

THE GSOC NEWSLETTER

The Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County, Florida

October 1, 2011

GSOC Calendar

October 8, 2011

Our October meeting will be held at the **Valparaiso Community Library**, 459 Valparaiso Parkway. Mr. David Weatherford, Library Director, will provide a tour of the library's genealogy materials and give us his tips on genealogy research. Information about the library and an aerial view of its location is on page 5 of this newsletter.



November 12, 2011

The November GSOC meeting will be held at the Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park in conjunction with the annual Pioneer Day which is sponsored by **Friends of Emerald Coast State Parks** in partnership with the **Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida**.



Family activities will include candle-dipping, blacksmithing, rag doll making, weaving and campfire cooking demonstration. Displays will also include early folk toys, a 19th

century chuck wagon and a Civil War camp-site by the Walton Guard. Other special activities include live dulcimer and flute music, quilting, storytelling and more. A rain date for this event is set for Sunday, November 13, 2011 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Park admission is free to those attending this event.

December 10, 2011

The December meeting will include a short program for the installation of the GSOC officers for 2012 followed by the traditional annual holiday party.



More information about the location of the meeting and the entertainment will be provided as the date approaches.

GSOC Meetings in 2012

January 14, February 11, March 10,
April 14, May 12, June 9,
July 14, August 11, September 8,
October 13, November 10, December 8

Minutes of the September 10th Meeting

President Malcolm Flanagan opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. at the University Archives and West Florida History Center in the John C. Pace Library, at the University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL with 14 members and 1 guest attending. Malcolm welcomed all attending and stated that the usual agenda items would be dispensed with in order to take full advantage of the visit to the archives and to hear Chuck Licari's report from the nominating committee.

Malcolm asked if there were any changes to the posted minutes for August. Ken Elliott made a motion to approve the August minutes as posted. The motion was seconded by Sue Basch and approved by the membership.

Chuck Licari reported on his efforts to put together a slate of officers for 2012. He said that Donna Elliott had agreed to be put on the ballot as president, Bob Basch has agreed to be treasurer for another year, and Jim Young is willing to continue as webmaster and corresponding secretary. Nominations from the floor were requested for 1st Vice President/Program Chairman, 2nd Vice President/Membership, and Recording Secretary. Ken Elliott agreed to accept the nomination of 1st Vice President and Sue Basch agreed to accept the nomination for 2nd Vice President, with Carol Lessard agreeing to be Membership Assistant. There were no nominations for Recording Secretary. Ken made a motion, Carol seconded, that Chuck's slate, including the nominations from the floor, be accepted. All approved.

[See slate of nominees on page 9]

Donna introduced today's guest host, Dean DeBolt, Archivist and University Librarian, who presented a very interesting and informative program and tour of the University Archives. Handouts were provided describing the content of the collections, weblinks to the archive catalogs, and instructions on how to locate books of genealogical interest using the Library of Congress classification scheme. Item of note: Use of this facility is free, and the general public is permitted to check out books from the regular library collection.

The October 8 meeting will be held at the Valparaiso Library with David Weatherford. In lieu of the November 12 meeting, GSOC members will host a booth at Pioneer Day at the Rocky Bayou State Park.

Respectfully Submitted, Donna Elliott,
1st Vice President, Acting Recording Secretary

University Archives & West Florida History Center

John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida



The University Archives and West Florida History Center contains the largest research collection on West Florida in existence, 1.5 million items. The history of the West

Florida region is preserved here by collecting, cataloging, and providing research materials about the region, its people, and its development from earliest settlement to the present. Covering the ten counties of the Florida Panhandle, the collections detail the Spanish, British, French, and American governments in the region as well as the people, towns, cities, and counties.

The University Archives collects and preserves the history of the University of West Florida including student life, campus events, faculty contributions, and buildings.

