



WALTON

RELATIONS & HISTORY

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Walton County Heritage Association

October 2023



WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

OFFICE LOCATION

Walton County Heritage Museum, (Old Train Depot)

Hours: Open Tuesday – Saturday, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

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Newsletter Cover Collage Photos

Clockwise from top left:

1. **Darlington, Florida, early 1900s, Courtesy of Baker Block Museum, photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley.**
2. *Henderson-Mathis turpentine still in Glendale or Gaskin.* 1904. Black & white photoprint, 4 x 6 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/42107>>, accessed 28 June 2017 by Sam Carnley.
3. **William Lewis (Luke) Hurst Family, Fleming Creek/Clear Springs area, north Walton County, ca 1894, from “The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,” p. 190.**
4. **Old Paxton High School, “1961-62 Paxtonian” Year Book, photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley**
5. Walton County Heritage Museum, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
6. Gladys D. Milton (1924-1999), Midwife, Flowersview/Paxton, photo by her daughter, Maria Milton. Also in “**The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,**” p. 249, and the September 2018 Newsletter at <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/NL2018Sep.pdf> Edited by Sam Carnley.
7. Walton County Heritage Museum, with sign painted by Sam Carnley
8. Paxton Water Tower, Paxton, Florida, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
9. Old Freeport School, constructed ca 1908, burned 1943. Photo from “**The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,**” p. 45. **Photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley.**
10. *Floralia Saw Mill Company's engine number 3 - Paxton, Florida.* 1907. Black & white photonegative, 4 x 5 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Photographer unknown. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/146972>>, accessed 7 September 2019 and edited by Sam Carnley. [Built in 1873 and Originally owned by New York, Ontario and Western Railroad Company as engine number 60; then owned by Southern Iron and Equipment Company as engine number 568 in 1907; then owned by Floralia Saw Mill Company as engine number 3 on March 3, 1907; returned to Southern Iron and Equipment Company and number changed to 915 on March 13, 1913; then owned by Louisiana Saw Mill Company as engine 50 in May, 1913.]

The Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. is a 501 (C) 3 Florida Not for Profit Corporation Recognized by the IRS as a Public Charity Organization for Tax Deductible Donations.

The Walton County Heritage Association was organized for four main purposes:

- To promote the preservation and restoration of buildings and other landmarks of historical interest within Walton County;
- To maintain the Walton County Heritage Museum to preserve the heritage of Walton County for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artifacts and information from the time of its original inhabitants to the present;
- To foster and enhance the development, education, and sense of history which is unique to Walton County; and
- To secure cooperation and unity of action between individual citizens, businesses, and other groups as may be necessary to fulfill these purposes.

The Association depends upon the support of its members and the business community to accomplish its goals. Annual dues are \$25 for individuals, \$40 for families and varying amounts for donors as shown on attached Annual Donor/Member Application for 2023. Donor logos are also shown on the attached Donor page in the monthly newsletter.

Annual Member/Sponsor Application 2023; See attached.

Member Benefits:

- Automatic membership in the **Walton County Heritage Museum** and the **Walton County Genealogy Society**.
- Invitations to Quarterly Members Meetings
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- **The Museum Gift Shop:** Members receive discounts on books, special publications, postcards, photographs, CDs, DVDs, videos, and gift items.
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ANNUAL MEMBER/SPONSOR APPLICATION 2024

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The Walton County Heritage Association is a nonprofit organization that was organized for four main purposes:

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2. To maintain the Walton County Heritage Museum to preserve the heritage of Walton County for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artifacts and information from the time of its original inhabitants to the present;
3. To foster and enhance the development, education, and sense of history which is unique to Walton County; and
4. To secure cooperation and unity of action between individual citizens, businesses, and other groups as may be necessary to fulfill these purposes.

* Additional gift of over \$2,000.00 (any amount in excess of that number) would be greatly appreciated. You may earmark this gift for a specific expense/purchase of gift items for our museum.

