



WALTON RELATIONS

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Walton County Genealogy Society

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Chronicling America

Both of our last two speakers at the Walton County Heritage Association meetings, **Bruce Cosson** and **Robert Daniel**, have discovered exciting items in historical newspapers using “Chronicling America,” a free online service of the Library of Congress. The service currently has almost four million pages available from Florida newspapers, including the *Panama City Pilot* (when Panama City was in Washington County) and the *Pensacola Journal* from 1905 through 1909. More pages are being added all of the time.

Chronicling America can be searched by individual states or by all states. For example, a search for “Wallace Bruce” in all states between 1885 and 1912, the year of his death, has 927 results. Of course, not all of them are the Wallace Bruce of Florida Chautauqua fame, but many are. A spot check of some of the results produced articles about Bruce speaking in Kentucky in 1889 and a mention of him in a Brownsville, Texas, newspaper in 1893.

The search results are highlighted so you can quickly determine if the results are relevant to your ancestor. Digitalized newspapers are available from 1836 until 1922. Start your search by visiting chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

WCGS Meeting

The Walton County Genealogy Society will not meet in August. Our next meeting will be Saturday, September 10, at 10:00 AM at the Walton County Heritage Museum. **Wayne Sconiers** will present training on “Hard Drive Failed: Things to Consider When Backing Up Your Computer.”

Legends from the Graves

Walton County Heritage Museum volunteers will host the second Legends from the Graves event on Saturday, October 1, in Eucheeanna. Save the date!

Upcoming Reunions

Garrett Family Reunion, Saturday, October 1, at the Friendship Church on Highway 83 in DeFuniak.

Weimorts Family Reunion, Saturday, September 11. Contact Suedelle Wilkerson at suedelle@fairpoint.net.

Walton County Heritage Museum

Open Seven Days a Week: 1:00- 4:00 PM
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435
850-951-2127
www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org
WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net

The following two stories are excerpted from *The Stories and Memories of Alice Creek, New Home and Surrounding Area*, which was recently published by Gone But Not Forgotten, a committee of the Walton County Genealogy Society. The book is \$25.00 and may be purchased at the Walton County Heritage Museum on Tuesdays from 1:00 until 4:00 PM.

Alice Creek School # 24

By Mildred Spence Boland

The Alice Creek School was built around 1920 at Alice Creek, which is now part of the Eglin Reservation. The county school system furnished the materials and Tiller Chessar with the help of the community men built the school house. The county let the building be used for church services. The church was named "Union Grove Baptist Church" and church was held once a month. Pastor's of the church that I can remember were Rev. M. G. "Murdock" Morrison and Rev. E. E. Earnest. I don't remember Rev. Dan Scott and R. E. West that was before them. Mrs. Herttie Hamilton Anderson drove down from the Alaqua Community each Sunday afternoon and taught Sunday School. She was the mother of D. L. Anderson that married my sister Thelma Spence.

I was baptized by Rev. Morrison in the Alice Creek swimming hole when I was eleven years old.

I carried my oldest son, Raymond Boland, to his first time to church at Alice Creek in November 1943.

In 1945, Union Grove Baptist Church joined together with New Home Baptist Church and organized the Southwide Baptist Church. The building was moved at this time and was used for the church. When the new church was built, the old building was used for Sunday School rooms and later as a Parsonage. Later it was sold to Aubrey Hobbs and was moved by him.

I started to school when I was five at Alice Creek School #24. The one mile walk was such a joy. We walked with our Spence cousins. After school as we walked home, we picked violets, wild honeysuckles, persimmons, sparkle berries, fox grapes and chinquapins.

We lay flat on our stomach and drank water from the clear Alice Creek. Sometimes we drank from cups we made with the poplar tree leaves. We raced up and down the old Red Hill, rolled wheels, and on the coldest days, walked barefoot on the spewed up ground (ice).

We laughed, sang crazy songs or teased each other. We even enjoyed walking in the rain. We just had fun.

My (Mildred Spence Boland) Teachers were:

1st grade: Rosie Mae Langley Spence, 1929 – 1930

2nd grade: Ione Hobbs Spence, 1930 – 1931

3rd grade: Ruby Palmer, 1931 – 1932

4th grade: Ruby Palmer, 1932 – 1933

5th grade: Cornelia Spence. 1933 – 1934

6th grade: Johnnie Mae Casey McDonald, 1934 – 1935

7th grade: Loy Strickland, 1935 – 1936

8th grade: 1st Semester – Ed Strickland, 2nd Semester – Loy Strickland, 1936 – 1937

At recess we played many games. We played baseball, dodge ball, hale-over, red rover, pop the whip, stiff starch, jump rope, bounce board, marbles, stick frog and racing and jumping contests.