The collections include:

- Family papers (letters, scrapbooks, diaries, genealogical records) and business records (lumber companies, railroads, law firms)
- Personal papers of prominent West Floridians including lawyers, entrepreneurs, artists, environmentalists, etc.
- Oral histories (audiotape/videotape interviews)
- Newspapers (1822 to present) published in West Florida
- Magazines/publications/newsletters of organizations, churches, businesses, tourist industries, and others
- Books including histories, genealogies, city directories, publications of city, county, and state governments and agencies
- Maps (originals and reproductions, 1500s to present)
- Photographs (30,000 items), 1850s to present

Information about the department, collections, portal to the Collection Guide and to the Archon catalog of holdings can be accessed at these sites:

<http://libguides.uwf.edu/universityarchives>
<http://library.uwf.edu/researchhelp/uawfhcguide>
<http://143.88.66.76/Archon/>

Within the Department, be sure to use the actual inventory notebooks which include collections that are not yet online: Bibliography of West Florida, Vols 1-4 which are published and cover 1535 to 1981 and the electronic supplement which covers new finds and new additions. There are also Maps, Newspapers, and Photographs.

Digitized Holdings and Online: see the "digital objects" tab of the Archon catalog (link above)

See also <http://palmm.fcla.edu> for shared Florida holdings of ten Florida state universities including UWF.

The staff: **Dean DeBolt**, University Librarian
850 474-2213, ddebolt@uwf.edu
Josh Broxson, Assistant Archivist
850 474-2710, jbroxson2@uwf.edu

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 - 12:00 & 12:30-4:30
Other times by prearrangement (please call)

Questions welcome by phone and e-mail.

Mailing address: 11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514-5750

Web address: <http://library.uwf.edu>

Civil War Sesquicentennial Selected Highlights of October 1861

October 1861 saw little decisive military action in the American Civil War though many skirmishes occurred. However, October 1861 did witness something that was to have a major impact on the American Civil War in later years - the promotion of General Tecumseh Sherman as commander of the Army of the Cumberland.

October 3rd: Governor Thomas More of Alabama banned the export of cotton to Europe to pressure France and Great Britain to recognize the Confederate government.



October 4th: The Confederacy signed a number of treaties with Native American tribes that brought these tribes into the war on the side of the Confederacy.

October 5th: The Cabinet in Washington DC signed a contract for a new type of warship, the Ironclad.

October 8th: William T Sherman was appointed commander of the Union's Army of the Cumberland.

October 10th: Jefferson Davis ruled out using slaves in the Confederate Army.

October 12th: Two commissioners from the Confederacy left the South for Europe.

October 14th: President Lincoln suspended habeas corpus.

October 21st: A Union force suffered heavy losses at Ball's Bluff: 223 Unionists were killed, 226 wounded and 445 taken prisoner. The Confederates lost 36 men.

Death of a Teenager

by Monette Morgan Young

It was Sunday, May 28, 1911. The Jeff Murphree household stirred as early that morning as they would have on any weekday morning. There were animals to feed, cows to milk, all the usual morning work, except that today no one would go to the fields to hoe or to plow.

The household had once numbered thirteen: Jeff and Tina Murphree and their eleven children; but the daughters Letha, Rubye, and Mae, and the son Walter, had married and had homes of their own. A little daughter Clara had died some years before. The children still at home were Ethel, 30 years old, who had been sick all the week before and still was; Eula, 26; Linder, 15; Leila, 11; Clyde, 8; and Inez, 4.

They lived in the Lloyd community, a small area of farms with one store and one church in Calhoun County, Mississippi. There were no industries. All stores were family owned. There was no employment other than farming except the job of post master in each of the community post offices. Every community usually had a Baptist church, but a few also had a Methodist. Most had a one room schoolhouse.

There were only a few preachers in the county. They each usually served four churches a month with service at one church each Sunday. But there would be no church service at Lloyd this particular day. Almost all social intermingling of the young people revolved around the church, and occasionally the school. On this Sunday, Eula and Linder wanted a little bit of social life with the other young people of the community. Ethel was too sick to go along, and Leila, Clyde, and Inez were too young. So Eula and Linder mounted horses to go to visit the young people in the Ellard family, a large family which lived not too far away. There were several Ellard children who were still at home.

The Ellards lived on the border between the communities of Lloyd

and Poplar Springs. They called Poplar Springs their church and were members there and there was going to be a church service at Poplar Springs on this day.

When the Ellard girls saw Linder as he and Eula rode up, they shrieked, "Now we have a driver." They were so wanting to go to church but their father and brothers weren't going that day. Most girls could drive a team of mules or horses hitched to a wagon, but in those days a group of unmarried girls didn't go alone anywhere. Fathers or brothers had to go along.

