

PINTLALA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Next Meeting:

April 24, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.
Pintlala Baptist Church



c/o Pintlala Public Library
255 Federal Road
Hope Hull, Alabama 36043

Volume XXXVI, Number 2

www.pintlalahistoricalassociation.com

April 2022



Snowdown Blacksmith Shop

Snowdown Blacksmith Shop was once located on Butler Mill Road, date unknown; Pictured left to right: Elsberry Mills, Hal Lamar, Sr., Thomas Meriwether, Croswell Meriwether, Byrd Meriwether and Ed Pettus. The three Meriwether men were brothers and siblings of Rebecca Meriwether Lamar, wife of Hal Lamar, Sr. Hal was the grandfather of Ted Lamar, Hope Hull, Alabama where Ted lives as of 2022. Photo courtesy of Ted Lamar

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Community" and the PHA

A community doesn't just happen. Planning and intention are both important. It takes hard work to minimize division and to strengthen unity. A vital part of forward-looking communities is some infrastructure supporting a community's history and heritage. My hope is that the Pintlala Historical Association is meeting this need. I would plead with you not to miss our next meeting. Clydetta Fulmer will be our presenter. Check out the program details elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter. On April 24, 2:30, PBC's fellowship hall, you will discover that Clydetta embodies talent, grace, and good will. Her sculptures are amazing and inspirational.

Consider the following:

- The Pintlala Elementary School will be celebrating her 100th year in a few months. This centennial will be important. I hope to know more by meeting time.
- Pintlala's Rosenwald School was built to educate young black students. The Tankersley School is located on School Spur just off Pettus Road. Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald, CEO of Sears, combined seed money with money raised by the community to build schools. By 1928, one-third of the South's rural black school children were served by Rosenwald schools. (US National Trust for Historic Preservation). The Tankersley School in Montgomery County was constructed as a Rosenwald Schools project in 1922 (Also a centennial) and is one of the structures Auburn University researchers are working to preserve. Much more to come about Auburn's initiative. The project is exciting to me.

I look forward to seeing you on April 24.

Gary Burton, President

In Memoriam

Randall Duane Culp
(1947-2022)

Frances (Bebe; Mrs. Meade)
Guy
(1928-2022)

Davis Garrett Henry, Sr.
(1933-2022)

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Anna Marie Hunt
Hope Hull, Alabama

Melinda Welch
Hope Hull, Alabama

April 2022 PHA Program

PHA will resume public meetings on Sunday, April 24, 2022 at Pintlala Baptist Church in the Fellowship Hall. We have pushed the meeting forward a week as the traditional third Sunday meeting is on Easter this year. We look forward to seeing all of our PHA members and friends on this day!

If you have not paid your 2022 dues of \$15.00 per household, please do so. Treasurer, Ina Slade will be happy to help you catch up.

Local sculptress Clydetta Fulmer will present the program on her two recent sculptures of Alabama pioneering women: suffragette leader Patty Ruffner Jacobs from Birmingham and voting rights activist Amelia Boynton Robinson from Selma. Fulmer's two busts can be seen at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Statuary Hall. They are the only women represented in this exhibition space. Clydetta will share historical information on the two women and the process of successfully completing the busts.

Thank you for attending this PHA meeting!



Courtesy Jerrie Burton

Walter Brothers Firm

Throughout this series of articles on the Walter Brothers of Sprague Junction, Montgomery County, Alabama their presence in that location has been followed from the time their father, Moore Leonard Walter came from South Carolina to Alabama around 1835, prior to the Civil War, to 1925 when the last of the three Walter Brothers, Jesse Walter, died. The brothers: Tristram Bethea Walter, Duncan Campbell Walter and Jesse Bethea Walter formed a business partnership (Firm) in which they established a variety of businesses from mercantile, lumber mills, cottonseed oil mills and extensive agricultural endeavors of which cotton was the largest. This, the last installment, concerning an interesting and intriguing family deals with their use of state and county convicts in their businesses in Sprague Junction.

ALABAMA AND THE CONVICT LEASE SYSTEM

The state of Alabama and its counties used a system of prison labor known as the convict-lease system during the time period between 1875 and 1928. This system allowed companies and individuals to pay monthly fees, established by the state Warden, to the state government for the labor of prisoners on farms, at lumberyards and in coal mines. As a result of this system, state revenues increased. County governments observed this practice by the state and began negotiating their own lease agreements with industries. The county convicts, mainly convicted of misdemeanors, not only served prison time for their crimes, but were responsible for paying all of their court costs—usually by serving extended sentences of hard labor in abominable conditions where they were often poorly fed and clothed and suffered torture and cruel punishment. The majority of both state and county prisoners were African American. Whippings were the accepted form of punishment used to enforce labor discipline.