- All donor categories are entitled to membership in the museum and Genealogy Society and 10% discount on museum gift shop purchases.
- For all levels of Sponsorship, the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. will acknowledge sponsors on our website, in our newsletter and on a permanent plaque in the Museum. Sponsorships are on an annual basis from January to December. This is an acknowledgement of your gift only and does NOT constitute advertisement or the promotion of any individual, business or organization by the WCHA.

Please mail your check and this form to:
WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC. 1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435.
THANK YOU!!!

The Walton County Heritage Association, Inc., is a 501(C)(3) charitable organization as defined by the IRS Code. Gifts may be tax deductible as defined by the Federal Income Tax Regulations. To request a receipt for your tax-deductible membership in the WCHA, or donation, please contact us.

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We dedicate this page to our sponsors in recognition of their generous support of our mission.

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City of DeFuniak Springs



In the past the city has generously supported us with cash donations of \$2,000.00 annually, but due to changing budget priorities, was unable to do so in 2023. We wish to recognize the city's generosity however, for its **in-kind** donation of the RR depot which serves as the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc., Museum and administrative facility. The city provides maintenance and upkeep on the facility, and payment of electrical, water and waste disposal services as well. The value of this facility to us is far in excess of \$2,000.00 annually, for which we are deeply appreciative. Thank you, City of DeFuniak Springs.

A Note From the Editor

First, let me apologize for the belated October newsletter. It was a busy month with other matters demanding a great deal of my time apart from the newsletter. Even though it is late, I very much appreciate your forbearance with me in getting it out. As in the past, the next scheduled publication will be the one of January, 2024. By then, I hope to have caught up on everything and be able to get that one out on time.

As previously noted, each month's newsletter will feature a chapter of the Walton County Florida, New History, as they are being written. We have now completed chapter 4 and accordingly, we are presenting it as this month's newsletter article. As always, in the interest of making our articles as factual as we can to the extent of our knowledge, please let us know of any errors, mistakes, etc. you find in them. Thank you.

Sam Carnley

From WCHA President, Marie Hinson

We have one announcement from our president as follows:

Wayne and Janice Sconiers are graciously hosting our November planning meeting at their home this coming Saturday, the 18th at 11:00 A. M. Wayne's ph. Number is 850-333-8156 if you need to call him for directions to his house. Wayne's delicious smoked cuisine, whether ribs, sausage or other meaty delight, will top the menu. Please bring your choice of pot luck dishes to round out the menu for the enjoyment of all. Thanks, and I hope to see you there.

4 Pre-United States Territorial Period 1784-1821

Following their seizure of Pensacola on 9 May 1781, the victorious Spaniards installed Colonel Arturo O'Neill de Tyrone as Governor and Commandant of the city and the Province of West Florida.¹ So anxious were they to be rid of the British that they named the new executive officer without waiting for the signing of the treaty officially ending the conflict with that country. Known as the Treaty of Paris, it ended the American Revolutionary War and the war between Britain and Spain, which returned Florida to Spanish rule in 1783.²

Much of this final chapter of Spanish rule in West Florida would be dominated by a tug of war between the United States and Spain over Native American loyalties and the "deer skin economy," monopolized by Panton (William) Leslie (John) & Co. The company title excluded the name of Thomas Forbes, a third partner in the firm.³

Panton Leslie owed its privileged position in West Florida commerce to Alexander McGillivray, a man of mixed Native American and European ancestry. During the American Revolution, he sided with the British. After the war, he settled in Pensacola and convinced the Spanish authorities there to enter into a treaty with the Creek Indians whose chief he proclaimed himself to be and due to his Indian ancestry, the Creeks accepted him as such.

