



# WALTON RELATIONS

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Walton County Genealogy Society

November 2012



Photograph courtesy of **Scott Clary**

## Who Are They?

This photograph appears to have been taken at Palmer College before the Administration Building burned down in 1915. The women may have been teachers there, but that is sheer speculation. If you have information about any of the women in this photograph, please contact us.

## WCGS Meetings

The Walton County Genealogy Society will not meet in November or December due to other Walton County Heritage Association events. We will resume our meetings in January 2013.

## Walton County Heritage Museum Holiday Hours

Christmas Reflections will open for tours beginning the evening after Thanksgiving and ending New Year's Eve. During those weeks, the Museum will be open on Friday evenings from 5:00 until 9:00.

The Museum will be open all day on Saturday, December 1, during the Tour of Homes, and we will display a tree at the Festival of Trees that weekend. We will also be open all day on Saturday, December 8, during Christmas Market and the Christmas Parade, which will start at 1:00. We will be participating in the parade this year, so come and cheer for us!

### **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)

[WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net)

# Childrens Home Cemetery History

By Sam Carnley

Nell and Sam Carnley surveyed the Childrens Home Cemetery on January 31, 1999. For a copy of Sam's booklet, *Childrens Home Cemetery: History and Survey*, which includes an annotated listing of the gravesites, please send \$1.50 to him at 6635 Wold Pond Road, Bascom, FL 32423. Thirty-six interments in the cemetery can be viewed on [Findagrave.com](http://Findagrave.com).

Located in the northwest corner of Walton County, Florida, the cemetery known as Childrens Home may have acquired its name from an orphanage. According to local tradition, a man named Brunner kept orphans in his home near the cemetery.<sup>1</sup> In reference to Brunner's establishment, the surrounding community became known as the "Childrens Home" settlement. The earliest known documented reference to the name is found in the Walton County School Board minutes. They show that in May and June, 1907, the Board authorized the opening of a new school named Childrens Home and appointed J. N. Brunner as supervisor.<sup>2</sup> The site of the new school was in a one room, white painted wood frame church building across the road east of the cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

Whether or not the name was in use earlier than 1907 is unknown, but available evidence suggests the cemetery existed prior to then. Inscriptions on the headstone of Allen H. Cawthon, who is buried there, show that he was born to M. A. and M. J. Cawthon on 6 January 1867 and died 16 March 1870. His is the oldest surviving marker to be found in the cemetery. In the absence of any other evidence of its age, it is presently unknown whether the cemetery predated the year of the Cawthon child's death.

It is known however, that settlement in the vicinity of the cemetery occurred somewhat earlier. According to Walton County tract book original entry land records, Murray A. Cawthon, probably the father of the child above, was among this part of the County's earliest settlers. In April of 1860, he purchased the first three parcels of land offered for sale in section 18 where the cemetery is located. One of the parcels lay adjacent to the property with the cemetery site. Other members of the Cawthon family were also early settlers of the area. In 1852 and 1856, William J. Cawthon purchased land in section 9. In 1857, he purchased land in section 8. Elizabeth Cawthon bought land in section 7 on 1 December 1857. All these properties were within 2 miles, or less, of the cemetery. Typically, settlers entered land they intended to purchase or homestead several years in advance of the actual purchase or patent date. The possibility thus exists that William J. Cawthon, for example, entered the property he purchased in 1852 some years in advance of that date. In view of this, it is likely the countryside in the vicinity of the cemetery was inhabited a number of years prior to 1860 and the site could have been in use as a burial ground before then.

The parcel containing the cemetery remained public property until acquired as part of a homestead by William Hutto in March of 1906.<sup>4</sup> On 18 June 1906, Hutto deeded the site to Willie Gautney, Mack Henry Busbee, J. I. Hurst, and J. J. Lassiter with the stipulation that it was for cemetery use. Following their demise the property passed to the heirs of these individuals, and that is the existing ownership status as of 1999.

Except for a few plots, the cemetery has not been maintained. Because it is privately owned, neither the local church nor the community has any obligation for maintaining it. As the result of a half century of neglect, it became overgrown with trees and underbrush to the extent that many graves sites were obliterated. Worsening its plight still more, headstone vandalism erased many old grave identifications. Such was its state until the late 1990s.

Ironically, its condition improved during that time due to an illegal act. Someone stole the timber growing on it. After cutting down all but three dozen or so of the pines and hauling them away for pulpwood, the thieves left the site littered with tree trimmings but otherwise more open and accessible than it had been in decades. Seizing the opportunity, community leaders requested from the County the use of a crew of prisoners to finally clean it up. In addition to removing the tree litter, the prisoners cut away the underbrush. After languishing for the better part of fifty years, the old cemetery has once again been reclaimed thanks to thieves and prisoners.