In 1883 State Warden, John Hollis Bankhead created a Board of Inspectors who were to oversee treatment of prisoners, check safety conditions in the mines and to ensure timely releases of prisoners.

Bankhead left office in 1885 and the office of State Warden was abolished. Scandal and abuse remained a part of the convict-lease system. There were a number of legislative efforts to end the lease system.

In 1928 the state prison mining and convict-leasing systems finally came to an end. Alabama was the last state in the Union to abolish this deplorable means of adding to the state and county coffers.

Sources: Encyclopedia of Alabama @<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org>

Legacy Moments@ <http://www.alabamalegacy.org/convict-lease> System

Sprague Junction Convict Stockade

The earliest date found which documents the housing of convicts at Sprague Junction is the circa 1890 date used by the Alabama Department of Archives and History for a collection of five images taken by an unknown photographer at the stockade in Sprague where the Walter men housed their leased workers.

Willie Walter (1891-1983), daughter of John Adkin Walter and Kate Peagler Walter, was born in 1891 at the Woodley Plantation (now called Oakwood) home of her grandfather Tristram Bethea Walter and his second wife, Callie Stacey Walter. In her biography, *Miss Willie*, by Mary Prim, Willie recalls family rides to the stockade farm in Sprague, which housed prison convicts leased by the Walter Brothers from the State of Alabama for work on their large plantation. Willie and her younger sister, Annie Ruth, looked forward to Sunday afternoon rides to the stockade where they could hear the prisoners sing spirituals and other songs. Willie recalled one refrain:

Last night in a dungeon...On a pallet of straw...

I swore that I'd never...Again break the law...

I've tasted life's pleasures...They were bitter gall...

Ten years of hard labor...Behind the stone wall.

This experience may have taken place around the turn of the 20th century, no definitive date was given in the biography.

Willie went on to describe the stockade as “a huge compound with shadowy gray, guarded buildings and vast acreage of fields and pastures. There were sleeping quarters, a large dining hall, an infirmary, a bath-house and several workhouses, all surrounded by a high wall. State officials came to inspect the compound periodically.

Vast fields of cotton stretched out from the stockade and acres upon acres of corn, sweet potatoes and other vegetables; also large pastures where cattle, hogs, horses and mules were raised.

The convicts themselves raised all of the food used at the prison as well as producing large amounts of cane syrup, milk and butter. Fed before daybreak, prisoners were taken to the fields or to the mills to work; they were brought in for dinner at noon and returned to their labor by one, where they remained until dark and were again brought back to the stockade in a parade of open wagons. Seeing the groups of men in their striped uniforms, accompanied by guards on horseback with rifles at their sides would always remind Willie of the lyrics *Ten years of hard labor...behind the stone wall.*” (p. 15, *Miss Willie*)

Alabama Department of Archives and History owns a series of five images of the Stockade at Sprague, Alabama. Unfortunately there is no accompanying information for the images other than an approximate date of 1890. Who took the photographs is unknown to Archives nor how the images found their way to the Department.

The image seen here features the exterior of buildings at the Stockade and confirms Willie Walter Stowers childhood memory of this part of Walter Brothers farming operation.



“A corner of the convict stockade at Sprague Junction, Alabama.”

Courtesy Alabama Department of Archives and History

Walter Brothers Stockade Warden: John Perry Jackson

Willie Walter Stowers explained in the Mary Prim, *Miss Willie* biography, page 15, that John Perry Jackson [ca. 1855-1920] was an uncle to her father, John Adkin Walter, Sr. This fact led to the conclusion that John Jackson was the brother of Mary Leonidas Jackson Walter, first wife of Tristram Bethea Walter, Willie's grandfather. According to the Walter genealogy by Col. J. A. Walter, III, siblings Mary Leonidas Jackson, (mother of John Adkin Walter, Sr.), John Perry Jackson and Annie Franklin Jackson were children of Benjamin Franklin Jackson (1819-1874) and his wife Julia Perry Moseley Jackson (1831-1856). Willie Walter Stowers further stated in the same source as above that John Perry Jackson was a stockade warden at the **Walter Brothers** farm, which paid the State of Alabama for convicts who were leased as workers for their farm operation in Sprague.