At the Ellard home, Linder put the Murphree horses in the barn lot there, and hitched mules to the Ellard family's wagon and the young people set off in the unusual heat, for that time of the year, to Poplar Springs church about four miles away.

I think it was certain that Connie Ellard was along, knowing or hoping she would see Clayton Murphree at the church. Clayton was working as a hired hand on Jess Patterson's farm in the Poplar Springs community. Clayton's mother, Lubie Enochs Murphree, had died and his father, Jim Murphree, had gone away to Texas and had left Clayton and his two other teenaged children in the home of his brother, Ransom Murphree. Ransom lived in the Oldtown community. Jess Patterson was a bachelor farmer, about thirty years old, considered well-to-do and living on his own farm with a house keeper to do for him in the day time.

Vivian Ellard and Linder sat on "straight" [ladder back] chairs, two of them, in the front of the wagon. They were lightweight and weren't anchored in any way. There was a "spring seat" behind the chairs, a bench seat with hardware and springs which attached it to the sides of the wagon. Vivian thinks Eula, Connie Ellard, and Lillian Ellard [later Mrs. Howard Murff] were the occupants of the spring seat.

The sermon, probably by Rev. McKibben, was most likely a long one. There weren't many Sunday schools in those days, just a song service and a long sermon.

After church this Sunday, the Ellard-Murphree group was invited to

the Jess Patterson home for dinner. It may have been considered a social "feather in the cap" to be invited to Jess's home for one of his housekeeper's bountiful Sunday dinners and the fun and fellowship of any young group. For some reason, however, Linder did not want to go. He may have wanted to go home and rest. He could have thought of the week of hard plowing in the fields that waited for him in the coming days, but anyway, he decided to go along and they all went.

They probably didn't get through eating until after 2 o'clock. They needed to leave soon afterwards to get back home to get the evening chores done. So, after visiting a while, the Ellard and Murphree young people started home. Clayton decided to ride horseback behind them as far as Uncle John Morgan's home. Supposedly, Clayton was riding part way home with them because he was so smitten by Connie that he wanted to be close to her as long as he could.

The happy little group arrived at the John Morgan house on the way home and Clayton stopped to visit with the Morgans for a few minutes before turning around to ride back to the Patterson farm.

The wagon turned into the smaller road that led to the Ellard home. The road wound down a very steep hill and had been made to follow the contour of the hill causing a sidewise slant to the road as well as the downward steepness. The wagon passed a small pile of brush and something, a rabbit, lizard, or snake, or something, moved in that brush and frightened the mules. They began to run faster and faster. The downhill push of the heavy rolling wagon increased their speed. Linder grabbed the reins and pulled back hard to no avail. Then he reached for the brake.

A wagon brake was a strong pole anchored in a pivoting mechanism on the outside so that it could be moved back and forth but not slide downward. The back and forth movement was to allow it to be pulled or pushed against the wheel to slow or hopefully stop a wagon. The end of the pole touching the wheel would have a soft pad of leather nailed to its end to help grip the iron-rimmed wheel.

There was always a rope tied from the top of the pole to some place at the back of the wagon. The rope needed to be new and strong so that the driver could reach it and pull on it strongly to stop or slow the vehicle.

This particular brake rope was a long plow-line and one end of it was lying loosely in the wagon. As the wagon hurtled down the hill, tilting sideways, Linder reached for the rope. He and his chair both fell out of the wagon. Vivian and her chair also fell. Linder's foot, however, had caught on the loose plow-line as he fell. Instead of falling clear of the wheel as Vivian had done, the rope caused Linder to fall into the path of one of the rear wheels. The wheel struck the back of his head and crushed it and then he was dragged by the ever faster running mules. Eula, my mother, jumped or fell trying to get to him to help him and tore a terrible gash in her leg. Vivian was bruised and hurt but not severely.

The Schwalenberg family lived at the foot of the hill and they heard the screams and ran out. Ed Schwalenberg, then about 25 years old, stopped the mules and everyone began trying to help. Clayton was still up at Uncle John Morgan's. He heard the screams and, as he ran toward the accident, met Vivian. She was injured but able to run and was hysterically incoherent.