The terms of the treaty signed in June 1784 provided protection of the Creeks on Spanish territory and guaranteed them "adequate trade." McGillivray's definition of adequate trade encapsulated exclusive Indian trading rights to Panton Leslie & Company, in whose profits he shared as a silent partner.⁴

Within a few years, Spain's promise to support the Creeks waned, leading McGillivray to court the Americans as protectors of the Creeks. In 1789, President George Washington appointed a commission to negotiate a treaty with McGillivray. He led a contingent of tribal chieftains to New York where they entered into a treaty with the Americans which subjected Creek lands within United States territory to American sovereignty and set a specified boundary between Georgia and land claimed by the Creeks.⁵

To cement McGillivray's loyalty to the treaty, the Americans made him an army general with an annual salary of 12 hundred dollars. But distrustful of the Americans, he shortly turned back to the Spaniards hoping for a better arrangement. In 1792 he entered into a new treaty with them that risked stoking hostility against white settlers on Indian lands. It gave the Creeks liberty to order settlers off their land and arms and ammunition to back up those orders. Several months after returning from New Orleans where he went to sign the treaty, McGillivray died of a lingering illness contracted on the way back to Pensacola.⁶

Although McGillivray's recent treaty with the Spaniards allowed the Creeks to drive settlers off their land at gunpoint, the Indians first had to acquire their guns and ammunition through trade with Panton Leslie & Company. At one point, William Panton actually commented to Creeks buying guns from him that "the weapons were to be used to kill Americans."⁷ Trade with the company required a currency readily available to the Indians in the form of deerskins, which served as a highly valued substitute for money, something the Indians neither possessed, nor had the means of acquiring.

With deerskins, the Indians could buy anything Panton Leslie had to sell, including firearms, whether to intimidate white trespassers or shoot white-tailed deer for their hides. Demand for deer hides arose in London as a substitute leather for beaver pelts, once the most popular material for making hats. The over-trapping of beaver in North America reduced their number, causing the price of their fur to rise sharply. Due to their greater supply and cheaper price, deerskins soon replaced beaver as the preferred hat making material.

The "deerskin economy" in West Florida exploded during the territory's British period of 1763-1783. It continued to dominate trade after Spain reacquired the territory in 1784 and allowed Panton et al. to stock and sell only English manufactured goods to the Indians in exchange for deerskins. In addition to guns and ammunition, the goods sought by the Indians were every-day house-hold necessities, dry goods, iron cooking ware and other utensils, not to mention alcoholic spirits, of the same kind white settlers might have purchased.

To supply themselves with the means of acquiring those goods, hunting became the full-time occupation of the Indians which consumed much time absent and often at considerable distances away from home and family, especially in the fall when they did most of their hunting. They became so reliant on purchased goods that they abandoned and lost the knowledge of crafting the necessities of life themselves as their ancestors had done for centuries before them. Even worse, demand for ready-made wares without available resources to cover their cost left them indebted to the trading firms who extended them credit for hides to be delivered in the future.⁸

John Forbes, younger brother of Thomas Forbes, and a long-time part owner of the former Panton Leslie firm in Pensacola assumed operational control of the business and changed the name to John Forbes and Company in 1804. As Panton Leslie & Co. had done in its heyday, he sent pack trains laden with trade goods to remote Creek villages across the Florida panhandle and into today's south Alabama where the Indians eagerly awaited them.⁹

Some of the Indians, the lower Creeks in particular, claimed parts of today's Walton County as their hunting grounds where they slaughtered white-tailed deer by the thousands. Writing in 1804, John Forbes described an area of the panhandle that appeared to encompass today's counties of Okaloosa, Walton and part of Holmes as Lower Creek hunting grounds:

. . . Continuing along the nation's boundaries from the Escambia River toward the east before arriving at Pea creek, there is a distance of some forty-five miles. From there following the border of Pea Creek to Santa Rosa Bay (Choctawhatchee Bay) there is another part of the Indian territory which is not as important for agriculture, but that is of extreme consequence because of its proximity to Pensacola. Besides being superior for breeding livestock, it will always offer all types of aid for the Navy such as top-masts, yards, and resin for the arsenals.

This stretch of land which measures about a million and a half acres would be difficult to obtain because of being excellent hunting land, and because it is claimed by the Lower Creeks, which now make up the major portion of the nation under the influence of the United States. Nevertheless, if it were possible by the means I suggested to make them come back to us for their needs, I hope that all difficulties could be easily overcome.¹⁰

His reference to the border of Pea Creek to Santa Rosa Bay describes the full length of the Choctawhatchee River running south across the panhandle. A curve in Pea Creek (River) runs east and parallel a short distance along the present-day Florida-Alabama line before emptying into the Choctawhatchee River. The area he seems to describe here is from the west boundary of Okaloosa County to the Choctawhatchee River, which includes Walton and that part of today's Holmes County west of the river.