In the 1900 U. S. Federal Census, John Perry Jackson was listed as born in 1851, was living at Robertson Crossroads (near Sprague); occupation was listed as convict warden and unbelievably provided a list of 48 prisoners under his responsibility. By the 1910 U. S. Census, Jackson was listed as a farm manager in Lowndes County, Alabama and was 58 years old. His obituary from newspapers.com at ancestry.com lists him as dying on March 3, 1920 at his home in Montgomery at 418 South Lawrence Street. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Montgomery.



“Warden Jackson and his man-hunters ready for the chase—Sprague Junction, Alabama” Courtesy Alabama Department of Archives and History



“Warden Jackson and his pack after the capture of a fugitive—Sprague Junction, Alabama” Courtesy Alabama Department of Archives and History



“Training young dogs to trail convicts-Sprague Junction, Alabama” Courtesy Alabama Department of Archives and History

**Nine Newspaper Articles from 1901 to 1916 Pertaining to
Sprague Junction Convict Stockade and its Prisoners**

The following nine newspaper articles from montgomery newspapers selected from the website *newspapers.com* at *ancestry.com* provide detailed insight into the Walters operations at Sprague. Some of the articles have been summarized and others transcribed as written.

SUMMARY, PAGE 5, MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 13, 1901

CONDITION OF CONVICTS

This summarization of an article appearing in the September 13, 1901 *Montgomery Advertiser* features details from reports of the State Board of Convict Inspectors, J. M. Carmichael, President and Inspectors Thomas Bradford and (Mr.) Shirley Bragg.

In July, 1901 the prison at the **Walter Brothers** Farm, Sprague Junction was inspected twice by Thomas Bradford and he reported "hard labor" seemed to be fair to the convicts. As of August 1, 1901 the **Walter Brothers** was listed as having 49 convict laborers. A total of 1, 694 state convicts were used by private Alabama businesses at that same time.

SUMMARY, PAGE 10, MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER,

JUNE 18, 1902

NEGRO FILES GRAVE CHARGE

John Woods, negro, filed in Montgomery City Court, a suit for \$1,000.00 damages against bondsmen of former Constable W. T. Fields and Justice W. A. Taylor for false imprisonment at the farm of **Walter Brothers**. The **Walter Brothers** Firm advanced Woods money to pay his fine and court costs. Woods stated that his treatment in Sprague was the same as accorded convicts hired by **Walter Brothers** from the State.

Transcribed excerpts from *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 17, 1904:

CONTRACTS FOR WOMEN

MONTGOMERY CITY PRISONERS ARE LEASED

**THEY WILL BE WORKED ON COUNTY FARMS BY WALTER BROS. AND J. L. HENDERSON—TO
PAY 1.05 EACH**

Mayor Thomas H. Carr yesterday made contracts with **Walter Brothers** and J.L. Henderson whereby they are to lease fifty female prisoners from the city to work on their Montgomery county farms.

The contracts were made in pursuance of a city ordinance recently passed authorizing the Mayor to lease female prisoners who have heretofore been a charge on the city. The male prisoners are worked on the streets. The female prisoners remain in cells at police headquarters and are an expense to the city government. The real purpose of the ordinance is to reach a vagrant class of negro women who, it is said, have not heretofore been arrested because of lack of facilities at police headquarters to care for them.

It is provided by the contracts that Mr. Henderson and **Walter Brothers** shall take all female prisoners up to 50 that are sentenced to hard labor by Recorder Arrington. They are to pay \$1.50 a month for each woman or girl and to feed and care for them. Mr. Henderson, whose farm is on the Plank Road, two miles from the city, contracts for 25, and **Walter Brothers** whose farm is near Sprague Junction takes 25. Each contractor has made a bond of \$500.00 for the faithful performance of the contract and each contract expires January 1st, 1906.

At present there are about ten women prisoners at police headquarters. ...The contract of **Walter Brothers** does not become effective until May 1st. It is provided in the contracts that the women shall not be made to perform labor other than farm or domestic. All prisoners are to be delivered to the contractors at police headquarters, and when they have completed their sentences they are to be returned there by the contractors.

