

# THE GSOC NEWSLETTER

The Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County, Florida

January 1, 2011

## GSOC Calendar

January 8, 2011

Our January meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. on January 8, at Bruce, Florida. Ann Denson Tucker, Chairwoman of the Muscogee Nation of Florida, is going to speak about her tribe's experience with the federal recognition process, give us a tour of their tribal center, talk



about their genealogy records, and give us tips about researching Native American ancestry. There is also a gift shop with hand-made items. Their website is at: <http://muscogeenationofflorida.com/about.html>

Donna & Ken Elliott delivered the GSOC Christmas food donations to the Rural Relief Mission in Bruce, FL, on Saturday, December 18. This was the last food distribution day before Christmas and the donations were most gratefully received.

To drive to Bruce, take Florida Route 20 east from Niceville, go through Freeport and stay on FL-20 toward Ebro. Bruce is essentially located at the intersection of FL-20 and FL-81. Turn left on Church Road just after you pass that intersection. The Tribal Council House is at 278 Church Road, shown as location "A" on this map.



It takes approximately 45 minutes to drive to Bruce from Niceville. If you would like to join a carpool, one is being planned from the Food Depot parking lot (Palm Plaza) in Niceville on John Sims Parkway, leaving at 9:00 a.m.

February 12, 2011

Since February is our "birthday" month, we will be celebrating GSOC's 35th birthday (1976 - 2011) with a birthday cake. We extend a special invitation to our long-time and life members to join us for this meeting.

For something fun, members will be asked to share interesting bits of information about what was going on at the time they were born. For suggestions, you can check out this website: <http://dmarie.com/timecap/>

In keeping with our birthday theme, Donna Elliott will talk briefly about places to search for birth records.

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## Minutes of the December 11th Meeting

Malcolm Flanagan, President, opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. at the Coach and Four Restaurant in Crestview, Florida, with 21 members and one guest in attendance.

Malcolm welcomed everyone to the Christmas party. Members Martha and Phil Trau provided the musical entertainment with their keyboard and drums. Three door prizes were given out: Bob Sutherland won a poinsettia, Donna Elliott won a gift box of cookies, and Margret Harris won an assortment of Christmas boxes.

Bob Basch, GSOC Treasurer, couldn't be present and the Treasurer's report was provided by Sue Basch.

Lorna Sainz said she had collected many membership renewal forms and reminded members to insure

information is correct in order to keep GSOC membership records accurate.

Donna Elliott announced the January meeting will be Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> with a visit to Bruce Florida, and a presentation by the Creek Muscogee tribe, their genealogy, museum and history. Members will meet in Palm Plaza parking lot at 9:00 am for a car pool to Bruce. The trip is about 45 minutes. Members can drive themselves and directions will be in the newsletter.

February will be the GSOC anniversary month with more details to follow in the newsletter.

Mike Martell said he had purchased a portable hard drive for storage of GSOC files. The GSOC file scanning will start in 2011 and these files will be placed on the hard drive.

Beverly Gross, officer chairman, installed the 2011 GSOC officers. As each one was announced Beverly announced their duties. The 2011 GSOC officers are: Malcolm Flanagan, President; Donna Elliott, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Programs; Lorna Sainz, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Membership, with 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Membership Assistant, Carol Lessard; Mike Martell, Recording Secretary, with Francis Hoge, Recording Secretary Assistant; Jim Young, Corresponding Secretary and Webmaster; and Bob Basch, Treasurer.

Respectfully Submitted, Mike Martell, Recording Secretary

Please welcome our new member,  
Mary Ellen Ezzel Ahlstrom  
from Crestview

## Local Events of Genealogical Interest

### Civil War Sesquicentennial Speaker Series

Indian Temple Mound Museum Lazarus Education Center  
139 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach

This free public speaker series is hosted by the Fort Walton Beach Heritage Park & Cultural Center at the Lazarus Education Center. It consists of local historians and archaeologists who will give talks on different Civil War topics.

