



WALTON RELATIONS

Volume 1, Issue 9

Walton County Genealogy Society

August 2010

Santa Rosa Beach is 100!

Members of the Walton County Genealogy Society (WCGS) will help Santa Rosa Beach celebrate its 100th birthday in September. WCGS will have a display at the Santa Rosa Beach Centennial Celebration event at Gulf Place on Scenic Highway 30A on Saturday, September 11, from 10:00 AM until 9:00 PM, and on Sunday, September 12, from noon until 6:00 PM.

Several people have offered to assist at the WCGS table to spread the word about our society, but we need more volunteers. If you would be willing to help for a couple of hours on one of those days, please contact **Wayne Sconiers** at WayneSconiers@embarqmail.com. For more information about the centennial and a schedule of events, visit srb100.com.

Lt. Sconiers Update

Our "Military Spotlight" in the January 2010 issue featured Lt. Ewart T. Sconiers, who died in Poland and is currently buried there. There has been another delay in the return of his remains, and it now appears the recovery will be next summer. See [Bring Sconiers Home](#) for the latest information.

No WCGS Meetings

The Walton County Genealogy Society will not meet in August, and we will be attending the Santa Rosa Beach Centennial Celebration on the day we normally have our September meeting. Please join us there!

Upcoming Reunions

Saturday, September 4 – **Burgess Family**

Saturday, October 2 – **Garrett Family**

Saturday, October 9 – **Crowder Cemetery**

See our [Reunions](#) web page for more information. If you can offer additional or updated information for that page, please contact [Wayne Sconiers](#).

Walton County Heritage Museum

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 1:00- 4:00 PM
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

850-951-2127

www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org

WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net

The Piney Woods of Portland and Basin Bayou

By Julia T. Cadenhead of Pensacola



Mr. Godwin and his son Buddy took me on a tour through the piney woods around Basin Bayou, Black Oak Cemetery, and Portland, Florida, in the summer of 2009.

Mr. Godwin was born near here in the early 1900s – maybe 1913 or so. He knows the area very well. Buddy drove us along Farrior Ward Hill which was near a head (of a stream) which was thick with TyTy bushes. They called it Hubbard Head. Both areas are north of Basin Bayou and we couldn't have gotten there had we not been in Buddy's four-wheel drive truck. Most of that area today is government land. We had to get a permit from Jackson Guard before we went in. There was a kind of pristine beauty in the canopy of tall, singular pine trees and the soft matt of ground beneath them.

During the drive, Mr. Godwin was reminded of the time he and his brothers were sent by their father to do some logging in that area. He was nine or ten years old at the time. After the brothers found a nice, big pine log in the woods, the challenge was to get it out of the swampy area where it lay. They thought it would be easy enough using the family ox, so they harnessed the log so the ox could drag it out of the swamp head for them. The work was slow and arduous. The boys worked hard, and the job was getting tiresome. Then the ox decided to lie down “and rest, I guess,” said Godwin. But the boys were in no mood to wait. They wanted to get the job done and go home.

One of them had an idea, so the others cooperated. They piled dead limbs and bushes in a circle around the ox and set the bushes afire. Well, it did get that old ox moving, for sure, but they soon realized the error of their idea. It took all of them beating and stomping the flames – everything they could do– to put the fire out. It was an awful feeling, he recalled. They could have killed that animal, and it would have been a calamity for the whole family. They could even have started a forest fire. The boys were filled with dread all the way back home while the ox towed the log. None of them wanted to tell their father about what they had done but, when they got home, his first question to them was, “Why is the ox's hide singed?” There was nothing to do but explain.

Moonshine Whiskey

Moonshine stills were not uncommon in the piney woods around Basin Bayou, the Alaqua, and Portland. Once Jim Hobb's boys came up on a still. It had been a long day and they decided it would be okay to try a little of the brew. Each one put a cup up to the spout and proceeded to taste the shine. It had a strange texture, there was a grassy residue in it, and it just didn't taste right. One of the boys decided to crawl up to the top of the vat and look to see if it might be full of pine needles.

It wasn't pine needles. Floating in the vat was a dead possum. He had been dead long enough for the fur to turn loose and begin dissolving in the brew.

"You have never heard such spittin' and hollerin' and cussin'," said Mr. Godwin. They turned the vat over and made sure it was emptied.