Transcribed excerpts from *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 24, 1911

CONVICTS ARE LEASED

WALTER BROTHERS BID IS ACCEPTED BY CITY COMMISSION

The bid of **Walter Brothers** who operates a large farm near Snowdoun, Alabama for the leasing of the city convicts during 1912 on the first day of which the present contract of Hunter and Vandiver expires, was accepted yesterday morning at the conference of the Board of City Commissioners.

Walter Brothers offered \$14.00 per month for male prisoners over sixteen years of age and sentenced for ninety days or longer. \$15.00 per month for male prisoners over sixteen years of age and serving sentences for less than ninety days, \$10.00 per month for male prisoners under sixteen years of age and serving sentences of ninety days or longer and \$9.00 for males prisoners under sixteen years of age and serving sentences of less than ninety days.

Transcription from *Montgomery Advertiser* of January 1, 1912

PRISONERS TO SNOWDOUN

THOSE SENTENCED BY CITY WILL WORK FOR WALTER BROTHERS

The city's prisoners, about thirty in number, were brought in from Vandiver's farm, twelve miles from the city, yesterday and today they will be sent out to **Walter Brothers** at Snowdoun, they having been the best bidders for the ensuing year for the lease of the city convicts sentenced for terms of from thirty days to three years.

Up to a year ago **Walter Brothers** had been lessees of **state** convicts for a number of years, prior to the bids of mine owners, in the Birmingham district, which were higher than could be afforded for farm labor, according to their [**Walter Brothers**] conclusion. They already have the stockade which was built for the maintenance of the state prisoners and which as been passed on by Dr. W. C. Oates, state prison inspector, and pronounced as one of the most modern in the state.

Transcription of article from *Montgomery Advertiser*, February 21, 1912:

CHARGES IN FINCH CASE GROUNDLESS

CONVICT ON WALTERS PLANTATION CAME TO DEATH FROM ILLNESS

At the administrative conference of the City Commissioners Tuesday morning at 11 o'clock, Commissioner C. Patrick McIntyre, head of the Department of Justice of the municipal government, stated that Monday afternoon he, accompanied by President Will A. Gunter, visited the **plantation of Jesse B. and Duncan Walter**, lessees of the city convicts, against whom charges of beating John Finch, a negro, to death last Tuesday afternoon were made and that after a thorough investigation of the complaint, he had come to the conclusion that the farmers were not guilty of the accusation.

Commissioner McIntyre said that upon reaching he plantation of the **Walter brothers**, he and President Gunter began immediately a tour of investigation. According to the Commissioner he and Mr. Gunter made first the rounds of the sleeping quarters, the kitchens and storehouses for the convicts. At each of the places they examined convicts in an effort to determine the nature of the treatment meted out to them by Messers. Walter, their wardens and overseers. Questions relative to the case of John Finch were asked the prisoners.

According to Commissioner McIntyre and President Gunter, the convicts sent to the plantation of the **Walter brothers** receive the best of treatment. The Commissioners state that more desirable lessees of the city's convicts could not be had.

Statements made to President Gunter and Commissioner McIntyre, by prisoners there, according to the reports rendered Tuesday morning, were to the effect that the negro John Finch was never mistreated, or beaten unmercifully. The convict who slept in the same bunk with Finch stated to Messrs. Gunter and McIntyre that Finch was not beaten to death.

Dr. Garrett, [See PHA Newsletter, July 2020] the physician who issued the certificate of death for Finch, was interviewed by President Gunter and Mr. McIntyre. Dr. Garrett said that Finch died of dysentery, complicated by chronic indigestion.

Transcription of *Montgomery Advertiser* article of November 13, 1912:

WALTER BROTHERS GET 1913 CITY CONVICTS

The contract between the city and **Walter Brothers** for the use of the city convicts was renewed for 1913 at a meeting of the City Commission Tuesday. **Walter Brothers** will be required to furnish bond of \$1,000.00 to guarantee that they will carry out the terms of the contract.

Under the terms of the document, the city is to receive \$14.00 per month for every person more than 16 years old and sentenced for more than ninety days. \$13.00 per month for same persons sentenced for fewer than ninety days., \$10.00 for every person under 16 and sentenced for ninety days or more, and \$9.00 for persons under 16 sentenced for fewer than ninety days. The city will also receive \$9.00 for all women leased to **Walter Brothers** by the terms of the instrument.

The original contract was awarded to **Walter Brothers** last February and the commission at that time agreed to renew the agreement if the firm desired the convicts for another year.

