



WALTON

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Walton County Heritage Association

March 2021



WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

OFFICE LOCATION

Walton County Heritage Museum, (Old Train Depot)

Hours: Open Tuesday – Saturday, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Postal Address

**Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.
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Cover Design: Sam Carnley

Newsletter Cover Collage Photos

Clockwise from top left:

1. **Darlington, Florida, early 1900s, Courtesy of Baker Block Museum, photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley.**
2. *Henderson-Mathis turpentine still in Glendale or Gaskin. 1904. Black & white photoprint, 4 x 6 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/42107>>, accessed 28 June 2017 by Sam Carnley.*
3. **William Lewis (Luke) Hurst Family, Fleming Creek/Clear Springs area, north Walton County, ca 1894, from “The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,” p. 190.**
4. **Old Paxton High School, “1961-62 Paxtonian” Year Book, photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley**
5. Walton County Heritage Museum, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
6. Gladys D. Milton (1924-1999), Midwife, Flowersview/Paxton, photo by her daughter, Maria Milton. Also in “The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,” p. 249, and the September 2018 Newsletter at <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/NL2018Sep.pdf> Edited by Sam Carnley.
7. Lake Jackson, South Side, in Paxton City Limits, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
8. Paxton Water Tower, Paxton, Florida, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
9. Old Freeport School, constructed ca 1908, burned 1943. Photo from “The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,” p. 45. **Photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley.**
10. *Floralia Saw Mill Company's engine number 3 - Paxton, Florida. 1907. Black & white photonegative, 4 x 5 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Photographer unknown. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/146972>>, accessed 7 September 2019 and edited by Sam Carnley. [Built in 1873 and Originally owned by New York, Ontario and Western Railroad Company as engine number 60; then owned by Southern Iron and Equipment Company as engine number 568 in 1907; then owned by Floralia Saw Mill Company as engine number 3 on March 3, 1907; returned to Southern Iron and Equipment Company and number changed to 915 on March 13, 1913; then owned by Louisiana Saw Mill Company as engine 50 in May, 1913.]*

The Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. is a 501 (C) 3 Florida Not for Profit Corporation Recognized by the IRS as a Public Charity Organization for Tax Deductible Donations.

The Walton County Heritage Association was organized for four main purposes:

- To promote the preservation and restoration of buildings and other landmarks of historical interest within Walton County;
- To maintain the Walton County Heritage Museum to preserve the heritage of Walton County for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artifacts and information from the time of its original inhabitants to the present;
- To foster and enhance the development, education, and sense of history which is unique to Walton County; and
- To secure cooperation and unity of action between individual citizens, businesses, and other groups as may be necessary to fulfill these purposes.

The Association depends upon the support of its members and the business community to accomplish its goals. Annual dues are \$25 for individuals, \$40 for families and \$100 for corporate memberships.

Individual Membership Application <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/Membership2020.pdf>
[Click here](#) for the Corporate Membership Application

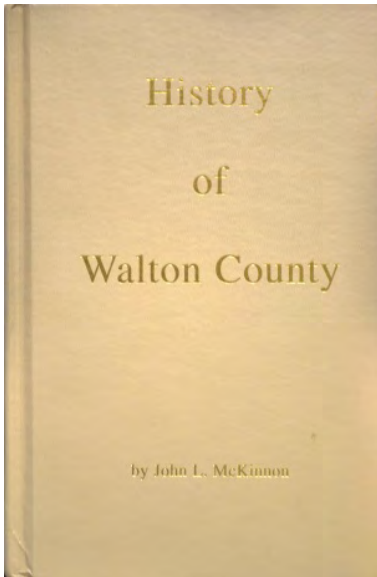
Member Benefits:

- Automatic membership in the **Walton County Heritage Museum** and the **Walton County Genealogy Society**.
- Invitations to Quarterly Members Meetings
- **Discounts** on Special Events
- **The Museum Research Center:** Members get free copies of documents and use of the Genealogy Society computer when the Museum is open.
- **The Museum Gift Shop:** Members receive discounts on books, special publications, postcards, photographs, CDs, DVDs, videos, and gift items.
- Free **subscriptions** to the WCHA Newsletter and Journal.

