

THE GSOC NEWSLETTER



THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF
OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

AUGUST 1, 2015

Next GSOC Meeting
August 8, 2015
10:00 am

Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida



Our August 8th meeting will be a Show-and-Tell. Volunteer members will bring things that they have found, inherited, or have been given that might be interesting to other members and tell us about them.

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July 11th GSOC Meeting Minutes

Pat Pruett, Recording Secretary

President Jim Young called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida and welcomed twenty members and three guests. The guests were asked to identify themselves and tell about their interests in researching for family members.

Pres. Young then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June GSOC meeting as they appeared in the July Newsletter. Motion made by Bob Basch and seconded by Bev Gross. Motion passed.

Jim asked if there were any questions concerning the Newsletter that was posted to our website on 1 July. Several persons expressed thanks to Jim for his work in putting out our newsletter and being webmaster as well.

Officers reports

1st VP-Programs Del Lessard could not be present so Pres. Young announced that the August meeting will be a members "Show and Tell". Those interested in participating are to notify Jim or Del before the next meeting.

2nd VP Membership Charlene Grafton said that she has sent out updates on membership to the officers. She said

one of our guests today is a potential new member. Charlene requested that if anyone has any new info for her to send it by e-mail.

Treasurer Bob Basch reported that our present checking account balance is \$2214.49 with no outstanding bills. A question was asked concerning our donations of books to local libraries. Bob stated that we have a separate account for that which comes from the money collected in our Blue Box at each monthly meeting. We presently have over \$300.00 and this money also helps defray costs involved in putting out our Journal each year. He then passed the Blue Box for donations.

Bob asked for a show of hands for those who planned to attend the Dutch Treat lunch today. Eleven people planned to attend at the Cafe Bienville after today's meeting. Bob then conducted a drawing for a door prize which was a book donated by Bev. Gross. Winner was Margaret Harris.

Recording Secretary Pat Pruett - nothing to report.

Corresponding Secretary Carl Laws said that he has quite a few publications to be reviewed today before being sent to the Ft. Walton Beach Library. There was some discussion concerning the availability of genealogy books at the library and Hilma Jenus said that the materials there have been moved to a different room but are still available. There has been some confusion due to the Research Librarian there leaving.

Publicity Chairman Val Moreland said we had a nice write-up in the Northwest Florida Daily News this past week.

After the reports from the officers, Pres. Young talked about the plans for the 2015 Journal. The theme this year is the centennial of Okaloosa County. Volunteers are needed to research and write articles on this theme. Volunteers to help with the editing and organization of the Journal are also needed and Pres. Young asked that anyone interested in any of these tasks to get in touch with him. He mentioned that Del Lessard is planning an article on the sheriffs of the county.

Program GSOC Genealogist Margaret Harris lead off the program by giving a presentation about finding genealogy-related books and other references online. She demonstrated how to find and use several very useful websites and gave her personal recommendations and tips. Following Margaret's presentation, everyone was given an opportunity to look at the resources which members had brought and placed on the tables in the front of the room. The persons who brought them told about their helpfulness.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Moss Hill Methodist Church

Moss Hill Methodist church is located a few miles southeast of Vernon, Florida.

American settlers had arrived in the Holmes Valley area in Washington County in northwest Florida around 1819, the year that Spain ceded Florida to the United States. By 1821, Methodist missionaries were active in the area and by 1826 they were connected to the South Carolina Methodist Conference.



The Moss Hill congregation first held services in a log blockhouse northwest of the current church site which was used by American settlers during the Second Seminole War. It is thought that the blockhouse remained in use until it was so deteriorated that it was replaced with the current structure in 1857 which was built on public land. The congregation's effort to gain ownership of the land succeeded when President Lincoln signed the land

transfer papers in December 1861, some eleven months after Florida seceded from the Union.

This unpainted building was built by both white settlers and slaves, all members of the congregation. The material used was pine wood, much of it heart pine which is highly rot resistant. The lumber was sawed by a water-powered mill on Hard Labor Creek.



Square nails and wooden pegs were used in the construction.



