



WALTON

RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 13, Issue 2

Walton County Heritage Association

November 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.
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, Florida 32435
Phone: 850-951-2127

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

Email: heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com

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Caroline Brown

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Back Issues: <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/newsletters.htm>

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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; See attached.

[Click here](#) for the Corporate Membership Application

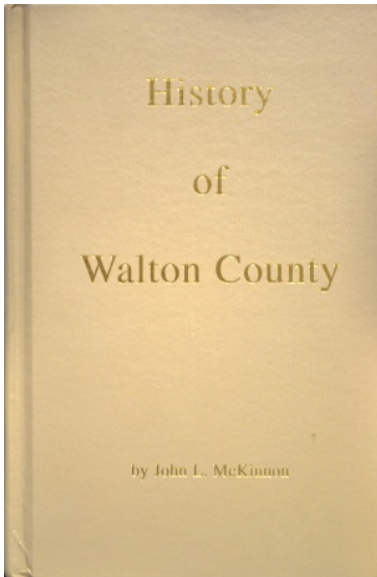
Member Benefits:

- 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

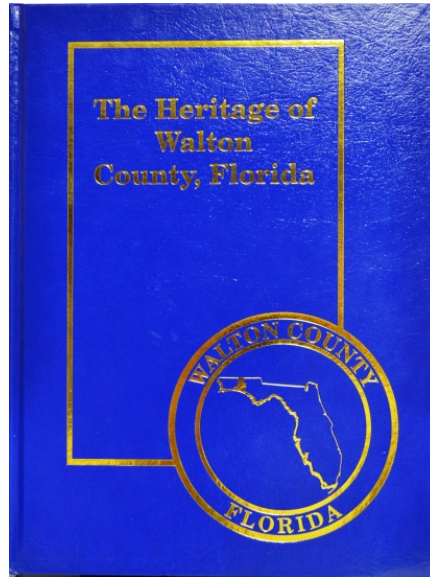
Our most popular books



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 at these links;

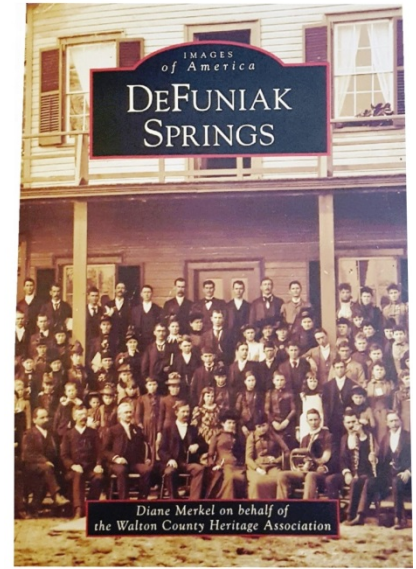
<https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/georgiabooks/pdfs/gb0503.pdf>, and <https://www.alibris.com/booksearch?mtype=B&keyword=history+of+walton+county&hs.x=0&hs.y=0>



The Heritage of Walton County, Florida. Item code B13.

Price, including tax,

\$63.13.



Images of America, DeFuniak Springs. Item code B06.

By Diane Merkel. Price, including tax,

\$23.53.

MAIL ORDER FORM

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

Customer Name: _____

Address: _____

Ph./Email: _____

Quanty	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.



Walton County Heritage Association

Membership in the Walton County Heritage Association includes
Membership in the Museum and Genealogy Society
2022

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.

Walton County in 1827

By
John Lee Williams

Edited by
Sam Carnley

The second legislative council of the Territories of East and West Florida convened on 1 May, 1823 in St. Augustine. Alternating the annual sessions of the legislative council between there and Pensacola, which hosted the inaugural session of June, 1822, posed a problem for members to attend due to the four-hundred-mile distance between the two cities.

Desirous of alleviating the difficulties of the annual trek of government officials between the two places, the council and Governor Duval sought to establish a middle point between them as the place of the territorial capitol.

