



# WALTON RELATIONS

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Walton County Genealogy Society

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## Meaning of “At Half Mast”

At First Universal Symbol Was Token of Submission and Respect For Enemy.

Perhaps you have noticed that whenever a prominent person dies, especially if he is connected with the government, the flags on public buildings are hoisted only part of the way up, remarks the *Toronto Mail and Express*. This is called “half mast.” Did you ever stop to think what connection there could be between a flag that was not properly hoisted and the death of a great man?

Ever since flags were used in war it has been the custom to have the flag of the superior or conquering nation above that of the inferior or vanquished. When an army found itself hopelessly beaten it hauled its flag down far enough for the flag of the victors to be placed above it on the same pole. This was a token not only of submission, but of respect.

In those days when a famous soldier died flags were lowered out of respect to his memory. The custom long ago passed from purely military usage to public life of all kinds, the flag flying at half mast being a sign that the dead man was worthy of universal respect. The space left above it is for the flag of the great conqueror of all—the angel of death.

*The Alma Signal* (Alma, Kansas)  
September 19, 1912, Page 7

## WCGS News

The Walton County Genealogy Society will not meet in February. The next meeting will be Saturday, March 21, at 10:00 a.m. at the Walton County Heritage Museum.

## Walton County History Fair

Reminder: The Walton County Fair building is currently undergoing renovations, so there will not be a History Fair this year.

## Book Wish List

*The Gillis Family in the South* by Clayton Metcalf was on the Book Wish List last month. Thanks to a tip from **Mark Curenton** of Apalachicola, it was found for sale by the Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society in Enterprise, Alabama. They apparently have a few copies of the book available for \$19.30, including postage. Call 334-393-2901 to confirm its availability before sending payment.

## **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](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org)  
HeritageMuseum@centurylink.net

## **February is Black History Month**

### **Walton County's Black Public Officials, 1867-1924**

Excerpts from *Florida's Black Public Officials, 1867-1924*

by Canter Brown (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press) 1998

Call, Henry W.

Born 1834, Florida, Mulatto, AME minister. Alive in DeFuniak Springs 1910. Washington County voter registrar 1868; Walton County voter registrar 1868; Walton County justice of the peace 1873-1875; Walton County commissioner 1875-1877.

[Note: The *U.S. Register of Civil, Military, and Naval Service, 1863-1959*, shows a Henry Call, who was born in Florida, working as an Inspector for the Treasury Department's Customs Service in Freeport on September 30, 1875. His compensation was \$729.00.]

Daniels, Joseph T.

Born 1825, Florida, Laborer. Alive in Walton County 1880. Walton County justice of the peace 1872-1873.

[Note: The 1880 census shows him in Precinct 1 of Walton County with his wife Lucindia (40) and their children Emma (17), Henry (16), William (14), Margarett (10), Amenaus (8), and Ancerpus (6 months). He was a laborer whose parents were born in South Carolina.]

Johnson, Willis.

Born 1812, Georgia. Farmer. Alive in Walton County 1870. Walton County voter registrar 1867-1868.

Pittman, Anderson A.

Born 1813, Georgia. Mulatto. Farmer. Walton County justice of the peace 1875-1879.

### **Florida's Education Association: The Beginning**

Florida teachers and administrators numbering 700 met here in Chautauqua Hall for a "teachers institute" called the Florida Chautauqua. The meeting was called to order by J.A. Graham, City Superintendent of Schools, Key West, at 12:30 p.m., on Thursday March 4, 1886. The major purpose of the gathering was a short but intensive training period mainly in subject matter fields, for many teachers were mere "grammar school grads." Here was the beginning of the Florida Education Association. A separate black teachers' association was formed in 1890. On July 1, 1966 the black and white organizations merged. The name Florida Education Association was continued for this combined organization and, in 1975, the word "United" was added when FEA and Florida's American Federation of Teachers merged. The Florida Education Association has become a symbol of the achievements of the past and an inspiration to those who will promote excellence for Florida's public schools, colleges, and universities in the future.

Historical Marker in Front of the  
Chautauqua Hall of Brotherhood  
DeFuniak Springs

# **Children's Home Community: The Origin of the Name**

By Sam Carnley

Note: Walton County spells the community name "Children's Home" with an apostrophe, so that spelling is used throughout this article.

The following article was written by Elizabeth McGee, the date and place of which are unknown:

Mr. Ed Rodwell has asked for some time that an article be done on the Children's Home Community name.

This reporter talked with Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Carnley who live in that community and they told me I should talk to Mrs. Nillie Harrison. Her grandfather, Rev. William (Bill) Bruner named the community.

Mrs. Harrison told me that her grandfather and his wife Eila Gilder Bruner came to Florida from Cuthbert, Georgia. They homesteaded land in Gaskin, Fl. and stayed there for several years. Then they moved to what is now Children's Home Community and homesteaded land there.

The Bruner s had 7 sons. They were Will Davis, Christopher, Thomas Jefferson, Auss John, Jess and Marcella.