Clayton and the young Schwalenberg men put the gravely injured Linder on a quilt and carried him up the hill to Uncle John's home. Linder was semi-conscious all the way up the hill and moaned out words, mostly "Clayton, oh, Clayton," and once before he died, "Leila". At the Morgan home, Linder was placed on a clean soft bed, one of those snowy spotless beds the homemakers of those country communities prided themselves on. Eula had evidently followed the pitiful procession up the hill or had run ahead. She had torn one of her petticoats and had bandaged his crushed bleeding head as best she could after the mules were stopped. Vivian thinks Linder also had chest injuries.

Dr. Steve Coley, the doctor residing in the Reid community, was called on the telephone. Each community had telephone wire stretched through the woods, fastened to trees, and most

homes had a big wall-mounted telephone with a long mouth. The signal rings were made by combinations of long and short rings. Each resident knew their own as well as all the other "rings" and everyone usually listened in on all the calls.

On this day when the various people heard Dr. Coley's ring, most responded as usual by going to their phones and picking up the receiver. Linder's sister Ethel was lying down. She still did not feel like sitting up all day. But when she heard the phone she said that she believed that she would see who was calling Dr. Coley. It was by this means that the family learned of the accident.

Linder's father, had ridden down to Shirley Ridge to visit his ailing married daughter Rubye. He had left her house and was on his way back home when the calls began going to every house along his way and he was contacted and began running his horse to get to John Morgan's house some six or eight miles away. Jeff did arrive just minutes before Linder died.

One call reached Uncle Will Spratlin. His home was just over the next hill from the Murphrees. Uncle Will's first wife had been Lois Murphree, sister of Jeff. Uncle Will hurriedly hitched up his wagon and went to get Linder's mother Tina to try to get her to Linder's bedside before he died, but a call came before they could leave from the Murphree home saying that it was too late.

Linder's sister Mae was married to Otho Brown and was expecting her first child. Her husband had gone for the afternoon and her mother-in-law had come to stay with her. Mae heard the doctor's ring and went to find out who was sick. When she did not return immediately, her mother-in-law went to see about her and found her lying on the floor in a faint.

At Linder's bedside, Eula sat by him as long as he lived. She bathed his face in cool water and soothed him as best she could. He was moaning every breath. Vivian said that the moans were heartbreaking. Dr. Coley arrived as soon as he could. Linder had not spoken for many minutes, but when he heard the doctor's voice he said, "Oh, Dr. Coley." Linder did not live long after the doctor arrived.

Linder's body was carried back home and laid on a bed with a sheet over his face. His mother, Tina, said, "I have to see him," and she pulled the sheet away to love and caress his bruised and battered features.

Early the next morning (the funeral was to be that day), neighbors went to the small new town of Vardaman, not too many miles away. Money had been given to them to buy a casket and a new suit for Linder's body. It may have been his first suit.

Aunt Leila said that Reverend McKibben was waiting at the Gaston Springs church when the funeral procession arrived and he said, "The most doleful sound to the human ear is the sound of the rolling wagon wheels which bear the body of a deceased loved one of the area's families."

The next day, farm work had to go on as usual. Crops must be planted early if there was to be a harvest. Jeff Murphree had to go into the fields the next day and all the next week, plowing over the tracks that Linder had made the week before as he had plowed. Jeff plowed and cried all those days that he was in the fields alone with his loss and his grief.

Editor's note: This accounting of an accident which occurred over 100 years ago came about when the author received a letter in May of 1982 from her aunt Leila Murphree Parker. Aunt Leila mentioned that the date of that letter was near the anniversary of Linder's death. Linder was Aunt Leila's brother. She was eleven at the time of his death but still recalled his funeral. Mother wrote back to Aunt Leila for all the particulars she remembered and also called Vivian Landreth, the Vivian Ellard of this story. Aunt Leila called Clayton Murphree, who was in a nursing home and got his recollections of the event. This account is included in Mother's book "The Cherry Hill - Poplar Springs - Reid Community in Calhoun County, Mississippi". I've condensed it slightly for publication here. Jeff [Jefferson "D"] Murphree, Ransom Murphree, and Jim Murphree mentioned here were sons of Charles Elbert Murphree.

