



WALTON

RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 15, Issue 2

Walton County Heritage Association

January 2024



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

DEPARTMENTS

Administration

President: Marie Hinson, hinsonharmony@yahoo.com

Vice President: Carolyn Brown

Treasurer: Sam Carnley

Secretary: Susan Horaist

Public Relations

Vacant

Museum Docent Coordinator

Carolyne Brown

Genealogy Society

President: Wayne Sconiers, waynesconiers@embarqmail.com

Newsletter

Editor: Sam Carnley, kienles810@gmail.com

Assistant Editor and Historian: Bruce Cosson, bac2work1958@yahoo.com

Editorial Advisor: Diane Merkel, 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.]

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.

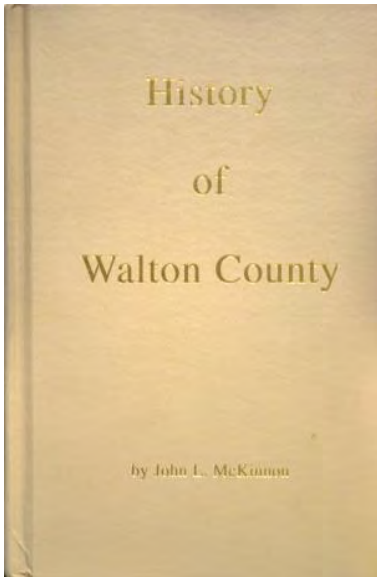
Member Benefits:

- 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

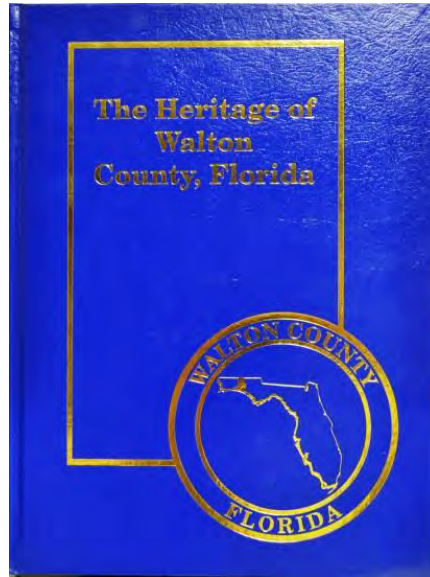
Our most popular books



History of Walton County

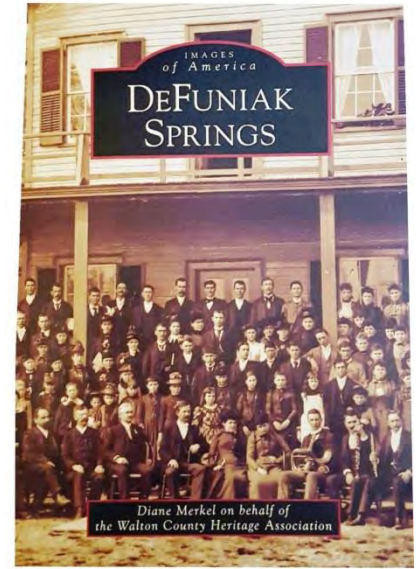
by John L. McKinnon. The Museum has sold out of this book and it is out of print, but it is available at these links;

<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, **\$23.53.**

MAIL ORDER FORM

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

Customer Name: _____

Address: _____

Ph./Email: _____

Qty	Description	Item Code	Price Each*	Amount
	The Heritage of Walton County, Florida	B13	50.80	
	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. 850-401-2060

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

Email: HeritageMuseum@bighthouse.com

ANNUAL MEMBER/SPONSOR APPLICATION 2024

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 \$ _____ * Total 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 2024

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

SPONSORS (\$100-\$499.00)

(None at present time)

SILVER SPONSORS (\$500 to \$999.00)

(None at present time)

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

(None at present)

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 recent years. 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 up-keep 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

As promised in the October newsletter, this month's newsletter features the next chapter in the sequence of the New Walton County History as completed, which is Chapter 5. We hope you find it both enlightening and enjoyable reading. 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

January kicks off our 2024 membership dues renewal month and we encourage you to continue your generous support of the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. as in the past. Please see our Annual Member/Sponsor Application for 2024 elsewhere in this newsletter for renewal options. Whatever level of member or sponsorship you choose is very much appreciated and we thank you.

5 Territorial Government And First Counties Created 1821-1844

In Pensacola on 17 July 1821, General Andrew Jackson as Commissioner of the United States officially took possession of Florida from Spain as provided by the Adams-Onís Treaty ceding the territory to the United States in 1819.¹

President James Monroe, who appointed Jackson gave him full power as governor to organize the government of the new territory. In exercise of that power, Jackson structured the government of the territory as well as all its political subdivisions existing then and in the future. He established the town limits of Pensacola, followed by creation of the city's governing council of a mayor and six aldermen. After providing for all other functions of the town government, he created the first two counties of the territory described as follows:

All the country lying between the Perdido and Suwaney rivers, with all the islands therein, shall form one county to be called Escambia. All the country lying East of the river Suwaney, and every part of the ceded territories, not designated as belonging to the former county, shall form a county to be called St. Johns.²

