



WALTON RELATIONS

Volume 6, Issue 6

Walton County Genealogy Society

April 2015

Chautauqua Video

In 1975, the *DeFuniak Springs Herald* ran an article about a coffee sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. The speaker was Dr. Stuart Towns of the University of West Florida who had reportedly produced a video about the Chautauqua movement that was supposed to be given to the library, but ours has no record of it.

The article listed those who attended the coffee; many names will be familiar: Harold Goodwin, Mayor of DeFuniak Springs; Henry Ennis, Moore's Furniture Company; J.R. Caldwell, Fisher Hardware; Freddy Baker, Council on Aging; Mrs. T.J. Reardon; Phil Baril, Florida State Employment Service; Vallie Adams, Adams Motel; M.T. Gladys Fountain; Woodard Lackey; Elmer Williams, Williams Studio and Frame Shop; Jack Elliott, Central Telephone; James Hagan, Choctawhatchee Electric Co.; Dr. and Mrs. Ed McCracken, OWJC; Ed Scofield, Chautauqua Neighborhood Center, OWJC; Ina Thompson; Edith Watkins; Don Wylie, Special Aide to Congressman Bob Sikes; Mrs. C.M. McDaniel; John Creel, Creel Ford; Alice Trainor and Ed Armbruster, Dave Russell Realty; Hazel Daughette, Odd Shop and Washerteria; Foster Burgess, Lake Sharon Estates, and Haywood Hanna, Gulf Power Company.

Thanks to **Robert Daniel**, Historian and Archivist Florida Chautauqua Association, for telling us about the article. He has since learned that Dr. Towns produced a slide show, not a video.

Meetings

Walton County Genealogy Society President **Wayne Sconiers** was the featured speaker at the quarterly meeting of the Walton County Heritage Association on Thursday, April 16.

The Walton County Genealogy Society will meet on Saturday, April 18, at 10:00 A.M. at the Walton County Heritage Museum. The public is welcome.

Reunions

The following families should have reunions in the weeks to come. Please send us any information you may have.

- **McHenry Family** of Eucheeanna
- **Spence Family** usually has its reunion on a Saturday in mid-May at the DeFuniak Springs Community Center.
- **Ward Family** of Eucheeanna

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

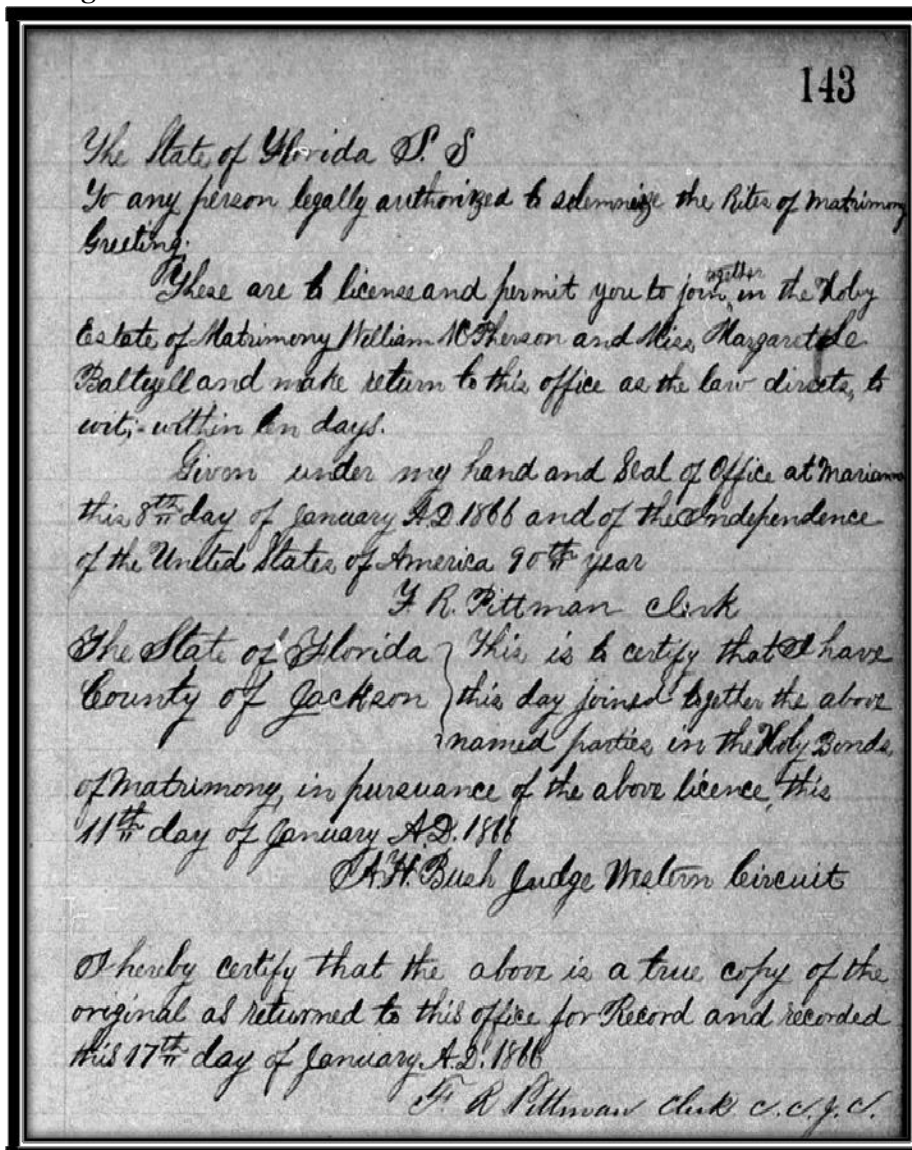
Captain William McPherson – After the Walton Guards

