



WALTON

RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 14, Issue 9

Walton County Heritage Association

August 2023



PAXTON
FLORIDA

Walton County Heritage
Museum

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: 850-401-2060

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

Email: heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com

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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. Walton County Heritage Museum, with sign painted 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 varying amounts for donors as shown on attached Annual Donor/Member Application for 2023. Donor logos are also shown on the attached Donor page in the monthly newsletter.

Annual Member/Sponsor Application 2023; See attached.

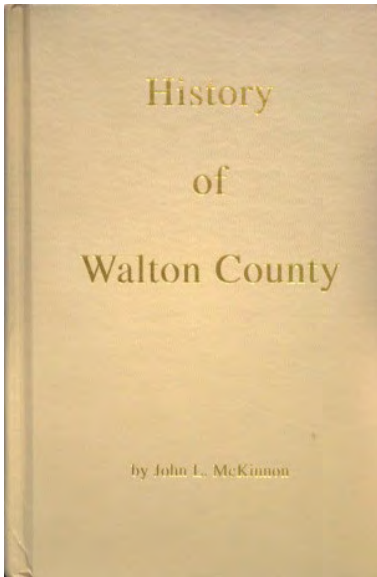
Member Benefits:

- 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

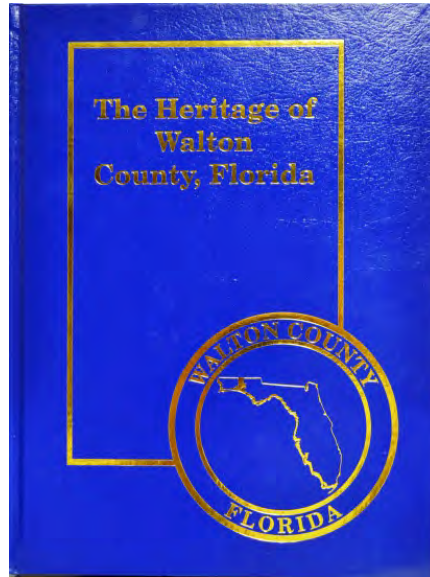
Our most popular books



History of Walton County

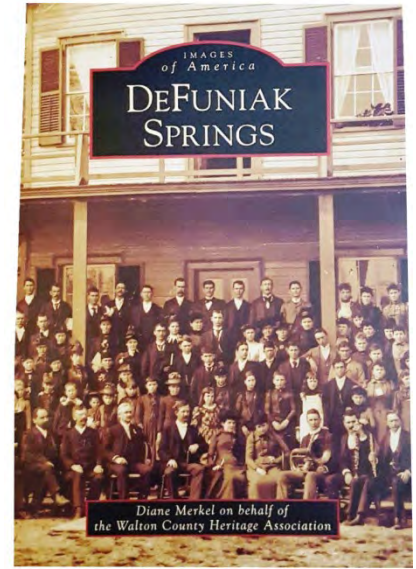
by John L. McKinnon. The Museum has sold out of this book and it is out of print, but it is available at these links;

<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: (Reduced) \$40.00
 Tax: 2.80
 Shipping: 8.00
 Total by mail **\$50.80**



Images of America, DeFuniak Springs. Item code **B06.**

By Diane Merkel. Price, including tax,

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MAIL ORDER FORM

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

Customer Name: _____

Address: _____

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Qty	Description	Item Code	Price Each*	Amount
	The Heritage of Walton County, Florida	B13	50.80	
	Images of America, DeFuniak Springs.	B06	31.53	

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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. 850-401-2060

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

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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.

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OUR SPONSORS for 2023

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

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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 2023. 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.

A Note From the Editor

Bruce Cosson and I have taken on the project of writing a new history of Walton County. We hope to have it completed by the county's bicentennial anniversary on December 29, 2024. As each chapter is completed, we will feature it as a newsletter article.

We have completed chapter 2 and accordingly, we are presenting it as this month's newsletter article. As always, in the interest of making our articles as factual as we can to the extent of our knowledge, please let us know of any errors, mistakes, etc. you find in them. Thank you.