Jan. 14, 6PM: Dr. Brian Rucker, "Beard's Raid"

Feb. 16, 1PM: Dr. Derek Zumbro, "Civil War Battlefield Photography"

Mar. 4, 1PM: Dale Cox, "Asboth's 1864 Raid"

Mar. 12, 1PM: Dr. Matthew Calvin, "The American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution"

April 2, 1PM: Brian Mabelintini, "Archaeology of Hammock Landing Battery and the Confederate Fortifications of Apalachicola"

May 7, 1PM: Dr. Richard Lewis, "Women and Slavery"

June 11, 1PM: David Ogden, "Pensacola Forts and the Civil War"

For more information, contact Museum Program Coordinator Mike Thomin at 850 833-9595

### February 1st: "The Legacy of Carver-Hill School"

with the Carver-Hill Museum staff at the Robert L. F.

Sikes Public Library, 1445 Commerce Drive, Crestview, FL Phone: (850) 682-4432 or (850) 682-8776



The cheapest way to have your family tree traced is to run for public office.  
Anonymous Email

## JULY 1916 STORM FLOODS PARTS OF OKALOOSA COUNTY

A tropical disturbance organized into a tropical storm on June 29, 1916, in the southwest Caribbean Sea. It moved to the north-northwest, brushing the coast of Honduras before strengthening into an unnamed hurricane on July 2. The hurricane continued to intensify, reaching major hurricane strength in the northern Gulf of Mexico on the 4th. It made landfall near Gulfport, Mississippi, with 120 mph sustained

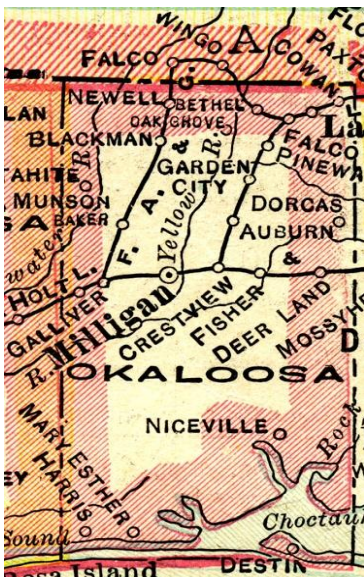


winds on July 5. This map shows the path of the storm. At the time, it was the earliest major hurricane to hit the U.S. in known history.

## July 1916 Storm (Continued)

Although Okaloosa County wasn't in the direct path of the hurricane, the resulting rain from this storm caused severe flooding in the heart of the county and at least one tornado caused damage. At the time of the flooding, Milligan was the temporary Okaloosa county seat as shown on the map below. The following extracts from *The Okaloosa News*, published in Crestview on July 14, 1916, tell more of the story.

*The L & N Railroad Company is probably one the greatest losers, with*



*the farmers of the county a close second. The town of Milligan, built close in on the banks of the Yellow River, is the worst damaged town in the whole county. Here the track of the railroad was covered in water for something like a mile, and the business section was from two to five feet of water. At the steps of the temporary courthouse the water was 32 inches deep, likewise at the depot, and the railroad track was washed up from the depot to the end of the trestle, a distance of more than a quarter of a mile.*

*The water was several inches deep in several of the residences of the town late Sunday evening, which caused several families to leave town and go out on the hill to spend the night. Several head of hogs and*

*chickens were drowned on the streets and in the yards. The damage to the Scotch people's saw mill and railroad track must be not less than two to five thousand dollars.*

*Dr. J.H. B. Miller's farm just this side of the river trestle was from five to ten feet under water. All railroad communication with Milligan was put out of business early Wednesday night of last week, and the best reports obtainable, say that it will be some time tomorrow (Saturday) before they will have a train. During this time, Mr. L.E. Bowers of this place, and Mr. J.A. Hart, of Baker, have supplied the merchants at Milligan with several wagon loads of provisions, which kept many people from being destitute of something to eat. Indeed the people and the town of Milligan have been hit the hardest by the storm of any other place in the county, and they are to be sympathized with.*