By H. C. "Hank" Klein

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In April 1861 the newly formed Walton Guards met at the Walton County seat of Eucheeanna and selected their Commander, William McPherson, a 28-year-old local boy, to lead them in the Civil War against the Union Army of the United States. In the April 2013 issue of "Walton Relations," historian Hank Klein presented what was then known about McPherson during the Civil War years. This month, Klein shares what is now known about McPherson's life after the war. Klein's complete portrait of McPherson may be read at waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/McPherson.pdf.

After the war, in late 1865, William McPherson set up a law practice in Marianna, Jackson County, Florida, where he had fought in 1864-1865 during the Civil War. On January 11, 1866, William McPherson married Margaret S. Baltzell of Jackson County, Florida. Below is a copy of their Marriage Certificate. They were married by A. H. Bush, the Judge of the Western District.¹



(Marriage Certificate between William McPherson and Margaret Baltzell - January 11, 1866)

Within a couple of years Margaret (Baltzell) McPherson died in childbirth and William McPherson moved on with his life. California had won its independence from Mexico and was a new state of the Union and many men of that time were moving to California to begin a new life after the Civil War.

William settled in Los Angeles and ran for and was elected the Los Angeles city attorney 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:²

- 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

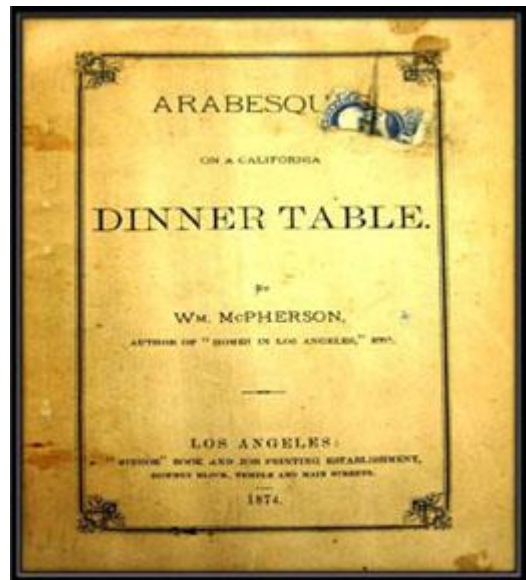
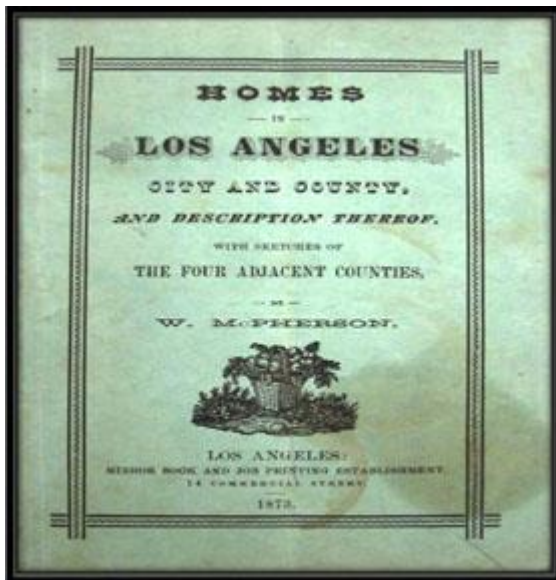