As of January 1999, it is a scene of tranquility. The view from atop the knoll where it lies is of rolling hills cloaked in unending stands of the ever-present planted pine. Interspersed within the pines are wind rippled expanses of golden broom sedge. Those same gentle breezes whisper softly in the needles of the site's remaining pines, as if to hush those sleeping below. A sagging wire fence, rusted and broken, encircles a tiny grave, obviously that of a small child. Holding up the fence are weather worn posts charred by the flames of some long ago woods fire racing unchecked across the overgrown cemetery grounds. On the sand beneath the weeds growing in the sad little enclosure lie broken bits of colored glass left as tokens of love. No marker bearing the child's name remains if, in fact, one was ever there. The child's anonymity, the wordless, heartbreaking expressions of profound love and grief one senses in the presence of the forlorn little shrine and the cemetery's lonely isolation rouse in the heart both a vague feeling of sorrow and the sudden desire for more cheerful surroundings.

But cemeteries are not entirely devoid of cheer. This is especially so for those who derive fulfillment at finding in them long-lost ancestors and relatives.

### Location

The cemetery is in the southeast corner of section 18, range 21 west, township 5, north, Walton County, Florida. It is on the west side of Frost Lane (a dirt road), one and one half (1.5) miles north of County Road 2. **From Crestview** (distance, 20-25 miles), take Highway 90 east to Highway 393 (Dorcas). Go north on 393 to County Road 2. Turn east on CR 2, go approximately 2 miles to Frost Lane. **From DeFuniak Springs** (distance, 20-25 miles), go north on U. S. Highway 331 to Gordon Tower. Turn west on County Road 2, go approximately five and one half (5.5) miles to Frost Lane. **From Laurel Hill** (distance, 6.-10 miles), go east on Highway 85 to Svea. Turn south on Highway 393 to County Road 2. Go east on CR 2 approximately 2 miles to Frost Lane. **From Florala, Alabama** (distance, 8-10 miles), go south on Highway 85. At Harrison Curve, take County Road 147 south to County Road 2. Turn west on CR 2, go approximately one half (0.5) mile to Frost Lane.

### Notes

1. Oral history, Mae Hazel Allen Carnley.
2. Walton County District School Board minutes, Book #2, pp. 214, 221, 225.
3. Oral history, Mrs. Merle Adams Jones.
4. Walton County, Florida, Reconstructed Tract Book, Range 21 W, Copyright 1998, Duke Vickery, Gulf Breeze, FL.

## Good News for Georgia Researchers

Last month, we reported that the Georgia State Archives was in danger of being closed this month. Thanks to **Lillian McLean**, we received word that funds have been restored to the budget so that the Archives will remain open until June 30, 2013. On July 1, the Archives will be transferred to the University System of Georgia, if the General Assembly approves the transfer, and funds will be appropriated to operate the Archives.

## Websites You May Have Missed

Thanks to **Lillian McLean** for sending this information.

**Genealogy Today** offers over 6,210 transcriptions -- including Masonic lodge rosters, funeral notices, school catalogues, telephone directories, insurance claims, directories, church member lists, prison records, etc. -- from original documents. This is a subscription service (\$32.95 annually) but it has some free databases, such as Funeral Cards and Ration Books. The subscription includes access to other databases, such as Criminal Records and Railroad Employees.

**Internet Archive** – The Internet Archive is a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Like a paper library, it provides free access to researchers, historians, scholars, and the general public. If you are looking for a website that apparently no longer exists, try the “Wayback Machine” that has preserved 150 billion web pages. The site has more than a million videos, 100,000 concerts, a million audio recordings, and 3 million texts available to you.

## Cemeteries Discovered

Travis Wilkerson and **Michael Strickland** have identified some cemeteries in Walton County that have not been surveyed previously. The underscored names below are linked to their listings on [Findagrave.com](http://Findagrave.com). If you have additional information about these cemeteries, please let us know.

Bailey Family – Euchee Valley on private property  
Basin Bayou – not yet located  
Bower – north of Rock Hill Road; Fairy Belle Bowers interred  
Braxton – not yet located  
Bruce – Charles W. Infinger interred  
Bunker – two cemeteries; one on private property not located  
Clark – not yet located  
Cuchens Family – Woodlawn on private property  
Day – north of C. J. Laird Road  
Hurricane Creek – not yet located  
J. F. Huckaba – not yet located  
Laird – not yet located  
Lakewood – not yet located  
Mayhair – not yet located  
McSwain – Euchee Valley; no marked graves  
Parrish – Off Co. Hwy. 183B on private property  
Prospect – not yet located  
Santa Rosa/Santa Rosa Catholic – not yet located  
Smith – not yet located  
Walker’s Rest – Off Indian Creek Ranch Road  
Wilkerson Old Field Family – near Caney Creek  
Woodlawn Baptist Church – on Cedar Lane in Woodlawn

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

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