The planks used in the ceiling have footprints and handprints resulting from being walked on and handled while they were stacked on the ground during the building years.

Moss Hill is believed to be the second building in Washington County to have glass windows.

Before and during the Civil War, the congregation included both white and black members. It was during Reconstruction that the congregation separated.

There is still no electricity in the building and the lighting comes from the tall windows and lanterns. The outside fellowship and picnic area, though, has both electricity and running water.

Moss Hill has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

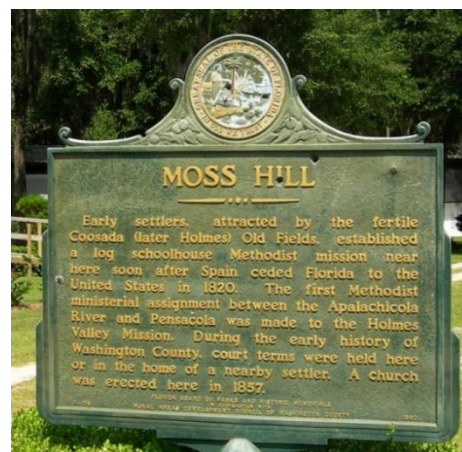
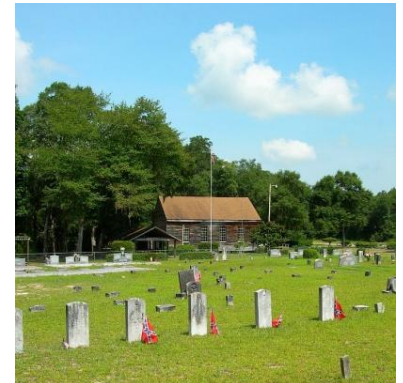


According to the sign in front of the church, services are still being held.

Markers in the adjacent Moss Hill cemetery honor some of the local men and boys who were captured when the Vernon Home Guard unit tangled with Union troops returning from the Battle of Marianna. The September 28, 1864 skirmish is the Battle of Vernon and a

locally remembered as number of the men taken prisoner died in northern prison camps and never returned home.

Grave markers here indicate service in the Mexican War, the Civil War, and recent wars.



<http://www.usgulfcoaststatesgeotourism.com/content/moss-hill-church-cemetery/gul01D4F2955A3C065FD>

Photos made July 14th, 2015 by Jim Young

The Cooling Board

by Monette Morgan Young

Around about 1910, a family living on the western edge of Chickasaw County, MS, had two sons.

An elderly relative had recently died at this home and, in that day, bodies were prepared for burial in the home where the person had died.

The designated coffin maker in the community made the coffins. The body was first bathed and dressed and then it was laid on a 'cooling board'. The quick cooling helped preserve the body and also provided a place to keep it until the coffin was ready. Each community usually had a wide board for that purpose which was taken from house to house as needed.

The board was laid between two tables, or between a table and the foot of a bed, or four chairs, each pair turned back to back. The board was smooth and quite wide.



This man's body had been prepared and 'laid out' on the cooling board in the boys room until his coffin was ready and the funeral held.

A week or so later, there was a country dance in the community and all the young people were eager to go. The older of the two boys sometimes got a little wild, especially when he'd sampled some country moonshine.

In those days young ladies frowned on loud behavior and especially boys with obvious signs of having a little too much to drink. So the older brother was shunned out of the dance by the girls, especially the one he was most interested in.

After about an hour or so he gave up and left the dance and came on home. Their house, as did many others, had "the boys'

room" sitting off from a corner of the porch of the main house. The boys' room's porch created a walkway to the main house porch.

As he neared the house an idea for a practical joke began to emerge. His brother had been very popular that night

with the girls who had rejected him so he thought he would have a prank waiting when his brother got home. He tied his horse to a tree in the woods behind the barn and his parents in the main house didn't hear him come in. He sat down in a chair in the room he shared with his brother. He didn't light the lamp, but by the moonlight coming through the window he could barely see the cooling board still propped up in the corner of the room. When the older brother heard the younger one's horse approaching about midnight (parties were not prolonged things then), the older brother set up the cooling board in the place where it had supported its last burden and got on it and stretched a sheet over himself.

