



# WALTON RELATIONS

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Walton County Genealogy Society

June 2010

## New WCGS Web Pages

Members of the Walton County Genealogy Society (WCGS) have various interests, so we have expanded our web presence to make it easier for you to find what you want and for us to target your interests in the future.

The WCGS web pages remain accessible through the Heritage Association website at [www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org). Now, when you click "Walton County Genealogy Society" on the main menu, you will be taken to a portal page that allows you to choose from four topics: Cemetery Project, Newsletters, Newspaper Archives, and Reunions. Information about the next meeting will always appear at the top of the portal page.

## Great News!

Our "Military Spotlight" in the January 2010 issue featured Lt. Ewart T. Sconiers, who died in Poland and is currently buried there. Pamela Sconiers Whitelock reports that our government plans to recover Lt. Sconiers' body this August. His family hopes a documentary will be made of Lt. Sconiers' journey home and his reinterment in Southwide Baptist Church Cemetery.

## WCGS Meeting

The next meeting of the Genealogy Society will be **Saturday, June 12, at 10:00 at the Walton County Heritage Museum**. We will discuss our ongoing cemetery projects and our outreach to the community through lectures and training sessions. Please join us!

## Reunions This Month

Saturday, June 12 – **Cosson** Family

Saturday, June 12 – **Nelson** Family

Saturday, June 19 – **Padgett** Family

Sunday, June 27 – **Sunday** Family

### **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](http://www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org)

[WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net)

# Returning Home

**By Barbara McClellan Moore of Houston, Texas**

The drive was bright, sunny, and warm for mid-February. I took advantage of my retirement to leave Texas and made a trip to my home in the Florida Panhandle to do some family research. I was in the Baker Block Museum when I was told by Ann Spann that one of my relatives had been asked to write the history of the Crowder Chapel and Cemetery and could sure use my help. I contacted Julia Cadenhead and found the ancestor we shared was Rachel Barnes Crowder.

The trustees of the Crowder Cemetery were looking for someone with ancestors there to offer to write the history, then donate the work back to the trustees. They would bind and sell it at the homecomings and singings held there. All proceeds would go for maintenance and upkeep of the grounds. I was honored to be part of this project, to be able to “give back” to the land I loved so well. My first stop the next day was Crowder Cemetery.

I was blessed with warm, sunny weather again and drove east toward Crestview. As I turned from the main roads and headed out into the rolling countryside, I enjoyed the breeze whispering through the pines that were a great source of income to the people who settled this land. How I wished I could listen and understand just one of the stories it could tell. It was easy to envision the people coming through with horse and wagons to haul water from the rivers and creeks so important for survival.

I came to a fork in the road with no sign; the left was paved, like the part I was on, the right was red clay. It has been 40 years since my paternal grandfather, Charles Edward McClellan, was laid to rest here. I got out and walked around, then closed my eyes trying to “see into my memory.” Remembering that Crowder Chapel sits on top of a red clay hill overlooking the Shoal River Valley, I took the right fork. It was as I remembered it.

Standing under the large oaks in front of the Chapel, leaning on the boards secured between them, I could almost smell the food being spread for “dinner on the grounds.” I began to remember the strong singing echoing from the chapel years ago. In the Baker Block Museum I had found a newsletter, “Wards and Bakers of the Deep South.” There was a transcript of an interview done with Jesse Cauthon Turner in 1997 about the Crowder Cemetery.

*“A young couple from Alabama was passing through the area headed for Bay County farther to the south. At that time, the Chapel did not exist and the area was a wilderness. The old road passed by the site where the present Chapel is now located and crossed a ford of the river just below. The young daughter of the couple became seriously ill so they decided to build a log cabin on the flats above the river ford and spend the winter while the little girl overcame her illness. The cabin had a stick and mud chimney and stood about where the picnic tables now stand in front of the Crowder Chapel.*

*“The child died and was buried near the cabin. This grave was the first burial in what is now known as the Crowder Chapel Cemetery. The stone marker over the little girl’s grave was placed there by Jesse Turner and other community members when the cemetery was ‘improved.’ The epitaph on her tombstone reads: ‘Mr. Roger’s child-died in 1852.’ The second and third graves are those of the Bell brothers who were murdered. The 4<sup>th</sup> burial was that of Gabriella Meigs, Jesse Turner’s maternal grandmother.”*

I walked through the cemetery and could hear echoes through my mind of past events and people as I read the names Cousins, McClellan, DeShazo, Laird, Beard, Wilkins, Crowder and Hinote. I had been in many of their descendants’ homes and eaten out of many of the ladies’ pots at the homecomings here. As intermarriages occurred, I became related to most the folks buried here in one way or another. My great, great, great grandfathers, Joseph Crowder (father of William Crowder) and Charlie Barnes (father of Rachel Barnes) are buried there. William married Rachel and they had 13 children. They had a large farm and William was also

a logger. He would follow the jobs farther and farther from home as timber nearby was cut down. One day he simply never returned. Working with the crews was dangerous and they did not have official “sign in sheets” with pertinent information on it like today. When a man was killed, they tried to find out if anyone knew him. If no information was available, they buried the man in the area where he died. That is why his wife Rachel was buried here in a lone grave on June 3, 1903.

In a handwritten note by community member Johnny Hinote, written shortly before his death on February 5, 1985, he documented the history of the cemetery.