We kept the floors scrubbed, the windows washed, wood brought in for the heater and the yards swept. Except on rainy days, when the bell rang, we lined up. The flag was raised and we said the Pledge of Allegiance, marched into the school and repeated the Lord's Prayer.

Grades from one through eight were all taught in the one room school. We made syrup candy on the pot-belly wood heater. We had a very good education, but we also had fun. As I have said, I finished the eighth grade at Alice Creek. I rode the bus to Walton High School and graduated in 1941.



I consider it one of God's great blessings to have lived in such a community. I would not trade my childhood years for anything. It was such a sad time when the families had to move away from homes they had worked so hard for. The older people like my Grandparents never seemed to be satisfied and content as they were at Alice Creek.

Alice Creek at Grandpa's House in the 1930s and Early 40s

By **Milford Lamar Bass**

Let's go to Grandma and Grandpa's on Alice Creek - grandparents are one thing no one ever forgets.

My grandparents lived about ten miles south of DeFuniak Springs, Florida on a bluff on Alice Creek. It was high and dry. Good fertile soil - you could grow anything; that is if you had a grey mule to plow it with. My grandpa loved a mule as long as it was grey.

My Grandpa Billy Donaldson and Grandma Della Trotman Donaldson:

In their days they had a wonderful place. One of the good things was the swimming hole on Alice Creek - boy was it deep. It must have been five feet deep! Now for a three foot boy that couldn't swim, that WAS deep. Also, in July it was still too cold. Another thing that was cold was their well water! We had to wash our feet with that at bedtime and it seemed to be the coldest water in the world!

Now you know how good food is at Grandma's house. Well, this was no exception - the best in the world. On one such visit all the adults went to Alaqua Creek to set out catfish hooks. In those days you used puppy dogs (lizards) for bait. The children were too small to go set hooks, but just right to get bait. Early the

next morning the adults went back to reap their reward. They came back with a half wash-tub full of fish. Now my grandmother didn't waste anything. There was a large catfish that was at least five pounds. My grandmother said, "Save that head for me." Catfish chowder - It was great! The fish was also delicious.

Now my grandparents in those days had a good house. Today they would qualify for housing assistance. They had a large yard which included a cane mill and a large wisteria vine on an arbor, which provided shade for washing clothes. They had a barn for storage, and a cow pen and barn that joined the yard. On the outside of the yard was a crib for corn and seed which they had rat proofed by placing tin at the top of the supporting poles. In those days you saved your seed from year to year. Also, you saved corn to carry to the mill for corn meal.

My grandfather made his own ax handles, hoe handles, hammer handles and pitch fork handles. These were mostly of white oak. He would cut them in the spring and anchor them in the creek. Come summer after the crop was made, he would go to work on making whatever he needed. Now while he was about this task, Grandma was not idle. She was milking the cow or cows, feeding the chickens, washing clothes, and caring for the children - two boys and five girls.

In the yard was a place for canning - vegetables, fruit, or meat. It got too hot inside to can. They had no pressure cooker, so it took about two to three hours to can most anything. Wood stoves were okay in the winter months, but not in the summer! Their fruit orchard had blue berries, figs, and pears. She also made watermelon rind preserves that were great!

In those days, everyone had a job to do. Now I know everything that grew on the farm was very important, but for us grandkids - all twenty or so - the watermelon was by far the best - Black Diamond, Stone Mountain, etc. Believe it or not, Grandpa would always cut us children one or two watermelons just before lunch. That was to last us until the adults finished eating and visiting. We had the bony pieces of the bird - the neck and back.

Another good time on the farm was hog killings. The coldest day of the year - no electricity or refrigerators, so you invited family and friends in to help. People usually left with a shoulder or two plus a head and feet and some spare ribs. Now while all this was going on there were sweet potatoes baking and a pot of pork stew with everything in it but the squeal! - Lord have mercy was it GOOD! Have you ever eaten souse or hog head cheese for breakfast with a buttermilk biscuit with real butter? Probably not unless you are at least seventy - you just missed it, "sorry!"

Now another thing they did wrong was cook the fat and save the grease. They tell me that stuff will kill you - but not if you follow a mule from daylight to dark.

Times were not easy in those days, but Lord as I look back they were wonderful. We only pass this way once and I enjoyed it. I have so many more good memories and some not so good like the day I got a pan of dishwater right in the face. We were playing hide and seek and I came by the kitchen window at the wrong time - and then there was the time the older boy talked me into putting a hot pepper in my mouth.

There were many more good times than bad. If you still have a mother, father, or grandparents, let them know you appreciate them for they love you and yours forever.

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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.