Piney Woods Rooters

Mr. Godwin told me that folks kept their piglets in a hole in the ground, and there was a good reason for that. Hogs and sows were marked with the owner's brand and allowed to roam free. When a sow was close to delivering piglets, whoever found her put her in a hole "just deep enough to keep her and the little piglets in it until we could make our rounds back to her. Then, we'd set her free. We branded the piglets and let them loose to



roam, too. Sometimes we came up on somebody else's piglets. We would brand the piglets with the same brand that was on the sow. Neighbors helped each other that way. It was easier on all of us – the brand settled ownership." I asked about wild pigs and he said, yes, there were some of those. He didn't bother with them; they were mean and hard to catch. "Wouldn't take much for one of them to hurt you really bad," he said.

He talked about "dip vats." "We dug a hole in the ground shaped like a scoop. We would walk the hogs and cows down into the hole filled with the solution. Then we walked them back up on the other end," he said.

People & Places

"Pensa Rosa" was an area on the east side of Basin Bayou. Mr. Godwin remembered that near there was some good farmland. Folks grew corn, beans, and peas, but it never caught on as an industry. Dude and Lula Brown lived in that area and patched holes in Mr. Godwin's daddy's mullet nets.

As we rode along, Mr. Godwin commented that right up to the Civil War folks were mining for gold at Henry Point. I was intrigued. "Did they really?" I asked. He was slow to respond and with a kind of laconic pace he answered my next questions, but I got a sense that this wasn't a story he was particularly proud of and, thus, his hesitation. He said he had heard tell that people found gold pieces and silver there at one spot along the shore.

He surmised the coins were dropped there by smugglers and traders. He had also been told the spot was a convenient out-of-the-way place for slave trading and other nefarious activities. A boat could creep up the waterway to the protected point on the bay's shores to do their business. I asked if he'd ever been there. I got a quiet and very quick "No." It gave me goose flesh.



He spoke of Indian camps in the area. I had hoped he might know something about Tish Brown Hubbard who was, herself, Indian. Mr. Godwin was just a little boy at the time he saw Tish. She was good friends with the Suggs (who were his mother's people). He said that Tish and his granny (Helen) Suggs took in washing, and they washed clothes for Mr. Chandler Reddick at his house on the west side of Alaqua Bay. They used an old wash pot to boil the clothes, and they would also beat the overhauls to clean them. We drove by the house which is beautifully preserved today.

Mr. Godwin also told me that Tish Hubbard and Frances Harvard (believed also to be spelled Hubbard) knew each other but were not blood related. He thought Tish might have lived at the old Farrington place at one time, near what was once the Mott boat business. Buddy Godwin, who was born after Tish died, added that he had heard of Tish – though he never saw or met her – and that she worked all around the area for different people. He said he had the impression she was on her own and wasn't anyone's wife. I had hoped to discover more about Tish, but that was not to be. I was truly grateful for Mr. Godwin's words, "She was an Indian." Perhaps someday, if I keep digging and listening, I will find her lineage. She is buried in Black Oak Cemetery. There is no marker.

Buddy is interested in his Native American heritage. He has Godwin cousins who are registered tribal members but, since he works full time as a commercial fisherman, he hasn't found the time to document his ancestry. With surnames like Godwin, Suggs, and Silcox, it shouldn't be too difficult.

Buddy and his father talked about Benny King Slew, boiling chitlins, and Frizz Branch, which was a popular place for making moonshine. They remembered that Harley Hamilton had a place at West Bayou which is at the mouth of Whitefield Bay. As we rode around the bayou, Mr. Godwin noted several places where Indians had camped prior to and during Civil War days.

Mr. Godwin mentioned his family, but I must confess I didn't pay sufficient attention to ensure I wrote all the names correctly. I will, at the least, note some pieces of the information he shared with me. He talked about his children: Angela Godwin (Creagle); Hubert Earl "Buddy" Godwin; David Thomas Godwin (who died in Texas) and Larry Bryant Godwin.

His father, William Wesley Godwin, married Clara Leviney Suggs. His brother Irving was born March 5, 1923, and died January 10, 2007. He recalled that Inez married a Roth and that Irving Godwin married a Suggs. He also mentioned his work in the CCC camp and his brother who served as county commissioner and also had a county road named after him as did "my" Mr. Godwin.

Thank you, Mr. Godwin and Buddy.

It was a wonderful day and a great opportunity for me to learn more about the culture and heritage of our part of the State of Florida.

Julia T. Cadenhead

Pensacola, Florida



Walton County Researchers

Wayne Sconiers is maintaining a list of people who are researching Walton County families. Below is a list of surnames that are actively being researched. If you would like to be added to the list of researchers, or if you would like to be put in contact with someone who is researching one of the surnames, please contact Wayne at WayneSconiers@embarqmail.com.

