



WALTON

RELATIONS & HISTORY

Volume 13, Issue 1

Walton County Heritage Association

October 2021



WALTON COUNTY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

OFFICE LOCATION

Walton County Heritage Museum, (Old Train Depot)

Hours: Open Tuesday – Saturday, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Postal Address

Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, Florida 32435
Phone: 850-951-2127

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

Email: heritagemuseum@brighthouse.com

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Treasurer: Sam Carnley

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Vacant

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Caroline Brown

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Back Issues: <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/newsletters.htm>

Cover Design: Sam Carnley

Newsletter Cover Collage Photos

Clockwise from top left:

1. Darlington, Florida, early 1900s, Courtesy of Baker Block Museum, photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley.
2. *Henderson-Mathis turpentine still in Glendale or Gaskin*. 1904. Black & white photoprint, 4 x 6 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/42107>>, accessed 28 June 2017 by Sam Carnley.
3. William Lewis (Luke) Hurst Family, Fleming Creek/Clear Springs area, north Walton County, ca 1894, from “The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,” p. 190.
4. Old Paxton High School, “1961-62 Paxtonian” Year Book, photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley
5. Walton County Heritage Museum, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
6. Gladys D. Milton (1924-1999), Midwife, Flowersview/Paxton, photo by her daughter, Maria Milton. Also in “The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,” p. 249, and the September 2018 Newsletter at <http://www.waltoncountyheritage.org/GenSoc/NL2018Sep.pdf> Edited by Sam Carnley.
7. Lake Jackson, South Side, in Paxton City Limits, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
8. Paxton Water Tower, Paxton, Florida, photo and editing by Sam Carnley.
9. Old Freeport School, constructed ca 1908, burned 1943. Photo from “The Heritage of Walton County, Florida,” p. 45. Photographer unknown. Edited by Sam Carnley.
10. *Floralia Saw Mill Company's engine number 3 - Paxton, Florida*. 1907. Black & white photonegative, 4 x 5 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Photographer unknown. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/146972>>, accessed 7 September 2019 and edited by Sam Carnley. [Built in 1873 and Originally owned by New York, Ontario and Western Railroad Company as engine number 60; then owned by Southern Iron and Equipment Company as engine number 568 in 1907; then owned by Floralia Saw Mill Company as engine number 3 on March 3, 1907; returned to Southern Iron and Equipment Company and number changed to 915 on March 13, 1913; then owned by Louisiana Saw Mill Company as engine 50 in May, 1913.]

The **Walton County Heritage Association, Inc.** is a 501 (C) 3 Florida Not for Profit Corporation Recognized by the IRS as a Public Charity Organization for Tax Deductible Donations.

The Walton County Heritage Association was organized for four main purposes:

- To promote the preservation and restoration of buildings and other landmarks of historical interest within Walton County;
- To maintain the Walton County Heritage Museum to preserve the heritage of Walton County for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artifacts and information from the time of its original inhabitants to the present;
- To foster and enhance the development, education, and sense of history which is unique to Walton County; and
- To secure cooperation and unity of action between individual citizens, businesses, and other groups as may be necessary to fulfill these purposes.

The Association depends upon the support of its members and the business community to accomplish its goals. Annual dues are \$25 for individuals, \$40 for families and \$100 for corporate memberships.

Individual Membership Application; See attached.

[Click here](#) for the Corporate Membership Application

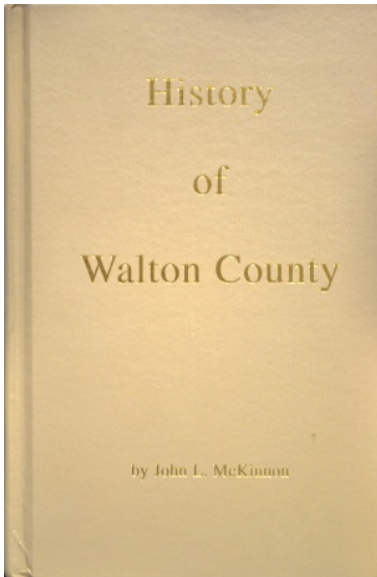
Member Benefits:

- Automatic membership in the **Walton County Heritage Museum** and the **Walton County Genealogy Society**.
- Invitations to Quarterly Members Meetings
- **Discounts** on Special Events
- **The Museum Research Center:** Members get free copies of documents and use of the Genealogy Society computer when the Museum is open.
- **The Museum Gift Shop:** Members receive discounts on books, special publications, postcards, photographs, CDs, DVDs, videos, and gift items.
- Free **subscriptions** to the WCHA Newsletter and Journal.

