



# WALTON

## RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 15, Issue 3

Walton County Heritage Association

February 2024







# WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

## OFFICE LOCATION

Walton County Heritage Museum, (Old Train Depot)

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

### Postal Address

Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.  
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, Florida 32435  
Phone: 850-401-2060

Website: <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/#>

Email: [heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com](mailto:heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com)

## DEPARTMENTS

### Administration

President: Marie Hinson, [hinsonharmony@yahoo.com](mailto:hinsonharmony@yahoo.com)

Vice President: Carolyn Brown

Treasurer: Sam Carnley

Secretary: Susan Horaist

### Public Relations

Vacant

### Museum Docent Coordinator

Carolyne Brown

### Genealogy Society

President: Wayne Sconiers, [waynesconiers@embarqmail.com](mailto:waynesconiers@embarqmail.com)

### Newsletter

Editor: Sam Carnley, [kienles810@gmail.com](mailto:kienles810@gmail.com)

Assistant Editor and Historian: Bruce Cosson, [bac2work1958@yahoo.com](mailto:bac2work1958@yahoo.com)

Editorial Advisor: Diane Merkel, [ddmerkel@cox.net](mailto:ddmerkel@cox.net)

Back Issues: <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/newsletters.htm>

Cover Design: Sam Carnley

## 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. Lake Jackson, South Side, in Paxton City Limits, photo and editing 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.]

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**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.**

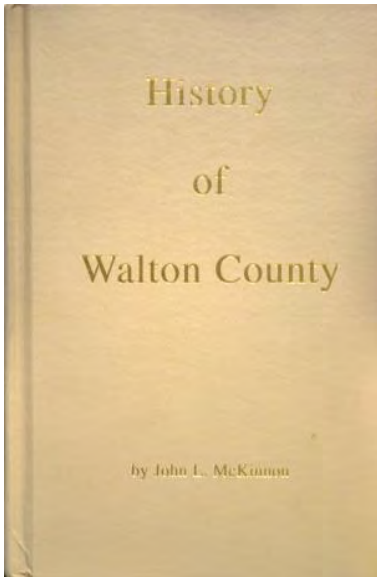
**Member Benefits:**

- Automatic membership in the **Walton County Heritage Museum** and the **Walton County Genealogy Society**.
- Invitations to Quarterly Members Meetings
- **Discounts** on Special Events
- **The Museum Research Center:** Members get free copies of documents and use of the Genealogy Society computer when the Museum is open.
- **The Museum Gift Shop:** Members receive discounts on books, special publications, postcards, photographs, CDs, DVDs, videos, and gift items.
- Free **subscriptions** to the WCHA Newsletter.

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# From the Museum Gift Shop

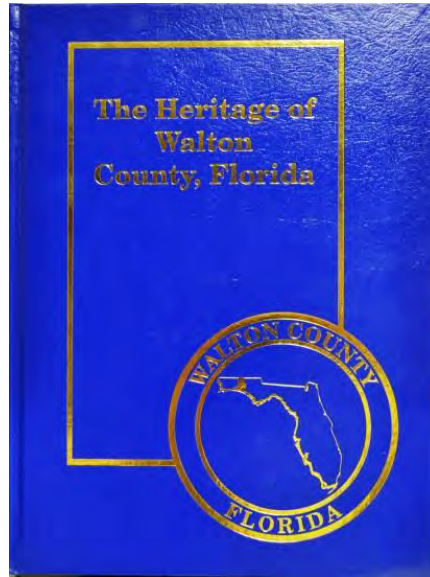
## Our most popular books



**History of Walton County**

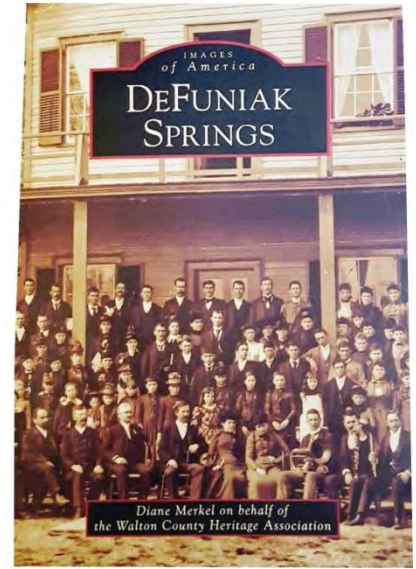
by John L. McKinnon. The Museum has sold out of this book and it is out of print, but it is available at these links;

<https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/georgiabooks/pdfs/gb0503.pdf>, and <https://www.alibris.com/booksearch?mtype=B&keyword=history+of+walton+county&hs.x=0&hs.y=0>



**The Heritage of Walton County, Florida.** Item code **B13.**

Price: (Reduced) \$40.00  
 Tax: 2.80  
 Shipping: 8.00  
 Total by mail **\$50.80**



**Images of America, DeFuniak Springs.** Item code **B06.**

By Diane Merkel. Price, including tax,

**\$23.53.**

## MAIL ORDER FORM

Walton County Heritage Association  
 1140 Circle Drive  
 DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

Customer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph./Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Quanty	Description	Item Code	Price Each*	Amount
	The Heritage of Walton County, Florida	B13	50.80	
	Images of America, DeFuniak Springs.	B06	31.53	

\*Price includes tax at 7% and shipping of \$8.00 per item.