Transcription of article from *Montgomery Advertiser*, February 3, 1915:

NEGRO'S HOBBY IS TO START SELF-STARTERS OF ALL AUTOS

ROBERT TATUM HAS PECULIAR HOBBY THAT COST HIM \$200 AND COSTS, OR 412 DAYS AT HARD LABOR, HE HAS JUST FINISHED ONE TERM

All persons are said to have their "hobbies." Robert Tatum, a 15-year old negro, is no exception, but his "hobby" is constantly getting him in trouble. He returned from **Walter Brothers** farm, where he served a sentence of three months a short time ago, and he will this morning take an early morning train for **Walter Brothers** farm again, where he will serve considerably longer than three months.

Robert's hobby is borrowing an automobile just to take a joy ride. He claims that when he sees an automobile with no one in it, that he just can't help but see if the self-starter is working, if it possesses such. If the car is a "flivver," he just has to see if he is "man" enough to crank it.

One day last week, Robert got in an automobile belonging to J. B. Pinckard., which was on the Capitol grounds, and drove it away. He was seen to enter the car and the police were notified, followed him and placed him under arrest about two hours later. That ride, two hours long, cost the negro boy \$100 and costs, or 206 days at **Walter Brothers** farm. The same negro used another automobile without the knowledge or consent of the owner a few days before he took Mr. Pinckard's, and he was given the same sentence, \$100 and costs, in this case too, yesterday afternoon.

Tatum served his previous sentence at **Walter Brothers** farm for the same offense.

Transcription of *Montgomery Advertiser* article, February 16, 1916**UNRULY CONVICTS CHANGE MINDS AND CAUSE NO TROUBLE
THREATENED MUTINY AT WALTER BROTHERS' FARM IS NIPPED IN BUD**

City negro convicts on the farm of **Walter Brothers** revolted early Tuesday morning and for a time it appeared there would be serious trouble on the farm.

In one of the stockade houses Monday night the guards locked up several negroes and when they went to the door Tuesday morning to get them out for their day's labor, the convicts told the guards they were not going to come out; that they were armed with bed slats and any attempt to force them from the house would result in trouble for them [guards].

The overseer of the farm called the police department and asked what steps should be taken. The police informed him the city was under no obligations to guard the convicts nor to force them to work while they were on the farm, advised the overseer that he could, according to the law, use certain means to force them to work.

The guards then returned to the stockade and told the convicts that unless they came out that they would force them out; that they had a sufficient number of guards to compel them to leave the house and that they would do so, unless they came out of their own accord.

According to Mr. Walter, [which Walter, unknown] the negroes then came from the stockade and worked throughout the day, offering the guards no trouble at all.

It was stated at the police station that the first report from the farm came early Tuesday morning in the form of a request for police to assist in forcing the men from the stockade. Sergeant Cen????? declared Tuesday afternoon that Chief Long advised him the city was under no obligation to quiet any trouble which might occur on the farm, as it is located outside of the police jurisdiction, and that should the guards need help they should appeal to the sheriff and not to the police.

Walter Brothers have a contract with the city for the service of convicts of the city, and it was some of these that revolted Tuesday morning. No further trouble is expected from them.

APPEALED TO THE MAYOR

Mayor Robertson Tuesday stated that he was called over the long distance telephone Tuesday morning by one of the Walter Brothers and informed that the Montgomery leased convicts were unruly and refused to go to work and asked the mayor for assistance. The mayor informed him he said, that the guards on the farm should be able to cope with the situation and that they should force them to work, but not attempt to injure any of them.

Transcription of article from *Montgomery Advertiser*, August 23, 1916:**CITY COMMISSION HANDLES ROUTINE AT WEEKLY MEETING
WALTER BROTHERS WANT CITY TO TAKE CONVICTS OFF THEIR HANDS**

At the meeting of the city commission Tuesday morning Mr. Bain appeared to ask that his fine of \$2, which was imposed on him in Monday's police court for Sunday violation, be remitted. The request was granted with Commissioner Tyson demurring.

A letter was read by the city clerk from Chief Long asking that the remaining eight days of a fine imposed on a prisoner, who is the only support of his family, be remitted. The request as granted.

The Rotary Club wrote the commission asking when its request for better sanitation would have action. Since the commission has not yet had time to look into this matter, the letter was referred to the board.

OTHER ROUTINE MATTERS

The Realty Syndicate wrote the board asking that it be granted an exemption of rental on water mains in Cloverdale in exchange for 1,700 feet of mains that it will deed the city. This also was referred.