-James Young, great nephew of Linder Murphree

Valparaiso Community Library

For our October meeting, we are very pleased that Mr. David Weatherford, Director of the Valparaiso Community Library, will provide us a special Saturday tour of the library's genealogy materials and give us his tips on genealogy research.

The Valparaiso Community Library opened in 1972. Since then the library has been a cultural and intellectual center for the community. It provides a high level of service in a friendly atmosphere. The library is a proud member of the Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative serving all citizens of Okaloosa County to provide improved access to information and education.

The library provides access to information and learning through print, electronic resources, cultural activities and specialized programs.

The Louise K. Fitzgarrald Genealogy Department has one of the finest genealogy collections in the state of Florida. Over 7,000 volumes of printed materials and 1,200 microfilm reels from Federal Census records and other references are available for use. The library also offers free access to subscription based online genealogical services.

Regular hours for the Valparaiso Library are:
 Monday: 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 Tuesday - Thursday: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 Closed on Weekends.



Aerial view showing the location of the Valparaiso Community Library (red circle) on the south side of Valparaiso Parkway

You Think That Your Genealogy is Complicated?

An Oldie But a Goodie

I'm My Own Grandpa

Many, many years ago when I was 23, I was married to a wider who was purty as can be. This wider had a grown-up daughter who had hair of red. My father fell in love with her and soon the two were wed.

This made my dad my son-in-law and changed my very life, for my daughter was my mother cause she was my father's wife. To complicate the matter even though it brought me joy, I soon became the father of a bouncing baby boy.

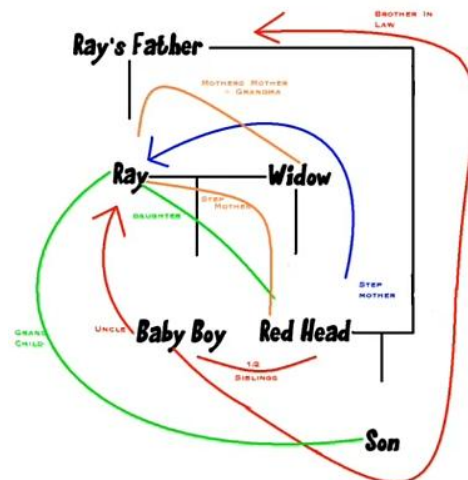
My little baby then became a brother-in-law to dad, and so became my uncle though it made me very sad. For, if he was my uncle, then that also made him brother of the wider's grown-up daughter who, of course, was my step-mother.

My father's wife then had a son who kept them on the run, and he became my grandchild for he was my daughter's son. My wife is now my mother's mother and it makes me blue, because, although she is my wife, she's my grandmother too.

Oh, if my wife is my grandmother, then I'm her grandchild. And every time I think of it, it nearly drives me wild. For now I have become the strangest case you ever saw. As husband of my own grandmother, I'm my own grandpa.

I'm my own grandpa,
 I'm my own grandpa
 It sounds funny I know
 But it really is so
 I'm my own grandpa.

Thanks to
 Hilma Jenus



For the music and the family tree diagram, go to:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYIJH81dSiw>

Events, Groups, and Sites of Genealogical Interest

Support The Destin History and Fishing Museum by Parking for the 2011 Destin Seafood Festival

The Destin History and Fishing Museum will provide parking for Destin Seafood Festival visitors for a donation of \$5 per car. Parking will be provided at the two parking lots adjacent to the Museum's 108 Stahlman Avenue location behind WhatABurger on Highway 98.

Alan Laird of AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar is donating the use of his lot in support of the Museum.

Parking spaces will be available Friday, September 30 from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM, Saturday, October 1 from 9 AM to 9:00 PM and Sunday, October 2 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Each car parked will receive a coupon for one free admission to the Museum and a \$5 coupon redeemable at AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar.

Parking access will be available from Hwy.98 across the street from AJ's Restaurant and on Mountain Drive behind the Museum. The Museum is a 501 C 3 foundation. For more information call 837-6611.

