



WALTON

RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 15, Issue 7

Walton County Heritage Association

July 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

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Vice President: Carolyn Brown

Treasurer: Vacant

Secretary: Susan Horaist

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Vacant

Museum Docent Coordinator

Carolyne Brown

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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.]

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 2024. Donor logos are also shown on the attached Donor page in the monthly newsletter.

Annual Member/Sponsor Application 2024; See attached.

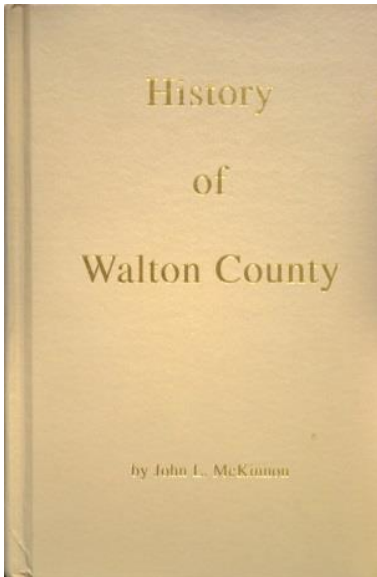
Member Benefits:

- 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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www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org. *Walton Relations & History* is a publication of the Walton County Heritage Association, Inc., Sam Carnley, editor. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email its editor at kienles810@gmail.com or phone at 850-209-3778.

From the Museum Gift Shop

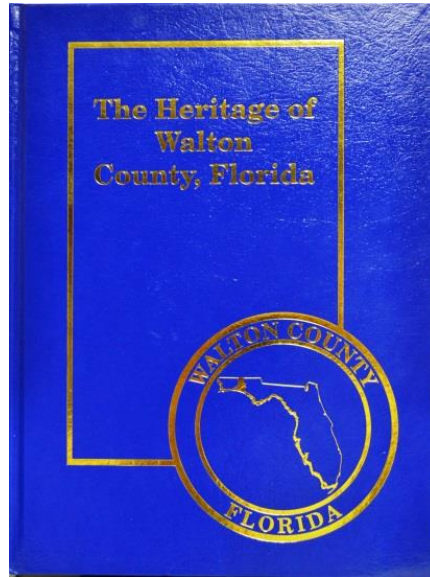
Our most popular books



History of Walton County

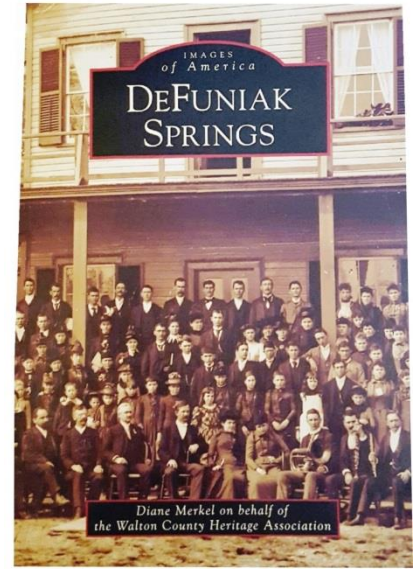
by John L. McKinnon. The Museum has sold out of this book and it is out of print, but it is available at these links;

<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: _____

Qty	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

ANNUAL MEMBER/SPONSOR APPLICATION 2024

Name:

Individual/Family _____

Sponsor/Business/Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Member/Sponsor Category:

Individual \$25.00, Family \$40.00, Sponsor \$100.00, Silver Sponsor \$500.00, Gold Sponsor \$1,000.00, Platinum Sponsor \$2,000.00, Additional Gift \$ _____ * Total Enclosed \$ _____ *Gift earmarked for: _____

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)

David Bludworth-\$100.00
Grace L. Marse-\$100.00
Ken & Gator Little-\$100.00
Sally Merrifield-\$100.00
Sam and Nell Carnley-\$100.00
Marie G. Hinson-\$100.00

SILVER SPONSORS (\$500 to \$999.00)

(None at present time)

GOLD SPONSORS (\$1,000 to \$1,999)

(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

Our New Walton County History project is going more slowly than we anticipated. Consequently we do not have another chapter ready for this newsletter. As in the past when that happened, we substituted material from other sources for our newsletter. We opted not to publish a newsletter in June. Our July article is about Grayton Beach; partly from my memories and stories from the Heritage Book. 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

GRAYTON BEACH
A Few Memories and Some History
By
Sam Carnley

While attending high school at Paxton in the late 1950s and early 60s, I had the opportunity to visit Grayton Beach on occasion. One trip involved a senior class day trip when most members of the class went along. I don't remember much about it except that I probably came home with a severe sun burn. A popular hangout was the Van Ness Butler store. I seem to recall it having a pool table and probably a juke box. In connection with the Butler family, a reference to the "Wash Away Hotel," comes to mind. On the senior class trip, I remember seeing what appeared to be a hotel with a large drift of sand piled up behind it. This was in 1961, I think, so whether the hotel still existed then, I do not know.