Sam Carnley

From WCHA President, Marie Hinson

We have two announcements from the president as follows:

- 1. The September 2023 WCHA board meeting has been canceled.**
- 2. The October 2023 meeting will be held on the 28th at Ghentsville Park in Paxton. If you are familiar with the area, go ahead and drive directly there. If you are not so familiar, please meet at 11:00 am at the museum and we will caravan to the park as a group. We are not planning a shared lunch so please bring your own food and drinks.**

Thank you.

Sam Carnley

2 The First Spanish Period 1513-1763

The recorded history of what would become the United States began on April 2, 1513 when Juan Ponce de Leon stepped ashore on the Atlantic coast of the newly discovered land he christened Florida and claimed for the Spanish Crown.¹

Another Spaniard, Panfilo De Narvaez, followed Ponce De Leon in attempting to explore and settle Florida in 1528. Due to storms, Indian attacks, starvation, and just plain bad luck, his flotilla of 5 ships with 600 men and 42 horses came to a disastrous end in which all but 4 men died. After wandering lost for 8 years, the men found their way to New Spain, now known as Mexico, in 1536.

One of them, Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, later wrote an account of the expedition which he published in 1542 after returning to Spain. In the account, he wrote of skirting the Florida Gulf Coast in make-shift barges searching for drinking water and food. Along the way, they passed just off shore of the geographic areas that later became the present-day counties of the panhandle.²

His description of what he saw represents the first known historical record of the counties although they would not become known by name for almost 3 more centuries. It therefore seems fair to say Walton County's history began in 1528 and credit Cabeza De Vaca as its first historian.

In 1558, sailing under the auspices of Viceroy Velasco, Captain Guido de Lavazares described a bay on the panhandle Gulf coast Robert Weddell believed to be the Choctawhatchee, which Lavazares named Ancon de Velasco, in honor of the Viceroy.³

The County's next historical record also came from the Spaniards in their account of an Apalachee attack against the Chiscas in 1677.⁴ The circumstances leading to that encounter arose in the mid-1670s after Spanish Franciscan friars had established a string of missions in Indian villages stretching from St. Augustine to the site of today's Tallahassee. Apalachee Indians inhabited the area and by 1675 the Friars had established a church in their principal village they called Mission San Luis de Talimali.

The Apalachee epitomized the Fort Walton Culture introduced in chapter 1. They practiced extensive agriculture in which they grew maize (corn), beans, squash, pumpkins and sunflowers. They also grew gourds for use as food containers, dishes, storage, musical instruments and purple martin nests.⁵

The martin's relationship with Native Americans is so ancient that no record exists as to its beginning. It is a symbiosis many thousands of years old made possible when gourd seeds somehow crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Africa to the Americas. Aboriginals began

cultivating them around 7,000 years ago and “. . .Gourd agriculture spread northward into what is now the southeastern United States where, it is believed, Indians first erected "trees" full of gourds for purple martins to nest. . .”

The benefit of the nesting gourds to the birds is obvious. The benefits to the Indians were two-fold. The birds consumed mosquitoes as well as insects harmful to planted crops. They also chased away crows and other birds that might harm their nestlings. Coincidental to that, chasing the undesirable birds kept them from eating the seeds and vegetables planted and growing in the fields.

Settlers, like the Indians recognized the benefits of the birds and adopted the custom of putting up nesting gourds for them and the tradition continues in Walton County today.

The Apalachee no doubt welcomed the spring arrival of the martins while they busied themselves in preparing their fields for the new year, beginning anew the seasonal activities of crop planting, hoeing, harvesting, preserving and storing of their agriculture products, around which they organized their lives.

Although less dependent on hunting-gathering as earlier cultures were, they still took advantage of wild game such as bear, deer, turkey, rabbits, raccoon, squirrels, fish, turtles, alligators and eels, etc. Wild plants they harvested in season included pecans, walnuts, hickory nuts, chincapins, black berries, mulberries, persimmons, plums, peaches, cherries, chestnuts, acorns and muscadine grapes. Also poke weed leaves, green briar root (tubers) and pig weed, to name a few.⁶

They lived in a complex hierarchically structured social setting headed by chiefs and other elites. They built mounds for ceremonial and burial purposes and on which they erected residences of tribal leaders. These represented the most salient characteristics among others too numerous to mention making up the myriad details of the everyday lives of these people which defined their culture.⁷

In 1676 and 77, unknown hostiles began attacking the Apalachee villages in and around Mission San Luis. They came under cover of darkness which made it impossible for the Apalachees to find out who they were. Lieutenant Governor and military Captain, Juan Fernandez de Florencia, commanded a squad of Spanish infantry garrisoned at the mission.