Crestview Public Library Hosts Native Indian Lecture and Dance

The Crestview Public Library is continuing their First Tuesday Lecture series at the library, 1445 Commerce Drive, Crestview, on **November 1st from 10:30 to 11:30 AM**. The public is invited and admission is free. Phone 850 682-4432.

The featured speaker will be Lt. Col. Kirby Locklear, USAF Ret., who is a member of the Lumbee Indian Tribe whose ancestral home is in what is now Robeson County, NC.

Col. Locklear is a direct descendant of the "Lost Roanoke Colony" whose ancestral people intermarried with the surviving colonists, migrated to southeast NC, and became the Lumbee Indian Nation.

Col. Locklear will speak about the Indians of NW Florida, the importance of story telling, the Thunderbird Intertribal Council of Niceville activities; and will include dance demonstrations, drumming and singing, and audience participation in Cultural Dances.

Col. Locklear is a graduate of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and the US Air Force Academy. He has earned numerous citations and five Air Medals among other honors.

He is a great Native Dancer and a wonderful speaker. Don't miss this event!

Laurel Hill Hobo Festival October 8, 2011

*Gene Clary Park,
Laurel Hill, Florida*



Laurel Hill turns out for a free community celebration on the second weekend of October.

Vendors offer food, arts and crafts, and more.

Activities for children are available. Enjoy live entertainment.

ANNUAL HERITAGE FESTIVAL AT THE BAKER BLOCK MUSEUM Corner of Hwy 189 & State Rd. 4, Baker, FL

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Annual Heritage Festival on **Saturday, November 5th**. It will be held from 9 AM to 4 PM and will feature: Pine Needle Basketry, Powder Horns and Knives, Fried Pork Skins, Local Honey, Native American history and artifacts, Live Music. Over 50 vendor booths!

2011 FSGS Annual Conference November 11th and 12th Sheraton Orland North Hotel 600 Lake Destiny Drive – Maitland, FL

Conference Topics: "Finding the Maiden Names of Your Female Ancestors", "The War of 1812 and Its Genealogical Consequences", "Migrations 1607-1850", and "Newspaper Genealogy."

The keynote speaker is **Lloyd de Witt Bockstruck**, nationally known professional genealogist, educator, librarian, author, and columnist.

For more information about the conference, including the speakers and topics for the breakout sessions, go to <http://www.flsgs.org/aem.php?eid=2>

Go to <http://www.starwoodhotels.com> for hotel details. A block of rooms has been reserved for conference attendees at \$88 per night (mention that you are attending the FSGS conference).

Sarah Frances Brooks Pryor (1877-1972)

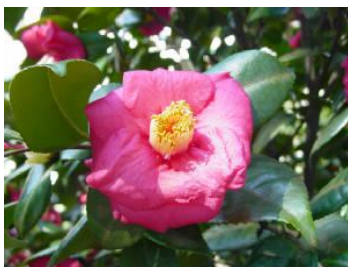


Sarah Frances Brooks Pryor was the first girl born to Harriet and John Thomas Brooks, one of the early families to permanently settle in "Camp Walton". Brooks Landing was named for them as was Brooks Bridge, the bridge across the Sound to Okaloosa Island. Their family had five girls and five boys.

Born in an Okaloosa County log cabin, she rowed a boat to school. She was a teacher, the operator of a historic hotel, and postmaster of Fort Walton Beach, appointed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1917 and serving until 1943.

A wife and mother, she also founded the Woman's Club of Fort Walton Beach; as president, she worked for civic improvements such as mosquito and garbage control, the area's first library, and its first medical facilities. Among her other activities, she preserved local Indian mounds and beautified roadways.

Sarah Frances had a very rich life belonging to many civic and social organizations and receiving many honors and awards. She was a very accomplished "first lady" of Fort Walton Beach. She was married to William C. Pryor for 64 years. Known affectionately throughout the Panhandle as "Aunt Frances", she founded the Fort Walton Camellia Society and the city became known as "the Camellia City"



Anderson, Camp Walton, Fort Walton, and Fort Walton Beach

Early settlers of Walton County, Florida were the first to establish permanent settlements in what is now Fort Walton Beach (the area was originally named "Anderson"). John Anderson received land plots in 1838 and the name "Anderson" is noted on maps from 1838 to 1884. It was not until 1911 that the name "Camp Walton" appeared on Florida maps.

