



# WALTON

## RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 13, Issue 5

Walton County Heritage Association

March 2022







# 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](mailto:heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com)

## DEPARTMENTS

### Administration

President: Marie Hinson, [hinsonharmony@yahoo.com](mailto:hinsonharmony@yahoo.com)

Vice President: Carolyn Brown

Treasurer: Sam Carnley

Secretary: Susan Horaist

### Public Relations

Vacant

### Museum Docent Coordinator

Caroline Brown

### Genealogy Society

President: Wayne Sconiers, [waynesconiers@embarqmail.com](mailto:waynesconiers@embarqmail.com)

### Newsletter

Editor: Sam Carnley, [wsamuelcarnley@gmail.com](mailto:wsamuelcarnley@gmail.com)

Assistant Editor and Historian: Bruce Cosson, [bac2work1958@yahoo.com](mailto:bac2work1958@yahoo.com)

Editorial Advisor: Diane Merkel, [ddmerkel@cox.net](mailto:ddmerkel@cox.net)

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

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.]

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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 varying amounts for donors as shown on attached Annual Donor/Member Application for 2022. Donor logos are also shown on the attached Donor page in the monthly newsletter.

**Annual Member/Sponsor Application 2022; See attached.**

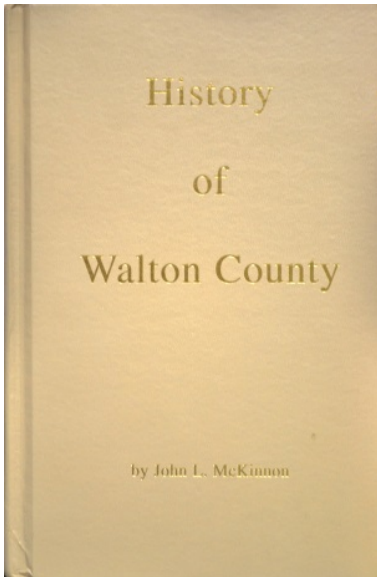
**Member Benefits:**

- 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.

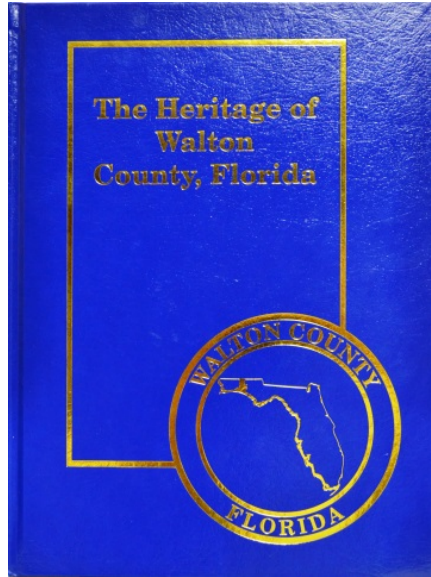
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# From the Museum Gift Shop

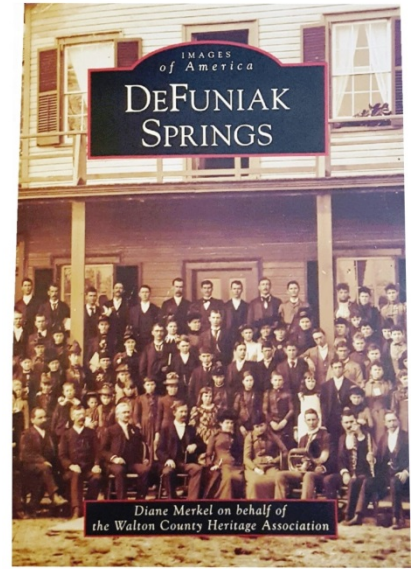
## Our most popular books



**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.



# Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.

1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, Florida, 32435, Ph. 850-951-2117

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

Email: [HeritageMuseum@bighthouse.com](mailto:HeritageMuseum@bighthouse.com)

## ANNUAL MEMBER/SPONSOR APPLICATION 2022

Name:

Individual/Family \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor/Business/Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Member/Sponsor Category:

Individual \$25.00,  Family \$40.00,  Sponsor \$100.00,  Silver Sponsor \$500.00,   
Gold Sponsor \$1,000.00,  Platinum Sponsor \$2,000.00,  Additional Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \* To-  
tal Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*Gift earmarked for: \_\_\_\_\_

### Our Mission

The Walton County Heritage Association is a nonprofit organization that was organized for four main purposes:

1. To promote the preservation and restoration of buildings and other landmarks of historical interest within Walton County;
2. 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;
3. To foster and enhance the development, education, and sense of history which is unique to Walton County; and
4. To secure cooperation and unity of action between individual citizens, businesses, and other groups as may be necessary to fulfill these purposes.