Total

Sorry, credit cards not accepted. Please send check or money orders only. Do not mail cash. Please allow two weeks for delivery.



# Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.

1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, Florida, 32435, Ph. 850-401-2060

Website: <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org>

Email: [HeritageMuseum@bighthouse.com](mailto:HeritageMuseum@bighthouse.com)

## ANNUAL MEMBER/SPONSOR APPLICATION 2024

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### Our Mission

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

1. To promote the preservation and restoration of buildings and other landmarks of historical interest within Walton County;
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.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REF: WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC., DTN3054584, CH52108.



## **OUR SPONSORS for 2024**

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

### **SPONSORS (\$100-\$499.00)**

(None at present time)

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(None at present time)

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(None at present)

### **PLATINUM SPONSORS (\$2,000 and up)**

#### **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 recent years. 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 up-keep 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**

This month's newsletter article is a continuation of our previously announced plans to publish each chapter of the New History of Walton County as it is finished. In keeping with that goal, we gave you Chapter 5 last month. Chapter 6 has now been completed and we present it to you this month. We hope you find it both enlightening and enjoyable reading. 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**

January kicked off our 2024 membership dues renewal month and we encourage you to continue your generous support of the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. as in the past. Please see our Annual Member/Sponsor Application for 2024 elsewhere in this newsletter for renewal options. Whatever level of member or sponsorship you choose is very much appreciated and we thank you.

## 6 Walton prosecuted, McLennan and Uchees Depart and the Creeks Invade.

After going to Washington in April 1826, no one heard from Secretary Walton for many months. Prior to departing for that destination, in a letter from Key West dated 22 February, he wrote Governor Duval advising he had collected nine thousand, eight hundred seventy-nine dollars and ten cents in salvage revenue due the territory.<sup>1</sup> Further advising he planned on traveling directly from Key West to Washington, he gave no indication he would first deposit the collections into territorial accounts.

By the following September, he still had not returned with the money. That prompted W. Hassel Hunt, editor and publisher of the Pensacola Gazette to print an article questioning Walton's unexplained absence and why he had not submitted to the Territorial treasury the nearly ten thousand dollars he had collected in Key West. The article's suggestion that the circumstances might lead to the public perception that Walton was a thief came as a major embarrassment to his wife and family.<sup>2</sup>

Walton finally revealed his whereabouts when he wrote to Henry Brackenridge, then a Superior Court Judge in Tallahassee on 11 December. Addressed from Washington, the rambling narrative of woe and self-pity bemoaned that people viewed him as a villain and had caused his family to suffer. He never explained his year-long absence nor admitted to any wrong doing but only that he had used poor judgement.

Failing to mention the money collected in Key West, he complained of the numerous places he had gone trying to raise the money he needed to take to Tallahassee. But as rumors of suspicion had preceded him, they all turned him down. He indicated he would return to Florida even if it meant going to jail and that he would resign as Territorial Secretary.<sup>3</sup>

Brackenridge first became acquainted with Walton when they served with Jackson in the transfer of Florida from Spain to the United States in 1821. On leaving Pensacola en route home to Tennessee, Jackson appointed Walton acting governor. In writing of Walton's performance in the position, Brackenridge expressed the following opinion of his character:

The person who fills the office of Governor is a young Georgian who has run through a handsome fortune, without capacity of habits of business. I have been compelled to do everything for him since General Jackson went away . . . he is a wastrel, a despicable character . . . unfortunately he is totally wanting in that weight of character and dignity of manners which become the station he fills. No one has respect for him or confidence in him. His companions are persons of no character, or the subalterns of

the army with whom he passes almost every night over the gaming table . . . He is in truth an object of universal contempt.<sup>4</sup>

Judging from what he wrote above, the letter likely came as no great surprise to Brackenridge. It no doubt saddened him that Walton in his poor judgement had failed to consider how his behavior might impact his family, and it is certain that he commiserated with them in the embarrassment and humiliation they felt in face of the rumors and accusations circulating in Pensacola about Walton.

As he stated he would do in the letter, Walton submitted his resignation to Secretary of State Henry Clay by letter from Baltimore on 14 December 1826 and soon after returned to Florida. He met in Tallahassee with Davis Floyd, the new Territorial Treasurer in January 1827 and promised to remit to the Territory the money he had collected in Key West. He subsequently reneged however, on his promise to pay, leading Floyd to file a complaint against him on an action of "Trespass on the case," for damages of ten thousand dollars.

