



WALTON

RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 10, Issue 2

Walton County Heritage Association

February 2019

WCHA President's Letter

2018 Report

We would like to thank all of our members for their continued support by joining and renewing their memberships each year. Without your support and the support of our Board of Directors and volunteer Docents, we could not keep the museum open and free to the public.

The WCHA continues to support our mission in preserving the History of Walton County. The WCHA is continuing to work with "Main Street, DeFuniak Springs" project. We have rotating exhibits in the museum to promote continued visitation. The museum had guest speakers at our January, April and July Members' meetings. Continuing our tradition... our October Members' Meeting and Membership drive was held at Eucheeanna Community Center and Doctor Sheppard's John Deere Tractors.

It was a beautiful day and everyone enjoyed our lunch at Community Center then a tour starting with his covered bridge, property and his multiple barns with fully restored antique tractors. We have opened the museum to private tours to the military, churches and out of town groups. We extended museum hours and had Caboose tours for special events held by the City of DeFuniak and other local organizations. Check us out on Facebook and our Webpage "Walton County Heritage Association".

We have added Instagram this year to share our history. The WCHA participated in Snowbird Day and the Florida Chautauqua where we sponsored a Performance Tea this year. We were in the Mardi Gras, 4th of July and Christmas Parades. We Sponsored the Lucky Duck at Lakefest. We also participated in Trick or Treat around the Circle.

- Volunteer Hours recorded 2018: 1,272
- Visitor sign-in for 2018 was 2,730.
- The museum was closed in the month of December, due to no heat.
- Facebook reached 2,200 people reviewing our post. Our Genealogy Society is continuing their work copying records at Clary Glenn and assisting individuals.
- The Board of Directors is looking forward to 2019. Please come and visit and invite your friends.

Thank you for your continued support.
Marie G. Hinson, President

This month's article is titled:
Braxton Bragg Miller

By
Doris Jean Bell

Walton County Heritage Museum

Open Tuesday – Saturday, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
1140 Circle Drive, De Funiak Springs, FL 32435
850-951-2127

<http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/>

Braxton Bragg Miller

By Doris Jean Bell

Transcribed, edited and expanded by
Sam Carnley

Editorial Note: This month's article is another in the series of family histories taken from the book, "The Heritage of Walton County, Florida," available for sale at the Walton County Heritage Museum. It was chosen for two reasons: first, it is about a Walton County family with an interesting history many of whose descendants continue residing in the county, and second, it serves to demonstrate how the history of one family may provide information missing from the history of an unrelated family.

Braxton Bragg Miller was born January 7, 1862, in north Walton County on the farm where he spent his entire life. The area was later called Gordon, Florida. He was the fifth son of eight born to Lewis and Sarah Elizabeth Cawthon Miller. The boys, in order of birth were, William J., Richard Lafayette, Thomas, Sherrod Koonce, Braxton Bragg, John Hosea Ballou (Dobbin), Allen Hart, and James Lewis Corbin Griffin.

His father, Lewis Miller, was the son of Josiah and Eliza Miller. The family lived in the vicinity of Samson, Alabama. Lewis Miller was a blacksmith and came to the Cawthon home, on the Florida side of Lake Jackson [then McDade's Pond]. He met Sarah Elizabeth, the daughter of William Cawthon and his third wife Nancy Langston Fountain. Lewis and Elizabeth were married in 1850 and moved to a place about five miles southeast of Lake Jackson. They later moved two miles farther south to the place where they lived during the remainder of their married life.

Bragg's childhood and youth encompassed the worst period the people of the South have ever known – the years of the war of Yankee aggression and reconstruction. Lewis Miller did not serve in the Confederate Army because his work as a blacksmith was needed to keep horses shod, and to repair tools and equipment. Betty [Elizabeth, Bragg's mother] was fond of telling about a band of renegades who demanded food for their horses. She told then that she only had a small amount of corn. One of them rode over to Lafayette, who was pounding corn into meal, and asked what they fed their horses. Lafayette kept pounding away and said "grass." She was proud of his quick thinking.

When Bragg was about fifteen, he had a bad accident which crippled him for a long time. He was hauling lumber from Ealum (Liberty). There was a deep gorge which had been cut by Gum Creek. He had removed the wagon body to stack the lumber on the wagon, and was sitting sideways on the lumber about midway between the front and rear axles. The team became frightened and ran away. He was afraid that they would go over the bank and into the deep creek, so he jumped off the wagon. He was knocked down and the rear wheel ran over his leg, crushing his ankle. His mother told that he did not walk for 6 months. He lay in bed in great agony until the bones knitted together in some fashion.