Soon after the creation of Escambia County, its residents clamored for annexation to neighboring Alabama. In December 1821, they petitioned the U. S. Congress to authorize the annexation but it failed to gain the necessary support.³ The list of inhabitants attached to the document included the names of several individuals later identified as residents of the future Walton County.⁴

In October 1821, Jackson left Pensacola enroute home to Tennessee. He later wrote president Monroe advising of his resignation as commissioner of the Florida transfer. Kentuckian William P. Duval, appointed by the president as Jackson's successor, arrived in Pensacola in June of 1822. On the following July 22nd, he convened the inaugural session of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida.⁵

The thirteen council members appointed by President Monroe were Henry M. Brackenridge, James C. Bronaugh, Richard Keith Call, William M. Gibson, James R. Hanham, Joseph M. Hernandez, Edmund Law, Thomas Lytle, Edgar Macon, John Miller, William Reynolds, Bernardo Siqui and Joseph M. White.

An Act the Council passed on 12 August, increased the number of counties by two. It changed the east boundary of Escambia County from the Suwanee River to the

Choctawhatchee and added the new county of Jackson with its west boundary on that river and its east boundary on the Suwanee River. That river, formerly the west boundary of St. Johns County, became the west boundary of the new county of Duval, and to the east of its described boundary all the remainder of East Florida constituted the county of St. Johns.⁶

Duval wrote Secretary of State John Quincy Adams that the Legislative Council had adjourned in September, and that he would return home temporarily to Kentucky. He further advised that future communications should be addressed to Secretary, George Walton as Acting Governor in his absence.⁷

Returning to Florida in the spring of 1823, Duval convened the second session of the Legislative Council on May 1 in St. Augustine. During the session the council on 24 June passed two Acts of historical significance. One redrew the boundaries of Jackson and Duval to accommodate the new county of Gadsden, growing the number of counties to five.

On the same date, they passed an act appointing two commissioners to locate a site for the Territorial Government centered between Pensacola and St. Augustine. By this act, the delegates would significantly reduce the distance attendees of the Legislative Council sessions were forced to travel from respective east and west ends of the territory they represented.

Named to carry out the task were Dr. William H. Simmons of St. Augustine and John Lee Williams of Pensacola. The two men concluded their work in early 1824 and submitted their report to the Governor. In March he issued a proclamation directing the next session of the Legislative Council to convene at the site selected by the commissioners on the day set by law.

The site as described placed it in Gadsden County “about a mile southwest from the old deserted fields of Tallahassee, about a half mile south of the Oke-lock-o-ny and Tallahassee trail, at a point where the old Spanish road is intersected by a small trail running southwardly.”⁸ After identifying the site, the council petitioned the U. S. government for the land needed to establish the territorial government. On 24 May 1824, an act of the U. S. Congress conveyed to the Territory a quarter section of land for the site of its capital city.⁹ A temporary structure of logs constructed on the site housed the December 1824 Legislative Council meeting.¹⁰ On 11 December the Council approved laying out the Town of Tallahassee.

On 29 December the Legislative Council carved out a portion of Gadsden County which included Tallahassee to establish the new county of Leon, named after the discoverer of Florida. Other counties established on that date included Alachua, Nassau, Mosquito, and for the territorial secretary, Walton.¹¹ The boundaries of the latter county were described as follows:

Be it further enacted That there be, and hereby is established a county to be comprehended within the following boundary lines, beginning on the boundary line at the north east corner of Escambia County, running east along the boundary line of said

Territory to a point on the said line, whence a line running south East will strike the south east side of Hickory Hill, thence a direct line to Wood's ferry on Bear creek, thence down said creek to St. Andrew's Bay, thence through the middle of said bay to the Gulf of Mexico, thence along the shores of the Gulf to the beginning, to be called Walton County.¹²

In 1825, after setting aside land for the government in Tallahassee, other public land in Leon County went up for sale. Members of the Territorial Government were among those rushing in to get the choicest parcels: Governor Duval purchased over two thousand acres, Henry Brackenridge acquired 320, James Gadsden, between two and five thousand, and Richard K. Call, over ten thousand acres.

In early April 1826, Secretary Walton traveled to Washington D. C. on territorial business. During her son's absence from Tallahassee, Dorothy Walton purchased almost a thousand acres of land. In two separate purchases in March and April, it consisted of the whole of section 4, and a quarter section each from sections 3 and 5, in township 001 south and range 001 east.¹³ The bulk of the property lay along today's U. S. Highway 27 (Apalachee Parkway) between the Capital and U. S. Highway 319 (Capital Circle). Mrs. Walton paid \$1.25 an acre for it, totaling \$999.63, but as some of the choicest residential and commercial real estate in present day Tallahassee, it is now valued in the millions of dollars.

