



WALTON RELATIONS

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Walton County Genealogy Society

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Who Are They?

Several years ago, some photographs were purchased from the online auction site eBay. Two other photographs from the lot were featured in the May 2013 issue of *Walton Relations*. The seller stated they were purchased in DeFuniak Springs. That, of course, does not mean the people in the photographs were from Walton County, but it is very possible.

The photograph of the lady does not have any identifying marks on it for her or the photographer. The photograph of the man is on a six-inch round, slightly domed disk, the purpose of which is unclear.

If you can identify either of the people in these photographs, please contact us.

WCGS Meetings

The Walton County Genealogy Society will not meet at the Museum again until September, but we take a road trip to Lakewood on Saturday, June 8.

Lakewood Cemetery Trip

Past issues of *Walton Relations* have mentioned a cemetery in Lakewood, but no one was able to identify its location until **Maria Milton** told us she has attended burials there and could show us where it is.

We will meet at the Museum at 9:00 AM on Saturday, June 8, and caravan up to Lakewood. We will meet Maria Milton at the Britton Hill marker and proceed from there to the cemetery where we will photograph and record its markers. We welcome all assistance with this project and hope you will join us. If you come, please be sure to dress appropriately and bring sunscreen and water. We expect to finish by noon and return to the Museum around 12:30.

Walton County Heritage Museum

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

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A Legacy Worthy of Preservation

By Annie Ruth Campbell

The following is a portion of a presentation given to the Walton County Heritage Association on April 15, 1993. Heritage has a copy of Mrs. Campbell's handwritten notes but, unfortunately, the last line of each page was not copied so some sentences are unfinished. Those sentences are noted as "[missing line]" in the transcript. If we locate the original notes, we will make the entire presentation available.

To President Cate, members of the Walton County Heritage Society, and to others present tonight: It is an honor and a pleasure to speak to you on the broad subject of "Black Community History."

The January 1992 newsletter to members of this organization contained a reminder that the Heritage Society is a county organization and that there had been discussion of documentation of black history.

My assumption is that my presentation tonight is the initial phase of such a project. This presentation, titled "A Legacy Worthy of Preservation," is not definitive or documented. My sources were mostly secondary; it is therefore subject to omissions and errors.

In some book, I read this quote: "Take a piece of wax, a piece of meat, some wet sand, some clay, and some shavings. Put all of these items on a fire and see how they react. Each of them is being acted upon by the same agent. Yet the wax melts, the meat fries, the sand dries, [the clay hardens,] the shavings blaze. Just so, under identical influence of circumstances and environment, one man is made better, made stronger, while another withers away. Not so much what is done to us, but what we do, determines our destiny."

Let's take a brief look at the communities of Flowersview, Lakewood, DeFuniak Springs, Freeport, Red Bay, Douglass Crossings, Euchee Valley, and Argyle in [missing line] a brief look at how they controlled their destinies.

Families in each of the aforementioned communities have seen the importance of family reunions as the vehicle for passing the family heritage to future generations. Church histories read at anniversary observances recall the vital contributions others have made to the community. Four grand Tivoli and individual class reunions have promoted a sense of pride in the accomplishments of blacks in Walton County. Then these are valuable sources of historical data: Family reunion histories, Tivoli school reunions, and church histories.

Located in the northern section of Walton County, Flowersview (formerly Flowers Quarters) is a unique community. Named after a black man, Charlie Flowers, it is now one of Walton's two all black voting precincts. It is a community that has always been politically vibrant, ecumenical in religious relationships, and demanding in the provision of education for its youth. Citizens reportedly provided for and paid the teacher for a four-month school year. Later, the county provided for the Mt. Zion School and [missing line] grade 8. For a brief period, instruction was provided through Grade 10 at the local school. Following the close of the facility for a school site, the building was converted into a community center. More recently, at the initiative of the Rev. James Williams and cooperation of local businesses and others, the facility has been repaired and become useful as an adult literacy center.

Two churches are located in the area. Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church is on land donated by the late K. R. Roberts. Mr. Roberts, [illegible] Oates, Will Cosson, the Joneses, Williamses and Miltons have been the leaders in improving the community in all phases of common concerns. The present day residents are active in county-wide social agencies and in the higher echelons of the Methodist and Baptist churches statewide.

Perhaps Flowersview's most widely-known resident is Gladys Milton, the midwife who won a lengthy legal battle for reinstatement by the State of Florida and the recent co-author of her biography, *Why Not Me?* The

residents probably consider Joe Maxwell worthy of remembrance because he operated a grocery store there over a period of many years. *[Missing line]* after earning degrees in medicine, education, and technology, are engaged in the fields locally and in communities throughout the U.S.

The Memorial Birthing Center operates with the assistance of Mrs. Milton's son, a medical doctor, and daughter Maria, who has had medical training.

In nearby Lakewood, Charley MacDaniels Whatley, now a retired Walton County educator, was for many years the guiding light for the students at Mt. Zion in Flowersview. She especially was the mentor for the late Monroe Hill, a V.A. hospital administrator, in Philadelphia, for Dr. James L. Hill, presently the only black school principal in Okaloosa County, and for Charlie Hill (deceased) who before his retirement and death was also employed by the Okaloosa School System. He also served for a number of years on the Fort Walton Beach City Council and recently had a street named after him.