When he was sixteen, his father died of pneumonia (October 1876). His mother, Sarah Elizabeth, did not die until February 3, 1936 at age 103. His brother Thomas married Dora Cockroft and moved to Defuniak Springs. Lafayette and Koonce went to Texas where they remained for several years. This left Bragg as the mainstay of the family, consisting of his mother, the oldest brother William, who was retarded, and five younger children. He and his mother ran the farm. He worked hard but managed a fair living. He had some education, presumably from the Reverend E. B. Armes who was a teacher as well as a preacher. Bragg was a teacher, for a short time, at a one room school on Paxton Creek. He said later that he wasn't supposed to be a teacher. In the 1880s he rented a place in Defuniak and moved his mother and the children there for schooling.

Lafayette and Koonce came back from Texas. Lafayette was married to Emma Jones. Dobbin taught school and secured a job at Portland. He boarded in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Iverson Goodwin. They were the parents of Robert and Leander. By this time Bragg was in his mid-twenties and his brothers thought he should be married. They introduced him to [the Goodwin's daughter] Leander Rosseline and they were married in March 26, 1891 at the Goodwin home. The ceremony was performed by the Reverend Mallie Martin.

At the time of his marriage, Bragg had bought two hundred acres of land from the railroad [Bought from the Pensacola & Atlantic Railroad, 7 April 1888, for which he paid \$250.00. Recorded in deed book # 5, p. 283, Walton County Official Records, Court house, Defuniak Springs]. In the late 1890s he decided to homestead one hundred sixty acres of land about one-half mile from his home [Patent # 15042, issued 4/9/1901, for 160.62 acres, described as the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, all in section 30, township 5 north and range 20 west, located south-west of section 20 on 1936 map excerpt, p. 8. Recorded deed book 14, p. 269, Walton County Official Records]. It was a small house, but later was enlarged with a second story added. The homestead law required that to prove up on a homestead, the applicant must improve it and live upon it for five years. In order to fulfill the requirements, he built a small log cabin on the land. At that time there were only two children, Blannie and Robert. Once each month, after supper, they would load the wheelbarrow with quilts and children, roll it down to the cabin and spend the night. They would return home the next morning. He eventually sold all but forty acres. It is now owned by Shirley Cason Hays, granddaughter of Minnie Lee Miller Cason. Bragg and Leander Miller became the parents of seven children – Blannie, May 3, 1892, Robert Iverson, August 10, 1894, Fletcher Edward, October 31, 1898, Minnie Lee, June 12, 1901, Audrey, December 29, 1907, Annie Hazel, October 31, 1909 and Milford Braxton, October 12, 1912. These births are recorded in the family Bible which is in the possession of Leah Ann Jackson Wilkerson.

The family owned cattle and sheep and usually rented farm land to sharecroppers. There were usually three families living on the home place. The sheep and cattle roamed the open range. Shearing sheep and marking cattle made spring a very busy time.

Education for the children was difficult. Blannie was educated in Defuniak, and taught school at New Harmony and Walton High. The others went to one-teacher schools, to Paxton and to Floral high school.

Bragg had a light stroke on a family hunting trip to South Walton National Forest in 1948. He gradually weakened in mind and body, but was never bedridden. On June 6, 1948, he slipped into a coma and died on June 7, 1948 at the age of eighty-six.

Submitted by: Doris Jean [Miller] Bell, 16052 N. Hwy 331, Defuniak Springs, FL 32433.

As stated at the beginning of this article, I will attempt to illustrate how a history of one family may sometimes provide missing information in the history of a separate and unrelated family. As far as I know, there is no blood relation between the Braxton Brag Miller family and the Joseph Carnley family, of which I am descendant. Joseph and Braxton however were neighbors in the vicinity of the north Walton County community of Gordon and their residences appeared near each other in the U. S. census of 1880 enumeration of Election District No. 5 of which Gordon, near Paxton was a part (see census image, p. 7).

Braxton's pertinence to Joseph for family history purposes is that when Joseph died in 1884, the court appointed Braxton, Alexander McSwain and Lafayette Cawthon as appraisers of his estate. The presumption being that as his neighbors, their knowledge of his possessions would enable them provide a more complete and accurate accounting of all his belongings.

