



# WALTON RELATIONS

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## Microfilm Reader



A microfilm reader was recently donated to the Walton County Genealogy Society. The reader will display images from 16 and 35 mm microfilm. 35 mm film is the type used for census records.

A collection of *Herald-Breeze* newspapers on 16 mm film was recently discovered by **Jeanne Laird**, Treasurer of the Walton County Heritage Association. Using the reader, we can now view this collection at the Museum, which includes newspapers from 15 July 1909 through 14 March 1912 and from 1 January 1914 through 30 December 1915 as well as more recent papers from the 1990s.

If you have microfilm that may be of interest to genealogists, please consider donating your reels to the Walton County Genealogy Society so that others might benefit from them.

## Next WCGS Meeting

The Walton County Genealogy Society will meet at the Walton County Heritage Museum on **Saturday, October 9, at 10:00 AM.**

Please visit the Walton County Heritage booth at the **Walton County Fair**, October 11 through 18. Representatives of the Museum will host the booth Monday through Friday, 5:00-9:00 PM, and **Wayne Sconiers** will host the booth on Saturday from 10:00 AM until 9:00 PM. Please come see us!

## Upcoming Reunions

Sunday, October 10 – **Crowder Cemetery**

October (date unknown) – **Darlington**

See our Reunions web page for more information.

### **Walton County Heritage Museum**

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 1:00- 4:00 PM  
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

850-951-2127

[www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org)

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# Walton County's Masonic Heritage

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Masonry's traditions run deep in Walton County. For the serious student of family histories, Masonic records may provide an additional source to better connect an ancestor to a specific activity. By searching beyond the mere genealogical facts relating to the pedigrees of ancestors or relatives, Masonic records add to the character of the person being researched. Walton County Masonic records are a valuable asset in learning expanded information about a forefather. This article details the establishment of formal Masonic activities in Walton County and also contains the names and offices held by many early Walton County Masons. The area of study has been restricted to lodges formed prior to 1900.

Freemasonry developed early in Florida after the territory was acquired from Spain in 1819. Masonry had been active in Spain during the final years of Spanish ownership of Florida. However, there are no records indicating that there were active Spanish lodges in the Pensacola area during this era. John L. McKinnon in his *History of Walton County* reports that Alexander McGillivra (also spelled McGillivray), the educated half-Scotch Indian who contributed to early events in north Florida's establishment, was buried with Masonic honors. Also it is known that Andrew Jackson, Florida's first territorial governor, was a Mason, as were several members of his staff. Thus it can be concluded that the early settlers of the territory brought Masonic leanings with them.

There were sufficient Masons living in the Florida Territory for the Grand Lodge of Alabama, in 1825, to issue a charter to Jackson Lodge No. 1, Tallahassee. One year later, the Grand Lodge of Georgia issued a charter for a lodge to be created in Quincy, followed shortly by a charter for a lodge in Marianna. These three lodges, in 1830, met to form the Grand Lodge of Florida Free and Accepted Masons, with the original headquarters to be in Tallahassee. From that beginning, all succeeding Masonic lodges in Florida obtain their authority to conduct Mason business.

In 1849, the Florida Grand Master authorized a lodge under dispensation to be named "Royal White Hart Lodge No. 17" to meet at Eucheeanna in the County of Walton. Under old Masonic custom, any five Brothers could form a new lodge. After the rule established by the English Grand Lodge in the Regulations of 1723, no set of brethren could establish a new lodge unless dispensation or permission was granted by the Grand Master who had Masonic jurisdiction over the specific location where the lodge was to be formed. The original records of those Brethren residing in Eucheeanna, who petitioned in 1848 for the formation of this lodge, have been lost. However, it is within the realm of reasonableness to assume that some of the original settlers of Walton County had been Masons in the state or country of their origin and now desired to start active Masonic communications in their new home.

The original name of the dispensation lodge directs substance to the belief that some of the petitioning Eucheeanna Brethren held Masonic roots from Scotland. The early settlers in the Eucheeanna area, designated as the first county seat of Walton, held strong Scottish ancestry, as maybe noted from a reading of the lodge's 1858 roster on Page 4. The cemetery adjoining the Euchee Valley Presbyterian Church (formed about 1823) contains several headstones indicating that the persons buried in that graveyard had been born in Scotland during the late 1700s. Under the English Masonic system, adopted by Scottish Masons, the original "Royal Lodge" was claimed to have been formed in the city of Jerusalem upon the return of the Babylonian captives. Therefore, the term "Royal" implied a strong Biblical connection. In the broader sense of the word, royal means magnificent or splendid. In Speculative Masonry, white is the emblem of purity. Hart is a deer found in England or Scotland. Thus the Eucheeanna lodge was to be named after a magnificent white deer.