In the last sentence, he seems to say the Lower Creeks were not trading with his company at the time. Possibly, they had fewer deerskins to trade then because the deer herd in the panhandle and other parts of the present day southeast had been hunted almost to extinction. By his statement that he believed the area to be important due to its proximity to Pensacola, he may have meant due to the value of the Indian trade, if they resumed doing it with his company.

Trails in West Florida, of which Pensacola was the terminus, were well known by the Indians, and had been for centuries. They included the one followed by the Delgado expedition in 1686, the Ayala expedition in 1693, and the Apalachee fleeing Moore's attacks in 1704, which later became the Pensacola to St. Augustine Road mapped by Joseph Purcell. Primarily foot paths, they no doubt saw a great deal of traffic related to the deerskin trade. The Lower Creek Trading Path and Trail to Deer Point identified in Chapter 3 quite possibly saw extensive travel for the same purpose. Much of this traffic crossed the area later becoming today's Walton County.

The future county lay within the territory of the Spaniards serving as sanctuary for the Creeks as treaties between them provided. At that point in time, none of the strife between native Americans and whites befalling it in the future had occurred due to the absence of white settlement.

The Spaniards, in fact, found the absence of white American settlers in their territory to their liking. They viewed the Americans as a threat to their sovereignty in Florida. That concern motivated their willingness to make treaties with the Creeks giving them *carte blanche* to resist white settlers with fire arms as the last treaty with McGillivray had done.

But events of the next few years would render futile Spain's attempts to retain its territorial integrity, especially over West Florida. After reacquiring the territory in 1783, it had retained the East and West Florida divisions established by the British with the boundaries of the western province on the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers on the east and the Mississippi River on the west. The western boundary however, moved incrementally east until settling on the Perdido River as it exists today.

Three significant events were responsible for the loss of territory. The first came with the U. S. purchase of Louisiana from France in 1803. Even though the purchase included the portion of West Florida claimed by Spain, the U. S. ignored the claim, considering it a part of the Louisiana Purchase. The area Spain insisted belonged to it included the Baton Rouge Government region and the Mobile District.

Residents of the Baton Rouge Government region favored the U. S. over Spain and declared their independence from that country. Forming their own autonomous jurisdiction, which they called the Republic of West Florida, they petitioned the U. S. for annexation. In 1810, the petition culminated in the Republic's annexation to Louisiana, becoming the second loss to Spain.

That left the Mobile District as Spain's last remaining territory between Pensacola and Louisiana. During the War of 1812, Spain sided with the British against the U. S. To prevent Spain from allowing the British to attack the U. S. from the Mobile District, a U. S. force sailed to Mobile in 1813 and seized the territory from Spain.¹¹ This left Spain with no territory west of the Perdido River and Pensacola its only Florida city of any significance other than St. Augustine.¹²

After seizing Mobile, the U. S. made it a part of the Mississippi Territory which had been opened up for settlers. But not all the settlers were white. Many were Lower Creek Indians the deerskin economy had forced into the lifestyle of white settlers and had begun staking out private farmsteads and settling down as their white neighbors were doing.

Although ethnically disparate, they had put aside cultural differences in order to live in peaceful coexistence. The Red Sticks, or Upper Creeks to the contrary, stubbornly clung to their warrior culture and despised the Lower Creeks for what they saw as bending to the will of the white man. But they would shortly learn that the warrior lifestyle and refusal to adapt to a future over which they had no control would alter their lives in ways they could not have imagined.