The Apalachee leaders appealed to him and the Governor of the St. Augustine province, who held jurisdiction over the Apalachee villages, for assistance in protecting against the night raiders. But the Spaniards had other priorities they considered more urgent and dismissed the request.

Left with no other alternatives to end the depredations committed against them, the Apalachees resolved to take care of the matter themselves. They had learned through informants that the Chiscas were the perpetrators and could be found at a palisaded village several days march to the west. Deciding to mount an expedition against them, the Apalachee chiefs

raised a militia of just under 200 men, consisting primarily of Apalachees along with a few of the Christian Chacatos living among them recruited as guides.

The Chacatos were refugees from an uprising in their villages west of the Chipola River in today's Jackson County. Like the Apalachee, they were of the Fort Walton culture among whom the friars had established missions in 1674. But a failed plot to murder one of the friars fractured the tribe. To escape the ensuing turmoil, some fled north to the southern part of today's Alabama, a few joined the Chiscas at their palisaded village and others sought refuge among the Apalachee at Mission San Luis.⁸

The expatriated Chacatos seemed never to return to the Chipola villages although some archaeologists consider that area contiguous with the eastern edge of today's Walton County as their indigenous home. Other historians questioned that view, despite the fact that the Chacatos guiding the militia on their march to the palisade seemed to know where they were going, as if they had been there before.

Perhaps that justified thinking of Walton County as ancestral to the Chacatos, the name by which the Spaniards consistently identified them in their records. Later historians identify them as the Chatot for reasons which remain unclear.

To underscore the importance the Apalachee attached to their farming, they put off launching the expedition until the seasonal hoeing of the fields could be done. With that laborious, but necessary chore finished, the militia set out on 2 September 1677 in search of the Chiscas. Of special note regarding the expedition; it consisted of no one but Indians, conceived, planned and executed by them alone.

The Spaniards limited their involvement to the provision of 30 harquebuses and ammunition in augmentation of the militia's archery, giving the Apalachees the edge over an enemy of superior numbers armed with archery only. Beyond that, no Spanish soldiers joined the militia as it marched off to battle.

After a march of 18 days, they found the palisade and succeeded in defeating its defenders and burning the structure and houses within to the ground with a loss of 5 dead and 40 wounded. Lingering at the site a few days to replenish their provisions and attend their wounded, they began the return trip to San Luis where they arrived on 5 October, 1677, some 33 days after leaving it.

Shortly after their return they gave a detailed verbal report of the expedition to Captain Fernandez de Florencia on which he prepared a written narrative. They described landmarks they passed of sufficient detail in the narrative to suggest the palisade's possible location as on the east bank of Big Alaqua Creek in the vicinity of its confluence with Little Alaqua Creek a short distance north-west of present-day Freeport.⁹

References in the narrative seem to suggest a long association between the Chacatos and the Pensacolas. Archaeologists believe the latter to be indigenous to an area stretching

from just inside Walton County's western border to Mobile Bay in Alabama. The affiliation of the two tribes may further indicate Walton County as a part of the area indigenous to the Chacato as previously noted.

If not indigenous, then surely a decades or generations-long connection with the geographic area of Walton County and the Pensacola tribe by the Chacatos is indicated by the intimate knowledge they seemed to possess of the area as the Fernandez de Florencia document shows. At one point appeared the passage, ". . . we picked up a trail which comes from the sea to the settlement of the Chiscas which the Chacatos and Pensacolas who had settled by the sea had opened." This information came from the Chacatos, because the Apalachees had no previous knowledge of the area west of the Chipola River.

Further on came this, "We dispatched three men in front of us so that they might search for the trail which led to the Chiscas, because we overheard the Chacatos saying that we must be close from the woods that they recognized." And, finally, this, "And then we noticed that the trail was well beaten down from the people who lived towards the sea who had gathered in the palisade of the Chacatos, Pensacolas and Chiscas."