The order of their listing on the census began with dwelling number 257, the household of Sarah E. Miller, Braxton's mother with whom he lived at age 18. Following Braxton's home a couple of houses down was Alexander McSwain's residence, dwelling number 259. Then came Joseph Carnley at dwelling number 260 and after him, Lafayette Cawthon, dwelling number 261. All this tells us is the dwelling sequence and where in the sequence each fit. It does not however tell us the physical address of each dwelling without which we have no idea of their geographical locations and that is a piece of information about Joseph which is missing and about which I am curious, simply because I would like to know where he lived. The only information gleaned from his probate records regarding where he lived was that he owned improvements on public land, which when his estate assets were sold, went to R. L. Miller for \$50.00. This tells me that he did not own the property on which he lived, but was a squatter on unsold land belonging to the Federal government.

But precisely where on the public land did he live? If it could be established where Braxton, Alexander and Lafayette lived, that information may point to Joseph's place of residence. In her history of the Braxton Bragg Miller family, Doris Jean Miller Bell, a granddaughter of Braxton and daughter of Robert Iverson Miller, writes that Braxton spent his entire life on the farm where he was born, although my research shows the farm was sold fifty years before he died. The challenge then, was to learn the location of that farm. Apparently it was the place on which the family lived at the time of the 1880 census. A search of the online deed books available on the Walton County Clerk of Court's website soon gave me the answer. According to Mrs. Bell, Lewis Miller was Braxton's father and recorded in deed book # 10, p. 447, was found a warranty deed dated 4 January 1898 which reads:

Know all men by these presents that we, Elizabeth Miller, widow of Lewis Miller, deceased, Richard L. Miller & Eliza H. Miller, (his wife), Abel C. T. Miller and Tillman Dora Miller (his wife), Sherrod K. Miller and Emma M. Miller (his wife), Braxton B. Miller and Leander R. Miller (his wife), James G. Miller and Adelia J. Miller (his wife), Allen H. Miller and Lillie T. Miller (his wife), Mary S. Jones and Jessie B. Jones (husband and wife), Edward S. Adams and Martha L. Adams (his wife), John H. B. Miller (single), and William Josiah Miller (Lunatic, single), only heirs of Lewis Miller deceased for and in consideration of the sum of three hundred and ninety-eight and 55/100 Dollars to us in hand paid by the Jackson Lumber Company the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged do bargain sell convey and grant unto the Jackson Lumber Company its heirs and assigns forever the following described property, to wit; the North East Quarter (NE $\frac{1}{4}$) of the North East Quarter (NE $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Twenty (20); The North West Quarter (NW $\frac{1}{4}$), the North Half (N $\frac{1}{2}$) of the South West Quarter (SW $\frac{1}{4}$); and the North West Quarter (NW $\frac{1}{4}$) of the North East Quarter (NE $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Twenty One (21) in Township Five (5), North of Range Twenty (20) West in Walton County State of Florida and containing three hundred and eighteen acres and eighty three hundredths (318 and 83/100) of an acre. . .

In witness whereof we have here unto set our hands and seals this 4 day of January 1898, [etc.]

From the above it is learned that the Miller farm in 1880 was situated in sections 20 and 21 (see 1936 map excerpt, p. 8) with the bulk of it in the latter section and firmly fixes the location of dwelling 257 on the census. The precise location of the dwelling on the property remains unknown, but is not relevant to locating Joseph Carnley's place of residence.

In order to do that, the sites of the dwellings of Alexander McSwain and Lafayette Cawthon needed to be determined. The first step was to find properties they owned where McSwain's land was north of Cawthon's. They both owned several parcels of property at various times, but none of them were north of sections 20 and 21 where the Miller land was. From that it was apparent that the direction of census enumeration was from north to south so I searched the deed books for deeds south of the Miller's. After a bit of searching I found parcels for them situated in the order shown on the census.

In deed book # 11, p. 40, I found a warranty deed from M. A. and Mary J. Cawthon dated 19 July 1884 to Alex McSwain for fifty acres located in section 6 of township 4 north and range 20 west. It consisted of two parcels, one of ten acres and the other of 40. In deed book # 36, p. 542 was a deed from M. A. and Mary J. Cawthon, also dated 19 July 1884 to Lafayette Cawthon and like the one to Alex, consisted of two parcels of ten and forty acres each. There were family connections involved in that Alex McSwain's wife, Nancy Ann Matilda Cawthon, was a sister of Lafayette and they were cousins of M. A. (Murray Andrew) Cawthon. Alex and Lafayette's parcels were situated so that each had a parcel north of the other (see p. 8). But the scenario only works if Alex lived on his ten acres and Lafayette lived on his forty. Their properties were surrounded by public land which had not been sold or homesteaded in 1880 and it is likely that Joseph Carnley's improvements were on that land somewhere between them as he appeared on the census. An unanswered question is whether or not Alex and Lafayette were already living on the properties in 1880 which were not deeded to them until 1884. According to the deeds they each paid \$75.00 dollars for their respective properties. Possibly M. A. held mortgages on them which they paid off in four years. Regardless of whether the circumstances as they appear are factual or nothing more than fanciful speculation, the 1880 census record appears to correspond to the deed records described above and demonstrates how unrelated family histories may sometimes benefit each other.