The younger brother came jauntily into the moonlit bedroom and saw the apparition and was quietly terrified. He slowly backed out of the room and went to his parents' room. He sat down in front of the still warm hearth. It was late autumn. His mother raised up and asked why he was not in his room. He replied that he was cold. Finally after another span of time she told him he must go on to his bed. The father was snoring happily all this time.

The boy got up and headed back to his room. He felt like his probable hallucination had vanished by then but it was still there. The brother had heard him coming back and had gotten himself back on the board. The younger brother retreated back to his parents' room. Again his mother questioned him and again he told the story of being cold. He sat and sat, finally she demanded he go to his room. The fire was quite dead.

The boy said something to the effect that something was in his room. She said that was foolish and she would go and prove to him nothing was there. She lit the kerosene lamp and set out with the boy, illuminating the way. The older brother heard someone coming but did not know the mother was along so he got back on the board.

When she saw the cooling board and its sheeted burden, she screamed and dropped the lamp. Fortunately, the lamp went out when it crashed to the floor and there was no fire. The father woke up and went hurrying in and found out there had been such a loud commotion and why.

The father sat in that room wrapped up in a quilt and made the older boy lie on that cooling board the rest of the night.

Monette Morgan Young, (1915-2000) was born on her parents' small farm in north central Mississippi. She loved family and community history and writing and also did extensive research on her own family line (**Morgan, Murphree, Hardin, Swindoll**, and others) as well as on her husband's line (**Young, Richards, Blue, Winter**, and others.)

She won several awards for her poetry and had numerous published articles. She was the author of *The Cherry Hill – Poplar Springs – Reid Community in Calhoun County, Mississippi* and "The Cooling Board" story above was extracted from that book and used here by permission.

History Mystery

What is the story on this personal post card from Destin?

By Hank Klein



The person who mailed this postcard was George Delbert (Del) Knapp who lived in Shoals (just across from what is now the Walton County Line). Knapp became the first postmaster of Shoals when they established their own post office on March 9, 1915.

On August 24, 1911 a personal post card was mailed to St. Louis , Missouri from the Destin, Florida Post Office. Another of the History Mysteries of Destin is who mailed this postcard and is the picture on the card what a homestead looked like in the Destin area in 1911?

A couple of months ago we discovered that the area that we call Miramar Beach today was known as Shoals, Florida , in the early 1900s. Before Shoals got its own post office, the residents sent and received their mail from the post office at Destin.

The person who mailed this postcard was George Delbert (Del) Knapp who lived in Shoals (just across from what is now the Walton County Line). Knapp became the first postmaster of Shoals when they established their own post office on March 9, 1915.

The picture on the post card is of Del Knapp's homestead in Shoals. It was made into a postcard and mailed to Del's sister Grace (Mrs. J. J. Googan) in St. Louis , Missouri . Notice what he said: "Hello Sis, Reckon you know this place, Del."

What the picture shows is a very simple cabin with no glass in the window that is visible. A person is standing on the front porch, and a horse and cattle are in the fenced front yard. A second person (probably Del) is standing with the cattle in the front yard. Choctawhatchee Bay is in the background, beyond the pine trees.

Sending and collecting picture postcards "was all the rage" in the early years of the 20th century. In fact, the period from 1907 to 1915 is now known as the Golden Age of Postcards. During the peak of the craze, the U.S.

Postal Service estimated that a billion penny postcards were mailed each year and many more were sent in letters or purchased to be added to collectors' albums.

The first known post card was mailed in 1899. But in 1902, Kodak made thick photo stock with postal markings on the back so folks could make their own postcards. Then in 1903, Kodak invented its No. 3A, Folding Pocket camera, which used film specifically designed for postcard-size prints.

The camera sold for \$3.50. Amateur photographers were now able to have their own images printed by Kodak directly onto postcard paper and send them through the mail to friends and family. The postage was one cent

These were called "Real Photo Postcards" or RPPCs. During this era, people made their own personal postcards, usually using themselves or their property as the subject. It wasn't like sending a letter because you could only send your picture and a small message, sort of like sending a text, Tweet, or using Instagram today. Times have sure changed... or have they?