On 2 April, Floyd had a warrant issued ordering the Marshall to arrest Walton and hold him in custody pending the setting of a court date. In the case filed against him titled "Territory of Florida vs. George Walton," he went to trial in April 1828 and entered a plea of not guilty, but the jury found in favor of the Territory for damages in excess of \$10,000.00 with interest.<sup>5</sup>

He had no assets of that value available to him other than the land his mother purchased in Tallahassee. Rather than let her son go to jail, she offered it to the Territory in lieu of the money he owed. The Legislative Council accepted the offer and adopted a resolution assigning to Mrs. Walton the judgement against her son for the land and granting full discharge of all claims of the Territory against him.<sup>6</sup> Following acquisition of the land, the Legislative Council passed an act laying it out in forty acre lots and putting them up for sale at public auction.

Walton never revealed what he did with the money, but a clue is suggested in Brackenridge's phrase that "...he passes almost every night over the gaming table. . ." That statement and the fact he never had any money in spite of holding a job with respectable pay, along with "stealing or committing fraud to gamble," are among the classic signs of a compulsive gambler.

During the times Walton served as acting governor he occasionally had to deal with the Indians, notably Chief Neamathla of the Miccosukees and others. There is no evidence of record however, that he ever came into contact with the Uchees of Walton County, or that he even knew about them.

Their earliest historical record seems to be from the Spaniards in 1639 and next, in the 1677 de Florencia account of the Apalachee expedition against their palisaded village west of the Choctawhatchee.<sup>7</sup> John R. Swanton's reference to the "Choctaw Hatchee Eucheas, in the 1761 census of the Tukebahchee," etc. may be the third earliest.<sup>8</sup> He noted that although the Spaniards called them Chiscas, later historians referred to them as Yuchi, Uchee, or Eucheas.

They were previously mentioned in Chapter 2 of this history and again in the Chapter 3 reference to McKinnon's History, in which he tells of Neil McClennan's first contact with them. Other than romanticized and speculative versions of their physical description, what they believed their history to be, how they lived and their relationship with the settlers, McKinnon wrote little of substance about them.

He quoted their chief, Sam Story, as saying a branch of the Euchees related to his tribe settled on the Savannah River in Georgia and another on the Apalachicola River in Florida.<sup>9</sup> John Reed Swanton identified three distinct paths of Yuchi/Uchi dispersion from the Appalachian Mountains where they were first recorded: the Choctawhatchee River in Florida, the Savannah River near Augusta, Georgia and a group further down the Savannah which later merged with the Lower Creeks.<sup>10</sup>

Historical research since John Reed Swanton's time suggests his version may be less accurate than the Chief's. John Hann's more recent translations of Spanish records clearly show that Chiscas from a village on the Chattahoochee River, which joins with the Flint River to form the Apalachicola, moved west of the Choctawhatchee and built the palisaded village the Apalachees marched against.<sup>11</sup>

It is documented of record that most of the Chiscas routed from the palisade returned to their previous village on the Chattahoochee.<sup>12</sup> Although speculative, but plausible, a few of them possibly fled to the north of Pensacola and settled temporarily on the river the Spaniards called Rio de los Chiscas, or River of the Chiscas, later renamed the Escambia.<sup>13</sup> Sometime afterwards they returned to Walton County and settled on Uchee Creek as originally known but, later renamed Bruce Creek, where McLennan found their descendants.

McKinnon writes that Chief Story told of his ancestors migrating from the west when they settled in Walton County. Possibly, they came from no further west than today's Escambia County, but McKinnon assumed he meant Mexico, and the chief may have told him that. But the long drawn out, flowery, romanticized saga McKinnon wrote begs the question of whose tale it was; his or the chief's.<sup>14</sup> To be sure, the chief had some version of a tradition about his tribe's origins, but typically, such tales were more fiction than fact.

In the overall scheme of things, the Chattahoochee River is part of the Apalachicola, which means Chief Story did not misspeak when he said a branch of his tribe settled there. The Chiscas returning to the Chattahoochee later joined the Creek tribes in Alabama, which fits Swanton's scenario of Chiscas (Yuchis) joining the lower Creeks. It also eliminates Swanton's Choctawhatchee Uchees as a third migratory branch because in reality, they were an offshoot of the group joining the Creeks.

McKinnon writes that when McLennan arrived in their village, the Euchees warmly welcomed him and invited him to take all the land he wanted. But within a decade of living with the white men as neighbors, they exited the county en mass, after Chief Sam Story

returned from a six-month trip to the Everglades and east coast in search of a new home for the tribe. McKinnon reckons the time of their departure as 1832, not stating it specifically, but associating it with the departure of Neil McLennan who embarked for Texas in November, 1833, “after the Euchees left in November before.”<sup>15</sup>

As to why they left, McKinnon wrote that Chief Story became alarmed by the irresponsible whites crowding into their hunting grounds and wantonly destroying wildlife for sport. They were setting forests fires just to see them burn without concern for the danger to people and wildlife they posed. When the chief confronted them for their careless and disrespectful behavior, they mocked him. The increasing hostility of the whites made the chief fearful of even worse to come. Rather than fight them he decided looking for a new place to live would be best.<sup>16</sup>

In reality, interactions between Indians and settlers were not as rosy as McKinnon claimed. By the time white settlers arrived in Walton County, a sizable body of history on conflict between the two cultures preceded them, much of it written on the exploits of Andrew Jackson. The Indians were no less aware of it than the whites and in all probability, the two eyed each other with considerable suspicion while at the same time, a few men on each side pretended not to.