Page No. 89
 Supervisor's Dist. No. 18
 Enumeration Dist. No. 18

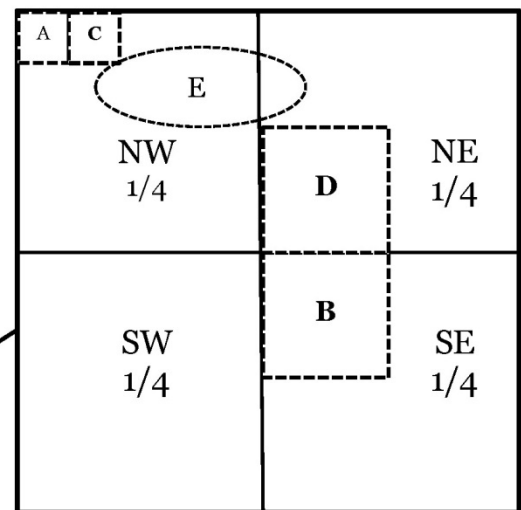
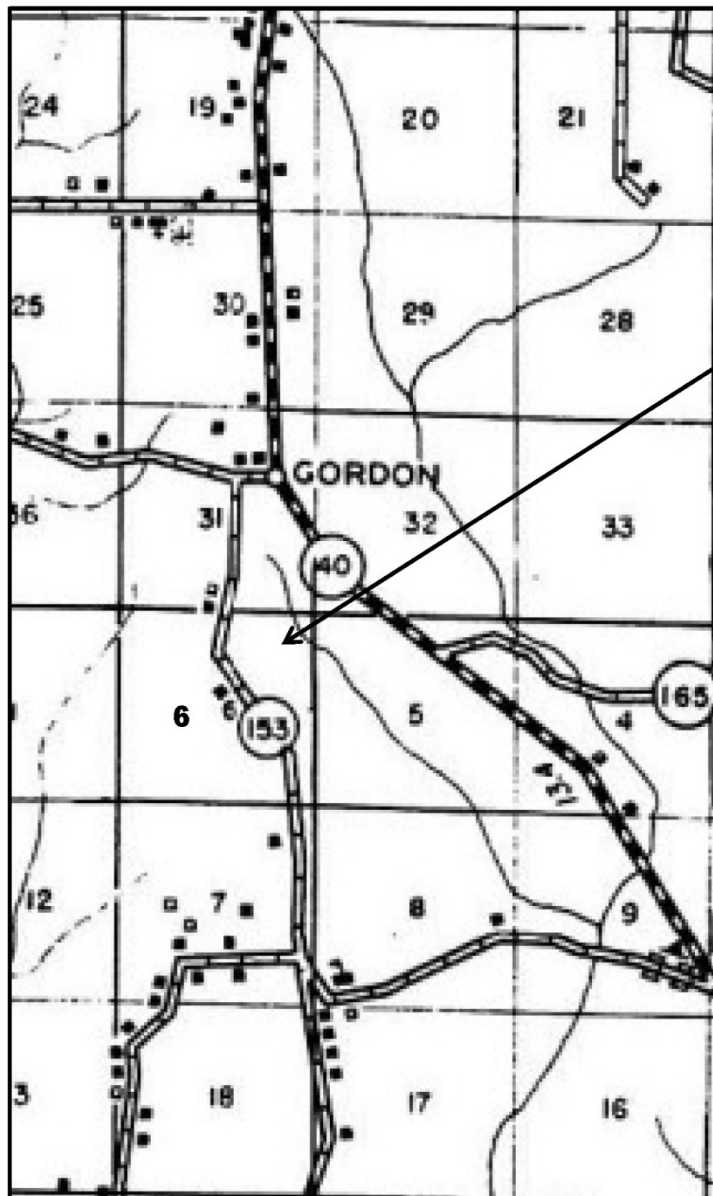
Received August 31, 80

Note A.—The Census Year begins June 1, 1870, and ends June 1, 1880.
 Note B.—All persons will be included in the Enumeration who were living on the 1st day of June, 1880. No others will. Children BORN SINCE June 1, 1880, will be OMITTED. Members of Families who have DIED SINCE June 1, 1880, will be INCLUDED.
 Note C.—Questions Nos. 12, 14, 22 and 23 are not to be asked in respect to persons under 10 years of age.