On another occasion, I spent the weekend with the Morrises who owned a beach house there. Jack Morris taught my science class and his wife, Elizabeth, taught typing and business. Their daughter, Mary and I were dating then, and they invited me down to spend a weekend with them. Fishing in the surf is my most memorable event about that trip. One fish I caught was a large trout of some kind. Mrs. Morris wrapped it in aluminum foil and cooked it in the oven. As I recall, it was quite tasty. The tackle I used had two hooks on the line. I made my best catch of the trip when I landed two fish at the same time, one on each of the hooks.

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They were a Hammer Head shark and a Hard Tail. The shark was about two feet long and the second one probably weighed a couple of pounds. I seem to remember that I used sand fleas as bait. They weren't really fleas, but a small crab that came in with each wave and quickly buried itself in the sand. You had to catch them fast before they burrowed out of sight.

As to the history of Grayton Beach, a short version of it is found in the Walton County Heritage Book (Blue Book), on pages 22-23, which is as follows:

In the 1880's Captain Gray, a retired Sea Captain from New England and a retired Civil War General Miller founded, platted and subdivided the area of Grayton Beach with the idea of selling lots. (It is told that Capt. Gray inadvertently burned his original home while trying to rid his house of fleas.) Willis Albert Butler, who had moved to DeFuniak Springs in 1907 and owned property at Phillips Inlet later traded that property for land at Grayton Beach and thus the Butler family became an integral part of Grayton.

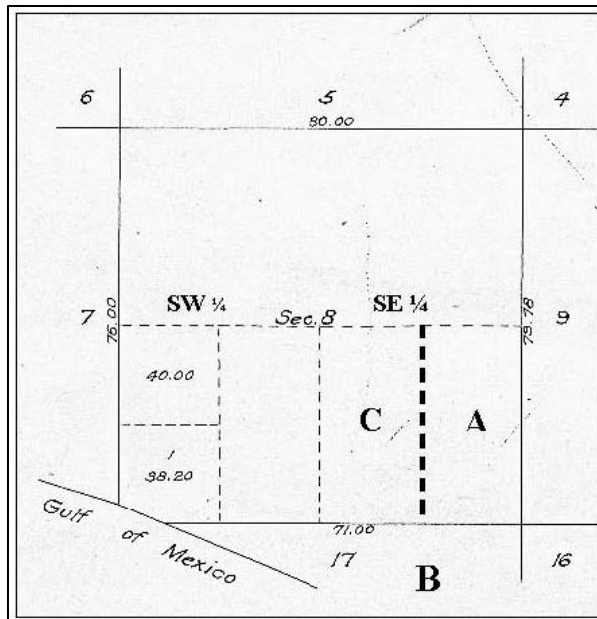
Grayton Beach is a beehive of activity during the summer months with a diverse, transit population of renters and the semi-permanent sun worshipers and fishermen of all ages, but in the winter time that population dwindles greatly, leaving the locals to enjoy their spectacular, less crowded stomping grounds."

No doubt the biggest draw to Grayton is sun worshipers and fishermen of all ages is its beaches,

having been honored by numerous periodicals as "The World's Most Beautiful Beaches."

Source: *The DeFuniak Springs Herald -Breeze*

According to US patent records, Gray, the rest of whose name was Charles T., acquired 129.63 acres via a cash sale entry dated 5/11/1893. It is described as the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$, 8-3S-19. This is deciphered as the east half of the southeast quarter, section 8, township 3 south and range 19 west. The same entry also included Lot/Tract 1, of section 17, same township and range. The plat of his survey is depicted below.



A. Charles T. Gray, E $\frac{1}{2}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$, 8-3S-19; and **B.** Lot/Tract 1, 17-3S-19, Patent No. 14042, 5/11/1893.
C. Van R. Butler, W $\frac{1}{2}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$, 8-3S-19, Patent No. 019473, 1/17/1929.

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It combines both his acquisitions in section 8 and 17, as well as the survey plat of a cash entry in section 8 by Van R. Butler, shown as the W ½ of SE ¼.