*Blackman and adjacent territory probably suffered the next heaviest loss, where it is said the storm on Friday blew down several out-houses, tore the porch roof off of a brick store, and badly damaged the residence of "Uncle" Billie Hart. The crops of this particular section were also badly damaged. The farmers and turpentine men were the worst sufferers in and around Holt. The towns on the east side of Yellow River were not damaged, in fact it appears the storm was much lighter on this side of the river, the only damage to amount to anything on this side being the washing of the hard roads, which have probably been damaged to the amount of two thousand dollars.*

*When the storm put the chief train dispatcher's office out of business with all points east of Pensacola, the L&N Co., sent Mr. Floyd Curry, their chief operator to Crestview where temporary headquarters were established for the purpose of handling all trains from Milton to River Junction. Thus it was Crestview was able to hear from the outside world twenty-four to thirty-six hours*

*earlier than any other town in West Florida. Chief train dispatcher, Curry, informs us that probably by tonight or early tomorrow, (Saturday), there will be a train through from Pensacola.*

*When all other towns in Okaloosa County were water logged and cut off from all the outside world, with some of them destitute of something to eat, Crestview was receiving mail daily from Pensacola via Camp Walton, and supplying our hungry neighbors at Milligan with fresh groceries shipped us from the wholesale houses at Florala.*

*During the high water at Milligan the Bull Frog Bath House broke its moorings and went down Yellow River. Thus it is the "best bath house in this section of the state" has been lost.*

*Mr. and Mrs. B.P. Edge of Niceville, spent Tuesday and Wednesday here visiting friends and relatives. Mr. Edge had come up to attend the regular meeting of the County Commissioners, but on account of the deplorable condition of things at Milligan, the meeting was put off subject to the call of the chairman of the Board. Mr. Edge reports the storm damage at Niceville very small. He says that \$10.00 will repair the damage done to the road from the John's Still to Niceville.*

**Transcription of *The Okaloosa News* from which the above extracts were taken is due to the fine work of Ann Spann and Donna Bishop Wright. Ann copied pages from film at the Baker Block Museum and sent them to Donna who typed them. The Baker Block Museum has made these transcripts available on their web site so that researchers may search them for names using the "find" feature on their internet browsers.**

**The Baker Block Museum website is at:**  
<http://www.bakerblockmuseum.org/>



## **YESTERYEAR in Okaloosa County**

Photos from the Florida Photographic Collection at the  
State Library and Archives of Florida



**President Truman in Valparaiso (1950)**



**Road between Valparaiso and Crestview  
(1919)**



**Brooks Bridge, Fort Walton Beach  
(1947)**

## **GSOC INFORMATION**

### **Officers**

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, Beverly Gross  
Historian, Sue Basch  
Genealogist, Margaret Harris  
Publicity Chairperson, Pat Pruett  
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor, Jim Young  
(Elected and Appointed positions)

### **Addresses**

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

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

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

### **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.

### **The Journal**

The GSOC Journal, *A Journal of Northwest Florida*, is published once each year. The 2010 issue, Volume XXXII, Issue 99, was published in September 2010.

### **The Newsletter**

The GSOC Newsletter is published on or before the first Friday of each month. Suggestions for articles are welcome. The editor can be contacted by phone at 850 862-8642 or by email at [youngjmy@cox.net](mailto:youngjmy@cox.net).

### **The Web Site**

The GSOC web site is hosted by Rootsweb at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~flocgs>. It is updated frequently and provides information about future programs as well as information about Okaloosa County and the GSOC itself.