\* Additional gift of over \$2,000.00 (any amount in excess of that number) would be greatly appreciated. You may earmark this gift for a specific expense/purchase of gift items for our museum.

- All donor categories are entitled to membership in the museum and Genealogy Society and 10% discount on museum gift shop purchases.
- For all levels of Sponsorship, the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. will acknowledge sponsors on our website, in our newsletter and on a permanent plaque in the Museum. Sponsorships are on an annual basis from January to December. This is an acknowledgement of your gift only and does NOT constitute advertisement or the promotion of any individual, business or organization by the WCHA.

Please mail your check and this form to:  
WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC. 1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435.  
**THANK YOU!!!**

The Walton County Heritage Association, Inc., is a 501(C)(3) charitable organization as defined by the IRS 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, or donation, please contact us.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REF: WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC., DTN3054584, CH52108.



## **OUR SPONSORS for 2022**

We dedicate this page to our sponsors in recognition of their generous support of our mission.

### **SPONSORS (\$100-\$499.00)**

**George and Margaret Little (\$100.00)**

**Douglas W. Rogers (\$100.00)**

**Bob Beasely, Supervisor of Elections (\$100.00)**

**David Bludworth (\$260.00)**

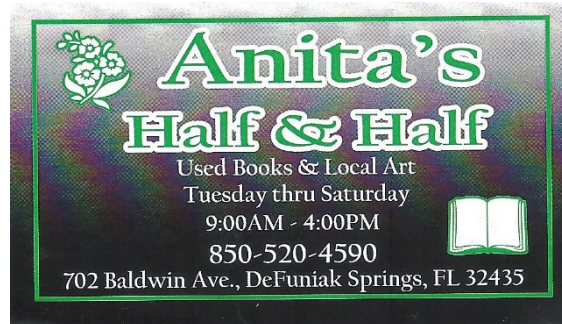
**DFS Landmarks, Inc. (\$100.00)**

**Merrifield & Pilcher Realty (\$100.00)**

### **SILVER SPONSORS (\$500 to \$999.00)**

(None at present time)

### **GOLD SPONSORS (\$1,000 to \$1,999)**



**Anita's Half & Half (\$1,000.00)**

### **PLATINUM SPONSORS (\$2,000 and up)**

#### **City of DeFuniak Springs**



In the past the city has generously supported us with cash donations of \$2,000.00 annually, but due to changing budget priorities, was unable to do so in 2022. We wish to recognize the city's generosity however, for its in-kind donation of the RR depot which serves as the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc., Museum and administrative facility. The city provides maintenance and upkeep on the facility, and payment of electrical, water and waste disposal services as well. The value of this facility to us is far in excess of \$2,000.00 annually, for which we are deeply appreciative. Thank you, City of DeFuniak Springs.

# **The Ghent and McDavid Families Of Walton County Revisited.**

**With a Contribution by Ralph Ghent,  
Mt. Airy, Maryland.**

Edited by  
Sam Carnley

I recently received an Email from Ralph Ghent, of Mt. Airy, Maryland, thanking me for the information provided in the Walton Relations & History newsletters regarding the Cawthons and John and Mary Ghent. The newsletter of February 2018 contained an article titled “Ghentsville,” about the mail robber, John Ghent. He had been arrested and charged with theft of U. S. mail. The U. S. Marshall held him under guard on the third-floor of a hotel in Pensacola, because he did not trust the local jail to be secure enough to hold him. When the guards momentarily took their eyes off Ghent, he plunged through a window and plummeted three stories to the ground. Although surviving the fall initially, the severity of his injuries caused his death a few hours later.

It is gratifying to learn that the newsletter is being read by people living outside of Walton County, who, just by chance, are related to characters appearing in our newsletter articles. Ralph is a descendant of Fielding Ghent, a brother of John. This is not to suggest that Fielding played a role in his brother’s criminality, because there is no known evidence of it. The focus of this article is not on that, but rather on the relationship of the Ghent and McDavid families, of which I previously had no knowledge.