Gray sold the lots in section 17 beginning in 1890 before he received his patent and deed in 1893. A few were sold in 1900. The deed book index shows seventeen conveyances of property. Some are for specific lots and some are not specific, indicated only as “Part of, etc.” Those purchasing lots in section 17 are listed below.

Grantee Name	Date	Lots in 17-3S-19	
		Lot No.	Blk No.
Mrs. E. M. Gardner	1890	4	4
Mrs. A. J. Holtz	1890	4, 5	2
A. W. Wilcox	1890	2, 3	2
Mary Wallace Croft	1890	1	6
Dixon Jones	1890	2	5
Mrs. H. J. Holtz	1891	6	4
Vashti L. Banfill, et al	1891	6, 7	2
L. W. Plank, et al	1891	6, 7	2
G. W. Shear	1892	16, 17	2
G. W. Shear	1892	16, 17	2
Edwin Cook	1893	1	Etc.
Mary W. Croft	1893	1	Etc.
Edwin Cook	1894	9	2
Edwin Cook	1894	E ½ of SE ¼, 8-3S-19, etc.	
Wm M. Wilson, et al	1900	Part of 17-3S-19. etc.	
Miller & Wilson, et al	1900	Part of 17-3S-19. etc.	
Wm Miller, et al	1900	Part of 17-3S-19. etc.	

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The United States of America.

CERTIFICATE
No. 14042 To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas, *Charles T. Gray, of Washington County, Florida.*

has deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at *Tallahassee, Florida*, whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said *Charles T. Gray*

according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," and the acts supplemental thereto, for *The East half of the South East quarter of Section eight and the Lot numbered one of Section Seventeen, the Township three South, of Range nineteen West, of Tallahassee Meridian in Florida containing one hundred and twenty nine Acres and Sixty three hundredths of an Acre*

according to the official plat of the survey of the said lands returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General, which said tract has been purchased by the said *Charles T. Gray*

Now know ye, That the United States of America, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress in such case made and provided, HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED, and by these presents DO GIVE AND GRANT, unto the said *Charles T. Gray*

and to *his* heirs, the said tract above described: To HAVE AND TO HOLD the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances, of whatsoever nature, thereunto belonging, unto the said *Charles T. Gray*

This patent is issued in lieu of an original one dated December 31st 1894 which has been cancelled. and to *his* heirs and assigns forever.

In testimony whereof, I *Grover Cleveland*

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made patent, and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the City of Washington, the *eleventh* day of *May*, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *ninety three*, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and *seventeenth*

LS

By the PRESIDENT: *Grover Cleveland*
By *M. McKean* Secretary.
L. C. Lamar Recorder of the General Land Office.

Depicted above is Charles T. Gray's U. S. Land Patent No, 14042, issued 5/11/1893.

106	INDEXED.
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:	
Certificate No. 14042.	
WHEREAS, Charles T Gray, of Washington County, Florida, has deposited in the General Land Office of the United States, a certificate of the register of the Land Office at Gainesville, Florida, whereby it appeared that full payment has been made by the said <u>Charles T. Gray</u> , according to the provisions of the act of Congress, of the 24th, of April 1820 entitled "An act making further provisions for the sale of the Public Lands, and the acts supplemental thereto, for the East half of the South-East quarter of Section Eight and the Lot Numbered One of Section Seventeen in Township Three South of Range Nine-hundred, west of the Tallahassee Meridian, in Florida, containing One Hundred, and twenty-nine acres and sixty-three hundredths of an acre according to the official plat of the survey of the said land returned to the General Land Office by the surveyor General, which said land has been purchased by the said Charles T Gray.	
NOW KNOW YE, that the United States of America, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress in such case made and provided, have given and granted and by these presents do give and grant, unto the said Charles T Gray and to his heirs the said tract above described, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD unto the same together with all the rights, privileges, immunities and appurtenances whatsoever, nature thereunto belonging, unto the said Charles T Gray, and to his heirs and assigns, forever. This patent is issued in time of an erroneous one dated December 31st, 1890, which has been cancelled.	
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I Grover Cleveland, President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made patent and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed. GIVEN under my hand at the City of Washington the Eleventh day of May in the year of our Lord, One thousand, eight hundred and ninety three and of the Independence of the United States, the One hundred and seventeenth.	
(U S A SEAL)	By the President: Grover Cleveland, By M. McKean, Secretary. L Q C Lamar, recorder of the General Land Office.
RECORDED VOL 22 PAGE 486. Pt. Washington.	
Filed and recorded January 23rd, A D 1894. W B Lassiter, Clerk C't C't.	
I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears of record in Book F at page 324 of the records of Washington County, Florida, and duly transcribed into the record of Walton County Florida, on the 10th, day of November A D 1913.	
Ehas H Gordon, Clerk Circuit Court. By <i>Walter Warren</i> Deputy Clerk. WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA.	
: : : : : -----000000e-----: : : : :	

Shown above is Charles T. Gray's deed to the Grayton Beach property. It is on file with the Walton County Clerk of Court in DB 42, P. 106.