Andrews, Adkison, Balkom, Baragona, Braxton, Brown, Cadenhead, Davis, Emmett, Garrett, Gainey, Godwin, Gomillion, Hartin, Hinesley, Kelly, Little, McBroom, McCellan, McCormick, McRae, Miller, Mitchem, Pittman, Pryor, Rachels, Raley, Register, Sconiers, Slay, Steele, Strickland, Walden, Waldo, Whitehurst, Wilkerson, Williams, Willis, Wright

More Cemetery Listings

Laura Nell Harrison recently donated some copies of *A Journal of Northwest Florida*, a publication of the Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County. The journals she donated have listings for Walton County cemeteries, including Alaqua/Steele, Black Creek, Black Oak, Center Ridge United Methodist Church, Children's Home, Gum Creek, Miller Community (Gordon Chapel), New Harmony Baptist Church, Pleasant Ridge, Ray, and Roche Hill.

Most of the cemetery listings were made in the early 1990s. In addition to the cemetery listings, some of the issues also include Walton County Marriage Records, compiled by Florence Lembeck, for the years 1909, 1910, and 1911, as well as some interesting letters and records not easily found elsewhere.

The journals are located in the genealogy bookcase at the Walton County Heritage Museum and are available for your research. If you have books or records pertaining to Walton County genealogy that you do not use any longer, please consider donating them to our collection so that others might benefit from them.

Thank you, Laura Nell!

Protecting Your Records [Before the Next Hurricane]

By **Burt Altman, Certified Archivist**

*The bulk of this article was originally published in the **Tallahassee Genealogist**.*

Last year we escaped the disastrous hurricane seasons that have struck the state in recent years, but it was still a turbulent season with many lesser storms, each of which had the potential to threaten our citizens and their property. And since forecasters believe that we are not even midway through a 20-year period of intense storm activity, we cannot become complacent and unprepared in 2010. While protecting and saving lives is certainly the first priority, many of us possess family records in various formats that we also want to protect and preserve for our own research, for future generations of our families, and for other historical or genealogical researchers. This article offers some tips on how you can protect your family papers, photographs, tape recordings, and moving images ahead of time, and ultimately preserve that legacy for your descendants in the event that a storm heads our way.

First of all, you need to realize that the greatest priority is to save your own life and your loved ones, so you should create a home disaster preparedness plan. In addition to having an evacuation plan and the essentials (food, water, medications) that the American Red Cross recommends, you should also bring:

- Any legal and financial records, such as insurance policies, house and automobile titles, checking and savings account books, investment records, birth and marriage certificates, passports, and credit and ATM cards; secure them in a waterproof container.
- A personal address book and the local telephone and yellow pages directories.
- A cellular telephone and charger, batteries, and portable radio.
- Your computer, if possible. Be prepared to wrap it in a large garbage bag and seal it with duct or packing tape. To be prepared, create backups of important data often (a flash or jump drive is often handy) and the most recent backup can be placed in a safe deposit box, with your important papers, or perhaps can be electronically emailed to yourself as a file attachment to download again later. Other computer peripherals, such as monitors, mice, and printers, are replaceable.

And last but not least, there are your important family records, which may be database files, original source documents, family photos (in print or digital formats), recordings, family bibles, and family heirlooms. Here you need to decide what's most important to you and whether you can get a replacement from someone else for items that are lost or damaged. If you have a reliable family member, you may wish to send copies of these items to them as emergency backups, in case of disaster.

To protect your vital family records ahead of time, you need to prioritize by making a list of what you wish to save **FIRST**. Think about what has historical, sentimental, and commercial value to you, and what you can easily take away if you have to leave quickly. These items might include a few family photographs, your grandmother's jewelry, a scrapbook or a piece of your child's artwork.

Small items, such as pictures and family papers that are very important to you and the family should be kept in one particular storage area. In addition, you should store these vital items in an area of your house away from windows, fireplaces, and water pipes, where the "elements" can get to them. Be sure to keep them out of attics, basements, and garages. If you have an interior closet, that's an excellent place to store them, as well as inside a safe bolted to the house foundation.

Now here are some tips about protecting specific formats of family records. For papers:

- Make photocopies of items such as birth certificates, passports, diplomas, and legal documents. Keep one copy at a friend's or relative's house and another in a plastic container.

- Place important papers in archival plastic page protectors (made of polyester, polypropylene, or polyethylene) and place the protectors in notebooks. They can be purchased at any photo processing place or department store. Do not use vinyl PVC or any material that smells odd.
- Use large capacity plastic storage boxes, which are great for storing important papers, family photographs, or loose genealogy papers you haven't filed and/or entered in your family records database yet. These boxes are readily available at dollar stores.
- Affix duct tape and packing tape to the lids of every plastic storage bin to help keep out water, and protect your valuable items from water damage.
- Do a "dry run" packing job ahead of time to see how many containers you can fit into your vehicle. Clothing can always be placed in small garbage bags and compressed around other items for padding and space conservation.

