

# THE GSOC NEWSLETTER

The Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County, Florida

December 2, 2011

## GSOC Calendar

December 10, 2011

Our December meeting will begin at **10:30** at the Coach-and-Four restaurant in Crestview. There will be a social time and the installation of GSOC officers for 2012 before the meal. Our own Phil and Martha Trau will provide the enter-tainment.



Please bring non-perishable food item(s) to be donated to a local charitable organization.



The arrow points to the location of the Coach & Four Restaurant

Our first meeting in 2012 will be on January 14, 2012.

## Pioneer Day at the Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park, November 12, 2011



The weather was perfect for the 2011 Pioneer Day. Here is a view of the bayou from near the GSOC table location.



In the photo above, Malcolm Flanagan and Lorna Sainz (Gator jacket) listen to Bob Baker, a guest, record a story about his early life in this area.

Our table was set up in the Magnolia Pavillion and contained examples of GSOC publications and information about the Society. Membership application forms were also available as were blank family tree forms suitable for children to use and decorate.

Donna and Ken Elliott set up the table and chairs. Lorna Sainz and Michael Martell were close behind. Other GSOC volunteers provided support throughout the day.



In the photo above, a Pioneer Day visitor examines an expertly detailed model of a turpentine still.



Dulcimer music drifted over the grounds as these players demonstrated how to play their instruments.

The annual Pioneer Day is hosted by the Friends of the Emerald Coast State Parks at Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park in Niceville.

There were demonstrations of pioneer skills such as spinning, weaving, quilting, basket-making, corn grinding, butter churning and shingle making. The craft of making candles by dipping was demonstrated and rag dolls were made. Quilting, sawing, and other pioneer skills were displayed. Storytellers told tales of pioneer life in the Panhandle, including discussions on turpentine and lumbering by a local expert. Native American flute music with its haunting bird-like tones entertained those enjoying hamburgers, hot dogs, chili, and other goodies. Visitors learned about native plants and wildlife. Displays included early folk toys, a 19th century chuck wagon and a Civil War campsite by the Walton Guard.

Other local historical groups included the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN), the 150-year-old Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church and the Arcadia Mill Archaeological Site.

**Thanks to Donna and Ken Elliott and all the other GSOC volunteers who came out to support the Society.**

## Civil War Sesquicentennial Selected Highlights of December 1861

<http://blueandgraytrail.com>



**December 10**, John T. Ford buys the First Baptist Church on 10th St. in Washington and turns it into a theater. Built in 1833, the church had been vacant since 1859, when the church merged with the nearby Fourth Baptist Church.

**December 19**, Great Britain officially complains to the United States over the seizure of two Confederate commissioners

**December 21**, Abraham Lincoln signs a bill creating the Navy Medal of Honor, America's first medal. It is to be presented to sailors or marines who "...distinguish themselves by their gallantry and other seamanlike qualities..."

**December 26**, U. S. Secretary of State William Seward apologizes to Great Britain for the actions of the *San Jacinto* in the Bahama Channel.

**Ford's Theatre** was used for various stage performances beginning in the 1860s. It is also the site of the assassination of President Lincoln on April 14, 1865.

The site was originally a house of worship, constructed in 1833 as the second meeting house of the First Baptist Church of Washington. In 1861, after the congregation moved to a newly built structure, John T. Ford bought the former church and renovated it into a theatre. He first called it Ford's Athenaeum. It was destroyed by fire in 1862, and was rebuilt the following year. When the new Ford's Theatre opened in August 1863, it had seating for 2,400 persons.

Following President Lincoln's assassination, the United States Government appropriated the theatre, with Congress paying Ford \$100,000 in compensation, and an order was issued forever prohibiting its use as a place of public amusement. Between 1866 and 1887, the theatre was taken over by the U.S. military and served as a facility for the War Department with records kept on the first floor, the Library of the Surgeon General's Office on the second floor, and the Army Medical Museum on the third. In 1887, the building exclusively became a clerk's office for the War Department, when the medical departments moved out.