They set in motion the events leading to that end when on August 30, 1813, some 700 of their number attacked the Fort Mims stockade located in the future Alabama county of Baldwin. Massacring over 200 of the fort's occupants and taking many others captive, they set off what became known as the Creek War of 1813-14. Most of the slain were women and children the attackers murdered after overwhelming the fort's armed defenders. Among them were Lower Creeks who had taken refuge in the fort along with white settlers and to whom the Red Sticks showed no more mercy than they did the whites.¹³

The barbarity of the Red Sticks at Fort Mims doomed them in the eyes of the American public and the Lower Creeks. The American military led by General Andrew Jackson quickly retaliated with a vengeance by defeating the Red Stick forces at the Battle of Horseshoe bend on Alabama's Tallapoosa River on 27 March 1814. A sizable contingent of Jackson's forces included Lower Creeks led by Chief William McIntosh of mixed Indian and European American heritage. Jackson's troops killed 800 of the Red Sticks 1,000 warriors, forever ending their ability to mount a significant fighting force.

In the Treaty of Fort Jackson drawn up after the battle, General Jackson forced the surviving Red Stick warriors to cede most of the remaining Creek lands to the United States, opening it up for white settlement.¹⁴ Chief Menawa who led the Red Sticks at Horseshoe Bend survived the battle and later exacted revenge against McIntosh by assassinating him.¹⁵

A few others besides Menawa lived to fight another day and migrated south to Spanish Florida where they continued to be a thorn in General Jackson's side. By the fall of 1814, several hundred hostile Red Stick Creeks had congregated around Pensacola and were raiding white settlers in U. S. territory along its southern border with West Florida. The British too were stirring up trouble with the U. S. They had landed a company of Marines in Pensacola and the undermanned Spanish defenders were helpless to stop them. The marines whipped up anti-American fervor among the Red Sticks hoping to gain them as allies in a planned invasion on the Gulf Coast.

Events in Pensacola had not gone unnoticed by General Jackson whose intelligence sources had apprised him of the British mischief going on there. Believing he had no time to lose, and not waiting for presidential authorization, he marched a 4,000-man force to Pensacola and seized the city. Unwilling to engage Jackson, the marines beat a hasty retreat to their ships waiting off shore.¹⁶

Jackson learned of the British invasion plans at New Orleans, and fearing it to be imminent he hurriedly marched his army there, arriving ahead of the British. In the clash that ensued upon their landing, Jackson dealt them a defeat so devastating that it permanently ended British designs on reacquiring their former American colonies and finally bringing the War of 1812 to an end.¹⁷

But Jackson did not forget the Indian problem at Pensacola and West Florida before going on to stop the British at the historic Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815. Not wanting to leave the matter unresolved, he dispatched Major Uriah Blue with a force of 1,000 men to deal with the Indians who had fled Pensacola when Jackson's army arrived there in early November 1814.

Major Blue's campaign however, got off to a bad start and continued that way due to forces beyond his control. The challenges he faced included unusually cold and wet December weather, inadequate provisions on hand and delays in replenishing them, exposure, fatigue and near starvation of his men due to extended marches without adequate nourishment and flooded streams they had no way of crossing except by wading or swimming in the freezing weather.

The frontiersman Davy Crockett served under Major Blue during the campaign and writing in his memoir years later, detailed the many privations the men of the expedition suffered. To make matters worse, the Indians they sought mostly succeeded in evading their efforts to hunt them down. They managed to kill a few hostiles around Pensacola and rounded up a number of others which they marched to Fort Montgomery, Alabama, over 150 miles away.

Chief Holmes, another Red Stick escaping the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, had established a village in the vicinity of Choctawhatchee River. Blue and his men set out to find Holmes' village, capture or kill him, raid the Indian's food stores to reprovision themselves, and burn the village. Quite possibly, they followed the Pensacola to St. Augustine Road across north Walton County to the Choctawhatchee River where they hoped to surprise Holmes.

On arriving there, they found to their dismay however, that not only had the Indians deserted the village, but had taken any food stuffs they had with them. Frustrated in their plans to dispatch Holmes and resupply themselves with rations, they had to console themselves with only burning the village and going away no less hungry than when they arrived.