In 1861, Camp Walton was a confederate military camp made up of the 1st Florida Regiment, which consisted of men from the Walton County Militia. At this time, Okaloosa County did not yet exist.

The 1st Florida regiment's camp was located in front of the Indian Temple Mound, now known as the Heritage Park and Cultural Center, and its mission was to protect the "Narrows" from Union ships. Although the 1st Florida Regiment did not see much action, they did keep busy by digging up prehistoric Indian remains buried in the Indian Temple Mound and displaying them at camp. The 1940 census counted 90 residents in Fort Walton and it was incorporated effective June 16, 1941.

"Beach" was added to the community's name on June 15, 1953, by agreement with the state legislature and incorporated a portion of Santa Rosa Island formerly known as Tower Beach.

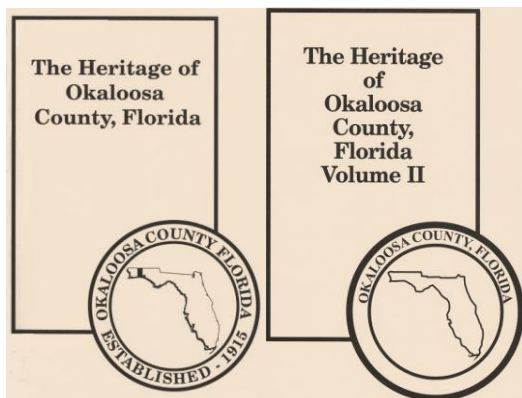
Tower Beach had been an amusement area in the 1930s with a board walk, casino, restaurant, dance pavilion, and concession stands which was largely destroyed by



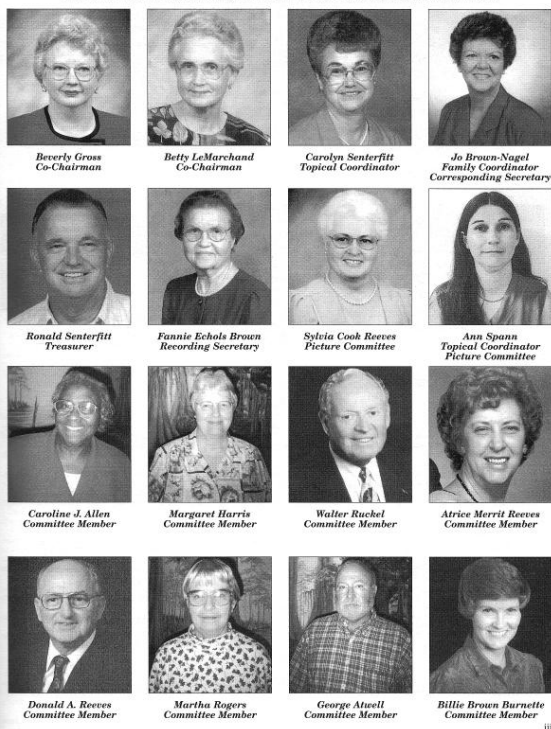
Tower Beach Postcard from the Late 1930s
fire on Saturday, March 7, 1942. Wartime supply restrictions prevented reconstruction.

This 875-acre parcel of [Santa Rosa Island](#) with three miles of Gulf frontage was conveyed to Okaloosa County on July 8, 1950 in an informal ceremony at the county courthouse in Crestview, Florida. The county paid the federal government \$4,000 to complete the transaction, the result of the efforts of Congressman Bob Sikes. The portion of Santa Rosa Island transferred is now known as [Okaloosa Island](#).

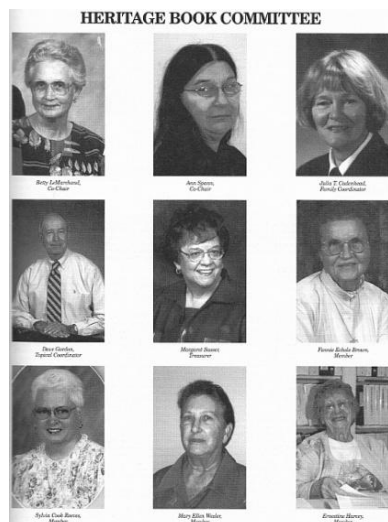
Wikipedia



THE HERITAGE BOOK COMMITTEE



Committee for Volume I



Committee for Volume II

The Heritage of Okaloosa County, Florida, published in two volumes, is an essential reference for anyone who is researching the County for genealogical or historical purposes. The books are approximately 12¼ inches by 9¼ inches, and are beautifully bound. Volume I contains 388 pages with historical photos on the inside of the front cover and front flyleaf and with a large detailed map of the County on the last flyleaf and the inside of the rear cover. Volume II contains 284 pages with historical photos on the inside of the covers and on the flyleaves.