Accordingly, on 24 June, the council passed an act providing for the appointment of Dr. William B. Simmons of St. Augustine and Attorney, John Lee Williams of Pensacola, to select a central location for the seat of Territorial government. It is now a matter of history that they chose Tallahassee as the place to serve that purpose.

The following year, the legislative council held its first ever session in the newly established capitol. As the spot remained nothing more than a wilderness at the time, the council convened in a log cabin hastily thrown up for that purpose. Villagers of the nearby Miccosukee tribe of Chief, Neamathla, found the goings-on of the white men a curiosity. Some of them entered the building and sat on benches intended for delegates of the council, while others gathered outside and peered through open windows and doors to observe, what appeared to them, as strange proceedings.

During those proceedings, the legislative council, on 29 December, 1824, created five new counties. They included Leon, Alachua, Nassau, Mosquito, and Walton. The latter named for Territorial Secretary, George Walton, Jr.

The creation of those counties came at a propitious time for John Lee Williams. Even before providing his services in locating the capitol, he had ambitions of writing a treatise on the geography and topography of West Florida.

His explorations of the panhandle in selecting the capitol site gave him the opportunity to observe and record the information he needed in writing his treatise, which he titled "A

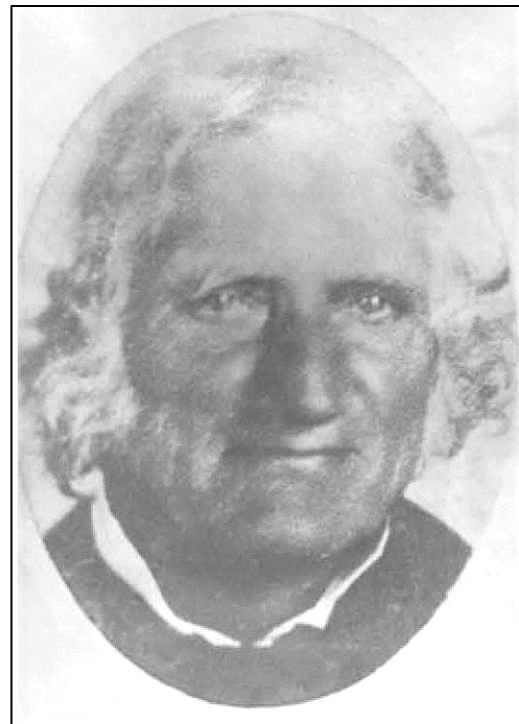


Figure 1. John Lee Williams, (1775-1855).
Source: Find A Grave Photo,
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/75406876/john-lee-williams>

VIEW OF WEST FLORIDA, EMBRACING ITS GEOGRAPHY, TOPOGRAPHY, & ETC.” L. R. Bailey, Philadelphia, PA, printed the book in 1827.

At the time the book came out, West Florida consisted of only six counties: Walton, Escambia, Washington, Jackson, Gadsden and Leon. Details given for each county include its boundaries, names of settlements, streams, lakes, tillable land and crops grown, forested land, swamps and hammocks, etc.

The section pertaining to Walton County is excerpted below. Interestingly, the only settler mentioned by name is McDavid, in connection with a former name of today’s Lake Jackson, in the north of the County. This McDavid, probably Richmond T. (1805-1871), appeared on the Walton County federal census of 1830 as a resident of the “Eastern part of Walton County.”

The significance of John Lee Williams’s reference to McDavid’s Pond in 1827 is that some member of the McDavid family, whether or not he was Jonathan T., settled that part of the county earlier than other families credited as being there first, most notably the Cawthons, who may not have arrived until 1837, some ten years after McDavid.

Williams mentioned McDavid in reference to the small settlement formed around the pond of his name. He wrote of other settlements as well as noted in the excerpt that follows:

Walton county is bounded west by Escambia; north by the thirty-first degree of north latitude; east by Jackson and Washington counties; and south by Washington county, and the Gulf of Mexico, at Pass L'Este [East Pass]. It is about the size of Escambia County. The Chactawhatchee Bay crosses the south end of the county, and the river of the same name skirts the eastern border.