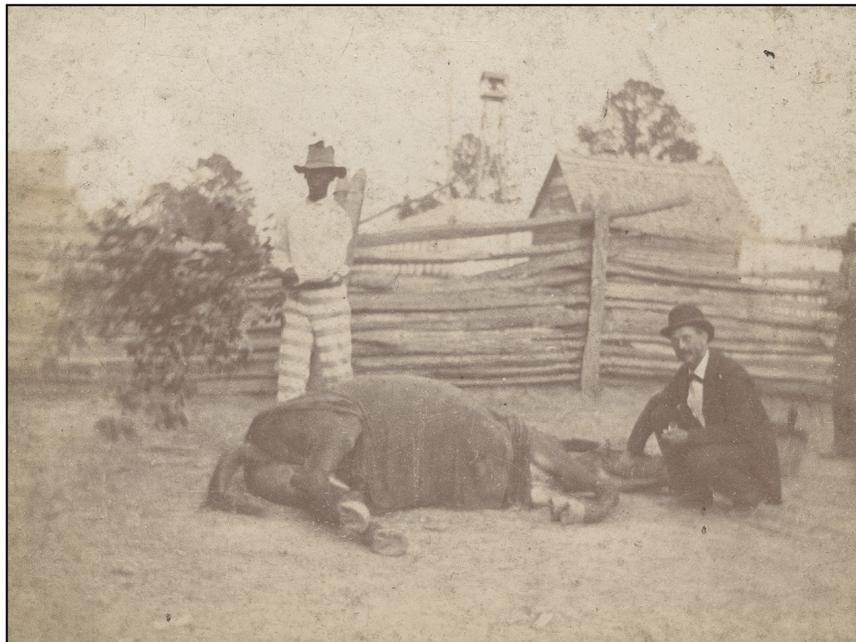
W. O. Strickland, who was fined fifty dollars in police court for carrying concealed weapons, had his fine remitted by the board.

The New Farley National Bank wrote the commission asking that it pay \$437.50, it's half of the expenses of securing bonds to secure the city deposits. This was referred.

T. H. Dudley, of Palmetto, and Arthur Street, wrote the commission complaining of the hog pens near him. The board voted to move the pens or fine the owners if they refused to move them.

WOULD CANCEL CONTRACT

Walter Brothers, who have city convicts working on their farm, wrote asking that the city take back its men, since the recent storms have made the men a dead expense to them. This was referred.



“Hypodermic injection by Dr. McCrummen. A sick mule at the convict stockade—Sprague Junction, Alabama” Courtesy Alabama Department of Archives and History

Note: Dr. McCrummen was a physician in Ramer, Alabama—not a veterinarian!

Newspaper Articles Retrieved by Adam Pitts

The following variety of newspaper articles were retrieved by Walter relative, Adam Pitts of Winder, Georgia. He is a Walter descendant through the Tristram Bethea Walter line. I selected these fourteen articles from thirty-five forwarded by Pitts. They seemed colorful and representative of local Sprague Junction life in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Thank you Adam!

New OIL MILL

Messrs. Walter Bros. & Co. have commenced the building of the oil mills near Ada, the present terminus of the Montgomery Southern. The site of the mills is near the store of Walter Bros., and will add much to that interesting section, besides giving employment to many who seek honest labor. The machinery is all furnished from foundries in this city, Mr. William Steele, one of the firm, having charge of the work.

1 The Montgomery Advertiser Tue Jun 26 1883

A SPECIAL TRAIN.

Brings in a Load of Cotton Over the Alabama Midland.

Yesterday morning a special train went out over the Alabama Midland on that part of the road completed between Sprague's and Troy and brought in a load of cotton for the Messrs. Walter Bro.'s.

The train brought in 250 bales of cotton and it was stored at the Alabama Warehouse. This is the first and only cotton the Walter Brothers have shipped by rail. They have marketed between 700 and 800 bales this season, but sent it all to the city by wagons except the 250 bales brought in by the special train on yesterday.

3 The Montgomery Advertiser Sun Jan 12 1890

DISSOLUTION

WOODLEY, April 12, 1886.

THE firm of Walter Bros & Steele has been this day dissolved by mutual consent, and Walter Bros. will carry on the Cotton Seed Oil and Lumber business on their own account.

All amounts due to be paid to them, and they will pay the liabilities, if any.
 april 20-ct WALTER BROS.