Two such men may have been Sam Story and Neil McLennan who committed themselves to peace as opposed to strife. At the beginning at least, they were able to maintain an uneasy coexistence of one with the other but that deteriorated over time to the point the Uchees began to feel threatened by the whites and their laws. An early example came in 1823 with the Treaty of Moultrie Creek between the U. S. Government and the Indians of Florida. It required all Indians in the territory to relocate to a reservation in central Florida.<sup>17</sup>

The presence of the Uchees in the County almost 10 years later indicates they had not taken the initiative to move on their own, or that no one had tried to force them to. In 1827 the Territory of Florida passed an Act titled “To prevent Indians from roaming at large through the Territory.”<sup>18</sup> In the presumption that all Indians had complied with the treaty and relocated as directed, it restricted them to the confines of the reservation and imposed severe penalties for straying beyond them.

It further authorized any person encountering an Indian off the reservation to take him into custody and deliver him to the justice of the peace who would administer punishment. That meant “not exceeding thirty-nine stripes, at the discretion of the justice, on the bare back of said Indian; moreover to cause the gun of said Indian (if he has one) to be taken from him and deposited with the Colonel of the county or Captain of the district in which said Indian may be taken, subject to the order of the superintendent of Indian affairs.”

On the heels of the 1827 anti-roaming Act came the Indian Removal Act of 1830,<sup>19</sup> and soon after that, the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832,<sup>20</sup> both of which called for their banishment west

of the Mississippi River. Just by being off the reservation the Uchees were in violation of the white man's law and with the passage of the other three, they had good reason to feel overwhelmed by the onslaught of laws aimed at disenfranchising them. There is little doubt that by that point, the far away reservation had become in their minds more welcoming than their Walton County home from which they faced eviction by the white settlers.

Although McKennon wrote that they left for the Everglades, their true destination could very well have been the reservation which lay in the same direction and almost as distant. Going there would bring them into compliance with the Moultrie Creek treaty and eliminate the risk of punishment they faced for violation of the 1827 Act. Those thoughts may have motivated their departure, or a desperate impulse simply to get as far away from the Mississippi as possible in the hope of never having to cross it may have been the deciding factor.

Shortly before they departed, the elderly Sam Story died and they buried him at their embarkation point near the confluence of Bruce Creek and the Choctawhatchee River. A monument honoring him later erected on the site is still there. Some of his descendants remain in Walton and neighboring counties today. Many Eucheas were caught up in the removals and sent west to Indian Territory in Oklahoma where their descendants were visited by present-day Florida panhandle Indians, perhaps as recently as 2011.<sup>21</sup>

According to McKinnon, the McLennans left about a year after the Uchees. But records recently coming to light differ with McKinnon on the dates when Neil McLennan arrived in Florida and when he left. Evelyn Clark Longwell writes in her 1952 biography of Neil McClennan that he arrived in Florida in 1816,<sup>22</sup> but does not cite her source.

She writes that McLennan left the county bound for Texas in December 1834, but again, no sources are cited. That is more than a year later than McKinnon gives. He writes further that a Captain Dod built the vessel McLennan used for transportation, which they christened "Schooner Eucheas," but Longwell identifies it as the Caledonia. After sailing through Santa Rosa Sound, they dropped anchor in Pensacola and remained several days to provision the boat for the trip.<sup>23</sup>

While there, persons knowledgeable of seaworthiness seeing the boat's shoddy construction warned McLennan it put the lives of its passengers at risk and strongly urged him not to continue on it. But he ignored them and sailed on anyway. A few days later a foreboding article, transcribed as follows, appeared in the Pensacola Gazette:

*An Adventurous Colony.* -- A few days ago, there sailed from this port bound for Texas, a river boat of about 15 or 18 tuns burthen. On board this frail craft, were embarked the persons and property of thirty-eight human beings. There is a highly poetical and beautiful theory of the Catholics to the effect, that every child is watched over and protected from harm by its guardian angel. It may be less poetical, but it is

not less pious, to hope that ignorance always has its protecting deities. It is seldom that anything occurs which looks so like a tempting of Providence as does this enterprize. The chances are ten to one against their reaching the land of promise to which they are destined. Our adventurers are the hardy children (or grand-children) of the “Land’o cakes,” and are last from the Uchee Valley. – *Pensacola Gazette*.<sup>24</sup>

The “Land ‘o cakes,” expression is from a Robert Burns poem in reference to the oat-cakes, or bannocks, which Scots famously carried for sustenance on long journeys. It seems to have been synonymous with Scotland at the time. The article, dated 3 January 1835, undoubtedly addressed McLennan’s perilous voyage in an unsafe craft and it validates the December 1834 Uchee Valley departure date Longwell cites.