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From the Museum Gift Shop

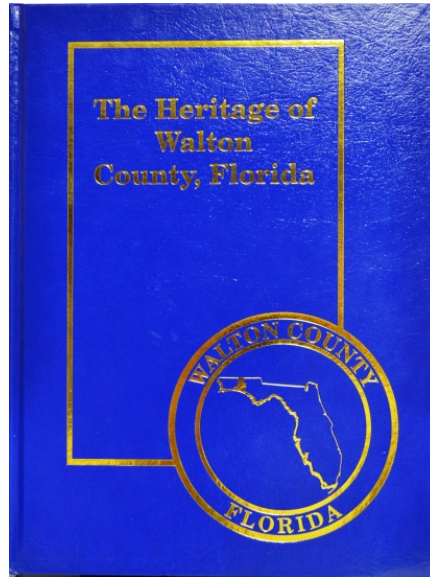
Our most popular books



History of Walton County

by John L. McKinnon. The Museum has sold out of this book and it is out of print, but it is available at these links;

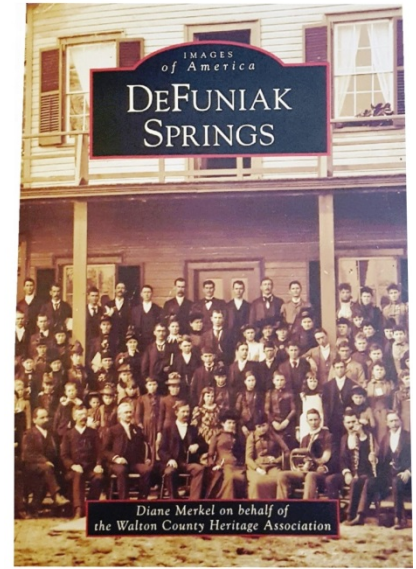
<https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/georgiabooks/pdfs/gb0503.pdf>, and <https://www.alibris.com/booksearch?mtype=B&keyword=history+of+walton+county&hs.x=0&hs.y=0>



The Heritage of Walton County, Florida. Item code

B13. Price, including tax,

\$63.13.



Images of America, DeFuniak Springs. Item code

B06. By Diane Merkel on behalf of the Walton County Heritage Association. Price, including tax,

\$23.53.

MAIL ORDER FORM

Walton County Heritage Association
1140 Circle Drive
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

Customer Name: _____

Address: _____

Ph./Email: _____

| Quanty | Description | Item Code | Price Each* | Amount |
|--------|----------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| | The Heritage of Walton County, Florida | B13 | 71.13 | |
| | Images of America, DeFuniak Springs. | B06 | 31.53 | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

*Price includes tax at 7% and shipping of \$8.00 per item.

Total

Sorry, credit cards not accepted. Please send check or money orders only. Do not mail cash. Please allow two weeks for delivery.



Walton County Heritage Association

Membership in the Walton County Heritage Association includes
Membership in the Museum and Genealogy Society
2021

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:

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| | | Individual, Family | |
| _____ \$ _____ | Dues | \$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.

Dr. Arthur Grady Williams, Sr., M. D.

A Walton County Doctor

By
Sam Carnley

A story of this beloved doctor is found on page 35 of the book, "The Heritage of Walton County, Florida." That book was the source of a selected portion of his story as written here. The major portion however, came from an edition of the Florala News, published in Florala, Alabama. The two sources are very similar in the information they provide, but the news article provides more detail as the author wrote it about a month after the doctor's death as a tribute supplemental to his obituary.

I have a special interest in the doctor, because typical of what has been written about him, on the cold evening of Sunday, January 10th, 1943, he made a house call to the little community of New Harmony to do his part in shepherding me into this life. It happened in the home of my maternal grandparents, Walter and Addie Kirkland. Granddaddy tenant farmed the forty acres they lived on with a mule and plow in growing cotton and peanuts. His and Grannie's oldest daughter, Eunice, was my mother and she lived with them while my dad, Walter Carnley, served in World War II.

The doctor's unhesitating willingness to attend my birth at an after-hours time and out-of-the-way place in harsh weather validates for me the truth of all the good things written about him. The story that follows is a verbatim reprint of The Florala News article:



**Dr. A. G. Williams, Sr. Source:
The Florala News, 3 May 1956, 13
days before his death on the 16th.**

A Tribute To Dr. A. G. Williams

By a FRIEND

It is unthinkable that a great and illustrious person, who has faithfully served the people of this entire section, day and night, through cold and hot, rain, storm and sleet, for a period of 43 years, should pass, with only the usual obituary at his passing. Many of his faithful friends are asking, "Why is not a final tribute paid to Dr. Williams' memory? Why does not someone write a closing tribute to" his life? That is the reason why this writer has undertaken to word such a tribute.