*“The old people lived nearby kept up the Roger’s child grave and started a cemetery here. They put a rail fence up. There was one acre of land and we did not have a deed to this acre of land. Later W.J. Davis and the neighboring people moved in here. The Turpentine Co. later deeded one acre to Crowder Cemetery.”*

Everyone took an interest in establishing the much needed cemetery. In reading the records, you find the pride people used to have in taking care of their own. All land and labor were donated. Chicken dinners and other fundraisers were held so materials not donated could be purchased. The trustees have always taken care of maintenance, and homecoming time finds flowers adorning the graves.

The Chapel at Crowder, while only one room, is spacious. It was built in 1952, more than one hundred years after the first grave was placed there. The sign, however, proudly states 1850, the year the Roger’s child was buried there. Rachel Crowder was affectionately known as “old Aunt” by everyone. Her hard work keeping up the cattle and ranch without her husband by her side was the talk of the area known as Mossy Head. She was always available to help others and shared the bounty of her garden with many. Though already buried in the cemetery, she had lived the closest to it and her name, as was the old custom, was chosen to forever mark this beloved resting place.

You can learn a lot by reading grave markers. A most curious epitaph is on my great, great grandfather’s headstone: “He was true and faithful to every duty.” As I talked to descendants, I learned of many records simply written by the old ones stored in the museum. I began to dig and found stories of the Union and Confederate armies that would send units to find the men hiding in the swamps during the day because they wanted to stay home and protect their families. They were forced at gunpoint to either enlist or die where they stood. Daniel K.T. McClellan chose to enlist even though it was the Union holding him at gunpoint. There were many hard feelings about men from the South choosing to do so, but he was more valuable to his family alive than dead. Just 16 months later, his unit was disbanded after a bitter battle in Tallahassee. He decided to go north into the Carolinas until feelings settled and his strong-willed wife took the children and joined him there, working in the Phoenix and Eagle cotton mills to be near him. After returning home, Daniel became a cooper and cobbler in addition to running the homestead with his wife Sallie by his side. Emotions of the war were buried deep and some never let Daniel forget his betrayal, but his family let their feelings be known forever engraved in stone.

My heart was full of warm memories as I stood behind the Chapel, looking down the slope, reading my list of seven or eight generations who established this land for us. They faced many challenges just to feed and clothe their families, learned how to use natural remedies to survive illnesses, and never gave up. This faith and persistence has been passed down so that today’s generation can have the peace and comfort we still enjoy on our land.

I now reside in Texas, but anyone wishing to contact me about our ancestors and share information may do so at [moore5440@sbcglobal.net](mailto:moore5440@sbcglobal.net).

A copy of the Crowder Chapel and Cemetery history is available on the genealogy shelf at the Walton County Heritage Museum thanks to the generosity of Julia (“Judy”) Cadenhead. Judy reports that the first two printings have sold out, but they are planning to print more for the Crowder Homecoming this Fall. – DM

# Internet Online Message Boards

By Wayne Sconiers, President, Walton County Genealogy Society

Have you visited free boards or forums and posted that question that keeps you from moving forward on your family tree? If you have not utilized this tool to help you connect to other family researchers, you are most certainly missing out on vital information to those connections. You will also find other researchers who are researching the same families or related families in the same area.

The Internet offers all of us many new opportunities to share and exchange information. One of the more prominent means of communication on the Internet is through message boards or forums. Message boards allow people to communicate freely with one another in a public forum. When many people participate in these boards, the amount of information that can be shared is tremendous. With a few keystrokes and the click of a mouse, message boards broadcast our interests and inquiries to other interested readers around the world 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Message boards are wonderful tools for genealogists who are trying to connect with others who have similar interests. I have even received answers to questions posed in 2008.

As with all good things, there are a few things to think about before posting your message. Message boards are read around the world and seen by millions of all races of people. Most message boards are public. So, when you post a message to the Internet, it is going to be published for anyone and everyone to read. You never know who is going to read your post or who might quote portions of it to share with other interested parties. So, before you push "submit," you will want to make sure that the message you post to the Internet only contains information that you are ready to share with everyone. It is also worth mentioning that messages posted to a message board are generally permanent. Once you push the "submit" button in a message board, you will usually not be able to go back and change or edit your message. So, make sure there are no typos in your message and that it says what you truly want it to say.

As a general rule, you will want to post your message in one or two places where it is the most appropriate so it will receive the best response. Leaving the same message in every available message board can be irritating to people who frequent them, and they do not appreciate reading the same message over and over again. It is worth mentioning that most people will begin to ignore a message that has been posted rather indiscriminately on several different boards.

Some of the most visited boards are [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) and [Genealogy.com](http://Genealogy.com). The boards are arranged by surname, region, and general topics (like genealogy software). I normally use the region board, such as Walton County, Florida, and surname board, such as Sconiers.

More information lessens confusion. If your message is content rich and detailed, it will attract more appropriate responses. For instance, if you are planning on writing a message about John Smith who married Mary Jones, you had better list more about them than just their names in your message! Otherwise, because of the common occurrence of the Smith and Jones surnames, you will have way too many people responding to your inquiry. So, it is important to include enough information about the people you are seeking so that everyone will know exactly who they are or at least how to positively identify them. The greater the details you can provide about when and where your subjects lived, dates, kids, parents, etc., the greater your chance of linking up with people seeking the same individuals.

So get online and use this great resource. It is free. You will also be surprised how much information can be claimed from reading through all the messages. Happy hunting!

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[www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org](http://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](mailto:WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net) or call 850-897-4505.