In the meantime, the new county named for Mrs. Walton's son began taking shape. After its boundaries were laid out as noted above, the legislative council on the same day they created the county, named its first seat and judges. Pending the location of a permanent seat, Big Spring on the Choctawhatchee River would serve in that role.¹⁴ On 30 December Governor Duval appointed James Bright as presiding judge and Nicholas H. Mitchell and Peter McCaskill as associate justices.¹⁵

The location of the county seat at Big Spring became the first point of contention for county residents, the majority of whom resided in Alaqua. In a document dated 17 November 1825 from Alaqua, they petitioned the Legislative Council to recognize their community as the county seat, citing its more central location to the majority of their residents than Big Spring. The list of petitioners included 54 signatures:¹⁶

Alaqua County Seat Petition, 1825

List of Signers

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Jones, Charles S. V. | 28 Caswell, Silvanos |
| 2 Tate, Zackeriah | 29 Vaughan, Michael, Sr. |
| 3 Wisenar, John | 30 Vaughan, James |

4	Wisnar, Charles	31	Womack, William
5	Barclay, John	32	Cossety [Cassidy], Charles
6	Byrd, Michael	33	Douglass, Alex
7	Evans, David	34	Jones, D.
8	Evans, James	35	Hunter, Lebeus
9	Ramsey, Henry G.	36	Pursell, Neill
10	Taylor, Lewis	37	Pursell, Dugald
11	Byrd, John	38	Ray, Gilbert
12	Neil, John	39	Ray, Daniel
13	Pitman, Jacob	40	McGilberry, Neill
14	Wood, Whitmill	41	Pursell, John
15	Wood, James	42	Campbell, Daniel D.
16	Wood, Green	43	McQuagge, Duncan, 1762-1835
17	Wood, Hardy	44	McQuagge, Norman, 1799-1863
18	Wood, Washington	45	McCaskill, Finlay
19	Wood, Freeman	46	McDonald, Alexander
20	Bailey, William	47	McLain, Daniel
21	Clark, Elijah	48	Gordon, Ephraim
22	Jones, Thomas	49	McLean, John
23	Williams, John	50	Robeson, Neil
24	Jones, John E.	51	McLenon [McLennan], Neil
25	Vaughan, Abner P.	52	McLean, Hugh
26	Vaughan, Michael	53	Anderson, A.
27	Tailor [Taylor], Shadrach	54	McLennan, L [Lauchlin]

In response to the petition, the Legislative Council on 10 December 1825 designated the house of William Baley on Alaqua Creek as the permanent county seat and court house.¹⁷ Other County officials not appointed until 1827 were: Archibald Anderson, Judge of County Court; Michael Vaughn, Sheriff; Henry G. Ramsay, Clerk; and Jeremiah Savell, David Gartman and Thomas Bright, Justices of the Peace.¹⁸

In addition to the first county seat, Alaqua became the site of the county's first post office although illegibility rendered the first post master's name unreadable. The post office had not been established as of 30 June 1825, however, because a list of letters of that date in the Pensacola Gazette included mail to Lauchlin McLennan and Peter McCaskill, known Walton County residents.¹⁹ U. S. post office records first identify Charles S. V. Jones as post master in Alaqua on 31 May 1826. Jones continued as P. M. until the P. O. discontinued on 14 May 1827. It reopened on 5 November 1827 with Jones continuing as P. M., and remaining until 31 March 1829. Post masters following Jones were Cade Godbold and David Evans. H. G. Ramsay, its last P. M. during the territorial period, served from 1833 to 1837.²⁰

Yellow Water post office followed Alaqua on 31 January 1827 under management of Jeremiah Savell as post master. A notice in the 9 November 1827 edition of the Pensacola Gazette announced that Yellow Water had changed to Almirante with the same post master. Those after Savell during the territorial period were John McDavid followed by Daniel A. Wilkinson, who served until 11 January 1842.²¹

Uchee Valley came after Yellow Water and with it, Daniel Anderson as post master on 8 March 1827. It continued in operation under that name until discontinued in 1829 at the end of the tenure of Thomas G. Bright, who succeeded Anderson. A post office at Bruce Creek supervised by John L. McKinnon as post master was established 22 June 1831 and discontinued on the following August 22nd. On 25 August 1831, Uchee Valley reopened as a change from Bruce Creek with John L. McKinnon as post master. He remained as P. M. until discontinuation of the post office on 18 September 1839 as a change to Uchee Anna which it remained through the end of the territorial period.²²

La Grange became the fourth Walton County post office on 15 July 1837 with James Mallett as post master until it closed on 7 September 1838.²³ Pea River, in Walton County when established on 30 June 1840 made it the fifth of the county's post offices opened in the territorial period. Michael Vaughan served as post master from the time it opened until it closed in 1842.²⁴

Just as post offices came and went, so did county seats. In 1830 the court venue and county seat moved from the Baley house on Alaqua Creek to a different house downstream of Baley's on the same creek. In May of that year, Judge of the Western District of the Territory of Florida, Henry M. Brackenridge, scheduled the court session for the 1st Monday in June at the new log house he had recently built on a knoll overlooking the creek, some distance south of Baley's.²⁵

As future events will show, voters usually insisted on having a say in locating the county seat, but that did not always happen as demonstrated in this instance. No one voted to move the seat to Brackenridge's house. As presiding judge, he simply did it and no one objected.