It would be impossible for one to say anything about Dr. Williams that is not already known-by his great host of friends and admirers. This is not an attempt to acquaint anyone with the man, or the great things he did for the benefit of his fellow beings. It is an attempt to "render tribute to whom tribute is due."

Life began for Dr. Williams in Buena Vista, Georgia, March 21, 1888. Little is known by this writer of his early life, more than he entered upon the study of medicine at about the time he became "of age" 'at what is now Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, graduating in the year 1912. He began his practice in the city of Tampa, Florida, but being unable to understand, or be understood by, the many nationalities in that port city, he removed to Lakewood, Florida, when that little city was a flourishing mill town, and became the "mill doctor" there, where he practiced for many years, until he built a modern new

office building between Florala and Paxton, Florida. He began his practice in Lakewood in the year 1913. In that year he began a career that, is known like a book by everyone in this entire community.

In February 1916; he was married to Miss Josie Mills, who has stood faithfully by him, and was his cherished companion and helpmeet [helpmate] through the many years of his service to the people of this community. The wife of a doctor must, at best, live a life of sacrifice, be sides giving encouragement and comfort to the one whose companionship she craves, but must forego. But the many acts of love and chivalry that Dr. Williams so lovingly showered upon his wife, attest to the fact that she never failed him, but was ever ready to share her part of his burden.

So, beginning in 1913, and until the untimely end of his busy life on May 16, 1956, Dr. Williams faithfully served the people of this section, rich and poor, colored and white, at all hours of day and night, every day in the week, and in all kinds of weather. One of the most unusual things about him was that, regardless of how long or rigorous his day may have been, he would answer a call at any hour of the night, with a cheerful, if sleepy, voice, and respond to any needed call, without regard to his own feelings or needs.

The calls he has answered run into the multiple thousands. He has brought more than 3500 babies into this world, many of whom are now parents, and perhaps not a few grandparents, as he began his practice well back in the "horse and buggy days." Obstetrics was his favorite work, until his extremely heavy practice, and his age compelled him to turn this work over to his son, now an established physician, following in his father's footsteps. Money was never an object with Dr. Williams, and he never mailed statements to his patrons, except a few at the end of each year. His office practice was always very heavy. It was nothing unusual for him to see as many as 50 patients a day, and has been known to see at least 70 in one day. He always had a round of home calls, after his tour of duty in the office. Following such days, he was then subject to calls at any hour of the night, and responded to such calls with a cheerful voice, and a willingness to serve.

Dr. Williams' chief diversion was his farm, and the cows and pigs, and other things on the farm. He arose early to spend an hour at the farm, and resorted thither, at any time he had a break. His only known "hobby" was collecting old coins. In the years past, he tried his hand at golf and fishing, but found that there was much too much to do, for him to spend much time at these pastimes.

At the time of his death. Dr. Williams was a member of many years standing of the Walton Okaloosa Medical Society, of which he served as President for many years. He was President of the Ruritan Club, of Paxton, and a member of the governing body of that little city. He was Vice-President of the Bank, of Florala from 1931 until his death. Many indeed were those who went to him seeking counsel on many subjects, and those who sought his counsel, were never turned away.

Perhaps the most fitting aids to the effort to eulogize this friend of all the people is a clipping from The Florala News of several years ago, while Dr. Williams was "still going strong," and a letter received by his beloved wife since his death. Here is the clipping quoting from the local paper, shortly after the close of World War II:

**"PROMINENT LOCAL DOCTOR
AWARDED MEDAL, CITATION"**

**"Loyal and Faithful Service Of
Dr. A. G. Williams During War
Wins Praise of Government."**

"Dr. A. G. Williams, Sr., was presented with the Selective Service Medal and citation this week, for patriotic service during the recent conflict. The citation was signed by President Truman.

" In appreciation of your loyal and faithful adherence " to duty given voluntarily and without compensation to the impartial administration of the Selective Service System, the Government of the United States expresses its gratitude in this public recognition of your patriotic services,' states the citation to which Lewis B. Hershey, Director of Selective Service attested.

"The medal, one of several recognitions given the local physician for service during the war, stated, 'Awarded in the name of the Congress of the United States for faithful and loyal service.'

"Dr. Williams is one of this community's most prominent citizens. He probably knows more people by their first name than any other man in this section. He spends his life for his fellowman, much of the time in disregard of his own physical well-being. It is frequently said that, no doctor was ever more respectful to his patients and very few doctors enjoy a larger family practice. He is a man of high ideals; a member of the Methodist Church, and serves on the Board of Stewards and trustees.