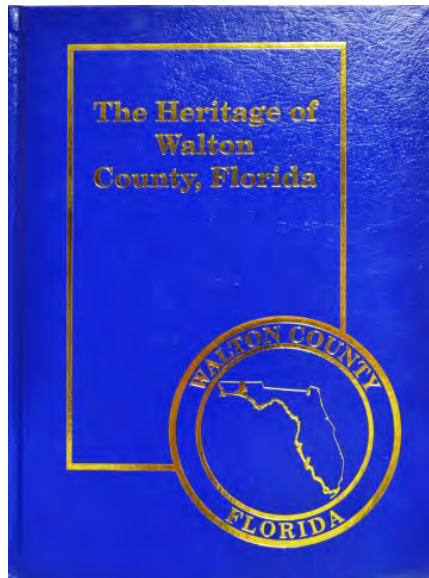
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From the Museum Gift Shop

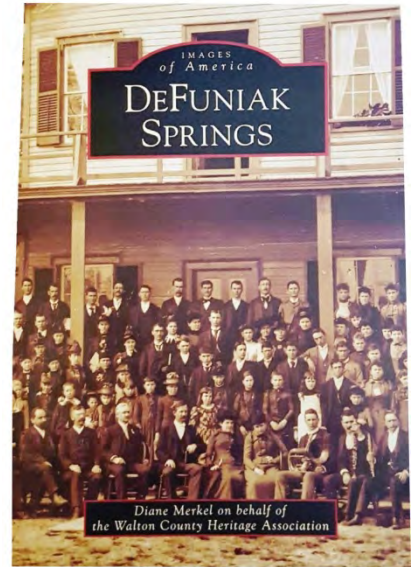
Our most popular books



History of Walton County
by John L. McKinnon. The Museum has sold out of this book and it is out of print, but it is available on line free of charge at this link,
<https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/georgiabooks/pdfs/gb0503.pdf>



The Heritage of Walton County, Florida. Item code **B13.** History of Walton County's organizations, churches and people. Hard cover, 316 pages, indexed.
\$59.00 plus tax and shipping.



Images of America, DeFuniak Springs. Item code **B06.** By Diane Merkel. Softcover, 128 pages, 185 photos, indexed.
\$21.99 plus tax and shipping.

BOOK MAIL ORDER FORM

Walton County Heritage Association
1140 Circle Drive
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

Customer Name: _____
Address: _____
Ph./Email: _____

Quantity	Description	Item Code	Price Each*	Amount
	The Heritage of Walton County, Florida	B13	71.13	
	Images of America, DeFuniak Springs.	B06	31.53	

*Price includes tax at 7% and shipping of \$8.00 per item.

Total _____

Sorry, credit cards not accepted. Please send check or money orders only. Do not mail cash. Please allow two weeks for delivery.

The News from Florala

By
Sam Carnley

The Florala News, published in Florala, Alabama, has been the sole news source, not only of the area of Covington County, in which Florala is located, but the north part of Walton County, Florida as well from the early 1900s until the present. From time to time, it has even reported on Walton County events as far south as DeFuniak Springs. Paxton, which came into existence no more than a few years before the Florala News went into publication, was often the subject of articles in the paper. Laurel Hill, then in Walton County, also received coverage quite regularly.

One of the paper's earliest articles relating to Walton County was the "Time Table of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad," published in the November 7, 1902 edition, page 2. The railroad's nearest passenger stop to Florala was DeFuniak Springs. From there connections could be made to Pensacola, New Orleans and Mobile; Pensacola, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Louisville; and Pensacola and Jacksonville (Figure 1).