The front part of the building collapsed on June 9, 1893, killing 22 clerks and injuring another 68. This led some people to believe that the former church turned theatre and storeroom was cursed. The building was repaired and used as a government warehouse until 1931.

Wikipedia



# I Remember Mama Murphree

by Monette Morgan Young

My grandmother Murphree, Gilly Hasseltine (Tina) Hardin Murphree, was born on September 15th, 1861, the daughter of David Wilson Hardin, a Baptist preacher. Their home was in the Shiloh Church community in Chickasaw county, Mississippi, about five miles west of Old Houlika near the old Natchez Trace.

Tina's mother, Barbara Jane Samantha Hardin, died very young, in her thirties. David remarried an Okolona woman, Miss Theresa Lacy, but she grew tired of country life and eventually took their one daughter, Lydia, and returned to Okolona. One by one, David's daughters married men in Calhoun county and left home. Finally, just he and Tina were there.

In the summers, David would be asked to go to churches away from home to hold protracted meetings and Tina would go too and spend the time with young ladies in that community. In the summer of 1878, he was invited to come and hold a meeting at Poplar Springs church about twenty five miles to the west and Tina went too. These meetings were always well attended and a young man named Jeff Murphree was there every day even though he was living with his parents in another community a few miles further west.

"Papa", as I called him, and Tina had not met before that protracted meeting. Papa said Tina was the prettiest thing he ever saw and said to himself, "She's mine if I can get her".

Jeff's parents lived then on the eastern edge of the Oldtown community, on the border with the Lloyd community. The old house is gone now, but old, old cedars, two of them, mark the spot where the front door was. Jeff was born on December 21st, 1859. He was named Jefferson but later adopted the middle initial "D". His parents were Rev. Charles Elbert Murphree and Elizabeth Eveline Brown Murphree. His paternal

grandparents were Ransom Murphree and Mary Walker Murphree. Ransom was the son of David Murphree, a Revolutionary War veteran, who had migrated from North Carolina to Mississippi.

One day, after Jeff and Tina were engaged, Jeff's daddy sent him to Sarepta in the northwest part of the county to sell a horse. Jeff asked the man he was selling the horse to for a little more than his father had told him to get and he took the extra money and had a picture of himself made for Tina.



The picture that Jeff gave Tina

They were married the next February. Jeff and John Morgan and Martha Swindle and Cousin Nancy Thomas traveled to David Hardin's home for the wedding.

They all spent the night there. There was a church service at the African-American church near the house that night and they all went to the service. The wedding was the next day, February 6th, 1879, and David Hardin performed the ceremony. It was snowing. After the wedding, Tina, Jeff, and the other visitors headed back to Calhoun county. John Morgan got in a very romantic mood and proposed to Martha Swindle sometime during the festivities.

Jeff and Tina's honeymoon was at his parents' home as was the custom in those days. Soon he built a little log cabin across the road and its site is just a little northeast of the twin cedar trees on the south side of the road. Four of Jeff and Tina's children were born in that little house: Letha Lorene (1879), Ethel (1881), Walter Lester

(1883) and Eula Barbara (my Mother) (1885). In October 1885, Jeff built a larger log house in the Lloyd community and moved his family there. That was the house which I knew as Mama's. Seven more children were born there: Elizabeth Ruby (1887), Mae Myrtle (1889), Clara (1892), Linder (1896), Leila (1898), Clyde Wilson (1903), and Inez (1908).

"Grandmother's house" is a magical place for most children. "Mama" Murphree's house had been a log structure. When I would know it, it had been covered outside with lumber siding and on the inside with such pretty paneling. The paneling had weathered to such a warm and soft brown. It was a big rambling old house. The earth dropped away from it in the back so that its little back porch was very high from the ground. High steps were there and from the kitchen. At the front, the porch was almost on the ground and there was a pretty yard. Two big trees were across the road and right in front of the house. A cedar tree sat beside the house to its west (right at the west end). A few hundred feet northwest of the house was a small building that had been a buggy shed in the old days and also a shop where "Papa" did his home blacksmithing. The main road leading past the house curved around it at the crest of the hill where the hill began to fall away into a deep hollow, west of the house. There was a deep well with very cold water but it was a long way away from the house. Immediately west of the house was another large tree near the wood pile. The barn was a long way from the house. It was nearly to the foot of the hill and the creek bottom.