The Van Ness R. Butler family were prominent in Grayton Beach from its earliest years. Presented below is a

history of the family found in the Walton County Heritage Book, on pages 126-127.

Van Ness R. Butler, Sr., South Walton Pioneer

South Walton lost a member of one of its most distinguished pioneer families when Van Ness R. Butler Sr., passed away on August 25, 2000 at the age of 96 years old. Ninety-four of those years had been spent in his beloved Walton County.

He was born September 21, 1903, to Willis Albert Butler and Eloise Holmes Butler in Canova, South Dakota where Willis was a wheat rancher. When he decided the weather was too cold, he began to look for new land. In Chicago he saw an advertisement for the Chautauqua in DeFuniak Springs that included a very reasonable excursion rate on the L&N Railroad. While visiting he found DeFuniak to his liking; he returned to South



Van Ness and Helen Butler

Dakota, and in 1907, he moved his family south. Thus began the integral role of the Butler families in Walton County.

In approximately 1915 Willis Albert Butler began the first of a series of land purchases designed to bring tourism to the virtually undiscovered, isolated timberlands of South Walton County, which happened to have some of the most pristine

beachfront property within the continental United States.

As a youngster, Van Butler's time was divided between DeFuniak Springs and Grayton Beach, where his father's property holdings included the old Wash Away Hotel. Attracting tourists to Grayton Beach moved along at a snail's pace until the improved highway system made travel easier.

After graduating from Walton High School in 1922, Butler attended Palmer College and the University of Florida, where he earned a teaching degree in 1926 and started teaching that same year. After finishing school he taught first at Laurel Hill (Okaloosa County) and then Point Washington (Walton County) where his parents had retired in 1922. He met and married another Point Washington teacher, Helen Enzor of Samson, Alabama.

In 1925 Van had the foresight to homestead 80 acres at Grayton (according to Bureau of Land Management records, his land patent, no. 019473 was issued 1/17/1929. The records also indicate it to be a cash entry rather than a homestead). While teaching in Point Washington was fine in the winter, the Butler family spent the summers at Grayton. His son, Van Ness Butler, Jr., remembered the move to the beach as quite an affair. His father built and ran the store there in addition to building several rental cottages. In 1939, the family moved to the beach permanently, with quarters in back of the store.

During World War II years from 1942 through 1945, a Coast Guard Station was assigned to Grayton, and the government leased the store and the cottages for their use.

Van taught until 1950 (over 30 years) in both Point Washington and Santa Rosa Beach, when he took an early retirement and began concentrating on the doings at Grayton Beach, which was rapidly growing in population, at least during the summer season. Someone once put a sign on the store that read: "Office of the Mayor, Water Department, Garbage Department, Sewage Department, Complaint Department, and

Real Estate Broker." Van Butler occupied every position!

Of his varied accomplishments in the Grayton Beach community and South Walton County, he took most pride in his long career in the field of education and involvement in lives of his students. In 1996, Walton County acknowledged his contributions by naming a new elementary school in Santa Rosa Beach in his honor.

While Butler's contributions to education were immeasurable, he also played an important role in the social life of The Grayton Beach community. The store and recreation hall that he built in 1938 became a popular gathering place for several generations of young people. Today, the building is considered one of Grayton Beach's historic landmarks. In Mr. Butler's lifetime, he had opportunities for numerous acts of community involvement, which included helping to bring all the utility services to South Walton County, electricity, water, and telephone service.

Although public works and service to his community are worthy of note, etched in his community's memory is his contribution to education.

NOTE: The Social Security Death Index lists Van Butler's birth as 21 Sep 1903 and his death as 25 Aug 2000. The Social Security Death Index lists Helen A. Butler's birth as 12 Apr 1908, and her death as 4 Nov 1987.

Submitted by: Heritage Book Committee. Source: The DeFuniak Springs Herald.