Recognizing the desperate plight in which the lack of food, exposure to the elements and rigorous marching had left his men, Blue resigned himself to the knowledge that his expedition had failed to accomplish its mission leaving him with no option but to withdraw from Florida. Many of the Indians he sought had fled to Apalachicola and joined the British who had built a fort at Prospect Bluff. Expressing his regrets in a letter to General Jackson for being unable to march against the Indians at the fort, he departed enroute to Fort Montgomery seeking the relief his men desperately needed.¹⁸

The Indians and British along the Apalachicola River and Fort Prospect Bluff, continued to make trouble for American settlers north of the Florida border. By 1817, Red Stick Creeks and other Indians, along with run-a-way African slaves, had formed a group known as Seminoles who inhabited parts of south Alabama, Georgia and the panhandle of Spanish Florida. A group of them under the leadership of the Miccosukee chief, Neamathla,

had settled in a village called Fowltown in that part of southwest Georgia later becoming Decatur County on the Flint River south of today's Bainbridge.

Fowltown sat in Georgia territory the Red Stick Creeks had earlier ceded to the United States in the 1814 Treaty of Fort Jackson following their defeat at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Near Fowltown, the United States military had erected Fort Scott, also on the Flint River. The fort's commander, a Major Twiggs, warned Neamathla that he had no authority for the village on U. S. property and ordered him to remove it.

Neamathla refused, and on 21 November 1817, Major Twiggs and his forces attacked Fowltown, forcing the Indians to withdraw. A couple of days later the troops again repulsed the Indians in a second engagement, putting to rest their claim to land on which the village sat. That precipitated the First Seminole War of 1817-1818 as it became known.

Reverberations of the Fowltown attack followed with Seminole retaliations against U. S. forces along the Apalachicola River and Fort Scott. A massacre of army troops and civilians on a boat near the river landing at today's town of Chattahoochee so outraged President James Monroe that he used it to justify ordering General Andrew Jackson to invade Spanish Florida to punish the guilty Indians.¹⁹

That gave the general the excuse he needed to go back to Florida and finish the job of mopping up the Indians he intended in 1814 when he left the matter in the hands of Major Uriah Blue who failed to carry it out. In mid-March 1818, Jackson led a force of 4,000 men south along the east bank of the Apalachicola River where he built Fort Gadsden.

From there he conducted a wide sweep of Florida Indian villages, killing and capturing the Indians and leaving their dwellings in smoldering ruins. Villages he destroyed were in Tallahassee, Mikosukee, and along the Suwannee River. He also captured the Spanish fort at St. Marks and executed two British nationals he charged with inciting the Indians against Americans, ending British attempts at further destabilizing the Seminoles in Florida.

Returning to Fort Gadsden briefly, his plan to depart from there to his home in Nashville, Tennessee changed when he learned a number of the Indians he sought had fled to Pensacola where the Spaniards were giving them refuge. Infuriated at the audacity of the Spaniards to again give sanctuary to the Indians as they had done on his first trip to Pensacola in 1814, he immediately set out for that destination intent on rectifying the Spaniard's insolent defiance of his efforts to neutralize the miscreant Seminoles.

He marched north on the east bank of the river to the site of present day Torreya State Park. There, on 10 May, he ferried his men across the river to Ocheese Bluff on the river's west bank using boats brought up from Fort Gadsden. Marching northwest through today's Jackson County he passed Big Spring, or Blue Springs as it is known today, crossed the natural bridge over the Chipola River and arrived at the site of collapsed Rockarch cave on the Waddell Mill Pond property about 11 May.

That is according to E. W. Carswell who, in 1969, published a booklet about his attempt at retracing Jackson's march across the panhandle. Carswell seemed to think the collapsed cavern at the Waddell site to be the ruins of the awe-inspiring cavern written about by such earlier explorers as Marcos Delgado in 1686, and Governor Don Laureano de Torres y Ayala and Friar Barreda in 1693, whose travels were previously addressed in Chapter 2.

John Lee Williams in 1825 and Bishop Michael Portier in 1827, wrote of visiting the cave a few years after Jackson passed through.²⁰ Their accounts will be addressed in later chapters.

The cavern described in the accounts of the above individuals stood on the site of the Chacato Indian village identified by Ayala and Barreda as San Nicholas. That cave, still intact as of 2023, is located a short distance from the Waddell site on private property.