On page 1 of the Thursday, 29 December 1904 edition, appeared the following article:

ACCIDENTALLY SHOT

By a Stray Bullet, Mrs. Riley Adams, of Paxton, Florida, is Instantly Killed While Rocking a Babe on Front Porch.

On Christmas morning while Mrs. Riley Adams, who resides at Paxton, Fla., near this place, was sitting on the front porch at her home nursing a baby of tender age, a bullet coming from an unknown source, struck her just above the heart killing her almost instantly. Fireworks were being discharged, and had been previously and no one noticed the direction from which the shot was fired, or saw the smoke accompanying the report. Neighbors soon rushed to the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Adams, and some were standing just outside the door beneath the porch roof,

TIME TABLE										
Louisville and Nashville Railroad.										
PENSACOLA, NEW ORLEANS AND MOBILE.										
No. 6.	No. 4.	No. 2.	Lv. Pensacola Ar.				No. 3.	No. 1.	No. 5.	
7:15 am	12:35 m	11:05 pm	Lv. Pensacola Ar.				5:00 am	4:00 pm	9:00 pm	
8:50 am	2:22 pm	1:02 am	Lv. Flomaton Lv.				2:35 am	2:30 pm	7:25 pm	
11:00 am	4:22 pm	2:55 am	Lv. Mobile Lv.				12:30 pm	12:15 pm	5:00 pm	
..... am	8:25 pm	7:30 am	Lv. New Or'ns Lv.				8:00 pm	7:25 am	
PENSACOLA, ST. LOUIS, CINCINNATI AND LOUISVILLE.										
No. 2.	No. 4.	Lv. Pensacola Ar.				No. 1	No. 3.			
11:05 pm	12:35 pm	Lv. Pensacola Ar.				4:00 pm	5:00 am			
8:15 am	6:30 pm	Ar. Montgomery Lv.				11:15 am	9:35 pm			
11:59 am	9:12 pm	Ar. Birmingham Lv.				8:33 am	4:05 pm			
2:30 am	8:20 am	Ar. Louisville Lv.				9:15 pm	2:45 am			
7:20 am	11:59 am	Ar. Cincinnati Lv.				6:00 pm	11:15 pm			
7:20 am	1:30 pm	Ar. St. Louis Lv.				4:15 pm	8:55 pm			
PENSACOLA AND JACKSONVILLE.										
No. 21	No. 3.	No Stop.				No. 2	No. 22.			
Daily.	Daily.	Where Time Not Shown.				Daily.	Daily.			
11:55 pm	7:00 am	Lv. Pensacola Ar.				10:50 pm	6:30 pm			
12:15 am	7:12 am	Lv. Bohemia				10:37 pm	6:06 pm			
12:20 am	7:15 am	Lv. Yniestra				10:34 pm	6:01 pm			
12:23 am	7:17 am	Lv. Escambia				10:32 pm	5:57 pm			
12:35 am	7:24 am	Lv. Mulat				10:23 pm	5:45 pm			
12:39 am	7:27 am	Lv. Harp				10:21 pm	5:40 pm			
12:50 am	7:34 am	Lv. Galt City				10:15 pm	5:27 pm			
12:58 am	7:38 am	Lv. Milton				10:10 pm	5:20 pm			
1:30 am	Lv. Good Range				4:55 pm			
1:55 am	8:14 am	Lv. Holts				9:35 pm	4:35 pm			
2:20 am	8:28 am	Lv. Milligan				9:20 pm	4:11 pm			
2:23 am	8:35 am	Lv. Crestview				9:13 pm	4:00 pm			
3:00 am	8:51 am	Lv. Deerland				8:55 pm	3:34 pm			
3:23 am	9:03 am	Lv. Mossy Head Ar.				8:40 pm	3:15 pm			
4:03 am	9:25 am	Lv. DeFuniak Springs Ar.				8:13 pm	2:40 pm			
4:18 am	9:34 am	Lv. Argyle Ar.				7:44 pm	2:28 pm			
4:40 am	9:47 am	Lv. Ponce deLeon Ar.				7:30 pm	2:08 pm			
5:00 am	10:00 am	Lv. Westville Ar.				7:18 pm	1:50 pm			
5:08 am	10:05 am	Lv. Caryville Ar.				7:13 pm	1:42 pm			
5:33 am	10:20 am	Lv. Bonifay Ar.				7:00 pm	1:20 pm			
6:00 am	10:38 am	Lv. Chipley Ar.				6:43 pm	12:57 pm			
6:30 am	10:57 am	Lv. Cottondale Ar.				6:25 pm	12:30 pm			
7:00 am	11:15 am	Lv. Marianna Ar.				6:08 pm	12:05 pm			
7:30 am	11:35 am	Lv. Cypress Ar.				5:48 pm	11:35 am			
7:40 am	11:42 am	Lv. Grand Ridge Ar.				5:42 pm	11:15 am			
7:58 am	11:52 am	Lv. Sneads Ar.				5:31 pm	10:45 am			
8:15 am	12:05 pm	Lv. River Junction Ar.				5:20 pm	10:20 am			
.....	1:43 pm	Ar. Tallahassee Ar.				3:13 pm			
.....	7:25 pm	Ar. Jacksonville Lv.				9:30 am			