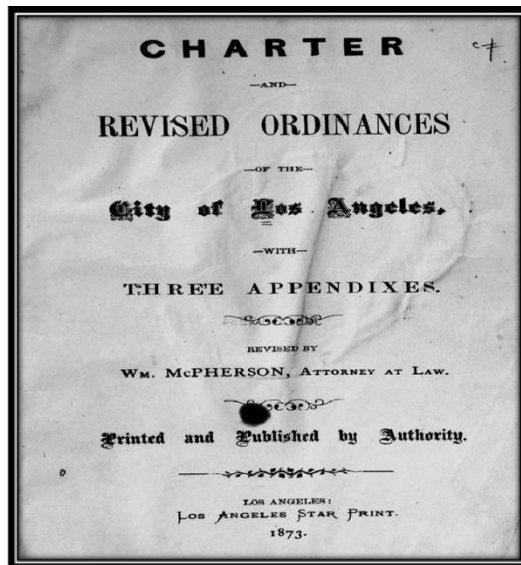
William McPherson was listed in the 1870 Federal Census taken on August 19, 1870, in Los Angeles City, California, living with three other young lawyers. Thomas Shipley was a 32-year-old and had been born in Virginia. Elwood McDaniel was a 27-year-old and had been born in Mississippi. Frank Ganahl was a 31-year-old and had been born in Georgia. They were living in an all-white neighborhood with other lawyers, druggists, a hatter, saloonkeepers, and a brick mason.³

After William McPherson left his political career he returned to practicing law. His law office was at #55 Temple Block, which was in the large building pictured below on what would become Temple Street in Los Angeles, California. This was the same building that housed many types of businesses, including the Los Angeles Court House.



(Temple Block Building, Los Angeles, California - 1873 - Courtesy Los Angeles Public Library)

William McPherson also became an author. His first book, which was “Revised” by him, was 215 pages in length and was titled *Charter, Revised Ordinances of the City of Los Angeles, with Three Appendixes*. Today, this book is in many law libraries across the country. This author located a copy at the Arkansas Supreme Court Library, in Little Rock, Arkansas, just five miles from his house.

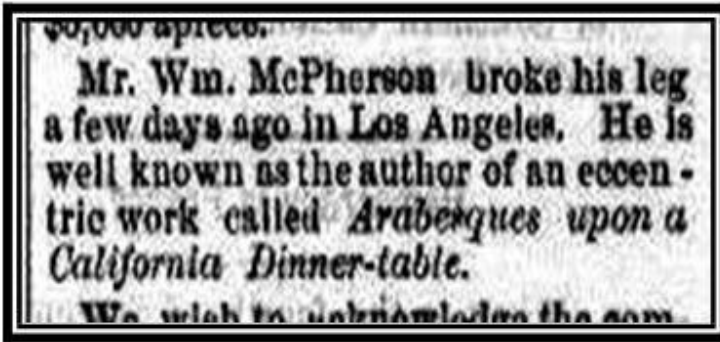


After William McPherson completed his first book he continued to author books. In 1873 he wrote and published a book titled *Homes in Los Angeles City and County and Description Thereof, with Sketches of The Four Adjacent Counties*. The book basically told the story of how nice it was to live in Los Angeles and compared it to other areas of the country.