The big central hall in Mama's house was as full of beautiful canned foods when summer ended as was ours. Her gardens and orchards overflowed with plenty. That hall was also screened and cool. Pretty chairs were in it too. Their whole house was special to me.

The front room was, to me, a picture. It had rush carpeting, a golden oak dresser (a massive one), a very pretty bed, and several pretty chairs. Crochet pieces and pretty embroidered things were in abundance. There was always a white, tufted spread on the bed.

It is hard to put Mama on paper. I haven't told of her energy and of how she loved to read and had so little to read. Once I carried a book down there that I had gotten from the school library. It was a book for an adolescent girl, one of Gene Stratton Porter's *Limberlost* series. Mama was just overjoyed to get to look at it and read several pages. She wanted to keep and read it and mail it to me or get it to me in some way. I sort of protested, since it was a library book. I can't remember but I hope I let her keep it.

Mama was a tiny woman. She seemed ageless to me. Women who had known her when she was young told me she was the prettiest girl they ever saw. When I knew her, she was thin and wiry, charged with energy. She pulled her hair back tightly and fastened it into a small coil just above her neck rather than on the back of her head.



**Papa and Mama Murphree**

In her day, most women immediately after marriage had donned somber dark clothes and never wore any others. But before she died, she began to let her daughters get some pretty but pale colors in dimity and voile and make her dresses that did not look so "old". She even had let one of them make her one with sleeves up to the elbow.

Mama could grow just about anything. Her roses and other plants were healthy and bloomed well. No

one ever told Mama that she couldn't grow good apples from the seed she planted from apples that were bought in the stores. She planted apple seed all over the place. I never saw so many apple trees, so many fine apples. She gave apples to the whole community.

One preaching day at Poplar Springs, when I was very small, I looked toward the back of the church and I saw Mama and Papa Murphree who had come in late (having come from Lloyd in their buggy). I immediately disengaged myself from Mother and headed for "Mama's" loving arms. Mama had some delectable piece of fruit in her purse. In retrospect, it seems to have been no fruit I had ever tasted before or since. People carried a little food in purses to quiet noisy children during the hour-long sermons. It was usually a dry cracker. Stores then did not sell cookies but some mothers baked their own and brought them along.

Sometimes some of my aunts or cousins would be there at Mama's when we went. But I was happy just to be there with Mama. Sometimes I stayed down there for several days and followed Mama around asking her for stories of "when you were a little girl". And, oh, the stories! These were of the community where she grew up. When Mama described her childhood to me, it sounded like stories from some enchanted land. Even though left motherless, she had had a happy time. Though she had never minded work one iota, she had not had to work a lot or very hard, it seems. One ex-slave woman and her daughter had stayed on at the Hardin place after the Civil War and helped out for wages.

Mama talked often about the Delashmitts. She told of a screech owl which took up residence in a cedar tree beside the Delashmitt's door during the Civil War while Mr. Delashmitt was away in the war. The family could not drive the owl away. They would take a "switch" and "shoo" at him and he would leave but would return. He sat silently. The second day of his vigil, a runner came to tell them that Mr. Delashmitt had been killed at Shiloh.

"Killed at Shiloh." I heard that said of so many of the sons of families in that area.

**[The Battle of Shiloh was a major battle in the Civil War, fought April 6–7, 1862, in southwestern Tennessee. The Confederates achieved considerable success on the first day, but were ultimately defeated on the second day. Shiloh, the costliest in battle in American history up to that time, resulted in Union casualties numbering 13,047 and Confederate casualties numbering 10,699. - Editor]**

David Hardin was a popular preacher. One cold winter day in 1874 he left home to conduct a wedding quite far away at someone's home. Mama was thirteen but would stay home alone. She was always quite responsible. Mama decided that she would get out early and get the calves up and get the milking done and the wood brought in and get inside the house before it grew dark.