Possibly relevant to these passages, especially the last one, is information provided by Gordon Willey in his survey of Walton County archaeological sites in the 1940s. He found three on the east side of Alaqua Bayou lined up from the head of the Bayou to its mouth on the Bay. He identified them as Weeden Island, Fort Walton and Pensacola cultures, the time periods of which were 100-1,000 AD and 1,000 to European Contact, respectively.¹⁰ As the attack on the palisade occurred well within the European Contact period, the Indians involved were of the Fort Walton and Pensacola cultures.

If the palisade stood on the east side of Alaqua Creek near Free Port as it now appears, the archaeological sites Willey described on the east side of Alaqua Bayou could have been the villages of the people who lived towards, or by the sea, as described by de Florencia.

According to modern maps, the distance from the confluence of the two creeks to the head of Alaqua Bayou, the nearest place connecting to the sea (Choctawhatchee Bay), is about four miles. That equates to a leisurely walk of a little over an hour between the two locations for people from the palisade and the villages to exchange visits with each other.

Taken together, the Fernandez de Florencia document and Willey's archaeological reports provide strong evidence favoring the Alaqua Creek location for the Chisca palisade. It may, in fact, be sufficiently strong to justify an archaeological investigation of the immediate area to conclusively settle the question of the palisade location one way or the other.

If it proves to be the site, a full-scale reproduction of the palisade with village enclosed could be constructed as a tourist attraction. It would become the bookend of a Native American heritage trail stretching from the similarly reconstructed Mission San Luis site in Tallahassee, now a state park. The two locations would symbolize the beginning and ending points of the

Apalachee expedition almost three and a half centuries ago and memorialize a Native American event of significant interest in the early history of Walton County.

Walton County historians are indebted to the Spaniards for still another record of events impacting the early history of the county. It is the story of a second expedition in 1693, led that time by a Spaniard in command of soldiers. Indians accompanied them as well, consisting of Apalachees with Chacatos again in the role as guides.¹¹

Their march began at Mission San Luis de Apalachee, formerly known as San Luis de Talimali, at the time of the Chisca expedition. But their objective involved a more ambitious trek taking them the entire length of the panhandle to Pensacola Bay, a distance of 200 miles.

Recently appointed governor of the St. Augustine Province of the Spanish Territory of Florida, Don Laureano de Torres y Ayala, received a royal decree from the King ordering him to make the overland expedition.

Admiral Don Andres de Pez, likewise received orders to sail to Pensacola Bay and lie at anchor until Governor Torres y Ayala notified him of his arrival by land so that the two could join forces and carry out the instructions mandated in the royal decree.

Under orders similar to those of Admiral de Pez, Don Francisco Milan Tapia received instructions to sail along the panhandle Gulf Coast from Cazina Point near the mouth of St. Marks River to Pensacola Bay. His instructions were to describe, "the shores, soundings, rivers, and bearings," he observed. On reaching the Bay, he would alert de Pez and Ayala of his arrival by smoke signals.

The journal he kept as documentation that he carried out the instructions given him has been preserved. In it he noted that he sailed on June 18, 1693 and arrived at the Bay on July 31st. A passage recorded in the journal relates to the geographic location later becoming Walton County. On June 28th, he writes:

I sailed two leagues from the anchorage which I left this morning and in the course of these two leagues west-northwest, discovered a small opening with its entrance northwest, east of this mouth is a large sand dune; north of the latter projects another piece of land covered by a growth of tall pine; a tiny level point of white sand lies west of this opening.

When one is on a northeast and southwest line with these sand dunes, the western tip of land shuts off the entrance; the latter is concealed by the shadow of the sand dune itself and could not be seen; the channel of this opening is close to a large dune, judging by what the Indian pilot told me.

A river called the Chicasses disembogues (discharges into) on the northeast side, and the sound extending to Pensacola Bay begins at this opening.¹²

Anyone familiar with the south side of Choctawhatchee Bay should recognize the above describes Santa Rosa Inlet (East Pass), Santa Rosa Island and Sound and the Bay itself. The Chicasses River is obviously the Choctawhatchee which empties into the Bay where Tapia indicated. The Indian pilot mentioned likely came from either the Pensacola or Chacato tribe.

Tapia would submit his report containing the above information to Ayala at Pensacola Bay on August 1, 1693. The Governor set out on the expedition at the end of which he would rendezvous with Tapia on June 7th. 1693. Accompanying him were the Franciscan priests, Friars Rodrigo de la Barreda and Pedro Galindez.¹³ Both Friar Barreda and the Governor journalized their observations along the way, and the journals were preserved as documentation of the expedition.