"Both Dr. and Mrs. Williams have made for themselves an enviable position in Alabama and Florida's civic and social life. They are both courteous, affable and accommodating.

"Dr. and Mrs. Williams have two sons, one of whom, Arthur Grady Williams, Jr., has followed in his father's footsteps in the study of medicine, and who is now renewing his medical studies at the Crawford - Long Hospital in Atlanta, Ga., after returning to the States from thirteen months spent in the European and Pacific Theaters. The younger son, Auston, resides with his parents.

" Little more than a week before his death, Dr. Williams appeared on The Good Life Program, over Station WSFA TV in Montgomery. As a result of this appearance, he was chosen "Senior Citizen Sweetheart of the Month," for the month of May by those who saw him on this program, and heard his story. A very recent letter received by Mrs. Williams relative to this appearance, will provide a fitting climax to this effort:

WSFA Radio and Television
10 East Delano Street
Montgomery, Alabama,
June 2, 1956.

Mrs. A. G. Williams,
Floral, Alabama.
Dear Mrs. Williams:

Although we do not mourn as those who have no faith, all of us on "The Good Life" program who met and loved Dr. Williams join in your bereavement in the loss of this most wonderful man.

It is a great tribute to his memory that more than 5000 viewers joined together to elect him our "Senior Citizen Sweetheart of the Month" for the month of - May. The material awards that go with the election have been sent by parcel post, and we hope that you, your family and your friends will come to look at and love them to; Each of us on the program who had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Williams on his brief visit felt the impact of his tremendous personality and we treasure that brief friendship.

' Again, let us extend congratulations on the award of the title of "Senior Citizen Sweetheart of the Month" given by so many in their votes for such a wonderful man.

Our best wishes go to you and his family.

Sincerely,

THE GOOD LIFE

John Allen Wolf,

Host.

Dr. Williams was a great lover of flowers and plants of all kinds. Perhaps his favorite flowers were roses and carnations; his favorite color, red. It was most fitting that his last hours before interment, were spent amid great banks of flowers, sent as a tribute by his hundreds of closest friends. A host were present for the last farewell. Although his spirit has taken its flight, and his body laid to rest, his memory will live on through the years in the hearts of his beloved ones and his great host of friends

A FRIEND.¹

In addition to and in reiteration of the foregoing article, the following words came from the doctor's story in the "Heritage Book:"

Lakeview Hospital opened in Florala, AL. in 1920, serving the sawmill towns of Lakewood, Lockhart, and Paxton, as well as Laurel Hill, DeFuniak Springs, and the bayou towns of Freeport and Boggy (Niceville). Dr. Williams served on the staff of Lakeview Hospital for many years.

Dr. Williams' farm at Lakewood included one of the first fish ponds in this area and was a source of enjoyment for this country doctor. He liked to hunt, but since his profession took most of his daylight hours, his hunting had to be done at night. His hunting partners often said, "Doc can coon and 'possum hunt with the best of them." Another interest was politics, and discussions of this subject could get lively.

Dr. Williams was a devout Christian, and lived his religion daily. He was a member of the First Methodist Church of Florala, serving for years on the Board of Deacons and Trustees. He was vice-president of the Bank of Florala, a charter member and president of the Ruritan Club of Paxton, a member of the Florida Medical Society, the Southern Medical Association, and the American Medical Association. The 1915 minutes of the Walton County Medical Society show Dr. Williams as a member of this group.

Dr. Williams is remembered as having a congenial, warm personality and a kind and compassionate nature. Many people sought him out, not as a physician, but as a trusted friend and good listener. Counseling was a large part of his life. He had a special concern for the area's impoverished and hard-up. Like so many doctors who lived through the depression, after the mills closed, his help to people went beyond what he did for them physically. In many instances, living was made easier, and lives happier because he cared.

His last office was in Paxton, FL on Highway 331 [I remember this office]. It was in this office that Dr. A. G. Williams, Sr., died [at the young age of 68] on the evening of May 16, 1956. Death was sudden, only minutes after he had seen a patient. As he would have wished, he was active to the end of his life in the profession in which he had served faithfully for forty-three years. He was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Florala [Find A Grave Memorial # 65174238]. Thus ended the life of a giant among men.

¹ The Florala News (Florala, Alabama), 14 June 1956, Thursday, Page 2, Newspapers.Com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/537745228/?terms=%22a%20tribute%20to%20dr.%20A.%20G.%20williams&match=1>
Downloaded October 14, 2021 by Sam Carnley.

“Miss Josie,” [his widow] remained in Florala after the death of her beloved husband. She remained active in her church and the History Club.²

² The Heritage of Walton County, Florida, p. 35.