The calf pasture was down a steep hill and contained an old Indian graveyard. She ran down the hill and clambered over the fence without looking up. When she did, she said that she was face to face with a very strange and fearsome animal. It was like nothing she had ever seen before. She said it was short, mule-shaped, but about half the size of a mule, with gray skin and blazing red eyes. It was pawing on one of the small hillocks that showed where graves were. It also was staring right at her. She said she fell back over the fence and hardly knew when she reached the house. She got inside and slid the bars on the doors and rolled in quilts and crawled under the bed. She did not move until her Daddy came in very late. He, she said, laughed at her, but she added, "He sure didn't go to see what it was." Daylight came and he did go and there seemed to be fresh digging.

At one protracted meeting which David was conducting, Mama and her hostess had ridden side-saddle to the church and she stepped off the horse onto the block of wood which was hewn into steps for mounting and dismounting. Mama had on a corset. All the girls wore them. A lizard ran up her leg and under her corset. Mama grabbed him tightly on her hip. She was too embarrassed to tell what had happened and ask the girl to go with her into the bushes to rid herself of







## Events, Groups, and Sites of Genealogical Interest

### GSOC Membership Renewals

Please remember that your GSOC membership for 2011 expires on December 31, 2011 (unless you are a life member.)

There is a membership renewal form on page 9 for your convenience. Please complete it and bring it and your membership dues to our next meeting or mail it and your check to the GSOC post office address.

### Christmas at Camp Walton 9am - 4pm, Dec. 10th

The Walton Guard will present a living history depicting Christmas at Camp Walton in 1861. The public is invited to view and inquire about the various activities of soldiers and their families that visited while the men were camped in the Fort Walton area during the Civil War.



**Camp demonstrations will occur 9am - 4pm December 10th at Fort Walton Landing on Brooks Street, the original Camp Walton location.**

Special activities include military camps, drills, firing demonstration, and children's games. The event is free to the public.

For more details, call Jim Busby at 862-9136 or email [jimbusby3@cox.net](mailto:jimbusby3@cox.net).

### A Journal of Northwest Florida

The annual GSOC Journal has been published and distributed. Vol XXXIII, Issue 100, is dated September 2011 and was distributed in November. If any member did not receive a copy, please let the Society know.

### YULE OF YESTERYEAR DECEMBER 10, 2011 10 AM - 4 PM



The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida presents ***Yule of Yesteryear***, a traditional Christmas celebration **and Holiday Victorian Tea**, Saturday, Dec. 10, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Come on out for a free family-fun holiday celebration. The Spirit of Christmas will fill the air with live music all day from the Niceville Noodlers, the Emerald Coast Chorus, and Trinity Presbyterian Choir.

The children will enjoy ornament making and a special visit from Santa Claus. Witness traditional craft demonstrations and shop for unique gifts and affordable stocking stuffers from local **craft vendors** in Perrine Park and in the ***Heritage Museum Gift Shop & Bookstore***.

**Food vendors** will be serving yummy foods outside, while the Museum will have scrumptious sweets inside at their **Holiday Bake Sale**.

Pre-register to participate in the Museum's ***Holiday Victorian Tea***. Enjoy teatime and refreshments during this delightful education program while learning about Victorian costume, etiquette, and holiday traditions. (Fee: \$12; Museum Members \$8)

#### Inside the Museum

Museum Open (free admission)	10:00 am
Pictures with Santa (1 hour only)	11:00 am
Holiday Victorian Tea (fee)	1:30 pm

#### Outside in Perrine Park

Emerald Coast Chorus	12:30 pm
Local Choral Group	4:00 pm
Trinity Presbyterian Choir	4:30 pm
Tree Lighting in Perrine Park	5:00 pm
(Sponsored by Trinity Presbyterian Church and the City of Valparaiso)	

There will be a Gathering in Trinity Presbyterian Church immediately following the tree lighting to organize for traditional neighborhood Christmas caroling. All groups, families and individuals are welcome!