However, without any explanation by the Florida Grand Lodge, when the charter was issued, January 10, 1849, the official title was "Eucheeanna Lodge No. 17, in the County of Walton." By 1858 the lodge had expanded to a membership of 65 members. The officers were:

William McDonald, Worshipful Master  
David Vaughan, Senior Warden  
J. K. McDonald, Junior Warden  
Neal S. Gillis, Secretary  
Rev. James Lassiter served as Chaplin.

A. C. Douglass, Treasurer  
Enos Evans, Senior Deacon  
S. L Perkins, Junior Deacon  
J. D. McSween, Tyler

Several members of the Euclidean Lodge served in offices at sessions of the Florida Grand Lodge. James M. Landum served as Grand Junior Deacon for the 1849 session. Daniel K. McDonald served as the Grand Junior Deacon for the 1850 session. Daniel G. McLean served as the Grand Senior Deacon for the 1851 session.

Walton County suffered serious economic problems related to the Civil War. Even though the county voted not to withdraw from the Union, the county did furnish many soldiers who fought with the south. The historic Confederate memorial, today located on the courthouse lawn in DeFuniak Springs, lists a total of over 90 Walton County men who lost their lives during this conflict, many of whom were either Masons or the family members of Masons. The list of the county's service men who lost their lives in the Southern cause indicate that thirty-two were from the family of Masons as reflected by the 1858 roster. The losses for Masonic families were as follows: McDonald, 5; McLeod, 3; McLean, 5 (including a Captain); Browne, 2; Gillis, 8 (including a Captain and a Lieutenant); Barclay, 1; Evans, 1; Campbell, 1; and Welch, 2.

During the Civil War, Yankee troops captured the Euclidean courthouse. Livestock, corn and other food supplies in the surrounding area were taken by the invaders. When the war ended there was even a shortage of seed corn for planting of crops for the next season. With these pressing issues, the locals were forcing their attention to bare survival. Due to inaction by the Brethren in filing required reports, Lodge No. 17 lost its Charter in 1868.

The Euclidean Masons held strong to their fraternal bonds. In 1870 they reapplied to the Grand Lodge for special dispensation to form a new lodge to be called "Euclidean Lodge, U.D.," meaning Under Dispensation. Walton Lodge No. 63 was granted a charter on February 15, 1872. Of the sixteen members who petitioned for the formation of a new Euclidean lodge, eight members of dissolved Lodge No. 17 joined in the petition, including Neal S. Gillis, A. P. McDonald, William McDonald, John McKenzie, J. L. McKinnon, James McLean, Neill McKinnon, and J. D. McSween. William McDonald, who had served as Master of the dissolved lodge, was elected to hold that office in the new lodge. During the period of dispensation, the Euclidean Brethren had conferred the Fellowcraft degree upon B. H. Rigdon and J. F. Wilson.

The last report of Walton Lodge No. 63 was filed with the Grand Lodge in 1882, and it was dissolved shortly thereafter.

The county's Mason history continued when Concord Lodge No. 50 was chartered January 20, 1886, and authorized to meet at Crestview in Walton County. There were fourteen Brethren involved in the formation of this lodge. Concord was the home lodge of Florida Congressman Robert Lee Fulton Sikes, who served many years in the U. S. House of Representatives. The lodge became a part of Okaloosa County when that county was established June 13, 1915, as the fifty-second county. Concord is still an active lodge and meets in Crestview.

Laurel Hill Lodge No. 44 was chartered January 19, 1897, to meet at Laurel Hill in Walton County. Lodge 44 was chartered with eighteen charter members. Fourteen of the Brothers came from Old Walton Lodge No. 54 (located at Oak Grove, Santa Rosa County, and chartered January 1880). Later Laurel Hill became a part of Okaloosa County. The lodge has enjoyed having the post office as a tenant in its lodge building. This was the home lodge of Most Worshipful Ernest Willie Campbell who served Florida as Grand Master in 1941. The lodge remains active.

Natural Bridge Lodge No. 106 was chartered January 16, 1889, to meet at Natural Bridge in Walton County. The lodge had fifteen charter members, of whom at least six were from Lake City Lodge No. 377 of Lake City, Alabama. One other original member was from Geneva No. 129, Alabama. The lodge was named after the Natural Bridge over Natural Bridge Cavern. The lodge remains active and now meets in Gaskin, Florida, which is about six miles from Natural Bridge.

