

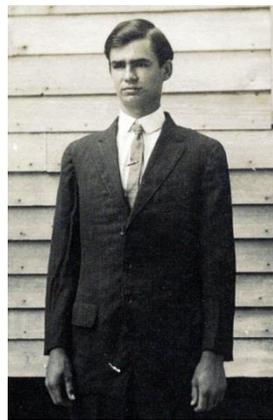


WALTON RELATIONS

Volume 4, Issue 6

Walton County Genealogy Society

April 2013



Who Are They?

Several years ago, a scrapbook of postcards was donated to the Walton County Heritage Museum by a woman whose son said he found them in an abandoned house in the 1970s.

The postcards are postmarked from 1909 until 1944. The earlier ones are addressed to Mary Geoghagan in both Gaskin and Darlington. Many of them are from Luke Parish who she eventually married. Some of the later postcards were addressed to their daughter Pearl.

There are a few photographs among the postcards, including the two above. There is no identification on the photographs. Local relatives of the Parish family do not know who they are. If you have information about these photographs, please let us know.

WCGS Meeting

The Walton County Genealogy Society will meet on Saturday, April 13, at 10:00 A.M. at the Walton County Heritage Museum. We hope to see you there!

Reunions

If you are a survivor or descendent of a family from the **Alice Creek, New Home**, or surrounding area before 1945, please attend the reunion on April 13 at Southwide Baptist Church, located off Coy Burgess Road, south of I-10, DeFuniak Springs, starting at 11:00 AM. Please bring covered dishes for lunch. There will be a guest speaker who has pictures of some of the homesteads before their destruction. For more information, call 850-548-5353 or 850-897-2145.

The 47th **Spence Reunion** will be Saturday, May 18, at the DeFuniak Springs Community Center. The doors will open at 10:00 AM, followed by a meeting at 11:00, and lunch at noon. Call Mildred Boland (850-892-3248) or Irmalee Bass (850-892-6103) for more information.

Walton County Heritage Museum

Open Tuesday - Saturday: 1:00 - 4:00 PM
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

850-951-2127

www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org

WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net

Captain William McPherson – Commander of the Walton Guards

By H. C. “Hank” Klein

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William McPherson was just 27-years old and living in Walton County when he was selected by his peers to be the Commander of the newly formed Walton Guards. 60 men met at the Walton County seat of Euchee-Anna and selected McPherson to lead them in the Civil War against the Union Army of the United States. Just who was William McPherson and what qualified him to lead the men from his county; also what did the Walton Guards do to help the Confederate cause at the start of the War Between the States? We hope to answer those questions and more in this article about Walton County.

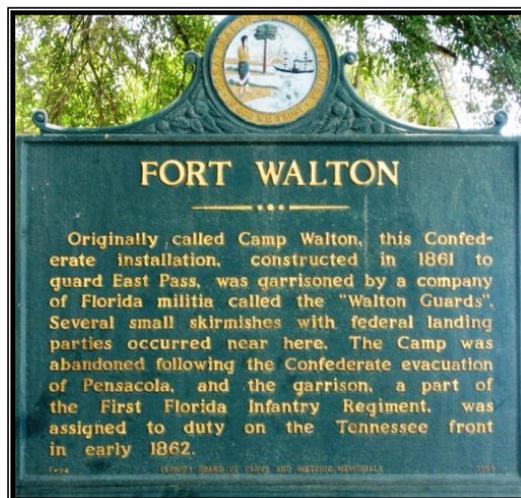
On March 1, 1861, just 50 days after the 62 to 7 vote in favor of the state of Florida seceding from the Union on January 10, 1861, the women of the county seat of Walton County, Florida, organized and marched around the small town of Euchee-Anna chanting, “Go boys, to your country’s call! I’d rather be a brave man’s widow than a coward’s wife.” That day, 60 brave men from Euchee-Anna and the surrounding area, at their womenfolk’s urging, joined what would be known as the Walton Guards.

In early April 1861, about a month later, these men met again, organized, and elected their company officers, who were:

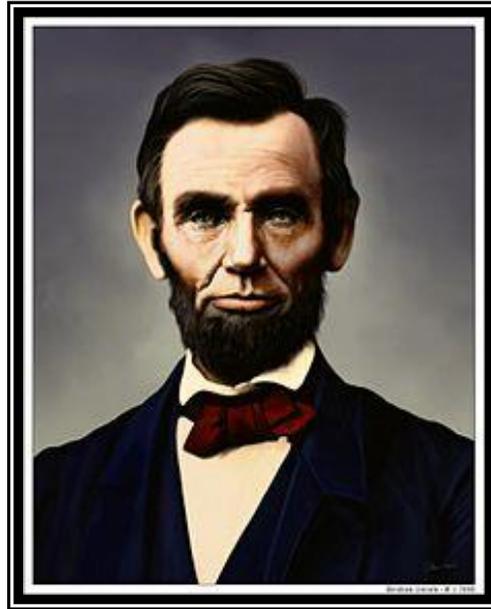
- Billie McPherson, Captain
- Charles L. McKinnon, 1st Lieutenant
- Henry W. Reddick, 2nd Lieutenant
- A. B. McLeod, 3rd Lieutenant