## GSOC INFORMATION

### Officers for 2011

President, Malcolm Flanagan  
1st Vice President (Programs), Donna Elliott  
2nd Vice President (Membership), Lorna Sainz  
2nd Vice President (Membership) Asst, Carol Lessard  
Treasurer, Bob Basch  
Recording Secretary, Mike Martell  
Recording Secretary Assistant, Frances Hoge  
Corresponding Secretary, Jim Young  
Immediate Past President & Journal Editor, Beverly Gross  
Historian, Sue Basch  
Genealogist, Margaret Harris  
Publicity Chairperson, Pat Pruett  
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor, Jim Young

(Elected, Appointed, and Ex Officio position s)

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President, Donna Elliott  
1st Vice President (Programs), Ken Elliott  
2nd Vice President (Membership), Sue Basch  
2nd Vice President (Membership) Asst, Carol Lessard  
Treasurer, Bob Basch,  
Recording Secretary, Mary Walther  
Corresponding Secretary, Jim Young  
Immediate Past President, Malcolm Flanagan  
Journal Editor, Beverly Gross  
Historian, Sue Basch  
Genealogist, Margaret Harris  
Publicity Chairperson, Pat Pruett  
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor, Jim Young

### Addresses

P.O. Box 1175, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175

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

Email: [gsocokaloosa@yahoo.com](mailto:gsocokaloosa@yahoo.com)

Newsletter Editor: [youngjmy@cox.net](mailto: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 Journal

The GSOC Journal, *A Journal of Northwest Florida*, is published once each year. The 2011 issue, Volume XXXII, Issue 100, was published and distributed in November 2011.

## The Newsletter

The GSOC Newsletter is 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](mailto:youngjmy@cox.net). Letters to the editor are welcome and may be published.

## The Web Site

The GSOC web site is hosted by Rootsweb at:

<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 symbol on the left is the QR code for the address of the GSOC web site. Scanning this symbol with properly equipped mobile devices will connect that device to the GSOC website.



Arrow indicates the door to the room used for GSOC meetings at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida



Map showing the location (A) of the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, Valparaiso, Florida



# Please remember to renew your GSOC membership for 2012

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

**Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County Florida**  
**P. O. Box 1175,, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175**  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~flocgs> email:gsocokaloosa@yahoo.com

Please help us update our files. Bring this form to the next Society meeting  
or mail it with your dues to the post office address shown above.

### DUES (Membership Year 1 Jan-31 Dec)

☐ Individual \$24.00 ☐ Family \$35.00 (Individual & spouse @ same address)

Please PRINT or TYPE all information:

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Surname, given name): \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Home): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Can name and phone number be shared with other members: Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_*

### Please put an "X" next to all areas of GSOC in which you are interested

Newsletter\_\_\_\_ Chair a committee\_\_\_\_ Member of a Committee\_\_\_\_ Nomination Committee\_\_\_\_ Christmas  
Party\_\_\_\_ Library\_\_\_\_ Short term Committee\_\_\_\_ Web Site\_\_\_\_ Field trips (ones who wish to take)\_\_\_\_ or (ones  
you are willing to arrange)\_\_\_\_ Historian\_\_\_\_ Suggesting Guest Speakers\_\_\_\_ Journal Editor\_\_\_\_ Journal  
Member\_\_\_\_ Writing: Other\_\_\_\_ Recording Secretary\_\_\_\_ Corresponding Secretary\_\_\_\_ Treasurer\_\_\_\_  
Publicity\_\_\_\_ Museum Volunteer\_\_\_\_ Give a Genealogy Presentation\_\_\_\_ Nomination Committee/  
Chairperson\_\_\_\_ President\_\_\_\_ Vice President\_\_\_\_

**Research:** Name of families and states you are researching \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Our December meeting will begin at 10:30 at the Coach-and-Four restaurant in Crestview. There will be a social time and the installation of GSOC officers for 2012 before the meal.



Phil and Martha Trau will provide the entertainment.

Please bring some non-perishable food items to be donated to one of our local charitable organizations.

Annual membership renewal information and form are on page 9.

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Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175