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in Election District 5, in the County of Walton, State of Florida, enumerated by me on the 10th day of June, 1880.

Enumerated by: L. M. Lueder

Name	Sex	Age	Color	Profession, Occupation or Trade	Place of Birth	Married		Married		Married		Married		Married		Married		Married	
						1870	1880	1870	1880	1870	1880	1870	1880	1870	1880	1870	1880	1870	1880
John A. Miller	M	35	W	Farmer	Fla														
Mary A. Miller	F	35	W	Wife	Fla														
William A. Miller	M	10	W	School	Fla														
Charles A. Miller	M	10	W	School	Fla														
John A. Miller	M	10	W	School	Fla														
William A. Miller	M	10	W	School	Fla														
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John A. Miller	M	10	W	School	Fla														
William A. Miller	M	10	W	School	Fla														



A. 10 acres deeded to Alexander McSwain by M. A. (Murray Andrew) and Mary J. (Williams) Cawthon on 19 July 1884, described as the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4, township 4 north, range 20 west, section 6. Deed book 14, p. 466. (Census Dwell. # 259).

B. 40 acres deeded to McSwain by M. A. and Mary J. Cawthon on the same day as A. above. Described as the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4, same township, range and section as above and same deed book and page number.

C. 10 acres deeded to Lafayette Cawthon by M. A. and Mary J. Cawthon on 19 July 1884 described as the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4, township 4 north, range 20 west, section 6. Deed book 34, p. 542.

D. 40 acres deeded to Lafayette Cawthon by M. A. and Mary J. Cawthon on 19 July 1884, described as the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4, township 4 north, range 20 west, section 6. Deed book 34, p. 542. (Census dwell. # 261).

E. Public land between McSwain and Cawthon. Joseph Carnley dwell. # 260 possibly located in this area.

Figure 2. The box in the above-right corner represents an enlarged view of section 6 shown on the map at above-left, located in township 4, north, range 20, west of the north part of Walton County, Florida. The map is an excerpt of a Florida county map dated 1936. The purpose of the above representation of section 6 is to show where Alexander McSwain, Lafayette Cawthon and possibly Joseph Carnley may have resided at the time of the 1880 U. S. census and possibly later based on the location of land McSwain and Cawthon owned in 1884. By establishing where they lived in 1880, it may be possible to closely fix the location of the residence of Joseph Carnley who was listed between them on the census that year. Joseph died in 1884 and McSwain and Cawthon were two of the three men whom the court appointed to appraise his estate. The third appraiser was Braxton Bragg Miller whose father Lewis Miller owned farm land in sections 20 and 21 shown in the top right corner of the 1936 map excerpt. Document prepared by Sam Carnley, 2/17/2019.



Walton County Heritage Association

Membership in the Walton County Heritage Association includes
Membership in the Museum and Genealogy Society
2019

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM as we are updating our records

Membership Benefits:

The Museum Research Center:

Members get free copies of documents and use of the Genealogy Society computer when Museum is open to the public.

The Museum Gift Shop:

Members receive 10% discounts on books, special publications, postcards, photographs, CDs, DVD's Videos and Gift items.

Membership is on a calendar year basis. Those paying in November or December will be members during those months as well as the next calendar year.

Walton County Heritage Association annual dues: Single - \$25.00 Family - \$40

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State** _____

Zip: _____ **Phone** _____

Email: _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift to the Walton County Heritage Association:

_____ \$ _____ Dues Individual, Family
 \$25.00 \$40.00
_____ \$ _____ Other Cash Donations Total Enclosed \$ _____

- ☐ I would like to volunteer at the Walton County Heritage Museum
☐ I have genealogy information I would like to share with the Genealogy Society
☐ I would like to talk with someone about how to get started researching my family tree
☐ I have artifacts or photographs I wish to donate or loan to the Museum

Please mail your check and this form to
Walton County Heritage Association
1140 Circle Drive
De Funiak Springs, FL 32435

Thank You!

All membership dues are tax deductible.

The Walton County Heritage Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization as defined by the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts may be tax deductible as defined by the Federal Income Tax Regulations. To request a receipt for your tax deductible membership in the WCHA please contact us.