The pack train Ayala led consisted of more than seventy horses with seventy-four Apalachee Indian wranglers and a company of Spanish infantry for protection. The 10th found him on the west bank of the Apalachicola River he crossed the previous evening. At the Choctaw (Chacato) village where he overnighted, he recruited five guides he hoped to be sufficiently competent to get him where he needed to go.¹⁴

On June 12, the expedition arrived at the deserted Chacato villages site of San Nicolas west of the Chipola River, which sat by an immense cavern. Barreda, familiar with the place as the priest of a failed mission church there in 1674, described the grotto as spacious enough to lodge 200 men.¹⁵ Going forward, the Governor decided to send a small party ahead to scout and clear a path for the main body of the expedition to follow. Friar Barreda volunteered to lead the party consisting of five soldiers and twenty Indians.

Departing ahead of the expedition the next morning, on the 13th, Barreda and his crew cleared a path as they went making it easier to travel for the Governor and his men following with the pack horses a day later.

On the morning of June 15th, Barreda arrived at a large river he thought would require a boat to cross. Historians have identified the river as the Choctawhatchee which placed him in present-day Holmes County. As to the whereabouts of his arrival at the river, he probably came to it either just below or a little above today's Florida state line with Alabama. That is the conclusion drawn from the landmarks and direction of travel described in his journal and more or less corroborated in the Governor's journal.¹⁶

Barreda lacked a boat to get him across the river, but nearby he saw large trees suitable for making one. Wasting no time, he ordered his men to cut one down, which he called a baria tree, and begin fashioning it into a dugout canoe. The late archaeologist John Hann, an expert translator between English and Spanish, believed baria to be the Spanish term for cypress tree.¹⁷

Work on the boat continued into the next day when the Governor arrived with the rest of the expedition. He ordered his men to join Barreda's already working on the boat to expedite its completion as soon as possible.

By the evening of the 19th, they had it done and in the river ready for crossing the next day. Barreda and the Governor neglected to record any details of the boat by way of description, much to the disappointment of present-day historians. If they had, it might have been identified as the dug-out found on the river described as follows:

Reportedly, the largest dug-out canoe found in North America was found near the mouth of Choctawhatchee River in 1965. This canoe, with a small section of one end broken off, was 46 feet long. It was displayed at the Barrett's Store in Point Washington for some time and was later bought by the owner of the Indian Springs Museum at Tallulah Falls, Georgia. In 1971 it was on display in a museum in Michigan.¹⁸

A canoe of that description is what Ayala would have needed to transport the loads burdening his 75 pack horses across the river in an expeditious manner. Efforts to track down the present location of the canoe have thus far been unsuccessful.

On the morning of the 20th, the men of the expedition divested the horses of their packs, harnesses and saddles, loaded them on the boat and ferried them across the river, which took many trips back and forth to accomplish. With the packs successfully across, the men ferried over next, and finally, they swam the horses over to complete the crossing. Ayala named the river, Santa Rosa, which his guides mistakenly told him emptied into Pensacola Bay. This may explain the name Santa Rosa appearing on some Spanish and British maps for Choctawhatchee Bay.¹⁹

When they had finished reloading the packs on the horses, sufficient time remained of the day to continue on a while. They soon found the ground in their path so boggy however, that the effort expended in negotiating it left them exhausted. After making very little head way, they gave up and pitched camp for the night, hoping for easier going in the morning.

On the morning of the 21st, they resumed their march to the west-south-west. Although a more hospitable terrain made for easier travel than the previous day, the hot June weather soon wore the men down. Desirous of giving them relief, the Governor brought them to an early halt at the edge of a shady creek and pitched camp for the night.

Notable landmarks recorded by both he and Barreda included hills with mineral bearing stones of a color appearing to contain iron, and chestnut trees near the creek. The Governor only alluded to the chestnut trees along with pines and oaks. Barreda, on the other hand, seemed taken with the chestnut trees, about which he wrote, ". . . we found a large number of sturdy chestnut trees. If they had been in season, we would have gathered a good many nuts."²⁰

Both men estimated the distance traveled that day as about four leagues. The previous day, the tedious going after crossing the Choctawhatchee limited their travel to about a league. That brought the combined distance traveled from the river over the two days to a total of five leagues. Five Spanish leagues at 2.60 miles each calculates to 13 miles.