The Masonic tradition established by the Euclidean Brethren spoke one more time. Herman Lodge No. 108 was chartered January 16, 1889, to meet at DeFuniak Springs in Walton County. The three line officers were C. A. Landrum, Worshipful Master, Wubb Conner, Senior, and A. B. McLeod, Junior Warden. Among the charter Brothers was D. L. Campbell, a Brother from the original Euclidean Lodge No. 17. From the second Euclidean lodge, Walton Lodge No. 63, there were eight Brothers: A. B. McLeod, Alex Steele, D. G. McLeod, W. L. Brown, W. J. Cawthon, N. J. McKinnon, James Bowers, and Laughlin McRae. New members for the area were Fellowcraft Brothers Millis A. Warren and L. L. Cawthon and Entered Apprentices M. L. Cawthon and J. W. Douglass.

The original charter was lost in a fire June 19, 1903. The lodge moved its meeting place to Freeport in 1903 where it remains an active lodge today.

**Sources:**

*The American College Dictionary*, 1953, Random House, New York  
*Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, Albert G. Mackey, 1946, Macoy Publishing Co., N.Y.  
*History, 1830-1988, The Grand Lodge of Florida Free and Accepted Masons*, L. Roy Crowther, 1988  
*Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*, Henry Wilson Coil, Macoy Publishing Co., N. Y.  
*Walton Wanderings—A Swing and a Miss at History*, James E. Moore, 1996, Bayou Publishing Co.  
*History of Walton County*, John L. McKinnon, Palmetto Books, 1968 reprint (original printing 1911.)

**1858 roster of members of Eucheeanna Lodge No. 17**

John Barclay	R.R. Golden	L. D. McLean
J. W. Barclay	D. G. Gunn	James McLean
Giles Bowers	W. G. Gunn	A. G. McLeod
James Bowers	A. J. Howell	Alex. McLeod
J. W. Bowers	Henry Hewett	D. G. McLeod
Thos. G. Bowers	E. D. Hewett	Neill McLeod
A.H. Browne	Moses Hewett	Wm. McLeod
Thos. G. Bronson	W. C. Jemison, Jr.	Neill McPherson
Arcy Campbell	Rev. Jas. Lassiter	Neil McCranie
D. L. Campbell	R. W. McCullum	A. C. Monroe
J. L. Campbell	A. P. McDonald	John Morrison
Neill P. Campbell	D. P. McDonald	T. T. Parish
D. W. Cranie	J. K. McDonald, J.W.	S. L. Perkins, J.D.
A.C. Douglass, Trea.	William McDonald, W.M.	Wm. M. Sconiers
Enos Evans,S.D.	John McKenzie	M. H. Stanley
James Evans	J. L. McKinnon	David Vaughn, S.W.
Jessie Evans	Lauchlin McKinnon	Isaac Welch
Dempsey Fennell	A. D. McKinnon	Islum Walker
A.D. Gillis	Charles McKinnon	Wm. Williamson
Neal S. Gillis, Sec.	Neill McKinnon	W. S. C. Younge
Malcom Gillis	D. M. McLean	J. D. McSween, Tyler
A.H. Brownell	D. K. McDonald	Neill J. McKinnon

**Laurel Hill Lodge No. 44 January 1897 Charter Roster**

Laurel Hill Lodge was chartered with 18 charter members. Fourteen came from Old Walton Lodge No. 54, (Chartered January 21, 1880, to meet at Oak Grove in Santa Rosa County) and four received their degree while under dispensation.

W. M. Richbourg, W. M.	J. L. Richbourg, S. R.	John H. Givins, J. W.
John A. Stewart	W. H. Tyner	J. L. Clary
L. B. Clary	W. A. Campbell	Marshal J. Brown
Jason C. Steel	P. B. Senterfitt	Allan Campbell
James Barrow	Marion A. Gordon	Capers Tyner
W. A. Richbourg	Charles H. Gordon	Charles H. Carmicheal

**1886 Charter Roster of Concord Lodge No. 50**

John W. Baggett	Allen R. Jones, S.W.	William E. King, J.W.
H. P. Bush	T. M. Baggett	J. H. Richbourg
I. S. Jones	Joseph J. Weekley,	M. V. B. Gay
F. C. Chaffin	James M. Hart	Obediah Edge
M. T. Senterfitt		

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at [WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net) or call 850-897-4505.