Note from Hank: If anyone has a Real Photo Postcard mailed from the Destin Post Office from 1903 - 1920 I would sure like to see it. Just contact me at the e-mail address below or contact the Destin Log.

H. C. "Hank" Klein is a Destin historian who visits often and lives in North Little Rock, Arkansas with his wife (the former Muriel Marler of Destin). Klein recently published a historic book about Destin's pioneer settlers. DESTIN Pioneer Settlers...A Land History of Destin, Florida from 1819-1940 can be obtained from Amazon.com, Tony Mennillo of Arturo Studios at 850/585-2909, Dewey Destin's Restaurants, in Destin, the Magnolia Grill in Fort Walton Beach, or Bayou Books in Niceville. He has spoken at GSOC meetings on several occasions. Klein can be contacted at klein@aristotle.net.

Also published in the Destin Log on July 7, 2015

Okaloosa Centennial: EARLY YEARS OF CRESTVIEW

The State of Florida donated land to the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad, a land grant railroad owned by the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad, in order to allow the linking of West Florida to the Atlantic Ocean. In 1881 track laying began between Pensacola and the Apalachicola River.

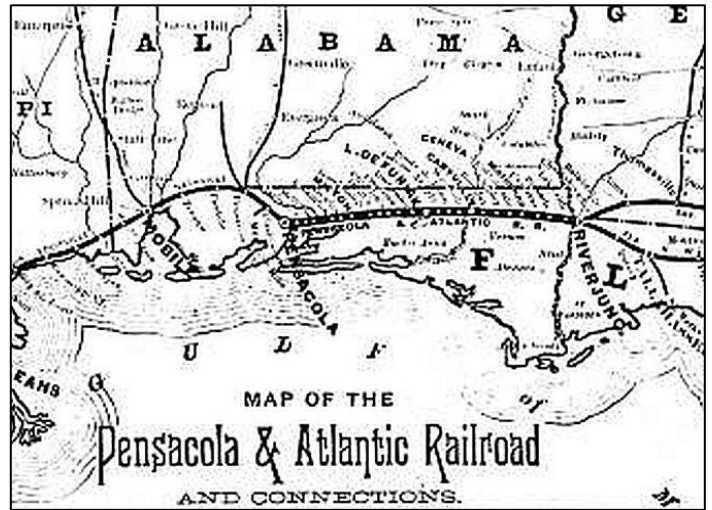
Crestview originally existed only as a boxcar set off beside the track to act as a station at the highest point on the Old Spanish Trail between the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean. In the late 1880s the Yellow River Railroad began building a 26 mile spur line from Crestview Station to Floral, Alabama, to support local timber operations. It was completed and opened in May of 1894 to passenger and freight traffic.

Prior to the railroad coming, the few settlers in the area sent word to relatives and friends of the expansive forests and good climate of the area, but until the coming of the railroad many "would-be-settlers" were afraid of the Indians. The coming of the railroad seemed to calm their fears and the first big boom came to northwest Florida.

Various types of settlers came. There were timber and naval store operations, cattlemen, herders, farmers, merchants, laborers and land companies. Many came on ox-drawn wagons from Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. Others came by train in response to advertisements placed by the L&N Railroad in northern publications. They elaborated on the pleasurable climate and warm winters. The large timber companies became interested in the area. Therefore, most of the males in the settlement worked either for the timber companies who stripped the land of its vast timbers or for the railroad. Homes began to spring up around the station.

In 1883 the Wardville Post Office north of Crestview Station was moved to the Station and the name changed to the Crestview Post Office. In 1883 when the Pacific and Atlantic rail lines were completed, the post office served a population of 300 with 50 being residents of Crestview Station. Hammer F. (Doc) Powell, the first resident of Crestview Station, was the postmaster and the stationmaster. He constructed the stationmaster's house and later built the first hotel/boarding house named the Powell Hotel on the southeast corner of Woodruff Avenue and Main Street. (The hotel, located at 189 - 197 N. Main, was replaced with the Lamar Hotel in 1926 and later became the site of Desi's Restaurant). The hotel was the stopping place of many railroad

travelers. Mr. Powell also owned a livery stable, at what is now 198 N. Main Street (which became the location of the first City Pharmacy in 1928.)