The deities protecting ignorance prevailed and the Schooner Euchee alias Caledonia safely arrived in the vicinity of the Brazos River, according to Longwell, “around 1 March 1835.” It sailed up the river just short of 250 miles to the vicinity of present-day Waco, where Neil settled on a large tract later becoming McLennan County. Within a few years of their arrival, Neil’s brothers, Lauchlin and John and members of their families were massacred by the Indians. Neil died in 1867 at the ripe old age of 90.<sup>25</sup>

In his history, McKinnon writes extensively of McLennan’s travels and misfortunes, which substantially agree with Longwell. His history contains a letter purportedly written by McLennan from Galveston; Texas, dated February 6<sup>th</sup> 1834. Again, this differs from Longwell’s date of arrival in the area as noted above. It may be argued that in the absence of cited sources, her dates are of no greater veracity than McKinnon’s. But the *Pensacola Gazette* article is a primary record showing a date more closely in agreement with Longwell.

This raises the question of why McKinnon’s letter is dated over a year earlier than McLennan’s arrival in Texas as Longwell shows and the *Pensacola Gazette* supports. Conceivably, McLennan wrote it in 1835 and erroneously dated it as 1834. Or, perhaps McKinnon miswrote the date when transcribing the letter for his book.

McKinnon described the departure of the Euchees and McLennan as sensational events. That, they may have been, but much less so than the soon to follow invasion of the Creeks. Abuses of their land rights in Alabama and Georgia emanating from the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832 had confounded and outraged the Creeks to the point desperation.

On the realization that both the government and white settlers were in collusion for nothing short of removal aimed at taking their land, the Creeks saw a campaign of violent resistance as their only alternative. They launched their first strike against the little village of Roanoke on the east side of the Chattahoochee River near Lumpkin, in Stewart County, Georgia, in the early morning of 15 May, 1836.



Led by Jim Henry and Nea Mathla in a massive surprise attack, they left a number of residents dead and the town in smoldering ruins. Never rebuilt, Lake Eufaula inundated the site when impounded behind the Walter F. George Dam built on the Chattahoochee River in 1963. Following the attack the Creeks crossed back over the River to Alabama, from where they had initiated the assault.<sup>26</sup> This incident and others so aroused local settlers that they pressured Alabama Governor Clay to call out the State Militia to deal with the increasingly hostile Creeks and return a semblance of order to the region.

Following a brief reign of terror soon suppressed by the Alabama state militias, most of the hostiles were rounded up and sent to Arkansas. Jim Henry and his 200 Uchee warriors, reportedly the most numerous and warlike of the enemies, held out the longest but were eventually captured.<sup>27</sup> These Uchees may well have been descendants of that branch of Chiscas the Apalachees attacked on Alaqua Creek in 1677 and relatives of the Walton County Euchees as well. As the principal leader of the Creek resistance, the public believed Henry's apprehension signaled the end of the war. But a significant number of Creeks evading removal remained at large.

Many of them had encamped in the swamps off Hobdy's Bridge on Pea River in south Alabama intending to escape down the Choctawhatchee to Walton County. In late March 1837, an Alabama militia assault scattered them in small groups which dispersed into the swamp.<sup>28</sup>

Occasional sightings of Indians heading downstream on the Choctawhatchee had been reported before the Hobdy's Bridge affray and one or two settler families had been murdered. But the main event presaging things to come occurred in Walton County on Sunday morning, 23 April, 1837. Two days earlier, seven men from Euchee Valley; Sylvanus Caswell, John Anderson, Joseph Nelson, John Porter, Thomas Broxton, Michael Vaughan Jr., and Michael Elliot, set out on a cow hunt along branches of Shoal River northeast of present-day Liberty on U. S. Highway 331 a few miles above DeFuniak Springs.

After riding all day Friday and Saturday with little rest, men and horses alike were spent by the time they halted on Gum Creek and set up camp in anticipation of a leisurely ride home on Sunday morning. At dawn, Caswell and Broxton arose before the others and walked away from the campsite to see after the horses. Before they could return a volley of gunfire from the surrounding woods directed at the spot they had vacated killed all who remained there.

The two men secreted themselves and watched as a large party of Indians entered the camp and finished off any victims they found still alive. After sacking the site of all food, guns and ammunition, they departed. The two survivors waited until they felt safe before venturing back toward the campsite and the bullet riddled bodies of their dead companions.<sup>29</sup>

As soon as families and neighbors of the victims learned of their murders they formed an armed company and rode out in search of the killers. They caught up with them in short

order and after a brief skirmish ended that particular band's killing spree. The small tributary on the south side of Shoal River where they met became known as Battle Branch and is now its name on county maps.<sup>30</sup>

Fearing the inevitability of more attacks, panicked residents called on Governor Richard K. Call to do something about the Indians. He ordered out the Jackson County militia under command of Colonel Jackson Morton of Escambia County and authorized him to raise militias in Walton and Washington counties in numbers sufficient to meet the threat.

The Governor wrote to U. S. Army General Thomas S Jessup requesting he send regular army troops to Walton County if he could spare them. The General however, had his hands full dealing with Seminoles in South Florida and informed Call he had none he could do without.