In DeFuniak Springs, whether the *[missing line]* or athletics, the same family names come to the fore. There are some 27 black churches in Walton County, with half of them located in DeFuniak Springs. The oldest are Mt. Nebo Baptist, Union Springs Baptist, and St. Joseph A.M.E. Before the separation of these congregations, all worshipped as members of the Union Church, a bush arbor structure in which interdenominational services were held. Between the years 1870 and 1895, the three distinct denominational churches were established.

Mt. Nebo is located on North 11th Street. Its present pastor, Jesse Washington (No. 11), ministers to a congregation with a legacy dating back to 1878. Upon leaving the Union Church, the late Rev. J. W. Harrell, with a small group of members, constructed a second bush arbor church on Toledo Avenue.

Through the years, Mt. Nebo members achieved success in many careers. To cite just a few: The late Dr. Davis Cady, high school and junior college administrator in Pensacola, Dora *[missing line]* Isabell Minor, Bernice L. Russ (also all deceased). Presently, citations are due for Tim Crenshaw, local law enforcement officer; Tyrone Broadus, minister; Norma Hartsfield, social services; Marva Crenshaw Campbell, Hillsborough County Judge; Clatie P. Baldwin, Walton County School System; and Ervin Carr, retired Fort Walton Beach policeman. All of these and others have, or are, adding to the legacy.

Strong ties bind families of Union Springs and St. Joseph churches. Prominent names intertwined in the history of the DeFuniak Springs community include the Jacksons, the Millers, the Jordans, the Grahams, the Crenshaws, Jemmotts, Youngs, Johnsons, Graytons, Hooks, and McLeans. There has been intermarriage between several of these families. These were large families and descendants have become educators, ministers, athletes, officers in the armed forces, and entrepreneurs.

A surprising number of indi- *[missing line]* -bershops, beauty salons, and grocery stores flourished at times at locations on East Nelson and East Baldwin Avenues.

The late John B. Jordan, father of prominent educators the late Anna J. Caldwell and Vivian J. Trahan, was the proprietor of a theater on Dorsey Avenue.

Peggy Daniels, a Miller descendant, is well known for her gospel music groups.

The late Harrison McLean owned a funeral home on East Nelson Avenue and had extensive real estate holdings in northwest Florida.

C. J. Hooks, the late father of Clint Hooks, the present city marshal, was a railroad employee but carried on his own businesses at the same time. By involving his sons in the selling of ice in the mornings and wood in the afternoon, he provided the impetus for the work ethic in them. Clinton now drives a school bus, owns parcels of real estate, and is co-owner of a laundromat. At one *[missing line]* Ruth Graham Smith is the organist for St.

Joseph, the church which her late father served as pastor. She operates a beauty salon, while her husband is proprietor of the city's only barber shop for black males.

Bethel Presbyterian Church, located on Roosevelt Avenue since it was established in 1930, is an offspring of Pleasant Grove Presbyterian Church in Euchee Valley. Its most notable contribution to the community has been the establishment of a pre-K school and day care center. The first was organized by the first pastor, George Cowsar; the latter by J. B. Rodgers in 1952. The day care center predated Head Start in the community and closed in 1965.

Willa Manning then operated a similar center in the Masonic Hall on Nelson Avenue and later moved it to her home. Willa presently is lunchroom manager for Walton Senior High School, is a caterer, creates crafts for sale, and has authored a cookbook.

[Missing line] include other members of the Gipson and Nelson families who moved from Red Bay. Davis Nelson is presently the oldest member. The late William Andrews was a faithful member and an ardent supporter of the NAACP during his lifetime.

Tivoli School: Prior to the location of the school at Thomas Avenue and Park street, classes were held in a house built by Ike McKinnon and Columbus Gipson. McKinnon donated land, materials, and labor for the Nelson Avenue structure. McKinnon's wife Lena, previously a teacher in Freeport, worked under Grant Campbell.

The four-room school, built by the local school board, was later expanded by the addition of two more rooms. During several subsequent administrations, as black schools throughout the county were phased out, five brick buildings were erected on the site.

The United Professionals of Walton County has as one goal the preservation of the Tivoli legacy, especially the years 1921 to 1938. T. P. Campbell was a member of that 1938 class and principal of the school from 1956 to 1969.

Other uses for these buildings evolved after 1969 when Tivoli closed and black teachers and students were transferred to other elementary schools, Walton Middle, and Walton High School.

During the past few years, black church leaders have again come to the forefront. At Temple Baptist and at St. Joseph, tutoring sessions are offered. A group of men, "The Concerned Fathers," is a county-wide organization *[missing line]* self-esteem and wholesome activities for young black males.

Douglass Crossroads: Prominent families in this community include the Colin Jacksons, the James Hogans, and Sandy McKinnons. Over the years, they operated businesses, farmed successfully, and educated their children without the aid that is now available.

Eddie Williamson, a member of Macedonia Baptist Church, is a civic minded individual who is involved in many local endeavors. He gave land on which part of the state park in the Douglass Crossroads community is located. He also is a member of the "Concerned Fathers." He comes from a large family whose members have extensive educational training and varied professional careers.

[To be continued.]

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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.