Figure 1. Source: Newspapers.Com, <https://www.newspapers.com/clippings/#user=8605200>, Downloaded by Sam Carnley, 3/29/2021.

when the “zip” of a second bullet was plainly heard as it struck the roof of the porch.

When word was received in Florala of the peculiar accident, if accident it was, a small crowd went over to Paxton, as a rumor had also reached here that suspicion rested on a couple of negro men who had been seen in a house directly in line from where the shot was supposed to have been fired from, and it was thought that possibly a lynching would occur, if the guilty one was caught. But on arriving there it was found that Justice Aaron Hilson and Deputy Sheriff Ben F. Cockcroft had the situation pretty well in hand and were thoroughly capable of controlling the few who might commit some rash act.

Several arrests were made and as the bullet which killed the lady had passed entirely through her body and been taken from the sleeve of her dress, unbattered, it was decided advisable to search all of the negro houses for arms in order to locate, if possible, the pistol or rifle that the bullet would fit. The search was made, but no such weapons were found, and as before stated, arrests were made on suspicion.

Sunday afternoon, it being deemed necessary that an inquest be held over the dead body, Coroner Hilson empaneled Messrs. Clemens, H. Hughes, Cook, Davis, Ryles and Parker who acted in that capacity, and their verdict was that death resulted from a rifle or pistol shot fired from the hands of unknown parties; and ordered more arrests made of persons to be held as witnesses.

On Sunday night a maudlin crowd went out about midnight and tried to frighten away the negroes from their quarters by promiscuous shooting, but a peaceable crowd was quickly gotten together and prevented this. Deputy Cockcroft secured the negro man whom the mob said they wanted, and hid him out until the arrival of Sheriff Campbell, of Walton County just before day on Monday morning, when he was carried to DeFuniak and placed in jail for safe keeping.

The sympathy of the entire communities both of Paxton and this place goes out to Mr. Adams in this his sad bereavement over the loss of his devoted wife. It will be remembered that while living in Florala a couple of years ago this man had the sad misfortune to lose three little children by death from fever that was an epidemic at the time.

Mrs. Adams was buried on Monday afternoon.

(Source: The Florala News, Florala, Alabama, Thursday, 29 December 1904, p. 1, Newspapers.Com, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/71721527/the-florala-news/#>, down loaded by Sam Carnley, 3/29/2021)

A second article, related to the above story, appeared in the edition of Thursday, 26 January, 1905, p. 1, titled as follows:

STATEMENT

Of William Patrick, Implicated in the Riot at Paxton on the Night of Dec. 25.