The connection between the two families seems to have begun with the marriage of Daniel Ghent (1777-1853) and Mary McDavid (1779-1825) in South Carolina, possibly in the Greenville area in the late 1700s. The families lived in the same area of the state and sometimes appeared in land records together. James McDavid, John McDavid and Fielding Gent are listed as witnesses on the “Will of Strother D. Shumate,” of Greenville District, South Carolina, dated August 3, 1834.

Daniel and Mary were the parents of Fielding (1806-1882), Nimrod (1809-1860), John (1810-1858) and Sarah Monima (1814-1881). John Allen McDavid was born in 1774 in Greenville South Carolina and died in 1838 in what was then Walton County, Florida. He is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, in Baker, Okaloosa County, Florida. John Allen and Mary McDavid may

have been siblings, making John the uncle of Fielding and they may be the witnesses of those names listed on the Strother Shumate will of 1834.

John Allen McDavid married Nancy Acker. Their children were:

Richmond Terrell (1805-1871), m. Sarah McCaskill.

Mary A., m. Jeremiah Sevell (post master of Almirante P. O. as of 5 May 1828)

David (nothing else known of him)

Melinda, m. Jesse Mims

Joel Acker (1799-1854), m. Margaret Earle.

Lucinda, m. Abner or Joab Gaines.

John Allen Jr., m. Samantha Horn (Eli Horn postmaster of Almirante as of November 25, 1846. Possibly the father of Samantha).

A former name of today's Lake Jackson, straddling the state line between Paxton, Florida and Florala, Alabama, was McDavid's Pond. John Lee Williams called it that in his 1827 book, "A View of West Florida." Richmond T. McDavid appeared on the Walton County census of 1830 as a resident of the eastern part of the county. This suggests that Richmond T. was the namesake of McDavid's Pond as identified by John Lee Williams in his book. It is very likely that Richmond and John Ghent were first cousins, which may explain why Ghent moved from Santa Rosa County to that part of Walton County shortly before Florida statehood in 1845.

Although the lake later acquired the name McDade's Pond or lake, no documentation has been found explaining such a change in the name. It was suggested that McDavid later changed his name to McDade, but as Find a Grave memorial # 12328241 for Richmond T. McDavid's burial at Coon Hill Cemetery in Santa Rosa County, Florida, shows, he took the name McDavid to his grave, having never changed it to McDade. What seems more likely is that the McDade name came about due to the erroneous spelling of McDavid.

Ralph Ghent's email is shown on the next page, followed by a copy of the Shumate will and photos of a knife made by Fielding Ghent that is now owned by Ralph, who is Fielding's third great grandson.

Ralph Ghent <ghentrk@gmail.com>

Mar 8, 2022, 5:20 PM  
(4 days ago)

to me, Ralph

Hi Sir,

I am Ralph Ghent, COL(Ret), US Army, and a direct descendant of Fielding Ghent (brother of John Ghent, who married Mary G. Cawthon and settled near Lake Jackson).

My line is:

My father = Frederick L. Ghent

My GF = Ralph Taylor Ghent

My GGF = Robert Taylor Ghent

**My GGGF = Fielding Ghent, who had brothers John and Nimrod.**

My GGGGF = Daniel Thomas Ghent

I have discovered your wonderful research and history in several Walton County Heritage articles re: the Cawthon's and John+Mary Ghent. Much of your great information jives with handed-down stories in my family regarding the irascible John Ghent, his theft as Postmaster in Ghentsville (Paxton), his demise leaping from a jail window and his 2nd burial upright (or seated) with pistols in hand (thanks to his loyal servant, Chap, who retrieved him from his first burial in/nearby Milton (where I believe Nimrod was residing at that time).

I must confess that I did not know that John Ghent was a State legislator (Florida), so your writings on that were very interesting.

The family stories did tell of Mary G. Cawthon and children leaving after John's mail-theft charges and death, and resettling in Texas. The explanation for the Texas move may be understood when we see that there was a half-brother of John Ghent who went west to Milam, Texas and settled his family there. It may be that Mary G. Cawthon joined that other Ghent to get a change of scenery, so to speak. That step-brother was Henry Clay Ghent (1831-1912). Henry Clay was a son of Daniel Ghent's 2nd wife (Nancy Wilson, 1796-1872), and he was a surgeon in the Confederate Army who later became a prominent physician in Bell County Texas.