On modern highway maps, the distance from Choctawhatchee River to the Holmes County west boundary line immediately south of the Alabama state line is twelve miles. On Walton County maps, the distance from Darlington in the north east corner of the county, east to the Holmes County line is a little more than a mile. Near Darlington on the map is a Chestnut Creek at a distance of a little more than thirteen miles west of the Choctawhatchee River which corresponds closely to the distance between the creek and the river as calculated by Barreda and the Governor.

The temptation is strong to jump to the conclusion that Chestnut Creek at Darlington is the same as identified in the 1693 expedition. Making that jump even more tempting is the route taken by a later expedition which approximated the same path and arrived at the same geographic location shown for Chestnut Creek.

General Andrew Jackson headed that expedition which invaded Spanish Florida at the end of 1817 to punish the Indians there for depredations against American settlers in neighboring Georgia. After dealing with the Indians along the Apalachicola River, he marched toward Pensacola intent on dealing likewise with the Spaniards, whom he had learned, were harboring some of the Indians he pursued.

In early 1818, his march to Pensacola brought him to the former site in today's Jackson County thought to be the Chacato village of San Nicolas. Later historians however, believe Jackson stopped at a cave on the site of today's Waddell's Mill Pond, situated a short distance from San Nicolas.²¹

Archaeologists have determined that both sites were inhabited by people of the Fort Walton and earlier cultures but Waddell was abandoned earlier than the time of Barreda's 1674 mission, eliminating it as the San Nicolas site.²² From there, Jackson marched to the Choctawhatchee River, closely following the footsteps of Ayala's expedition 125 years earlier.

Arriving at the river at about the same spot as Ayala, in the vicinity of today's highway 2 bridge, he found as Ayala had, that he needed a boat to cross the stream. How he accomplished it is left to the reader's imagination, because he found his way across without any explanation of record. Although he noticed an abundance of cypress trees, he apparently did not attempt to build his own dug-out canoe as Ayala did.²³

On the west side of the river, he found the same wet terrain described by Ayala, which made difficult going.²⁴ As he marched along, he saw rolling hills, "sprinkled at the surface with small rounded sandstone-like gravel (the color of this sandstone resembles the reddish tint of rusted iron). The yellow and red soil is seen only in the rolling country."²⁵ This echoed

the Ayala reference to, “one little hill which looked to us as if composed of some iron mineral because of the color of the soil and the various stones we found on it.”²⁶

Newspaper articles in 1962 and 63 confirmed the presence of iron minerals in the vicinity of north Holmes County and nearby Geneva, Alabama. Studies of those and other areas in the Choctawhatchee-Pea River basin were made to determine the feasibility of iron ore mining.²⁷

Over forty occurrences of ore were identified around Geneva, but none were reported in Holmes County. Of those found near Geneva, only one yielded commercial, but apparently unprofitable production. Those disappointing results cooled further interest in mining and talk of it faded away, leaving reports of the minerals Ayala and Jackson observed as nothing more than false hopes.²⁸

As the path taken by Jackson is described, “The route apparently ran slightly south of and parallel to the Alabama-Florida border, perhaps not far from the present Sweet Gum Head and Camp Creek communities, thus entering what’s now Walton County a little north of Darlington and northwestward past Gaskin.”²⁹

The two expeditions, documented as following the same path and entering Walton County at the same location leaves little doubt that Chestnut Creek at Darlington is the same one on which Ayala camped the night of 21 June, 1693. On this basis, Walton County can justify the erection of a historical marker at the Highway 2 bridge across the creek identifying it as the site of not one, but two separate historical events 125 years apart.

On departing the Chestnut Creek area, Ayala continued in a southwesterly direction possibly taking him through today’s New Harmony, Cluster Springs vicinity and exiting the southwest corner of the county at about the confluence of Pond Creek and Shoal River.