Before becoming judge, he played a historic role as an aide to Andrew Jackson in the transfer of the Territory of Florida from Spain to the United States. As a lawyer fluent in Spanish, he had been of invaluable service to Jackson in dealing with the obstinate Spanish governor, Colonel Jose Callava, Jackson's counterpart in the transfer.²⁶

With that task accomplished, Brackenridge received his commission as judge on 5 June 1822 from President James Monroe.²⁷ In that position, he figured prominently in the early history of Walton and the other west Florida counties he served as well. His attendant duties required him to travel the 200 miles from Pensacola to Tallahassee and back. Between those two places, he held court in Alaqua, at the Baley house before completing his own house and

began holding it there, and Chipola, originally Webbville, later becoming Marianna in Jackson County.²⁸

Due to the frequent outbreaks of Yellow Fever in Pensacola, he considered it an unhealthy place to be and chose not to reside there. Instead, he found a place more to his liking on the east side of Pensacola Bay across from the town. Today it is in the area between Gulf Breeze and Navarre in Santa Rosa County.

The house he bought there came with 36 acres he used for gardening, planting fruit orchards and live oak trees. Its location on the beach allowed an unobstructed flow of Gulf breezes making it a comfortable place even in the heat of summer. Calling the place Santa Rosa, not only did he keep a vegetable garden, but also chickens and a milk cow.²⁹

He had the Navy in mind when he planted the live oaks because they made the best wood for building sailing ships of the kind common in his day. Before leaving Florida, he sold the property to the U. S. government for use as the Naval Live Oaks Reservation which still exist today. It is now part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore near Gulf Breeze.

Although he enjoyed living at Santa Rosa, there were too many wearying miles between it and Tallahassee. Desirous of shortening the distance, he bought the place on Alaqua Creek. By moving there, he could cut his horseback or wagon trips to Tallahassee by a day and a half. Later on, he bought a covered wagon and hired a man to drive him where he needed to go.

He purchased the 500-acre property in 1828 for \$1.00 an acre. Soon after acquiring the land, he started adding improvements. In early 1830, he began construction on a house of hewn logs. He described the site as a “high hill with more beautiful woods and a fine spring over which I will erect a little milk house.”³⁰

The log house consisted of three wings with one to serve as a court house, one for his residence and the third for the residence of James Evans, who lived there as caretaker of the property. In addition to building the house, he contracted to build a military road from his place at Santa Rosa to Alaqua. That involved building bridges across Jones and Alaqua Creeks over which the road led past his front door and beyond, connecting to roads through other places where he held court and on to Tallahassee. The road became the route of a stage coach from Santa Rosa with a stop at his house which served as both a station for the coach and a tavern.

The locations of Brackenridge’s house, the spring over which he built his milk house, the bridge across Alaqua Creek and the road of which he wrote, were lost to history for more than 190 years. But thanks to the efforts of Alaqua native and historian, Bruce Cosson, they were recently identified. In the interest of preserving its history, it would seem incumbent on the County to memorialize the site by marking it with the erection of a permanent historical plaque (see endnote No. 30).

Brackenridge recognized his stay in Florida as tenuous due to the political whims of a future president willing to reappoint him or not, to which he occasionally alluded in his writings. For that reason, he had contingency plans to return home to Pennsylvania if his services in Florida were no longer needed or desired.

When Andrew Jackson assumed the presidency in 1829, Brackenridge had every reason to believe his past relationship with Jackson had been such as to pose no risk to his reappointment. He began the year 1832 thinking that, but soon learned the president had decided to replace him with someone else. He sold his Alaqua property, went home to Pennsylvania and never returned to Florida.³¹ Before he left however, he received an outpouring of support from the residents of the county when in January 1832, they petitioned President Jackson to reappoint him as judge, but to no avail:

PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT BY CITIZENS OF WALTON COUNTY

January 24, 1832

To the president of the United States

SIR The Subscribers citizens of Walton County in the Territory of Florida having understood that the term of office of the Honorable Henry M. Brackenridge Judge of the Superior Court of the Western District of Florida will expire in a short time beg leave most respectfully to request that he may be re-appointed. Since the organization of our Courts Judge Brackenridge has presided with great satisfaction to the people and with Honor to himself. The deportment of Judge Brackenridge on the bench and in his intercourse with his fellow citizens has been such as to elicit their warmest approbation. The re-appoint of the Judge would be received with great pleasure by the citizens of this County.