Mrs. Harrison said her grandfather Bruner built a huge barn on his place and fixed some rooms in the loft for the boys to sleep in. His desire was to build a building and keep orphan children. He and his sons built a church of logs. They cut the timber in the woods themselves. This church was on Adams Road. That church is gone but the cemetery is still there Mrs. Harrison said. After they built this church they discussed a name for it and one of the boys said, "Lets call it Children's Home because we want to put in an orphanage."

This dream of building an orphanage did not come true for the Bruners because they had a misunderstanding with a neighbor about a hog and they sold out their land in the Children's Home Community and moved to Southport, Florida.

Mrs. Harrison lives in the Children's Home Community on land that was homesteaded by Bill Harrison, her husband's father. She said the house stands on the same spot of land where the original house was built, although it is not the same house.

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A search of the Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office records online revealed that John W. Bruner received patent number 16092, dated 3 July 1902 for 80.01 acres in Walton County, Florida. It was described as the SE ¼ of the SE ¼ of Section 28, and the NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 33, all in Township 6 North, Range 19 West.<sup>1</sup> A map of Walton County dated January 1992 shows Gaskin as located in the south part of Section 33. This appears to confirm the statement in the article that the Bruners homesteaded land in Gaskin.

On 29 February 1904, J. W. Bruner and Eller Bruner, husband and wife, executed a warranty deed to J. W. Collinsworth for the sale of their homestead property in Sections 28 and 33 for which they received \$700.00.<sup>2</sup> This was probably about the time they moved from Gaskin to the area which would become Children's Home community.

In a warranty deed dated 15 December 1909, the Florala Naval Stores Company conveyed eighty acres to J. W. Bruner described in part as follows: The West half of the South-west quarter of Section Seventeen (17) in Township Five (5) North of Range Twenty- one (21) West, etc.<sup>3</sup> According to the deed however, Bruner paid \$400.00 for the land, indicating he purchased it rather than entering it as a homestead as the article states. This parcel of land lies across the road directly east of the Children's Home Cemetery, which is located in the south-east corner of the SE ¼ of Section 18. The unpaved road between the two parcels was once unofficially known locally as Frank Adams, or

simply Adams Road for Frank Adams whose farm was a short distance south of the cemetery on the west side of the road. On current Walton County maps (dated 1992), the road is identified as Frost Lane.

On 5 March 1907, less than two years before the date of the above warranty deed, a request by J. N. (W.) Bruner and J. A. Paul that the Walton County Board of Public Instruction establish a school in their community was granted and Bruner was appointed supervisor of "Children's Home School" on 7 May 1907.<sup>4</sup> That appears to be the first reference to the name in any presently known official records.

According to the Board of Public Instruction minutes of 11 June 1907, a building was inspected for a school named "Children's Home" and acceptance recommended. As soon as the property was deeded to the Board, desks and seats would be ordered for it. In the article, Mrs. Harrison tells of a church the Bruners built of logs near the cemetery. Possibly, the same building served as the school.

Even though he did not own the land at that point, Bruner obliged by executing a warranty deed to the Board for an acre of land on 25 August 1907.<sup>6</sup> Its description placed it in the south-west corner of the SW 1/4 of Section 17, of the township and range described above as the land that Bruner did not purchase from Florala Naval Stores until 1909.

In a warranty deed dated 28 October 1910, J. W. Bruner and Ellar Bruner sold to I. S. Lurie for \$1,400.00 the SW 1/4 of Section 17, Township 5 North of Range 21 West, "except one acre in the S. W. Corner where school house stands."<sup>7</sup> That may be the point at which the Bruners sold out and moved to Southport as stated in the article.

On 9 November 1920, the Walton County Board of Public Instruction sold the acre to I. S. Lurie, putting him in possession of the entire SW 1/4 of Section 17.<sup>8</sup> At what point the school ceased operation is unknown. A second building known as Children Home School was erected in Section 20 about a mile south of Section 17 before 1912 and continued in operation until 1949 when it was closed and its students transferred to Paxton.

Taken together, the oral history of Mrs. Harrison from the article, the minutes of the Board of Public Instruction, and the Walton County Official Records appear to confirm J. W. Bruner as the originator of the Children's Home Community name.

<sup>1</sup> Bruner, John W., Walton County Florida, BLM-GLO website.

<sup>2</sup> WD, J.S. Bruner and Eller Bruner, Grantor, J. W. Collinsworth, Grantee, Walton County OR book 15, page 611, dated 1904, Courthouse, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

<sup>3</sup> WD, Florala Naval Stores Company, Grantor, J. W. Bruner, Grantee, Walton County OR book 31, page 368, dated 1909, Courthouse, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

<sup>4</sup> Walton County Board of Public Instruction Minutes Book 2, pages 214 and 221, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

<sup>5</sup> Walton County Board of Public Instruction Minutes Book 2, page 225, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

<sup>6</sup> WD, J. H. Bruner and Ellar Bruner, Grantors, Board of Public Instruction of Walton County, Grantee, Walton County OR Book 25, page 417, dated 1907, Courthouse, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

<sup>7</sup> WD, J. W. Bruner and wife Ellar Bruner, Grantor, I.S. Lurie, Grantee, Walton County OR Book 32, page 269, dated 1910, Courthouse, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.