After electing their company officers, they agreed to meet at Alaqua Creek, just below Berry’s mill in two days. They then boarded the schooner *Lady of the Lake* for their voyage to Garnier’s Bayou (at present-day Fort Walton Beach) where they spent the night. The next day, they sailed down to the “narrows” where they chose the site for their camp at the top of a tall earthen mound. From that point, they could observe any vessel that might attempt to travel from Choctawhatchee Bay up the “narrows.” The encampment was called “Camp Walton” – named for their county and located at the far southwest corner of what was then Walton County.¹

The narrows (as it was called) was the waterway between Santa Rosa Island and the mainland that flowed from what is today downtown Fort Walton Beach to Gulf Breeze, Florida. The tall earthen mound the Walton Guards chose because of its good vantage of the Santa Rosa Sound was what is known today as the Indian Temple Mound. Below is a picture of the historical marker at the foot of the Indian Temple Mound in downtown Fort Walton Beach, Florida, that describes the Walton Guard’s camp and their responsibilities while stationed here.

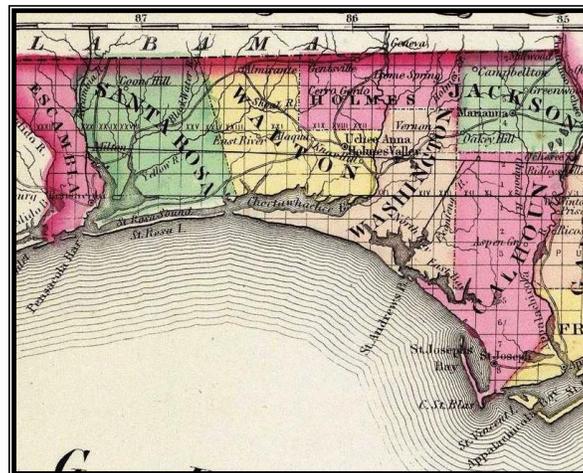


The Union controlled Fort Pickens at the mouth of the Pensacola Harbor, while the Confederates controlled Fort Barrancas in Pensacola, with General Braxton Bragg as the Confederate general in charge. One of President Lincoln first actions, once the southern states seceded from the Union, was to blockade the southern ports to stop commerce at all southern ports – this included East Pass.



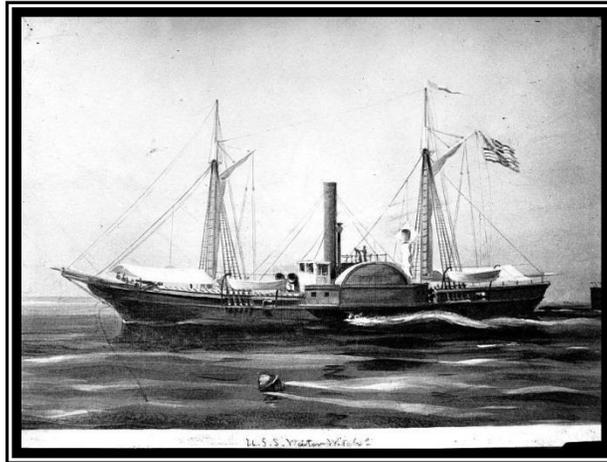
(President Abraham Lincoln 1809 – 1865)

The early map below shows why the area of the Walton Guards' assignment was so important to the Confederacy. At times the Union blockading ships USS *Water Witch* and USS *Wyandotte* anchored at the mouth of the East Pass during the summer of 1861, and the Confederates worried that a Union ship might decide to sail into East Pass and up Santa Rosa Sound (the narrows) and attack Fort Barrancas from the rear. Guarding the narrows and watching any Union activity that might occur at East Pass was an important assignment for the newly established Walton Guards.



A review of this map also shows that Okaloosa County had not been established yet – it was not formed until June 13, 1915. Fort Walton Beach did not exist at the time either, and East Pass was actually in Washington County, not Walton or Santa Rosa Counties.

There were no real battles at Camp Walton, just a few skirmishes with the Union steam gunboat the USS *Water Witch* firing on the camp from their ship while blockading the area. Camp Walton eventually received two cannon and fired on the Union blockaders as they sailed by in the Gulf of Mexico. Union blockaders also came ashore at East Pass from time to time and were driven back by the Walton Guards.



(USS Water Witch – Union Side-wheeler, 160' Gunboat)

The Walton Guards buried their two cannons when they abandoned Camp Walton on April 16, 1862, and joined the Confederate troop in Pensacola. Pensacola was soon abandoned by the Confederate troops also when they moved to Tennessee to fight battles on the front line of the war.

The cannon shown in the picture below is one of the cannon buried by the Walton Guard. It was found years later by citizens of Fort Walton Beach. It is on display in downtown Fort Walton Beach at the base of the Indian Temple Mound where the Confederate Camp Walton was once located.



Captain William McPherson's Background

One might wonder who Captain William (Billie) McPherson was and what qualified him to lead his county's troops as commander of the Walton Guards. The 1860 Federal Census for Walton County shows that 27-year-old Billie McPherson was living with his parents.