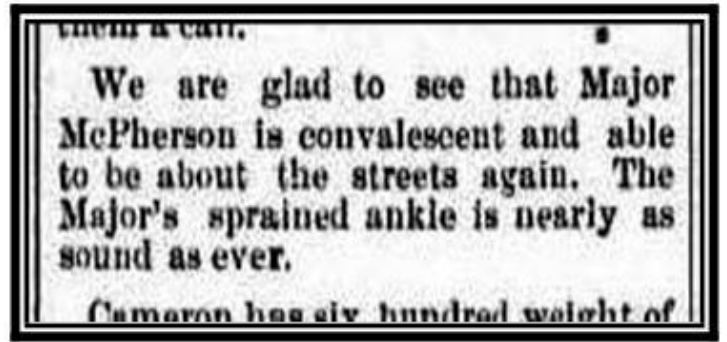
The next year, 1874, McPherson wrote and published his third and, as far as we can tell, his final book titled, *Arabesques on a California Dinner Table*. McPherson's third book was reviewed in the *Los Angeles Daily Herald* in the Wednesday morning, July 8, 1874, issue:

We have before us a little book, entitled, "Arabesques on a California Dinner Table," by Wm. McPherson, recently issued from the Mirror office in this city. The work is printed in pamphlet form, contains eighty pages and has a very creditable typographical appearance. The subject matter comprises three idealistic essays, entitled, "Whom Shall We Choose," "Hilaria," and "Publicity." The writing is profusely illustrated with choice quotations and historical references and is apparently designed to while away a leisure hour without affecting anything profound or startling. Just what the book has to do with California or dinner tables we cannot see, but suppose that the rose will smell as sweet by this as by any other name."

It really does not sound like this was a very good book review but, rather, more like William McPherson was someone to write about. Then two years later, in the spring of 1876, there was news again about William McPherson in the local newspaper.



Mr. Wm. McPherson broke his leg a few days ago in Los Angeles. He is well known as the author of an eccentric work called *Arabesques upon a California Dinner-table*. We wish to acknowledge the com



We are glad to see that Major McPherson is convalescent and able to be about the streets again. The Major's sprained ankle is nearly as sound as ever. Cameron has six hundred weight of

The first news article that appeared on Thursday morning, March 2, 1876, mentions that he broke his leg. Then again on Wednesday morning, March 29, 1876, another news article states that McPherson is “able to be about the streets again” and “the sprained ankle is nearly as sound as ever.” They must have been *very* hard up for news or William McPherson must have been a very important person in the Los Angeles community.⁴

The last two articles that appeared in the Los Angeles Daily Herald that mention William McPherson, or Major William McPherson as he was sometimes called, were in April and May of 1876. On April 28, 1876, in the City Council news there was mention of William McPherson being one of four individuals who had applied for the position of Police Judge. Again, just seven days later, on May 5, 1876, another article appeared in the City Council news which mentioned that William McPherson was one of seven candidates for City Judge. He was appointed to neither position.

After that there was no further mention of William McPherson in the newspapers in Los Angeles. He was not listed in the next City Directory for Los Angeles which came out in 1878. Additionally, he could not be located in the 1880 Federal Census. Possibly he died in mid-1876 or he may have been disappointed in not being named a judge and simply moved on to greener pastures.

In 1911, in his book titled, *The History of Walton County*, John L. McKinnon writes about William McPherson and states that "after the death of his young wife he cast his lot in the far West and sleeps today solitary and alone on the Pacific slopes beneath the golden sands of California."

Summary - So, William McPherson did pretty well for himself in civilian life after the Civil War, too. When we think of early Florida and Walton County we often believe everyone was a farmer and lived off the land. While that was often true, it was certainly not the case with William McPherson, the Commander of the Walton Guards during the Civil War. Nor was it true of his parents and their family. They were very well to do and educated their children very well for that day and age. No wonder his peers chose him as their leader of the Walton Guards.

Endnotes:

¹ Marriage Certificate - Jackson County, Florida, dated January 11, 1866

² City of Los Angeles Officials/Office Holders - <http://cityclerk.lacity.org/chronola/index.cfm?fuseaction=app.FacultySearchGeneral>

³ 1870 United States Federal Census for Los Angeles City, California

⁴ Chronicling America, Library of Congress - www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov

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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.