I do have one question-mark in my lineage that perhaps you may be of help, sir. Of course, John Ghent's father was Daniel Thomas Ghent and Daniel's first wife (and the mother of John, Fielding and Nimrod) was a Mary McDavid (McDade?), as best as I may discern. But there is scant info on her. I do not know if it is Mary McDavid or Mary McDade ... and if she was possibly a descendant of another Florida family. If there's any chance you may have further info on her, then I would greatly appreciate it.

In closing, my wife and I have a small reunion planned in October in Destin, FL with a few of my retired military classmates from West Point (Class of 1975). As part of our trip to that area, we aim to take a few days and visit Florida, Lake Jackson area, Paxton, Milton, Brewton, and maybe run up to Dothan to trace some of John and Fielding's paths. I am most interested in seeing if there is a mound or gravesite with John Ghent buried upright and to see where John lived and the site of "Ghentsville." If by any chance you may be free in October, we would be most grateful to meet you and chat about John Ghent. I could show you a beautiful pocket knife that was handmade by Fielding Ghent and it is beautifully inscribed on the case with, "Fielding Ghent, Florida, 1864."

~ 3 ~

Again, many thanks for your thorough articles!

Respectfully,  
Ralph Ghent  
Cell: (240) 446-3943  
Mt. Airy, Maryland

WILL OF  
STROTHER D. SHUMATE

SOUTH CAROLINA GREENVILLE DISTRICT

I Strother D. Shumate being sound in mind and memory and bearing in mind the uncertainty of human life do make this my last will and testament first I bequeath my soul to God who gave it secondly I bequeath (after my funeral expenses and debts are paid) all my personal and real estate to my wife for her to enjoy during her lifetime or widowhood. If she should marry then I wish her to have a child's part At her decease or the expiration of her widowhood, I bequeath Penelope my youngest daughter two hundred dollars the balance to be equally divided between my nine Children.

I do appoint my oldest son Lewis H. Shumate and my wife Anna my Executors.

Given from under my hand and seal this 3d August 1834.

James McDavid  
John McDavid  
Fielding Gent

Strother D. Shumate (L.S.)

Probated December 8, 1834  
Watson O.G.D.

Recorded in Will Book B- Page 135

Apt. 7 File No. 432



Pictured above is a pocket knife hand-made by Fielding Ghent, of Milton, Florida in 1864. Fielding was the 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather of Ralph Ghent who is the owner of the knife. Photos by Ralph Ghent.

# **DeFuniak Springs Seeks National Historic Landmark Designation**

DATE: 3-10-22

TO: Editors, Program Directors, Businesses, Individuals

Contact: Melinda Henderson (850-830-7663), Ex. Dir. Forward DeFuniak, Inc

FOR: Immediate Release

LEAD: DeFuniak Springs Seeks National Historic Landmark Designation

Status as a National Historic Landmark is the highest, most exclusive, official recognition that the United States government bestows on its historic resources. Such a designation can greatly aid the economic development of an area. The City of DeFuniak Springs and Forward DeFuniak, Inc. are assembling a nomination packet for submission to the National Park Service seeking designation of the Chautauqua Campus/Area as a National Historic Landmark. The following progress has been made in this multi-year process.

1. A Core Working Group of 7 members nominated by the city, Forward DeFuniak and the community was formed. The City Manager, the Mayor, and the President of Forward DeFuniak are ex officio members of the group. Two meetings to determine duties and task assignments have been followed by telephone and e-mail contacts to track both accomplishments and needs. An additional group of community volunteers is being identified to assist in the process.

2. The Core group is identifying and collecting published histories of the Chautauqua movement in the US, the town's founding, and the local Chautauqua movement (1885-1930). With scarce resources found, it is attempting to identify the history of any Chautauqua activities locally from 1930 to the present. A national impact, rather than simply local, regional and/or state level impact, must be documented for success.

3. Xeroxed documents, books, and a four-page list of references to be used in the nomination, stand approximately two feet tall. Since all structures and sites in the defined area must be studied, the nomination document is expected to be several hundred pages long. It will be reviewed by historians across the United States before final review by the Secretary of the Interior.

Watch for follow-up articles on the progress of this important project. Core Group meetings are announced on the city web site and are open to the public. A slide presentation is available to groups or organizations outlining advantages and disadvantages, etc. of seeking this designation. Call 850-830-7663. You can also volunteer!