 October 1850	yr. end 6-30-51	no return	
		yr. end 6-30-53	7.51	9.85
		3 qtrs. end 6-30-55	7.64	3.31
		2 qtrs. end 6-30-57	5.11	5.64
P.O. Discontinued:	19 June 1858			

**Statehood Usage**

I	Ghentsville Flo	8-23-51	blk.	ms. rates	1 known
---	-----------------	---------	------	-----------	---------



Ghentsville Postal Route  
No. 3541<sup>2</sup>

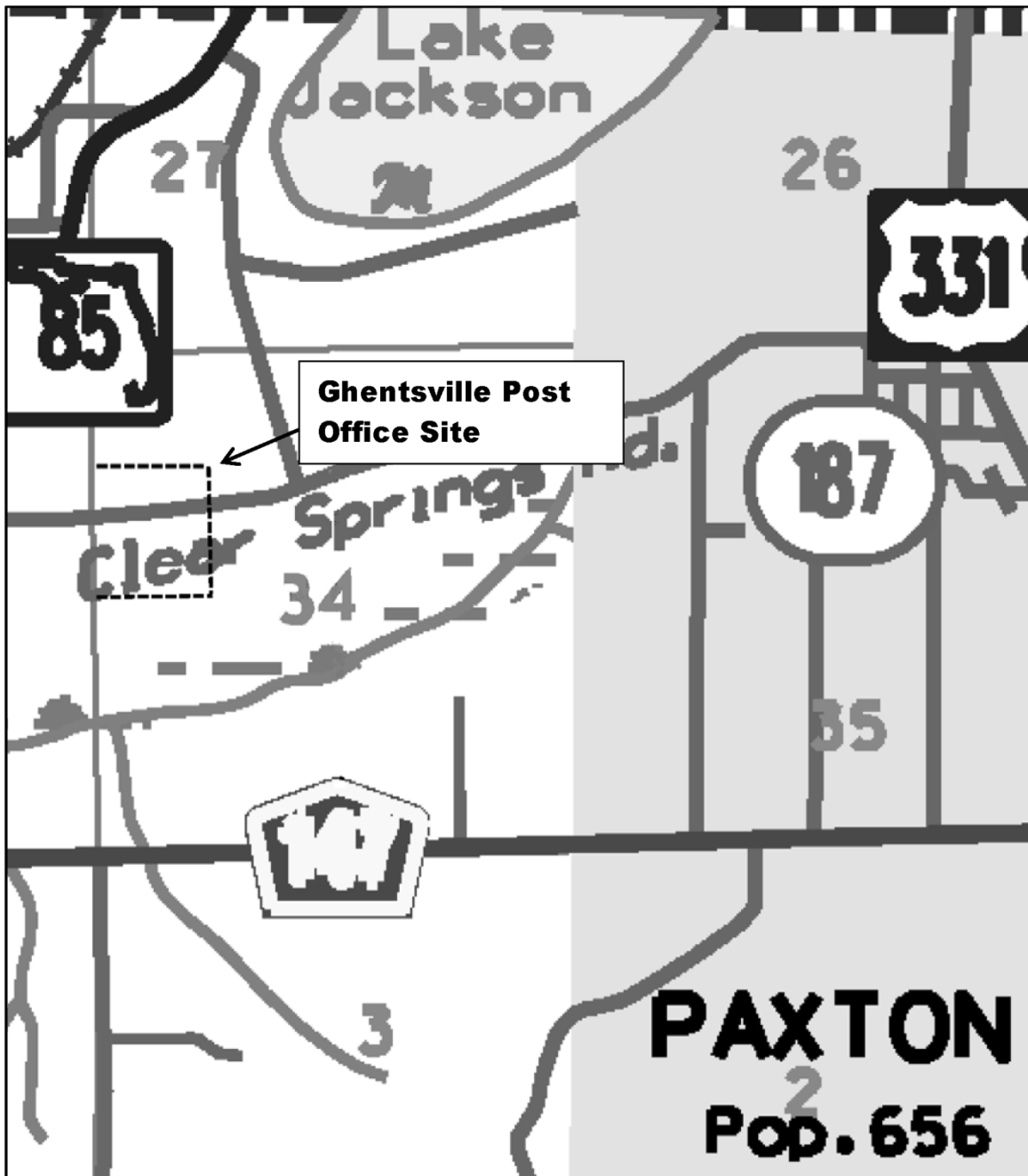
No. 3541. -- From Bainbridge, Ga. at 3 1/2 p.m. twice a week, Tuesday and Saturday by Chattahoochee, Marianna, Scurlock's Spring, Webbville, Campbellton, Geneva, Ala., Ghentsville, Fla., Almirante, Milton, and Floridatown to Pensacola, by 4 a.m. Tuesday and Friday, 230 miles; and back between 8 a.m. Tuesday and Friday and 7 p.m. Thursday and Sunday. Proposals to run direct to Marianna via Brown's Ferry are invited.

Wm. T. Stockton	\$300, supply Almirante and Campbellton if No. 3541 is changed.
Wm. E. Anderson	\$3,395, buggy, as now carried, commence at Chattahoochee.
Bennett & Kerr	\$3,490, or \$4,490, 2-horse coach.
McMillan & Campbell	\$5,600, 2-horse coach.
George W. McCoy	\$5,850, 2-horse coach.
Tillinghast & Bassett	\$6,395, 2-horse coach, \$9,365, 3 times a week via Brown's Ferry.
Wm. T. Stockton	\$2,050, 2-horse coach, Bainbridge to Marianna, and Milton to Pensacola.
Wm. E. Anderson	\$4,970, 2-horse coach to Marianna, residue buggy, \$3,890, 2-horse coach to Chattahoochee, residue buggy, \$6,190, 2-horse coach direct via Brown's Ferry, \$3,745, buggy or sulkey, direct via Brown's Ferry, Bainbridge to Marianna 2-horse coach, Marianna to Pensacola buggy, \$6,385, 2-horse coach, \$5990, 4-horse coach to Chattahoochee, 2-horse coach thence to Marianna, thence in buggies.
Wm. T. Stockton	\$5,390, 2-horse coach, or \$4,940, 2-horse coach, and mail wagon from Marianna to Milton, \$4240. - -

Apr. 14, 1851 -  
accepted at \$4,200.

<sup>1</sup> Florida Stampless Postal History 1763 - 1861, (David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 666 N. E. 128th Street, P.O. Box 611388, North Miami, Florida 33261-1388), p. 141

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 48



The block in broken lines represents the location of a deed Mary Ghent received from the State of Florida in 1862. The property was described as the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4, Section 34, township 6 north, range 21 west, containing 39 and 92/100 acres. It was probably the site of John Ghent's home and the post office he established in 1850. His grave is probably also located somewhere on the site. (Source: General Highway Map, Walton County, Florida, State of Florida Dept. Of Transportation, November 2006. [http://www.fdot.gov/geospatial/geomap/walt\\_c.pdf](http://www.fdot.gov/geospatial/geomap/walt_c.pdf), downloaded, edited and annotated by Sam Carnley, 7-26-2017.)

© 2018 Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. ~ [www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org)  
*Walton Relations & History* is a publication of the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.,  
 Sam Carnley, editor. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email  
 its editor at [wsamuelpcarnley@gmail.com](mailto:wsamuelpcarnley@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

**2018**

**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..*

**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.