If you have important books, such as family Bibles:

- Remove any books that are in a slipcase, which can easily get wet in a disaster, and put them in a safer place, such as a small, flat box.
- If the books are in fragile condition, you can purchase book boxes through archival catalogs, such as Gaylord, Brodart or Light Impressions.

For photographs, negatives, audiovisual recordings, and any electronic files:

- If photographs have been bunched together, separate them so that if they get wet, they won't stick to each other. It's better if they're stored in three-hole-punch archival plastic pages or in a photo album made of acid-free materials and photo-safe plastics.
- For negatives, purchase archival three-hole-punch negative sleeves that can accommodate 35mm negatives, and store them in archival albums, which again, can be purchased at any photo processing or department store.
- Make back-up copies of audio recordings and films, preferably on CDs or DVDs, and keep the originals in clean, cool dry storage. Acid-free boxes, which can be purchased through archival supply companies, such as Gaylord and University Products, will protect record jackets; be sure to use cotton gloves when handling recordings.
- If you have any electronic files of documents or images on your computer, back them up to either floppy disks or flash drives, which you can take with you. Also remember that if you have floppy disks or CDs, avoid storing them in an area of wide temperature and humidity fluctuation, in direct sunlight, or in the vicinity of magnetic sources.

If a storm is approaching, it's also a good idea to transfer all files, whether paper or electronic, photographs, and recordings into file boxes and load them into your car, or leave them with someone else who may not be in the expected storm's path.

Start preparing now.

Helpful websites:

Gaylord – www.gaylord.com

Brodart – www.shopbrodart.com

Light Impressions – www.lightimpressionsdirect.com

University Products – <http://www.universityproducts.com>

Archival Methods – www.archivalmethods.com

Archival Preservation - [http://www.shopbrodart.com/Archival Preservation](http://www.shopbrodart.com/Archival_Preservation)

Census Instructions

By Diane Davis Merkel of Choctaw Beach

I recently received an email, asking if I knew what the term *serving* meant when referring to an occupation in the 1860 census. My first thought was that it applied to domestic help, but I was not sure. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the Census Bureau has the complete instructions for the 1860 census online. The answer to the question was found in paragraph 10 of page 18 of the instructions:

. . . The members, or inmates, of a family employed in domestic duties at wages you will record as “servants,” or “serving,” or domestic,” according to the custom of the vicinage.

My first instinct was correct, but it was good to find proof of it.

The 1993 cover memorandum to the online 1860 census instructions explains that the only known copy of the 1860 instructions was found (presumably in 1993) at the Library of Congress. Prior to that, the Census Bureau answered inquiries about the instructions by answering that they “generally followed 1850” when, in fact, there were differences, including one that may be helpful to Walton County researchers:

. . . They specify (p.14) who taxed Indians are and how they are to be enumerated—by writing “Ind.” under the color [race] heading. (On the schedule, that column provides only for “White, black [note that use of this term began in 1850], and mulatto.”) . . .

Taxed Indians? Sure enough, paragraph 5 of page 14 of the instructions states:

“Indians *not taxed* are not to be enumerated. The families of Indians who have renounced tribal rule, and who under State or Territorial laws exercise the rights of citizens, are to be enumerated. In all such cases write “Ind.” opposite their names, in column 6, under heading “Color.”

If you have not been able to locate an Indian ancestor in the 1860 census, that paragraph may provide the reason.

Reviewing the census instructions was a valuable exercise for me because I had never before thought to look at them and, as I discovered, they can provide information about which people were counted, abbreviations used by census enumerators and, perhaps most importantly, an insight to the government’s cultural practices of the time. For example, the 1860 paragraph about “Color,” which describes the use of *white*, *black*, *mulatto*, and *Indian*, ends with, “It is very desirable to have these directions carefully observed.” Some things never change!

The instructions for the 1860 and 1870 censuses can be accessed from the U.S. Census Bureau website at <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/>. I encourage you to poke around the various census years as there is a wealth of supplemental information available, including special reports, abstracts, and bulletins, most of which is online in PDF format. For example, we are all painfully aware that the 1890 census records for Florida were lost in a fire, but there is a summary available of the population of Walton County – 4,816! – broken down by precinct that may be helpful for general research purposes.

©2010 Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.

www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org

Walton Relations is a publication of the Walton County Genealogy Society. Wayne Sconiers, President. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email its editor, Diane Merkel, at WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net or call 850-897-4505.