These afford a good navigation, and plenty of fine fish. On the shores are many excellent hammocks, but as yet uncultivated. A high ridge divides the Chactawhatchee bay from Shoal River; on this the land is poor and barren; but the noblest springs issue from its sides, descending with a rapid current to the bay on the south, and to the river on the north. In a course of three or four miles from their sources, they often become deep enough to navigate with large boats; their waters are very pure and cold.

Betwixt the ridge and the bay, besides several excellent hammocks, there is a space of from three to five miles of good pine land, excellent for grazing. Four considerable streams are formed, and run into the north side of the bay. At the west end, Twin creek is the first; it enters a large lagoon or arm, which extends seven or eight miles into the country. Boggy creeks unite about four miles from the bay: there are three principal branches, that, when united, form a considerable river. Rock creek is also large enough for navigation, seven miles from the bay.

Alaqua is the largest stream that enters from the ridge. It is navigable fifteen miles into the country; it then divides into three principal branches, each of which have a course of twenty miles. The springs, of the two eastern branches of this river, rise gradually in cane patches, and flow through a beautiful undulating country of good land. They interlock with

the heads of Shoal River and Uche [Eucliee, now Bruce creek]; and the great ridge here terminates in a succession of high peaks.

This river enters the bay over a bar of five feet water. The settlers, on the Alaqua, are a race of industrious farmers, who have few slaves, yet they appear to enjoy much comfort and independence; they seem to estimate the benefits of education and industry, more correctly than many other new settlements. Good crops of grain are raised here; and cattle thrive with little care; the soil is rich but rather thin; the substratum is a kind of soap-stone, with many fossil impressions. It is sufficiently solid for building.

The Yellow Water [Almarante, now Laurel Hill] settlement is in the north-west part of the county, on the banks of the river of that name. Here is a small body of excellent land, very well improved, for a new country. Crops stand the droughts of summer better here, than in any other part of Florida. Cotton and corn are their principal crops: the pine lands, for six miles from the river, produce equally well as the river bottoms. Twelve miles south, there is another settlement, commencing on Shoal River.

There they have a similar tract of land, founded on the same kind of soap-stone as at the Alaqua. The Uche creek rises north of the Alaqua; and after running a course of forty miles south-east, it falls into the Chactawhatchee river, five miles above the Big Spring. The Uche valley is among the best lands of the county: it has a substratum of limestone. Crops here are often scorched by the sun; and are not so good in dry, as in wet seasons: here is a large settlement of industrious farmers, who, with very few slaves, are improving in property and respectability.

On the north line of Walton County, there is a small settlement formed around McDavid's pond, a very pure and handsome sheet of water of an oval form: it is about three miles long and two broad. The land on its borders is clayey; but produces good crops of corn, potatoes, peas, &c. A large creek issues from this pond [Staggers or Paxton Creek, which flows into Pond Creek, which joins Shoal River near Dorcas], and forms one considerable branch of Shoal River.

About two miles south of McDavid's pond, there is a very singular hammock of excellent land containing about four hundred acres. It is in a pine barren country, where a branch of Shoal River rises [Pine Log Creek], which, after running a short course, divides, and loses itself in a narrow swamp, which entirely surrounds this hammock, with a thicket so impervious, that until the surveyors were obliged to push a line through it, no one had suspected anything but swamp existed there [Probably Bear Flat Swamp].

On penetrating the narrow border, however, they were surprised to find a high rich tract of land, of considerable extent. At the south-west side of the hammock, the waters again collect, and run off in a fine current.

Near one-third of Walton County, is good tillable upland and hammock land: the rest is pine barren. In the western part, the streams burst in large torrents from the ridges, and pursue their course to the bay, in deep ravines; but north and east of the Alaqua, the streams head in gentle vales, like grass savannas in the outward circle; but

further inward, thickly covered with reed cane (*Arundo Teeta*,) and still farther, where the water rises, it is always surrounded with titi bushes, almost as thickly set as hairs; as the valley extends, groves of oak, hickory, magnolia, gum and poplar, cover the surface. On the whole, the eastern part of Walton County is a pleasant and excellent grazing country.