We are sir, Your obedient Servants

Walton County January 24th 1832

1	John Anderson	33	Jeptha Stevenson	65	N. H. Mitchell Jr.	96	Thomas J. Snowden
2	John Barclay	34	Angus McLeod	66	John McKenzie	97	R. T. McDavid
3	Angus Anderson	35	John J. Duncan	67	Donald Gunn	98	John Steagall
4	Tho G. Jones	36	Jesse P. Evans	68	Daniel G. Gunn	99	Thomas Baggett
5	Michael Vaughan	37	William McLean	69	John McLean	100	Edmund Baggett
6	Sylvanus Caswell	38	William M. Evans	70	James P. Buchanan	101	Reuben Hart Sr.
7	John Stepheson	39	James Alley	71	M. Morrison	102	Eli Horn
8	James Knight	40	Michael Vaughan	72	Wm. W. C. McCollom	103	Joab H. Gartman
9	Jame Vaughan	41	A. P. Vaughan	73	Daniel C. Anderson	104	Malcom McCaskill
10	James Evans	42	Daniel McLeod	74	Arch McCallum	105	Norman Morrison
11	D. M. McCallum	43	Neal Gillis	75	John Gillis	106	John Steagall Jr.
12	McRee Williams	44	Mathew Duncan	76	Robert Robertson	107	McMillian Stegall
13	Thomas Broxson	45	Alex McLeod	77	Sween McSween	108	Stephen Senterfit
14	James Lowe	46	Frederic Kysor	78	Neil McGillberry	109	Gedion Holton
15	James Wood	47	John Byrd	79	John McDonald	110	Joab Home
16	Samuel Wood	48	Daniel Byrd	80	Dugald Purcell	111	Reuben Hart Jr.
17	Henry J. Jones	49	Michael Byrd	81	Edward Hunter	112	Absalom Stokes
18	William Broxson	50	John Neal	82	Isaac M. Hunter	113	John Barron
19	L. D. Peavy	51	Dred Porter	83	John Fakes	114	Daniel Hart
20	J. Pyburn	52	Thomas G. Bright	84	A. McDonald	115	John Campbell
21	John Spears	53	D. L. Jones	85	John Wisner	116	Reuben N. Barron
22	Swain Gilles	54	Donald McLean Sr.	86	Alfred Alley	117	John Hart

23	Duncan McCallum	55	H. M. Wood	87	Duncan C. Anderson	118	Absalom Fukeway
24	W. Wommack	56	Angus McDonald	88	A. McGaskill	119	Richard S. Compton
25	Joseph Loghren	57	Alexd McKenzie	89	Paul M. Jones	120	Donald Campbell
26	Gilbert Ray	58	Daniel D. Campbell	90	Norman C. Anderson	121	Allexander McCaskill
27	William McCallum	59	Alexander McDonald	91	Peter C. McDonald	122	D. G. McLean
28	Arcible McCallum	60	Nicholas Hunter	92	Jeremiah Savell	123	John Montgomery
29	Allen Morrison	61	Daniel D. McLean	93	David Gartman	124	Wright Gaskins
30	Samuel Blair	62	William W. McCallum	94	Robert McKinnon	125	Enos Evans
31	William V. Duncan	63	Daniel Ray	95	H. G. Ramsay	126	William Ward
32	James Mallett	64	Hull Jones				

Unlike Brackenridge, Reverend Charles S. V. Jones had no reason to believe he would ever leave Alaqua. His name headed the list of signatures to the 1825 petition for the Alaqua county seat mentioned earlier. Becoming the County's first identified post master of record did not end his inaugural achievements. In 1827 he established Alaqua Methodist as the first church in the county.

Whereas some ministers would not hesitate to shun denominations different than their own, Brother Charlie, as he came to be known, saw things differently. As evidence of his impartiality, when the Presbyterian Church on the far side of Uchee Valley found themselves in need of a pastor, Brother Charlie happily stepped into the role. He did it so often in fact, that the horse he rode tramped a path across the valley between Alaqua and the other Church that folks called the "Old Brother Charlie Jones trail."

During his time as post master, his son Thomas carried the mail between Alaqua and Pensacola. One day in July 1827, while on his route near Yellow Water post office two men accosted him in an attempt to rob the mail. One fired a gun at him but missed and the other tried unsuccessfully to stab him with a knife. Just dumb luck and inept would-be thieves and murderers saved him and he managed to escape with the mail.³²

Martin Hutto seems to have been the only one of the assailants ever identified. He was arrested and convicted of attempting to murder and rob the carrier of the United States mail. After escaping once or twice, authorities finally managed to hold him long enough for Judge Brackenridge to give him a sentence of two years in jail. Being sentenced and serving it though were different things, because in 1829 he finally escaped for good, never to be heard from again.³³

In 1829, Reverend Jones acquired 160 acres of public domain land through a cash entry sale for which he received a Preemption Patent signed by President, Andrew Jackson.³⁴ Being more land than he could ever use for farming, he came up with an idea of what to do with the excess. He placed an ad in the Pensacola Gazette advertising a "New Town in Walton County," to be known by the name Whitesborough.

It offered lots of 105 feet square for 20 dollars each. Describing the property in glowing details, he lauded its cool breezes and springs of pure invigorating water. Terms provided for a cash down payment, with the balance due in installments.³⁵ It is unknown if he sold any of

the lots. If he did, the number fell short of that needed for a town, because there is no record of it ever coming about.

Alaqua, the first post office in the county, and Yellow Water, the second, were not quite at opposite ends of the county because Alaqua is more or less centrally situated. Yellow Water though, sat closer to the county's northern border in a more isolated area and less is known about its early population than of Alaqua.

Judge Brackenridge, writing in 1830 gave the number of families in Alaqua as about thirty and in the next settlement, meaning Uchee Valley, as about twice that,. Yet, the post office at Uchee Valley came after Yellow Water. If post offices were established based on population density, then it would follow that Yellow Water's population exceeded that of Uchee Valley. But based on that reckoning, Uchee Valley with its larger population should have had a post office sooner than Alaqua.

The logical conclusion is that getting a post office depended more on the literacy, motivation and other factors of the people in a community than their number. In his book, "A View of West Florida," published in 1827, John Lee Williams identified three settlements in the north of the county, Yellow Water being the first. The others were McDavids Pond and Shoal River.