Directly west of that point in today’s Okaloosa County is the little community of Dorcas, where in the late 1800s William McCallum plowed up in his field an object he thought to be an Indian tomahawk. Many decades later, after William had died, his grandson Martel found himself in possession of the object, having inherited it from his father, Willie.³⁰

Although his family still called it a tomahawk, Martel began questioning that assumption. He had always thought Indians made their weapons of stone; not metal like the object he had known all his life as a tomahawk. After making a few inquiries, he learned that the object appeared to be a bronze Spanish Battle Axe, probably dating from the 16th or 17th century.

A reporter from the Pensacola News Journal wrote about the relic in an article published in 1967, with a photo included. Martel wondered about it for many years afterwards, hoping that someday he would learn more about its history.

He recalled that his father always told him to keep it in the family, but he did not comply with that wish. At some point after the battle axe article appeared in the paper, Martel donated



Spanish halberd plowed up in his field by William A. McCallum of Dorcas, Okaloosa County, Florida, either in late 1800s or early 1900s. Photo by Ira Brock, Pensacola News Journal (Pensacola, Florida), 26 February, 1967, Sun, Page 43. Used with permission.

it to the Smithsonian Museum, where it apparently remains today. In 1985, Martel died at the young age of 63, having never fulfilled his desire to learn the axe's origin.

Judging from its photograph in the newspaper, it is a type of hand weaponry categorized as a halberd. The armies of many European countries used them for centuries. Pictured below right is the author's graphic rendition of the halberd in its intact form based on historical descriptions.³¹

It has a hook or thorn on the back side of the blade for grappling mounted combatants and dragging them off their horses onto the ground. In length it was usually 5 to 6 feet long. Troops who used the weapon were called halberdiers (alabardero in Spanish).³² The Spaniards used them in European campaigns as late as 1656, 37 years before Ayala came along.

Ayala's soldiers carried muskets and pistols, and probably swords. If they carried halberds, he did not mention them. It seems unlikely the Indians carried them because in their role as laborers and horse handlers, they had no need for them. It is conceivable however, that halberds among an assortment of other weapons were present on the expedition, even though undocumented. It is also possible a source other than the Ayala expedition left the relic for McCallum to find two centuries later.

If he found it before 1900, he resided in Walton County at the time. Evidence of this comes from that year's census of the Walton County, Shoal River Precinct No. 7, which listed him as a 52-year-old head of a household who farmed for a living. The area remained in Walton County until it became part of Okaloosa County on its creation in 1915.

On departing the Dorcas vicinity, Ayala continued to Pensacola Bay, which he reached in early July. Interestingly, he reported seeing a small number of buffalo along the way.

Within a few years after Ayala's expedition, Florida's Spanish Mission system fell on hard times leading to its disintegration. The War of the Spanish Succession broke out in 1701 pitting Britain and Spain against each other. In 1704, James Moore of British Colonial South Carolina, led a large force of men including a thousand or more Creek Indians against the Spanish missions in Florida. They overwhelmed the Spanish and Indian defenders, killing hundreds of Apalachee men, women and children and routing the few Spaniards they did not kill.



The death and destruction they brought to the missions so demoralized the Spanish priests and their flocks that they fled in fear of their lives. Many were enslaved by the Moore forces and taken to South Carolina to work on plantation. Moore, a slave merchant himself, profited handsomely off the Indians he sold into slavery.³³

The Spaniards, finding themselves helpless against the English invaders, gathered up as many of the Apalachees and other Christian Indians as possible and sailed with them to Cuba. Those left behind fled to other places within and beyond Florida. Some went to South Carolina, Creek territories in Alabama and other points north. Others went west to Pensacola, Mobile and Louisiana. Virtually none of them would return to their ancestral Florida homes.³⁴

For many decades afterwards, the interior of Spanish West Florida remained home to very few native people except around Pensacola. Following the Moore attacks in 1704, a large contingent of Apalachees from the San Luis and surrounding missions, along with Chacatos and others, fled en mass to the west Florida province.

Numbering just under one thousand souls, they drove what remained of their cattle herd with them, probably along a path closely following that taken by the Ayala expedition of 1693 and Jackson in 1818. But upon entering today's Walton County along the Alabama state line, they probably followed Jackson's path around present day Lake Jackson and struck the same "Red Ground Trail" he followed to Pensacola. This is the path shown on the Stuart-Purcell map as leading from the Choctawhatchee River to Mt. Pleasant on the north side of Escambia Bay.