Archaeologists have determined that both sites were occupied by people of the Fort Walton and earlier cultures but Waddell became uninhabited earlier than the time of Barreda's 1674 mission, eliminating it as the San Nicolas site.²¹

From Waddell, according to Carswell, Jackson marched to the Choctawhatchee River, closely following the footsteps of Ayala's expedition 125 years earlier. Arriving there at about the same spot as Ayala, in the vicinity of today's highway 2 bridge, he found as Ayala had, that he needed a boat to cross the stream.

How he accomplished it is left to the reader's imagination, because he found his way across without any explanation of record. Although he noticed an abundance of cypress trees, he apparently did not attempt to build his own dug-out canoe as Ayala did.²²

On the west side of the river, he found the same wet terrain described by Ayala, which made difficult going.²³ As he marched along, he saw rolling hills, "sprinkled at the surface with small rounded sandstone-like gravel (the color of this sandstone resembles the reddish tint of rusted iron). The yellow and red soil is seen only in the rolling country."²⁴ This echoed the Ayala reference to, "one little hill which looked to us as if composed of some iron mineral because of the color of the soil and the various stones we found on it."²⁵

Newspaper articles in 1962 and 63 confirmed the presence of iron minerals in the vicinity of north Holmes County and nearby Geneva, Alabama. Studies of those and other areas in the Choctawhatchee-Pea River basin were made to determine the feasibility of iron ore mining.²⁶

Over forty deposits of ore were identified around Geneva, but none were reported in Holmes County. Of those found near Geneva, only one yielded commercial, but apparently unprofitable production. Those disappointing results cooled further interest in mining and talk of it faded away, leaving reports of the minerals Ayala and Jackson observed as nothing more than false hopes.²⁷

As Carswell described the path taken by Jackson, “The route apparently ran slightly south of and parallel to the Alabama-Florida border, perhaps not far from the present Sweet Gum Head and Camp Creek communities, thus entering what’s now Walton County a little north of Darlington and northwestward past Gaskin.”²⁸

At that point, Jackson had followed the same path west of the Choctawhatchee River as Ayala in 1693, also the path of Purcell’s Pensacola to St. Augustine Road. After departing Walton County’s Chestnut Creek area, Ayala veered southwest and exited the county’s southwest corner. Jackson, however continued directly west along the Purcell map route to the “Great Pond,” then unnamed but now Lake Jackson, after the General himself.

The City of Florala has erected a historical plaque on the lake’s southwest corner identifying it as the campsite of General Jackson in 1818. According to one account of Jackson’s presence there, he interrupted his march briefly to allow some of his men to recuperate from small pox.²⁹

Leaving the lake he continued southwest on the Red Ground Trail, another name for the Pensacola to St. Augustine Road. Red Ground aka Ekana Chatta referenced an Indian village in Jackson County which lay in the path of the Pensacola - St. Augustine Road as earlier noted in chapter 3.

Jackson kept to the Pensacola to St. Augustine Road, also known as the Lower Creek Trading Path, probably in reference to its use by the Indians in traveling to and from Pensacola to trade deerskins for goods at Panton Leslie’s and later John Forbes’s trading post. Following the path all the way to Pensacola, Jackson arrived there on 21 May after crossing the Escambia River a few miles north of the town, which he did not enter until the 24th.

On the 25th, he commenced firing on Fort Carlos de Barrancas, behind whose battlements the Spaniards had ensconced themselves. Due to the refusal of the Spanish Governor to surrender, Jackson’s forces continued a barrage against the fort until the governor raised the white flag of capitulation on the 28th.³⁰

Nothing further is heard of the Seminoles used by Jackson as a pretext to invade Pensacola. After the general took the city depriving the Indians of its sanctuary, they seem to have dispersed only to congregate in other areas of Florida. In the meantime, negotiations between Spain and the United States government culminated in Spain ceding Florida to the U. S. on 22 February, 1819.

General Jackson, who had withdrawn from Florida after capturing Pensacola in 1818, returned to the city to officially receive West Florida from Spain on 17 July 1821, thus ending the second Spanish period of Florida history.

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