An anonymous letter from Uchee Valley dated May 1, 1837 published in the Pensacola Gazette expressed the level of tension prevailing among the residents. They were seeing Indians or evidence of them everywhere, lurking about and spying on the neighborhood. Someone found a trail they made in the woods and guessed from its appearance "there must have been a great number of them." It told of the bodies of the men murdered on Gum Creek being found the day after they ran down their killers on Battle Branch.

Saying they killed one of the Indians and took two prisoners, no further details regarding the total number involved were given, leaving the reader wondering if there were others that escaped. It identified a squaw as one of the two prisoners captured and that John L. McKinnon took her home with him. She later escaped, about which the writer of the letter commented, "She is able to give the Indians much information concerning the situation of our settlement, she having passed directly through it, will be to the Indians and efficient guide."

The Battle of Hobdy's Bridge is mentioned and that 300 Indians escaped, presumably all heading to Florida, of which only 15 were captured, apparently leaving the remaining 285 free to continue on. He further opines that "there are four or five hundred Indians in and upon the borders of the county." For some reason, they only found the bodies of three of the murdered men: John Anderson, Michael Vaughan and "old Nelson." They had been shot and scalped. No mention is made of two other bodies that would account for the total of five men identified in various newspapers as being killed.<sup>31</sup>

As the above letter illustrates, fear of the Indians ran high among the county residents for good reason. Editorials of the Pensacola Gazette on the other hand, strove to assure its readers that help would soon be coming: "We have heard that the Jackson County militia were to march on the 5<sup>th</sup> and were to be at Mallet's Landing on the 8<sup>th</sup>." At the same time, it downplayed the Indian threat, calling their concerns "groundless apprehensions." That being easy to say from the safety and security of a cozy office almost a hundred miles distant from any danger.<sup>32</sup>

The foregoing editorial appeared in the May 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the Pensacola paper. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, it published a letter dated “LaGrange, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1837. It revealed that Walton County citizens had not sat wringing their hands while waiting for the Jackson County troops to arrive. They had elected Lauchlin McKinnon, brother of John L., as Captain in command of a militia of 53 of the county’s ablest volunteers to counter the Indians. In a May 19<sup>th</sup> skirmish at Black Creek Swamp the militia routed them within a few minutes. The fleeing Indians left behind five dead and a surviving child of about age eight. Enos Evans suffered the militia’s only casualty.<sup>33</sup>

Writing in his history, John L. McKinnon told a version of the battle that differed from the above narrative. He wrote that his father, “Colonel,” John L. McKinnon, “was the ranking military officer in this part of the state.” And that after the battle, “Colonel McKinnon entered the swamp and bore the wounded Enos Evans out on his shoulders.” He writes nothing about his uncle Lauchlin commanding the militia, or even being present at the battle.<sup>34</sup>

Militia muster rolls from the war show that John L. McKinnon held the rank of a private, “appointed quartermaster at La Grange on May 12<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>35</sup> The assignment came after he allowed the squaw to escape. In view of that, the timing of the appointment raises the question of whether it aimed to prevent him from helping the Indians win the war.

McKinnon erred in claiming his father as the ranking military officer. Initially, Governor Call put Jackson Morton of Escambia County in that position. But due to illness he never accepted the appointment. A letter published in the Gazette dated La Grange, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, revealed Governor Call had appointed Colonel Leaven Brown of Jackson County as commander of the militia forces.

In a report to Governor Call on May 24<sup>th</sup>, Colonel Brown wrote that he arrived in Walton County on the 19<sup>th</sup> and intended to march on to Black Creek in reinforcement of Captain McKinnon’s engagement against the Indians that night, but did not go because he could find no one to show him the way. Two days later he marched to Alaqua where he had learned a number of Creeks were occupying the home of J. J. Harrison. Arriving at the house on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, he took the Indians into custody, four of which were warriors, along with thirteen women and children.

While there, the Colonel received information about an Indian camp across Alaqua River. He set out in search of it with a friendly Indian leading the way. They found the camp and took ten more prisoners consisting of a man and nine women and children, which he put in custody of Captain Daniel’s company with orders to march at the rear of the command. Told by the friendly Indian of another camp nearby, they followed him in the direction he said they would find it, but he became lost.

The male prisoner told Captain Daniels he knew the way and volunteered to lead them to it. Colonel Brown warned him his life depended on telling the truth. He led them through

the swamps until daylight without finding the camp at which point the colonel decided to return to the house across the river where they had left the other prisoners under the guard of a squad of militiamen. Shortly after sun up they reached the place on the river where they had crossed the evening before.

Captain Daniel's men, angry that the prisoner took them on an all-night trairpse through the swamps to nowhere, turned their guns on him and shot him dead, as Colonel Brown told him they would do if he deceived them. Seeing that, the women and children bolted in fright and Daniels men in their anger shot them down. Leaving them where they fell, the Colonel marched the militia back to La Grange. Those were the details he wrote to Governor Call in his report of May 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>36</sup>

The Pensacola Gazette published an article on May 27<sup>th</sup> in which it referenced the shooting of the prisoners; "We have further information on the subject. It is reported that of the Indians killed all, or nearly all, were prisoners. That there was but one man among the slain – the rest were women and children. We would fain hope that this is not true."