This is highly speculative because no record of their route is known to exist. But that seemed the general path of a foot trail Native Americans used for centuries, and later expeditions attempted to follow with varying degrees of success. The San Luis Apalachee procession likely crossed the Escambia River a few miles north of its mouth on the Bay and marched south to the vicinity of Pensacola.

They remained there only temporarily because the Spanish officials could not guarantee their safety from the hostile Indians who had harried them all the way from San Luis, nor provide them with badly needed food. Disappointed with that outcome, they continued on to Mobile hoping to find a better reception from the French governed province.

Rather than continuing on to Mobile, some of them chose to remain in Pensacola and around 1718 a few of those from Mobile returned to join them. They established a mission a few miles north of Pensacola on the river they named Escambia, after a former village near San Luis de Apalachee. That name supplanted the earlier one of Rio de los Chiscas (River of the Chiscas).

John R. Swanton mentions "The Yuchi," aka the Chiscas, as follows:

. . . In 1718, we hear of a “Rio de los Chiscas,” 5 leagues from Pensacola. In the census taken in in 1761 (?), we find the “Choctaw Hatchee Eucheas” included with the Tukebahchee and “Pea Creek and other plantations” under the traders James McQueen and T. Perryman, and these are probably the Yuchi of the French census of the same period located close to the Tukebahchee and said to number 15 men. We are to infer from this that they had been settled among the Upper Creeks. Their possible connection with the Yuchi reported by Hawkins to have united with the Shawnee on Tallapoosa River has already been mentioned. We hear nothing more about them from this time on, but their name is preserved in Euchee Anna, a village in Walton County, Florida.³⁵

Swanton’s reference to Rio de los Chiscas in 1718 relates to the previously mentioned settlement of Apalachees fleeing the Moore attacks on Mission San Luis de Apalachee in 1704.

John Worth attributes the name to the Chiscas of the palisaded village the Apalachees destroyed in 1677, and locates the palisade site on the “upper Escambia-Conecuh River drainage.”³⁶ He may be correct as to the origin of the river name, but his view of the palisade’s location is not shared by others, who, for reasons previously noted, believe it stood on Alaqua Creek near Freeport.

Worth answers the question of what happened to many of the Indians whose lives were upended by Moore’s attacks on the missions east of the Apalachicola River. A great many of them, he writes, settled in and around Pensacola where they remained until again displaced by war.³⁷

The Chiscas he speculates as settling on Rio de los Chisca possibly were a splinter group of the larger body of those in flight from the destroyed palisade. Those whose name Euchee Valley in Walton County memorializes may have been a similar offshoot.

The larger number of Chiscas routed by the Apalachees returned to the village on the Chattahoochee River they occupied before moving to the palisade.³⁸ Conceivably, the 15 Eucheas Swanton mentioned as settlers among the Upper Creeks in 1761 were descendants of this group.

Those remaining on the Chattahoochee later settled among Creeks in Alabama where in in 1836 their descendants joined a Creek uprising against the white settlers in Georgia and Alabama.³⁹ A year later, Walton County would find itself embroiled with the Indians, who were ultimately defeated and removed to Oklahoma soon after.

That destination however, awaited Nariva Americans not yet born when Florida’s indigenous tribes were decimated during the troubles of the eighteenth century. Unwelcome repercussions of that troubled time lay in store for Spanish control of Florida as well.

Spain and France went to war with Britain in a European conflict known as the Seven Years War (1756-1763). At the same time France and its Indian allies fought Britain and the American colonies over disputed territories contiguous to colonial boundaries. The Americans called it the French and Indian War because that's who they fought. Events on the other side of the Atlantic remained of little concern to them as the contest on their home turf edged in their favor.

Spain did not interfere on the American front while both adversaries seemed on equal footing. But as its position grew increasingly tenuous, France asked Spain to enter the war on its side. Seeing that as an escalation, Britain retaliated by seizing the Spanish island of Cuba. The American war concluded in defeat for France and Spain, frustrating their territorial ambitions, not only for land they did not own, but much of that they previously did.

In the 1763 treaty ending hostilities, France lost land it claimed east of the Mississippi River to Britain and Spain gave it Florida in exchange for their more highly prized Cuba.⁴⁰ The British governance of Florida implemented that year would bring major changes in its administrative structure as developments in the next chapter will show.

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