



WALTON RELATIONS

Volume 3, Issue 1

Walton County Genealogy Society

October 2011

Walton County Fair

The Walton County Genealogy Society will once again participate in the Walton County Fair. The Fair will be at the Walton County Fairgrounds on Highway 83 North in DeFuniak Springs from Monday, October 10, through Saturday, October 15. The Fair is open Monday through Friday from 5:00 until 9:00 P.M. and on Saturday from noon until 9:00 P.M. **Janice and Wayne Sconiers** will be manning the Walton County Heritage Association table all day Saturday and will be pleased to help you with your genealogy research.

Each participant in the Walton County Fair is asked to donate a prize. Ours will be a free engraved Depot Walkway Stone, which is a \$100 value. Stop by the Walton County Heritage Association table to enter your name in the drawing, which will be held when the Fair closes at 9:00 P.M. Saturday night. You do not need to be present to win.

If you would like to see who else is manning the Walton County Heritage Association table at the fair, please check our new online calendar at www.brownbearsw.com/freecal/Heritage.

No WCGS Meeting This Month

The Walton County Genealogy Society will not meet in October. Our next meeting will be Saturday, November 12, at 10:00 AM at the Walton County Heritage Museum.

Halloween Happenings

The Walton County Genealogy Society will participate in "Halloween Happenings" on Monday, October 31, from 5:00 until 7:00 P.M. We will be giving Trick or Treaters candy in front of the Walton County Heritage Museum. Donations of candy for this event will be greatly appreciated. You can drop it by the Museum whenever it is open (see hours below).

Upcoming Reunion

Donaldson Family Reunion, Saturday, November 5, at the Steele Church in Alaqua.

Walton County Heritage Museum

Open Tuesday - Saturday: 1:00- 4:00 PM
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

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Walton County Timeline from the Brackenridge Letters

Compiled by **Wayne Sconiers**

President, Walton County Genealogy Society

Note: While researching the history of the Alaqua area, **Bruce Cosson** discovered a collection of letters by Henry Marie Brackenridge (1786-1871), the son of Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748-1816), a Scottish immigrant who founded what are now the University of Pittsburgh and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and who served as a Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.



Henry M. Brackenridge (*left*) was an accomplished man in his own right. In addition to serving as the first judge of West Florida, he was an author who served as a U.S. Congressman from Pennsylvania.

Bruce's discovery of Henry Brackenridge's letters is perhaps the most significant find to date in our quest to understand the early history of Walton County. Bruce provided the Walton County Genealogy Society with copies of the letters, which may be read at the Walton County Heritage Museum, and **Wayne Sconiers** compiled this timeline from the Brackenridge letters and other sources. If you are researching ancestors from the early 1800s, this timeline will help determine the county in which they lived and pinpoint significant events of the time.

1814 to 1818 – Andrew Jackson entered Florida in search of Indians. When settlers moved in after 1821, they were confronted by bands of Indians. The majority of the Indians were in central Florida, but sizeable bands lived in northwest Florida.

1821 – Spain ceded Florida to the United States on July 17, 1821. Then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams was influential in getting Spain to give up Florida.

1821 – The Florida Territory was divided into two counties, Escambia and St. Johns. Escambia included lands to the west and St. Johns to the east.

1821 – Henry M. Brackenridge met Andrew Jackson on the Mississippi River and became Jackson's secretary for his upcoming mission to the Florida Territory.

1821 – The yellow fever epidemic in Pensacola killed 300 of the 400 Americans there.

1822 – Jackson County was formed from Escambia County.

1822 – On June 11, Henry M. Brackenridge was appointed by President John Quincy Adams to be Judge in and over that part of the Territory known as West Florida.

1822 – Brackenridge bought some land on the Santa Rosa Sound and held court sessions in Pensacola, Chipola, Tallahassee, and Webbville.

1824 – Walton County was formed from Escambia County and named after George Walton, Jr., the first Secretary of the Florida Territory from 1821 to 1826.

1825 – Washington County was formed from Walton and Jackson counties.

1826 – During the first quarter of the year, land in Alaqua was surveyed by James Exum and James Lane. A settler with the surname Vaughn was listed in T2N R19W S32, which is southwest of and behind Steele Church.

1827 – Brackenridge married Caroline Marie in March.

1828 – Brackenridge was appointed Judge for the District of West Florida.

1828 – Brackenridge purchased land in Alaqua, about one and one-half days away from the first settlement on the road from Santa Rosa.

1828 – On August 22, Hardy Wood recorded his land deed, signed by President John Quincy Adams (1825-1829), for T2N R19W S19, touching a corner of Judge Brackenridge's land.

1829 – On May 15, Brackenridge recorded his land deed, which was signed by President Andrew Jackson.

1830 – On June 1, the first court session in Walton County was held in Alaqua in the home of Judge Henry Marie Brackenridge and lasted two days. The court was in the center of a large log hewn building with two wings. The Judge lived in the north wing, and James Evans lived in the south wing.

1830 – 1,207 persons were listed on the federal census as of September 27. Enumerators were Alex McLeod, Michael Vaughn, Sr., and David Evans, assistant to the Marshall of the Western District of Florida.

1830 – The second court session in Alaqua was held on December 1. The case was *Territory of Florida vs. Pagget and Alley* in the Superior Court of Walton County. The case lasted two days, and the defendants were fined one dollar each.

1831 – A report of the last six months of the court was sent on June 6 by H. G. Ramsay, Clerk of the Superior Court of Walton County.

1837 – Members of the Alberson family living on the Alabama and Florida border were killed by Indians on February 28, and Indians later killed nearly everyone on a homestead in Gadsden County. Later, in response, a militia group from Pensacola searched for Indians along the Yellow and Shoal rivers.

1837 – In April, a family of settlers at a Blackwater River lumber mill deceived and captured a family of Creeks. In reprisal, Creek warriors attacked a group of seven men from Walton County along the Shoal River, and only two men survived. The local militia pursued the Creeks and killed two of them.

1837 – On May 13, a band of Indians encountered the overnight encampment of Sil Caswell, Thomas Broxton, Big John Anderson, William Nelson, and John Porter, who had been hunting cows. Anderson, Nelson, and Porter were killed along with four Indians. Michael Vaughn was also killed.

1837 – On May 19, a fight near Bruce, referred to as Battle Bay, resulted in three whites and ten Indians killed. The other Indians fled into the swamps.

1837 – Governor Richard Keith called on militias from Jackson, Washington, and Franklin counties to help.

1837 – About 70 Creeks surrendered at the end of May and were taken west.

1838 – The Second Creek War in Alabama started in July, and Indians raided the panhandle area.

1840 – The federal census listed two persons drawing a war pension, Joab Horn and Aaron Snowden. Henry G. Ramsey, Assistant Marshall, was the enumerator, and James Evans was the Justice of the Peace.

1842 – Santa Rosa County was formed from Escambia County.

1845 – Florida became the 27th state.

1848 – Holmes County was formed from Walton and Jackson counties.

1915 – Okaloosa County was formed from Walton and Santa Rosa counties.

Gone But Not Forgotten

In December 1943, at the height of World War II, the Army Air Corps and the U.S. Government expanded Eglin Field to encompass the Walton County communities of New Home and Alice Creek. Eight-year-old Maveen Henderson and her family were given thirty days to pack up and get out before their house was bulldozed.

Maveen Henderson Bruner will talk about those days at the **Emerald Coast Archaeology Society** meeting on Saturday, October 22, at 1:00 P.M., at the Indian Temple Mound Museum, 139 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach. Everyone is welcome, and there is no charge.

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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.