With the additional freight and passenger traffic from the railroad, Crestview continued to grow, and by 1889 the census population of the Crestview Station was 165. In 1890 the P&A railroad constructed a depot in Crestview and removed the boxcar that had been set off and used as a station. In response to the increasing need for lodging and food for travelers the Woodruff Café and Okaloosa Hotel were constructed on the northwest corner of the intersection of the railroad tracks and Pearl Street (now Ferdon Blvd./S.R. 85). These buildings were wood and brick construction and no longer stand.

A bridge was constructed over the Shoal River three miles south of town that enabled train travelers to travel by horse and ox wagon to Camp Walton (later named Fort Walton Beach) to the beaches and summer places in that area.

In addition to the timber companies and the sawmills, around 1900 the turpentine stills were prevalent and remained a vital part of the area industry until about 1940. Housing communities built around the sawmills and residents shopped in the Crestview Station business district. Roads were being constructed in the State and the Florida Midwest Highway traveled through Crestview Station on what is now Main Street.

By 1912 the Crestview population had grown to 200. Okaloosa County was created in 1915 and Milligan was designated as the temporary county seat pending a referendum. Crestview was incorporated in 1916. The *Okaloosa News Journal* established its office in Crestview and began to campaign for Crestview to become the county seat. In the referendum of 1917, Crestview succeeded in winning the vote against Baker and Milligan and

became the county seat. The courthouse was built in 1920 on a 14-acre site which had been reserved by Crestview for Civic property.



Land companies promoted Crestview by distributing pamphlets to entice settlers to move there. They touted the "pleasant climate, the right lands for cultivation, and the great source of lumber, fish, and game throughout the area." They pointed out that the city is the geographical center of the County with a railroad and highway center. They also noted the availability of a paved hard road to DeFuniak Springs and a north-south highway to Camp Walton and Laurel Hill.

By 1918 the first Bank of Crestview was located on Main Street (the building is gone but the steel vault remains in an attorney's office at 115 Courthouse Terrace, on the corner of Main and Courthouse Terrace). The first automobile dealership, a Ford dealership, was located on the corner of Main Street and Oakdale Avenue. (This wooden structure no longer exists.) In 1920 the American Legion Post was founded and the first county jail constructed on the land designated as civic land. (This structure no longer exists.) The first movie house was constructed at Main Street and Oakdale Avenue (297 N. Main Street, later Crestview Plumbing and Hardware). Movies were shown using a Delco Light System and the theater drew movie patrons from several miles to see the "new marvel of the age".

A number of commercial buildings had been constructed along Main Street by the mid-1920's. Of the early structures, several remain substantially as they were in the 1920's. The Pecan Packing Company was located at 192-194 N. Main Street. It was a one-story brick structure with stucco completed in 1918. Bower's Ladies Wear and Dry Goods Store was located at 209 N. Main Street. It was a one-story structure completed in 1920. Vaughn's Grocery was located at 211-215 N. Main Street and was completed in 1920. The Farmer's Exchange was located at 301 N. Main Street, a brick structure

completed in 1920. Vaughn's Dry Goods Store was located at 307 N. Main Street and that structure was completed in 1920. Berman's Dry Goods was located at 321-335 N. Main Street and that structure was completed in 1920. Livewire Grocery Store was located at 337 N. Main Street and that structure was completed in 1924. McLaughlin Mortuary was located at 432-440 N. Main Street and that structure was completed in 1925. Garrett's Grocery was located at 450-452 N. Main Street and that structure was completed in 1926. Okaloosa News Journal Publishing Office was located at 468-470 and that structure was completed in 1926.

Cox Grocery and Wallace Confectionery was located at 102-104 N. Main Street. It was a two-story brick structure that had a dentist office and rental rooms located upstairs. It was completed in 1925. Hutto Barber Shop and Adams Drug Store were located at 106-110 N. Main Street in a one-story brick structure completed in 1925. An auto repair shop was located at 172 E. Woodruff Avenue and that structure was completed in 1929. The buildings still intact are a good representation of the community services Crestview had available during the 1920's and into the 1930's.