Marine Lt. John G. Reynolds assigned with assisting in the round-up of the Indians for removal, went to the place where the prisoners were shot, and apparently found them still lying where they fell. The paper published his report of what he found on June 10<sup>th</sup>. A discrepancy in the number he reported as murdered and the number in Colonel Brown's report went unexplained:

Your surmise in relation to the murder of the 12 women and children proves to be correct. On my route westward I was necessarily obliged to pass the place where the murderous scene was enacted. The spot was not more than fifteen feet in diameter. I minutely examined the place and I am firmly of the opinion that the poor devils were penned up and slaughtered like cattle and such was the opinion of the friendly Indians in company. The shrieks of the poor children were distinctly heard at a house, distant, I should think, one-quarter of a mile. Several were scalped, and all who had earrings had their ear slit with knives in order to possess themselves of the silver. I do think this one of the most outrageous acts civilised men could be guilty of. Had the officers in command deemed proper to destroy them before their surrender there would perhaps have been no inhumanity in it, but after a surrender, and passing a swamp all but impassable as prisoners, to be murdered in cold blood in the manner the scene indicates is worse than my imagination could conceive.<sup>37</sup>

There is no record that Governor Call, Lt. Reynolds, the Pensacola Gazette, or anyone else found the report sufficiently atrocious to investigate it and hold those responsible to

account. Apparently, neither did McKinnon because it does not appear in his history, although immensely more sensational than anything else he wrote.

The militia continued its campaign against the Indians until most of them were finally subdued around the end of July when reports of their presence in the county tapered off. Isolated reports of Indian troubles around the state continued into the 1850s, but the Walton County Indian War of 1837, the longest year in the county's history, had come to an end.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Walton to Duval, 22 February 1826, Territory of Florida vs. George Walton, [Case files of the Second Circuit Court and Superior Courts of Florida, 1828 (Series L61), Box1, Folder 116, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee.]

<sup>2</sup> Extract, letter from Col. George Walton to Gov. Duval, re. money collected at key west \$9,879.10, Pensacola Gazette, 8 Sep. 1826, Newspapers.com, [https://www.newspapers.com/search/?query=%22col.%20george%20walton%22&p\\_province=us-fl&dr\\_year=1826-1826](https://www.newspapers.com/search/?query=%22col.%20george%20walton%22&p_province=us-fl&dr_year=1826-1826)

<sup>3</sup> Walton, George, to H. M. Brackenridge, December 11, 1826, Folder 50, (LB# 43), *Henry Marie Brackenridge and Family Papers, 1816-1889*, (Published by ULS Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh Library System, 7500 Thomas Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA, 15260, 2007) <https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735060474172#page/1/mode/2up/search/december+11,+1826>

<sup>4</sup> Satterfield, Frances Gibson, *Madame Le Vert, A Biography of Octavia Walton Le Vert*, (Edisto Press, P. O. Box 4, Edisto Island Souths Carolina, 29438,1987), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Territory of Florida vs. George Walton, [Case files of the Second Circuit Court and Superior Courts of Florida, 1828 (Series L61), Box1, Folder 116, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee.]

<sup>6</sup> Resolution, Ref. Dorothy Walton, Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida: passed at their seventh session, 1828, p. 298, <http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1828.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Hann, John H. *Apalachee, The Land between the Rivers*, (University Presses of Florida, 15 NW 15th Street, Gainesville, Fl. 1988), 185-187.

<sup>8</sup> Swanton, John Reed, *Early History of The Creek Indians and Their Neighbors*, (Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1922), 304.

<sup>9</sup> McKinnon, John L., *History of Walton County*, (First published in 1911, The Byrd Printing Co. Atlanta, GA., Second publication, Palmetto Books, Gainesville, Florida, 1968), 76.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 289.

<sup>11</sup> Hann, John H., *Visitations and Revolts in Florida, 1656-1695*, (Florida Archaeology, Number 7, Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research, Division of Historical Research, The Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida, 1993), 60-61.

<sup>12</sup> Cox, Dale, *The History of Jackson County, Florida*, Vol. One, (Made in the USA, Charleston, SC, 2014), 26.

<sup>13</sup> Worth, John, *Rediscovering Pensacola's Lost Spanish Missions*, (University of West Florida, 2008), 8-9. <https://pages.uwf.edu/jworth/WorthSEAC2008.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> McKinnon, John L., *History of Walton County*, (First published in 1911, The Byrd Printing Co. Atlanta, GA., Second publication, Palmetto Books, Gainesville, Florida, 1968),67.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 98.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 72-77.