## **Surnames Being Researched by GSOC Members**

**As of December 2010**

**(States of Interest Shown If Provided)**

Abernathy, Abernethy, Ackerman, Alexander,  
Applegate, Aschebourg, Ash, Ashe,

Barnett, Bartlett, Basch (Alsace Lorraine), Beall,  
Berdal, Berge, Bishop, Black, Blackwell,  
Blanton, Blomquist, Blue (NC AL MS),  
Boatwrights (VA), Boones, Bottcher, Boyet (GA,  
AL, FL), Boyett, Boyette, Boyt, Brand, Brekke,  
Briscoe, Brown, Bryan (SC AL FL),  
Bryant (SC AL FL), Burgoon (MD OH IA TX),  
Burleson (FL AL TN), Burman, Burris,

Caleb, Callahan (Ireland), Carnley (SC AL FL),  
Carroll, Carter (GA FL), Causey, Chambers,  
Chase (VT), Clark (FL AL TN), Cloud (AL GA  
SC), Coleman, Connolley, Cooke (Roxie Anna),  
Cooper, Cox, Cramer (OH), Crockett, Cromelin,  
Croshaw, Cumperque,

Daniell, DeCeass, DeLagnes, Dillon, Disborough,  
Donahue (PA), Draper (VA SC AL), Duncan,

Eavenson, Elliott, Ellis, Ezzell,

Flanagan, Foley, Forrester, Frazier, French,

Garison, Garrett, Garrison, Gordon, Graves,  
Grover, Guizot,

Hardin (AL MS),  
Hathaway (MA, SC, GA, AL, FL), Haughaboo,  
Heath, Helms, Henderson (NY), Henry, Hester,  
Hicks, Hoge, Hogg, Hooper, Hopkins, Hopkins,  
Hopper, Horne, Horner, Hunnicutt, Hyatt,

Ingersoll,

Jean, Jeans, Jefcoat, Jeffcoat, Jenus,  
Johnson (SC), Johnson, Jordan,

Kluge, Koster,

Lambrechts, Laskowska, Leach (Canada ND),  
Ledbeter (VA NC GA AL), Lessard, Licari (NY),  
Lindsey, Lome (England),  
Maddocks (ME WA ND), Malone, Martell,  
Martin, Mason, Matlock, McBride, McCall,

McCool, McCrews, McGuigan, McLaren,  
McMahon, Melvin, Mendenhall (Quakers, NC),  
Mock, Morgan (NC AL MS), Morounew,  
Murphree (NC AL MS),

Nelson, Ninian,

Osborn,

Padget, Parker (GA FL), Parrish, Peck,  
Predmore,

Rankin, Reaves (SC FL), Reeves, Richard (AL  
MS), Richards (AL MS), Roberts, Robillard  
(Canada), Roosa, Rose, Ross, Rossell,

Sangaree, Schluter, Scott, Sidebottom, Smith  
(SC), Soblet, Sonderegger, Sowerby, Sparks,  
Sparks, Spencer, Stiles, Stith, Stone, Strickland  
(NC, GA, AL, FL), Summerford, Sutherland,  
Switzer,

Tate, Thomsen, Thornton, Tomlinson (CT VT),  
Trau, Tuttle (OH), Tveito,

Vesterdal, Vinson,

Wade (OH), Walker, Ward (NC AL), Ward,  
Weathersby, Weeks (SC GA AL FL), Wells,  
West, White (PA), Wilkinson, Williams,  
Winter (MS), Winters (MS), Woodruff,

Young (NC AL MS),

Zeug

**Please contact the Society to be put in touch with  
the GSOC member(s) who are researching these  
surnames.**

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

or

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

## EARLY YEARS OF CRESTVIEW

### Adapted from the Submission for Naming the Old Downtown Section of Crestview, Florida, as a National Historic District

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 Florida, 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.



### Early Crestview (continued)

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.



Crestview Historical Photographs  
From the City of Crestview Web Site

### 2011 Membership Dues

Please remember to renew your GSOC membership for January 1 - December 31, 2011. Dues are \$24 for an individual and \$35 for an individual and spouse at the same address.

**\$5 will be deducted from your dues if you bring in a new member in January!**

Please go to the GSOC website and download a renewal form or a membership application (or pick one up at the December 11th meeting.) Checks should be made out to GSOC and mailed along with the application form to the GSOC post office address or brought to a meeting.



## **Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County**

**Next meeting: Saturday, January 8, 2011**

**Location: Muscogee Nation Tribal Council House**

**278 Church Road, Bruce, FL**

**Time: 10:00 AM**

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