North Main Street - Circa 1940's



Reese's Greyhound Bus Station - Circa 1950's



Railroad Depot - Circa 1960's



The Crestview Theatre - Circa 1940's

Crestview Historical Photographs (From the City of Crestview Web Site)

This article was adapted from the Submission for Naming the Old Downtown Section of Crestview, Florida, as a National Historic District

GSOC INFORMATION

Officers for 2015

President, James Young
1st Vice President (Programs), Del Lessard
2nd Vice President (Membership), Charlene Grafton
Treasurer, Bob Basch,
Recording Secretary, Pat Pruett; Asst. Frances Hoge
Corresponding Secretary, Carl Laws
Immediate Past President, Donna Elliott
Journal Editor, TBD; Historian, TBD
Genealogist, Margaret Harris
Publicity Chairperson, Val Moreland
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor, Jim Young

Addresses

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Email: gsocokaloosa@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor: youngjmy@cox.net

Meetings and Membership

Regular meetings of the GSOC are held at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Avenue, Valparaiso, FL, at 10 AM on the second Saturday of each month. There is no admission charge and all are welcome. The meetings are usually followed by an optional Dutch treat lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Annual membership dues are \$24 for an individual and \$35 for an individual and spouse at the same address. If you would like to become a member, want to renew your membership, or want to update your membership record, please go to the GSOC web site and get one of the appropriate forms.

The Newsletter

The GSOC Newsletter is usually published on or before the first Friday of each month. Suggestions for articles are welcome. The editor, Jim Young, can be contacted by phone at 850 862-8642 or by email at youngjmy@cox.net. Letters to the editor are welcome and may be published.

The Journal

The GSOC Journal, *A Journal of Northwest Florida*, is published once each year. The 2014 issue, was published and distributed in September 2014.

The Web Site

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~flocgs>

The site is updated frequently and contains information about future GSOC meetings, minutes of past meetings, copies of the newsletters, articles and items of genealogical and historical interest, and much more.

The GSOC Publications Disk

This compact disk (CD) contains all of the books listed below in searchable PDF files. To get a copy, please send your check for \$17.00 (shipping is included) with your order information to **GSOC, P.O. Box 1175, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175**, and mark your envelope "Book Sales"

Volume I, Cemeteries of Okaloosa County, Florida; 24 cemeteries east of the Yellow River & north of the Shoal River and I-10

Volume II, Cemeteries of Okaloosa County, Florida; 26 cemeteries north and west of the Yellow River

Volume III, Cemeteries of Okaloosa County, Florida; 11 cemeteries south of the Shoal River

Funeral Records of Okaloosa County; Records from McLaughlin Funeral Home, Crestview, FL, from 1927 - 1984. Over 11,000 entries. Includes the names of the deceased and, when given, the names of parents. Deceased are listed alphabetically, parents names are indexed.

Santa Rosa County Marriages, 1869-1906

Over 7,000 names with every-name index, 123 pages.

Walton County Marriages, 1895-1915

Over 10,000 names with every-name index, 165 pages.

Nostalgia

Crestview News Journal, August 1956



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- FOX THEATRE

Sunday & Monday August 12 and 13 JAMES STEWART DORIS DAY ALFRED HITCHCOCK THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH	Thursday & Friday August 9 and 10 World Without End with Hugh Marlowe, Nancy Gates
Saturday August 11 Red Mountain also City Across The River	
Tuesday & Wednesday, Aug. 14-15 Earth vs. The Flying Saucers with Hugh Marlowe and Joan Taylor	



The August GSOC meeting will be on Saturday, August 8th 2015, at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, Valparaiso, at 10 AM.

This meeting will be a Show-and-Tell where volunteer members bring items or information that they have found, inherited, or were given that would be of interest to fellow members.

"Whatever you know, whatever you learn – Pass it On!"

**Genealogical Society of
Okaloosa County (GSOC)**
P.O. Box 1175
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175