<sup>17</sup> Treaty of Moultrie Creek, 1823, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Moultrie\\_Creek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Moultrie_Creek)

<sup>18</sup> An Act, To prevent Indians from roaming at large through the Territory, Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida: passed at their fifth session, 1826-1827, pp. 103-104 (113-114) [http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1826\\_1827.pdf](http://edocs.dlis.state.fl.us/fldocs/leg/actterritory/1826_1827.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Indian Removal Act, 1830. Library of Congress, <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&file-Name=004/llsl004.db&recNum=458>, downloaded by Sam Carnley, 11/26/2019

<sup>20</sup> Treaty of Cusseta of 1832, Encyclopedia of Alabama, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3083>, and Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Cusseta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Cusseta). See also the Second Creek War, Encyclopedia of Alabama, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3866?printable=true>

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Scott Sewell and S. Pony Hill, *The Indians of North Florida From Carolina to Florida, the Story of the Survival of a Distinct American Indian Community*, (Barkentine Publishing, 30 Medford Drive, Palm Coast FL 32137-2504, 2011), 138-142

<sup>22</sup> Evelyn Clark Longwell, "McLennan, Neil," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/mclennan-neil>

<sup>23</sup> McKinnon, John L., *History of Walton County*, (First published in 1911, The Byrd Printing Co. Atlanta, GA., Second publication, Palmetto Books, Gainesville, Florida, 1968), 98-99.

<sup>24</sup> An Adventurous Colony, The Pensacola Gazette, 3 January 1835, Sat. Page 5  
[https://www.newspapers.com/search/?query=%22uchee%20valley%22&p\\_province=us-fl&dr\\_year=1835-1835](https://www.newspapers.com/search/?query=%22uchee%20valley%22&p_province=us-fl&dr_year=1835-1835)

<sup>25</sup> Evelyn Clark Longwell, "McLennan, Neil," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/mclennan-neil>

<sup>26</sup> Roanoke, Georgia, burned by Creeks, 1836, The History Engine, <https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/448>

<sup>27</sup> Jim Henry Captured, Richmond Enquirer, (Virginia), Newspapers.com  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/466045554/?terms=%22Jim%20Henry%22&match=1>

<sup>28</sup> Battle of Hobdy's Bridge, Bridge, Digital Alabama,  
<https://digitalalabama.com/forts-of-alabama/battle-of-hobdys-bridge/6705/>

<sup>29</sup> The Pittsfield Sun (Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 18 May, 1837, Thu. P. 3, Newspapers.com,  
[https://www.newspapers.com/image/531984307/?terms=%22joseph%20nelson%22%20&match=1&clipping\\_id=124287829](https://www.newspapers.com/image/531984307/?terms=%22joseph%20nelson%22%20&match=1&clipping_id=124287829)

<sup>30</sup> John L. McKinnon, *History of Walton County*, (Palmetto Books, Gainesville, Florida, 1968), 109-117; Uchee Valley letter, May 1, 1837, Transcripts of Pensacola Gazette Articles, May 13, 1837 (attached); Brian R. Rucker, *West Florida's Creek Indian Crisis of 1837* (The Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Jan., 1991), pp. 315-334, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30147524>; Section 6, Township 3, north, Range 21, west, General Highway Map of Walton County, Florida, prepared by the Surveying and Mapping Office, State of Florida Department of Transportation in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, November 2006, [https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/co-gis/countymaps/color/walt-c.pdf?sfvrsn=c51fd2aa\\_4](https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/co-gis/countymaps/color/walt-c.pdf?sfvrsn=c51fd2aa_4)

<sup>31</sup> Excerpts From Issues Of The Pensacola Gazette Covering The Walton County Indian War Of 1837, p. 9, Image 13. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00047638/00001/images/25>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 12, Image 16.

<sup>34</sup> McKinnon, John L., *History of Walton County*, (First published in 1911, The Byrd Printing Co. Atlanta, GA., Second publication, Palmetto Books, Gainesville, Florida, 1968), 118-120

McKinnon's account of the incident differs on several points from the Pensacola Gazette article. He states that Colonel John L. McKinnon was the ranking military officer in that part of the state, which was incorrect. Col. Jackson Morton was appointed to that position by Governor Call per the Pensacola Gazette article dated May 20, 1837. No evidence of record has been found showing John L. McKinnon was a commissioned military officer of any rank. Militia muster rolls of the war indicate his highest rank was that of a private. McKinnon gives the location of the battle, the biggest fought in the county, as "south of the cow-pens," then Antioch [cemetery], "around Battle Bay." These are landmarks on Black Creek, the site per the Gazette. McKinnon writes that Col. John L. McKinnon bore the wounded Enos Evans, the only white casualty of the skirmish, out of the swamp on his shoulders. This likely was Captain Lochlin McKinnon, as, according to the Gazette, he commanded the militia in the skirmish.

<sup>35</sup> McKinnon, John L., Private, Florida militia muster rolls, Seminole Indian Wars, p. 24  
<https://original-ufdc.uflib.ufl.edu/UF00047719/00007/25j>

<sup>36</sup> Excerpts From Issues Of The Pensacola Gazette Covering The Walton County Indian War Of 1837, p. 17-18, Images 21-22. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00047638/00001/images/25>

<sup>37</sup> Excerpts From Issues Of The Pensacola Gazette Covering The Walton County Indian War Of 1837, UFDC Digital Collections, George A. Smathers Library, University of Florida, p. 13, Image 17,  
<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00047638/00001/images/25>