He described Yellow Water as a settlement in the north-west part of the county, on the river of that name. As a small farming community, it had good soil with respectable crops but seemed not to have been there long. He learned from the farmers that their best crops were cotton and corn grown on bottom lands and sand ridges of sufficient moisture to survive extended dry spells with little harm. He revealed nothing however, about population numbers.

Almirante, successor to Yellow Water, originated as the Spanish name for Black Water River in Santa Rosa County. In 1693, the Mexican map maker, Don Carlos de Siguenza y Gongora, named it Rio Del Almirante, meaning River of the Admiral. He discovered it during the expedition that year of Admiral Don Andres de Pez on whose ship he arrived in Pensacola Bay for the purpose of preparing a map of the Bay and its tributaries. As a gesture of gratitude to the Admiral for the privilege of participating in the expedition, he bestowed the name in de Pez's honor. Centuries later, the name somehow became associated with the Yellow River, which Gongora overlooked in his map making.³⁶

In his book, Williams placed the Shoal River settlement twelve miles south of Yellow Water. The tracts of the two were similar in size and soil types. Nothing is mentioned about crops or population. He located the small settlement of McDavid around the pond of that name on the "north line of the county," which he described as a "very pure and handsome sheet of water of an oval form of about three miles long and two broad." He wrote of a large creek on the pond's south end that drained into Shoal River. Farm crops he mentioned included corn, potatoes, and peas.

J. A. (John Allen) McDavid appeared on the list of Escambia residents of West Florida favoring annexation to Alabama in 1821. In 1824 Escambia yielded land on its eastern border to Walton County where the pond is located. John Allen, age 56, his sons, Richmond T., age 25 and David, between 20 & 30, appeared on the 1830 census in east Walton County. Quite possibly, the sr. McDavid had settled near the pond by the time he appeared on the 1821 annexation list.

According to the history of the Town of Florala which developed on the north and west side of the lake, the McDavids operated a grist mill on the same creek Williams described. In later census records, Richmond and others of the family gave their occupation as millers, hinting of a long family tradition.

After Brackenridge left Alaqua in 1832, the use of his log house as a court ended, leaving the county in a quandary as to a county seat. Richmond McDavid and David Evans were among members of a commission appointed in 1833 to locate a new seat. But the matter became a drawn-out issue that took a while to resolve satisfactorily.

In the mid to late 1830s, William Cawthon who owned large herds of cattle in what was then known as "Cawthon's Cowpens," the predecessor of Dothan, Alabama, migrated south and settled in the McDavid's Lake neighborhood. Cawthon and three wives, the second he married after the first one died, and the third with whom he allegedly lived out of wedlock after divorcing number two, produced 24 children. In 1973, his great granddaughter, Mrs. Audrey Miller Pittman (1907-1990) of Paxton, compiled a history of the family in Walton County in which she gives the most probable date of arrival as 1837.³⁷

She writes that many of the children became prominent citizens while raising large families with spouses chosen from other settlers moving into the area. Among those she named were the McSwains, Harts, Bowers, Woods, Meiggs, Cockcrofts, Steeles, Claries, Flournoys, Edges, Harrisons, Cooks, Turners, Infingers, Gordons and others. Most conspicuously absent among those she neglected to name were the Ghents, Welches, Pittmans, Millers and Jacksons. Others she omitted were the Carnleys, Busbees, Palmers, Adams and Allens, all of whom married Cawthons in later years. For several generations afterwards, few residents of the locale could deny Cawthon kin. A considerable number of them remain there today.

John L. McKinnon wrote in his 1911 "History of Walton County," that the "Cawthons settled on Yellow and Shoal Rivers." They did in later years, but Mrs. Pittman places their earliest settlement on the south side of the lake. She writes of the three Cawthon wives, but hints at nothing unusual about the relationship of the third wife, Nancy Langston Fountain, from whom she descended. Nancy's unmarked grave is a short distance from the south shore of Lake Jackson near the original family home site. Mrs. Pittman detailed the many activities of the family in their everyday lives as they produced most of the essentials needed for their sustenance.

They grew garden vegetables and field crops and raised, consumed and marketed livestock. Cattle were rounded up and driven yearly to markets in Troy, Alabama, Milton, Florida and Pensacola. From those same markets came necessities they could not produce themselves. Sheep were sheared with some of the wool retained for home use and the balance sold. Farm produced wool and cotton provided home spun fabrics for self-made clothing, bedding and other uses.

A stage coach traveling between Milton and Troy passed through once or twice a month and stopped overnight at the Cawthon place. Mrs. Pittman also wrote of a post office there but postal history records place the area's earliest post office in Almarante, about ten or twelve miles west of the lake. John Ghent, a son-in-law of Cawthon, established the earliest post office of record in that immediate vicinity in 1850. He also operated a stage coach station, which Mrs. Pittman possibly confused with the Cawthon place.

Although tradition holds that Cawthon operated a grist mill on the local creek, she says nothing about it in her history. She writes instead, that they turned their corn into meal by putting it in a hollowed-out block and pounding it with a large stone. She attributes the later operation of a grist mill to the Cockcrofts, which census records confirm. On the Walton County agricultural census of 1885, Benjamin F. Cockcroft, age 36, is enumerated at McDade's Pond and "miller" is shown as his occupation. The same year, he took residence on the property as a homestead entry and in 1894 received a patent for the 160-acre parcel.