On the 28th day of Dec. 1904, Riley Adams and myself, Wm. Patrick, were placed in jail in Walton County, Florida, on warrants sworn out by I. M. Ryals charging us with rioting and entering into the dwelling house of the said I. M. Rials armed with guns, searching for a negro

named Lige Pitts, supposed to have been the negro who fired the shot which killed Mrs. Riley Adams, the wife of the said Riley Adams, now in jail with myself.

There are also two other young men, Will Burton and A. Meadows, who were placed in jail at the same time with us, on warrants sworn out by Mr. Clemmons, of Paxton, Florida, charging them with rioting and also holding a negro under false arrest.

Both acts said to have been committed on the night of Dec. 24th, 1904, the night on which Mrs. Riley was a corpse.

Now, the facts are these: Two young men were doing as they were asked to by the justice of the peace and his bailiff; not only these two but quite a lot of other men were acting under the same orders and all had strict instructions not to allow any negro to leave Paxton on that night and were furnished guns for that purpose.

Now, let us look at this thing from a white man's standpoint. What are the characters of the men thus charged? Have they ever before been charged with rioting? Have they ever been known to raise unnecessary disturbances with negroes? Did they voluntarily instigate a riot on that occasion?

What trouble there was, was brought about because of the fact that a white woman had been shot down and instantly killed, with her three months old baby in her arms.

The best evidence obtainable up to six o'clock that night indicated that she had been killed by an accidentally shot fired in some part of the mill quarters.

But about this time George Pitts was questioned in regard to the matter, who stated that right at the time Mrs. Adams was killed Lige Pitts, his brother fired two shots. One negro woman named Susie, who is now living with Major Kelly in Paxton said that night that Lige Pitts was the man who did the shooting.

She stated that about ten minutes before she heard Mrs. Adams was killed, she saw Lige Pitts with a bright looking pistol which he shot two times just after leaving her house. George Pitts said that Lige Pitts had a forty-four-caliber pistol which he shot twice. The statements of both coincided as to the time and place at which the shooting was done, and from their statement, it was certainly very evident that one of these shots killed Mrs. Adams.

It was the opinion of some after hearing the statement of those two parties, that if they could find Lige Pitts he would acknowledge he was drunk and shot in that direction at that time.

Now, friends, we are placed behind iron bars for attempting to investigate this matter and showing a desire to protect white women from the murderous bullets of drunken black brutes.

True, there may have been some steps taken on the impulse of the moment that were not right and proper.

Every person in Paxton was excited. People differed in their opinions as to what was best to be done, but if any of us have been guilty of any act that is unbecoming a white man under such trying circumstances, we beg you as far as possible to try to put yourself in our places and say what you would have done.

It is impossible for you to say what you would do until you are placed there. This man Riley Adams, who is today behind bars with us, is bereaved of his wife and has a three-month-old baby left motherless and deprived of even the privilege of seeing it, all because of a murderous pistol in the hands of a drunken negro.

Because of my great grief over the misfortune of this man and because I feel that he deserves more sympathy than myself, I will not say much in regard to my own case, further than to say that I have a wife at home with a broken heart and three small helpless children who are deprived of my support and care. I am so completely crushed that I cannot place the matter before you in such a way as I would wish.

But, take special notice that it is on account of my wife and children that I make this appeal to the people.

If it takes all this to stand by my friends and especially my color, I am not ashamed of it and have no apologies to make.

My mother was a lady and I firmly stand on white principles, and today if I was out this of and a white woman was shot and killed, I would do my utmost to find out how and why, especially if I had a reason to believe that she had been shot by a drunken negro who was carrying and shooting a pistol in open violation of the laws of the state.

There would never have been any of this trouble if this negro had behaved himself. When we arrested Lige Pitts on the day that Mrs. Adams was killed he showed guilt. I saw him with a pistol that morning and several other negroes also had pistols.

When we began to gather these negroes together, after Mrs. Adams had been shot, there was no pistol to be found, only as they were forced to bring them out. When I arrested Pitts, it took me ten or fifteen minutes with help of Mr. Burden with our guns cocked on him to make him go and get the pistol that I had seen him with that morning.