The books were created by the Heritage Book Committee. Several of the Committee members are current members of the GSOC. The books were published by the Committee and the Heritage Publishing Consultants, Inc., Clanton, AL. Volume I (ISBN 1-891647-71-7) is © 2004 and Volume II (ISBN 978-0-9798537-3-5) is © 2008. The books are available at most of the County libraries and museums. Copies of both volumes are still available for purchase (as of 9-22-2011) at the Baker Block Museum.

The first 120 pages of Volume I contain county history, and detailed information concerning government, religious, educational, community, settlers, and civic and fraternal organizations. The remainder of the book contains family and individual histories and recollections, most with photographs. The first 109 or so pages of Volume II contain additional historical information and the remainder of the volume contains additional family histories and recollections.

Even though I am not a native of Okaloosa County, I found these books to be extremely interesting. The histories are detailed and the family and personal histories are wonderful. Many of the family names have become familiar to me in the names of communities, buildings, and parks. Some of them are of GSOC members, past and present.



Many of the stories brought a lump to my throat, such as Maggie's Story in Volume I. Maggie's Story begins: **January 25th, 1894, was probably a typical Northwest Florida winter day, clear and cold, except that Annie Gary Cobb lay dying. She had given birth prematurely earlier in the week to her sixth child, a girl she had named Maggie. Annie and her husband James Bartlett Cobb were trying to keep Maggie warm and alive by keeping her in a shoebox very close to the wood stove. By the end of the day, Annie was dead leaving Susie, Pearl, Valerie, Welter, Dallas, and Maggie without a mother and Bartlett a widower. Annie was only 26 and Bartlett was 34. ...** Submitted by her granddaughter, Margaret Talbot Hatfield

Even if you are not conducting research, I recommend these books to anyone who lives in or has any connection to Okaloosa County, and offer my thanks to the members of the Heritage Committee for their professional and enduring work and congratulate them for a job well done!

Review by Jim Young

Slate of Nominees **GSOC Officers for 2012**

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, {no nomination}
Corresponding Secretary, Jim Young
Immediate Past President, Malcolm Flanagan

The Crestview Railroad Depot Display at the Heritage Museum

In the heyday of railroad travel, daily passenger trains linked Northwest Florida to New Orleans, Jacksonville, and Atlanta directly and to the rest of the United States through connections. The streamliner era arrived in 1949 when the L&N and the Seaboard Air Line railroads introduced the Gulf Wind from Jacksonville to New Orleans with numerous stops along the Panhandle, including Crestview. The Heritage Museum has



Photo from the Heritage Museum Website

extensive artifacts from the Crestview depot. Special trains carrying political candidates and other VIPs sometimes caused local excitement, and occasionally the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus train passed through en route to and from its home base in Sarasota.

Crestview was largely an outgrowth of the coming of railroad service to the west Panhandle of Florida. The Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad (P&A) was incorporated on March 4, 1881, to run from Pensacola to the Apalachicola River near Chattahoochee, a distance of about 160 miles (260 km). No railroad had ever been built across the sparsely populated panhandle of Florida, which left Pensacola isolated from the rest of the state. William D. Chipley and Frederick de Funiak, both of whom are commemorated in the names of towns later built along the P&A line were among the founding officers of the railroad company.

Heritage Museum Website
and Wikipedia

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 positions)

Addresses

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

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

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 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, 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 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, and much more.



The symbol on the left is the QR code for the GSOC web site.



GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF OKALOOSA COUNTY
Next meeting: Saturday, October 8th, at 10 AM
at the Valparaiso Community Library,
459 Valparaiso Parkway

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