Scotsman Neil McLendon is identified as the earliest white settler in Walton County by McKinnon, but his spelling of the last name is at odds with the spelling from other sources. Neil's brother, Lauchlin, is found on the previously noted list of letters from the June 30, 1825 Pensacola Gazette with the last name spelled as McLennan. He spelled it the same way in his own hand writing on the November 1825 Alaqua county seat petition. Neil also signed the petition, but wrote his last name as McLenon. In later documents from outside Walton County, his last name is spelled the same as Lauchlin's, and for consistency, that is the spelling this history uses.

On the 1821 Escambia County annexation document listing J. A. McDavid, and thirty-nine other individuals later tied to Walton County, Neil McLennan is absent. Neither is he on a list of Escambia County preemption claimants dating from 1819.³⁸ He first appears in Walton County on the 1825 Alaqua county seat petition.

In the company of McLennan when he arrived in West Florida and encamped on the Escambia River above Pensacola were his brother, Lochlin [Lauchlin], brother-in-law, Daniel D. Campbell and John Folk. McKinnon writes that Lochlin [Lauchlin] remained at the encampment while Neil, Campbell and Folk set out on a prearranged journey to meet Uchee chief Sam Story at his village in the future Walton County.³⁹ The Escambia County preemption claimants listing referenced above includes a Lauchlin McClennan (from 1819), Daniel D.

Campbell (from 1820) and John Foke (from 1819).⁴⁰ This indirectly confirms that Neil McLennan arrived in Escambia County during the same period as these three men, but does not prove him to be the first settler in Walton County.

Someone came first, and whether he, or another person held the distinction, other Scots, many from the Isle of Sky Highlands, soon followed and swelled the population of Uchee Valley to the largest settlement in the county as Brackenridge noted in 1830.

¹ General Andrew Jackson receives Florida from Spanish governor Colonel Jose Callava, 17 July 1821, Pensacola Gazette, 18 August 1821, Newspapers.com, accessed 15 November 2023.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/352582492/?terms=%27andrew%20jackson%22&match=1>

² Escambia and St. Johns Counties created, Sec. 1, Ordinance XX, Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida : passed at their first session, 1822, <http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1822.pdf>

³ Memorial to Congress by Inhabitants of West Florida, The Territorial Papers of the United States, v.22 1821-24, pp. 320-323,

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31210016047159&view=1up&seq=340&q1=memorial+to+congress+by+inhabitants+of+west+florida>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Davis, T. Frederick (1945) "Pioneer Florida: The First Session of the Legislative Council of Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly: Vol. 24: No. 3, Article 6. Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol24/iss3/6>

⁶ Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida Passed at their First Session, 1822, pp 3-6.

<http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1822.pdf>

⁷ Governor Duval to Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, 9-22-1822, The Territorial papers of the United States. v.22 1821-24, pp. 534-536 .

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31210016047159&view=1up&seq=553>

⁸ Proclamation by Governor Duval, Site of Tallahassee selected as seat of territorial Government, The Territorial Papers of the United States, v.22 1821-24, pp. 854-855,

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31210016047159&view=1up&seq=876>

⁹ Land Granted for the Seat of Government in Florida, An Act providing for a Grant of Land for the Seat of government in the territory of Florida, Acts of the Eighteenth Congress of the United States, May 24, 1824, p. 30-31, <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/l1/lsl/l1sl-c18/l1sl-c18.pdf>

¹⁰ The first Capitol was a log cabin built in 1824, The Florida Capitol, Capitol History, https://www.floridacapitol.myflorida.com/the_capitol/capitol_history#:~:text=The%20first%20Capitol%20was%20a.and%20took%20almost%2020%20days

¹¹ Leon County boundaries defined, An Act To establish new counties and to define the boundaries of the counties of the Territory, Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida: passed at their third session, 29 December 1824, p 261, <http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1824.pdf>

¹² Walton County boundaries defined, An Act To establish new counties and to define the boundaries of the counties of the Territory, Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida: passed at their third session, 29 December 1824, p 260, <http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1824.pdf>

¹³ Walton, Dorothy, Cash Entry Sales, 3/15/1826, 4/01/1826. and 4/01/1827, Doc. # 187, and 201-209, BLM – GLO, <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/results/default.aspx?searchCriteria=type=patent|st=FL|cty=073|ln=walton|sp=true|sw=true|sadv=false>

¹⁴ Big Spring on Choctawhatchee River temporary seat of Walton County, Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida: passed at their third session, 29 December 1824, pp. 252-253.