His father Neil was a 51-year-old lawyer and his son Billie was also a lawyer. Others living in the family home in the county seat of Euchee-Anna were his mother Eliza (age 49), his sisters Sarah (age 18) and Isabelle (age 16), and his brothers Malcolm (age 15) and John (age 13). Also living in their home was Eugene Ward, who was the family's music teacher, and two servants: Mary Jane Drummond (age 15) and Thomas J. Laird (age 17). His parents were very well to do with servants and even a live-in music teacher for their children.ⁱⁱ

William McPherson followed in his father's footsteps and was also a lawyer. Young McPherson was very well educated for the times. He had graduated in 1858 from Cumberland University Law School in Lebanon, Tennessee, with a law degree.ⁱⁱⁱ

Prior to graduate school, William McPherson attended and graduated from Oglethorpe College in Georgia and was in the first graduating class of Knox Hill Academy located in Walton County, Florida.^{iv}

In 1860, William McPherson was also the census taker for neighboring Washington County, Florida. His name is listed as the Assistant Marshall on many of the pages of the Washington County Federal Census.^v

SCHEDULE 1 - Free Inhabitants in: *Washington* **in the County of Washington**
of *Florida* enumerated by me, on the *11th* day of *June*, 1860. *Union of them have been recorded*
Post Office *Warren*

1	2	3	4		7	8		10	11	12	13	14
			5	6		9	10					
		<i>William McPherson</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>f</i>								
		<i>Eliza McPherson</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>m</i>								
		<i>Sarah McPherson</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>f</i>								
		<i>Isabelle McPherson</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>f</i>								
		<i>Malcolm McPherson</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>m</i>								
		<i>John McPherson</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>m</i>								
		<i>Eugene Ward</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>m</i>								
		<i>Mary Jane Drummond</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>f</i>								
		<i>Thomas J. Laird</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>m</i>								

After the Civil War, McPherson married Margaret LeBaltzell of Jackson County, Florida, on January 11, 1866. After the death of McPherson's young wife, he moved to California where he was the elected city attorney for the city of Los Angeles on December 9, 1868. He served for two terms through December 9, 1870. While serving as the Los Angeles city attorney, he also served on the following committees:^{vi}

- Fire Limits Committee - Member, February 8, 1868 – December 9, 1869
- Public Pound Committee - Member, January 4, 1869 – December 9, 1869
- Special Election Committee – Member, July 21, 1869 – December 9, 1870

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- i *Seventy-Seven Years in DIXIE*, by H. W. Reddick, published in 1910
 - ii 1860 Federal Census for Walton County, Florida
 - iii Catalog of Officers and Students – Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee – Academic Year 1857-58
 - iv Southern Reporter, Milledgeville, Georgia Page 2, July 29, 1856 – Oglethorpe College Graduation
 - v 1860 Federal Census for Washington County, Florida
 - vi City of Los Angeles Officials – <http://cityclerk.lacity.org/chronola/index.cfm?fuseaction=app.FacultySearchGeneral>
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The author of this article, H. C. “Hank” Klein, has long been interested in the history of Northwest Florida and the genealogy of his father-in-law’s and mother-in-law’s families (Marler and Shirah). Both came from pioneer Destin families and both were related to Leonard Destin, the founder of Destin, Florida.

Hank’s father-in-law’s aunt, Emma Marler, married George Destin, the first born son of Leonard and Martha Destin, while Hank’s mother-in-law’s sister, Alice Shirah, married George D. Destin, the son of George Destin and grandson of Leonard and Martha Destin.

Klein has written books documenting he and his wife’s family genealogy. Hank has also contributed historical research for Tony Mennillo’s recently published book *Salty Memories along the Coastal Highway – Historic Stories of Destin and the Emerald Coast*. Copies of this book containing 492 vintage photographs of Destin and the Emerald Coast can be obtained by contacting Arturo’s Studio at <http://www.arturosstudio.com> or 850/585-2909 or from Amazon.com.

Klein lived for many years in both Okaloosa and Bay Counties. He is now retired from his credit union management career, and he and his wife (the former Muriel Marler of Destin, Florida) live in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He can be contacted at klein@aristotle.net or at 501-256-7474.

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The Civil War in Florida

The Walton County Heritage Association has contracted with GLMCO Memorials for the restoration of the Walton County Confederate Monument at the Courthouse. Donations are still needed! For more information, see www.waltoncountyheritage.org/WaltonCountyConfederateMonument.pdf.

Fold3 is offering free access to all Confederate records in its database this month. Visit the website at http://go.fold3.com/civilwar_csa.php?xid=1590.

Author-historian Dale Cox will speak at the Walton County Heritage Association’s members meeting on Thursday, April 18, at 6:00 PM at the Museum. His topic will be “The Asboth Raid of 1864.” See his popular blog, “Civil War Florida,” at <http://civilwarflorida.blogspot.com/>.

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Walton Relations is a publication of the Walton County Genealogy Society. Wayne Sconiers, President. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email its editor, Diane Merkel, at WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net or call 850-897-4505.