He had it concealed in the loft of his house. The guilty scoundrel knew that we would find it out on him, and we had to force him to bring it down.

My only regrets are having to leave my wife and children. As for being sorry for anything that I said or did on that occasion, I repeat that I am not.

I wish I could talk to every man in this county about the matter, but as that is impossible, I will conclude by saying that I am perfectly willing for the white men of this county to decide my case.

WILLIAM PATRICK

Following that article on the same page but in a society news column, or perhaps more appropriately, the gossip column, came tidbits from Laurel Hill, which at that time remained a small town in north-west Walton County:

Laurel Hill Items

Mr. and Mrs. Sowell, of Muscogee, spent several days here this week with O. W. Camb and his family.

We are glad to say J. H. Pugh has recently rented the Givens residence and is now a citizen of our town. We also welcome Mr. Pugh to the family here.

Mrs. B. F. Tucker returned from Pine Barren Friday after spending several days at the bedside of her daughter, who is seriously ill, though somewhat improving.

Mr. D. R. Moore and Miss Maggie Steele were happily married at the bride's home a few miles from town, Sunday afternoon. Rev. J. F. Ford officiating.

J. L. Clary and family are comfortably domiciled in the residence formerly owned by J. F. Richbourg, postmaster. We are pleased to have Mr. Clary in our town.

Wm. Gavins moved to Laurel Hill with his family last week and will make this his future home. It makes us think our town is among the coming for so many people to be moving in.

(Source: The Florala News, Florala, Alabama, Thursday, 26 Jan. 1905, p. 1, Newspapers. Com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/308409431/?terms=statement&match=1>, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 3/29/21.

Only a few years after the turn of the century in 1900, the bulk of Walton County remained heavily forested, and as California and other western states do today, saw many uncontrolled forest fires. Following is a Florala News story about one such fire in 1909:

Forest Fires in Walton

The piney woods out southeast of town have been burning many days. Grass and leaves and branches of blown down trees are so dry that the fire has spread over many miles of territory. Some places it has caused damage to the farmers and cattle raisers in the northern part of Walton county by burning fences, where the old split rails are still used.

Farmers have been fighting the fire early and late and are still at it with no probability of rain in sight. Along the road leading from Florala to DeFuniak many large trees have burned at the ground and fallen across the highway. At night the fire presents a beautiful, though often unpleasant sight to the traveler, for through the valleys the smoke is so dense that one cannot distinguish the horse which is being driven.

Some places, fifty feet from the ground the dead limbs of pine trees were brightly blazing, throwing a weird light over the surrounding darkness and forest. However, the only damage the forest fires have done so far has been the destruction of fences and the waste of pine trees.

A second article followed the one above in the same column. It extolled the value of a good horse over the automobile:

About Hay Burners

With the many modes of travel now in vogue it would seem that the horse stands a good chance to be relegated to the rear; but on the contrary the price of good animals seems to be on the incline.

This is speaking of horses in general; but it is of a particular horse, and he is a good one, too, that we are thinking. This horse belongs to Dr. R. L. Miller, and he is justly proud of the ownership. Last Sunday afternoon he and a friend decided to go to DeFuniak, which is 27 miles away, by dirt road. **They left Florala Monday at 5 o'clock a. m. and arrived there at 9:30; spent several hours there, leaving at 5:30 on the return trip, they reached Florala at 10 p. m. after having driven "old Dan" 54 miles, and giving him seven- or eight-hours rest.**

Trains, autos and airships break down, but rarely the good buggy horse; as evidence of this Dr. Miller and his fiend passed an automobile three miles this side of DeFuniak that went through here the afternoon before. It was abandoned on the roadside. For traveling, and on something that one can depend, give us a good horse.

(Source: The Florala News, Florala, Alabama, Thursday, 2/11/1909, p. 1, Newspaper.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/308396486/?terms=forest%20fires%20walton%20florala&match=1>, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 3/29/21.