<http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1824.pdf>

- ¹⁵ Rerick, Roland H., *Memoirs of Florida*, Vol. II, pp. 67-68, Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=sYnjZW4cPywC&pg=PA60&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false
- ¹⁶ *Petition of Citizens of Walton County Requesting Easier Access to the County Seat, 1825*. 1825-11-17. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/347051>>, accessed 14 January 2024. The Florida Memory website included a transcribed list of petition signers from the original document images which contained errors as follows: 1. John Byrd on the original list was left off the website transcribed list. He was added as No. 11 on the transcribed list edited for this history. 2. The website transcription left off Elijah Clark from the original list. He was added as No. 21 on the edited list. 3. Charles Cossity on the website list was corrected as Cassidy, No. 32, on the edited list. McLennan, L. on the website transcription was edited to show his full first name.; Lauchlin, No. 54.
- ¹⁷ House of William Bailey on Head of Alaqua Creek Walton County seat, Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida: passed at their fourth session, 10 December 1825 p. 83, <http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1825.pdf>
- ¹⁸ First Walton County officials appointed, 19 January 1827, *The Territorial Papers of The United States / Compiled and edited by Clarence Edwin Carter*. v. 23 Florida Terr., 1824-1828, pp. 732-733, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044032317083&seq=750&q1=michael+vaughn>
- ¹⁹ List of Letters, *Pensacola Gazette*, June 30, 1825.
- ²⁰ Walton County, Florida Post Offices, "Florida Stampless Postal History 1763-1861," pp. 73, <http://www.fphsonline.com/docs/book1999/Rfphsall.pdf>
- ²¹ *Ibid*, 76.
- ²² *Ibid*, 286.
- ²³ *Ibid*, 165.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*, 226.
- ²⁵ Carnley, Sam, "Henry Marie Brackenridge, Walton County Pioneer Judge," (Walton Relations & History Newsletter, Vol. 10, Issue 1, January 2019), Walton County Heritage Association, Inc., 11. <https://www.waltoncounty-heritage.org/GenSoc/NL2019Jan.pdf>
- ²⁶ Morris, Allen (1978) "Beginnings of Popular Government in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*: Vol. 57: No. 1, Article 4., pp. 5-6. Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol57/iss1/4>
- ²⁷ Brackenridge, Henry M., Commission as Judge, West Florida District, 5 June 1822, *The Territorial papers of the United States / Compiled and edited by Clarence Edwin Carter*. v. 22 Florida Terr., 1821-1824, p. 451. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044032317075&seq=471&q1=brackenridge>
- ²⁸ Carnley, Sam, "Henry Marie Brackenridge, Walton County Pioneer Judge," (Walton Relations & History Newsletter, Vol. 10, Issue 1, January 2019, Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.), 11. <https://www.waltoncounty-heritage.org/GenSoc/NL2019Jan.pdf>
- ²⁹ Carnley, Sam, "Henry Marie Brackenridge, Walton County Pioneer Judge," (Walton Relations & History Newsletter, Vol. 10, Issue 1, January 2019, Walton County Heritage Association, Inc), 3. <https://www.waltoncounty-heritage.org/GenSoc/NL2019Jan.pdf>
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, 9. Note: Brackenridge's former land in Alaqua changed owners a number of times and ultimately became in total or in part the property of members of the Cosson family of Alaqua. Bruce Cosson, an Alaqua native, is among the owners and also an avid amateur historian of that part of Walton County. He has studied Brackenridge and his Alaqua property for many years in an effort to locate the sites of the log house, the milk house and bridges Brackenridge described in his letters. After many years of searching Bruce has succeeded in finding where those structures stood on the property. Nothing remains of the log house but traces of the milk house and bridge across Alaqua Creek are still in evidence as of 2019, almost 190 years after Brackenridge built them
- ³¹ *Ibid*, 14.
- ³² Caution to Mail Riders, Thomas G. Jones attacked by desperados, *The Territorial papers of the United States / Compiled and edited by Clarence Edwin Carter*. v. 23 Florida Terr., 1824-1828, p. 940, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044032317083&seq=968>
- ³³ Carnley, Sam, "Charles Shepherd Vinson Jones, Alaqua's First Preacher," (Walton Relations & History Newsletter, Vol. 8, Issue 6, May 2017), Walton County Heritage Association, Inc., 9 <https://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/NL2017May.pdf>
- ³⁴ Jones, Charles S. Land Patent, 1829, BLM – GLO, https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default_pf.aspx?accession=FL0060_316&docClass=STA
- ³⁵ Jones, C. S. V., New Town in Alaqua, Whitesborough, *Pensacola Gazette*, 28 July, 1829, p. 4, Newspapers.com, https://www.newspapers.com/image/352710798/?match=1&clipping_id=137078934

³⁶ Leonard, Irving A., *Spanish Approach to Pensacola, 1689-1693*, (Quivira Society Publications, Volume IX, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1939). Description, etc., by Don Carlos de Siguenza y Gongora, Document 10, p. 166.

³⁷ Pittman, Audrey M., *Story of the First White Settlement on the Shores of Lake Jackson*, Vol. 12, Issue 2, Walton Relations & History, December 2020, Walton County Heritage Association, pp.2-7, accessed 1/17/2024.

<https://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/NL2020Dec.pdf>

³⁸ American State Papers, House of Representatives, 18th Congress, 2nd Session
Public Lands: Volume 4, Pages 61 through 63, No. 437. Claims to land in West Florida.

<https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsp&fileName=031/llsp031.db&recNum=72>

³⁹ McKinnon, John L., *History of Walton County*, (First published in 1911, The Byrd Printing Co. Atlanta, GA., Second publication, Palmetto Books, Gainesville, Florida, 1968), 16

⁴⁰ American State Papers, House of Representatives, 18th Congress, 2nd Session

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