2 The Montgomery Advertiser Wed Apr 21 1886

ESCAPED - CONVICT!

Escaped from Walter Bros. at Sprague Junction, Ala., March 2, 1896.

WILL NASH

DESCRIPTION—Nearly black; about 5 feet 7 inches; No. 8 shoe; weight, 130 to 135 pounds; limps in walking. Convicted in Birmingham.

Will pay \$25 for his arrest.

WALTER BROS.,
 Sprague Junction, Ala.

4 The Montgomery Advertiser Fri Mar 6 1896

Heavy Loss by Fire.

Walter Brothers, large planters and general supply merchants at Sprague Junction, twenty miles east of Montgomery, were burned out the past week. It is reported the loss will amount to near \$10,000, with no insurance. It is estimated the stock of goods carried by the firm doing a general merchandise business was worth \$6,000; the store house about \$2,000, about \$600 in cash, together with all books and accounts, being burned.

The burning is supposed to have been the work of an incendiary.

5 The Randolph Toiler Fri Jan 14 1898

The dance at Sprague Junction last Tuesday evening over Walter Bros.' store, was a decided success every way, smooth floor, nice music and good dancers made the evening an occasion long to be remembered by those who participated.

The dance continued until early morn. Messrs. J. D. Boyd and W. M. Payne to whom the pleasure of the evening is due promise to send out bids to another at a very early date.

Among those present were Miss Minnie Walter with Geo. Peagler, Miss Bessie Tankersley with Mr. J. D. Boyd, Miss Carle Tankersley with Mr. W. M. Payne, Miss Alice Ekwurzel with Dr. David Shackelford, Miss Agnes Underwood with Mr. Tomy Shackelford, Miss Mattie Farmer with Mr. J. F. Robertson, Miss Janie Edwards with Mr. J. G. Glass, Miss Corra Lawrence with Mr. T. J. Hendunn, little Miss Eula Lee Underwood with Master Jesse Walter. Chaperones, Mesdames Adkin Walter, W. E. Pitts and Mrs. J. A. Watson.

6 The Montgomery Advertiser Sun Aug 6 1899

Will Renew Contracts.

Lessees of State Convicts Visit the Capitol.

For the purpose of renewing their contracts for the labor of third-rate men on farms, fifty in number, W. D. and L. H. McCurdy, of Lownsboro, and Jesse Walter, of Walter Bros., at Sprague Junction called at the office of J. M. Carmichael, of the State Convict Department, yesterday afternoon.

It is believed that the contracts will be renewed. They report much success with the men now working on their farms.

8 The Montgomery Advertiser Thu Nov 3 1904

Galdwell Cotton Planter.

We have just received a carload of these celebrated Planters and have numerous testimonials from prominent planters attesting their worth and superiority over all other planters. They can be had at Teague & Son's Hardware Store, Montgomery, and from us at Sprague Junction. Walter Bros. adv-it.

7 The Montgomery Advertiser Tue Jan 14 1902

THE CONVICT'S DINNER.

Sprague, Ala., Dec. 24. 1910.
Editor The Advertiser:

Your correspondent was a visitor at the convict farm of Walter Bros., at Sprague Junction today, where the prisoners were treated to a Christmas dinner. The table was loaded with fresh meats, vegetables, cakes, fruit, etc., and judging from the way in which they relished the good things set before them, they are well and healthy if not happy. The stockade buildings and grounds are in a clean and healthy condition, which speaks well for Mr. W. C. Taylor, the warden, who seems to thoroughly understand his business in the management of convicts. Visitor.

9 The Montgomery Advertiser Tue Dec 27 1910

Five Convicts Escaped Today From State Farm

Five of the city convicts, leased to Walter Brothers on their farm at Sprague Junction, escaped last night. They worked during the night, cutting a hole through the floor, and, digging out from underneath, got well away.

Deputy Sheriff Coke went down upon receipt of the information, with the sheriff's dogs, and is on the track of the fleeing convicts.

Walter Brothers have fifty-eight of the city's convicts on their farm. These are all in ward only for misdemeanors, the recorder's court having jurisdiction alone over minor offences.

The escape of the prisoners was reported to the police department at about 9 o'clock this morning.

10 The Montgomery Times Mon Jun 9 1913

Walter Bros. Employ Coke as an Expert in That Line.

W. C. Coke, who has been employed by Sheriff Horace Hood as a deputy and dog warden, has been engaged as dog warden by Walter Brothers at their convict stockades at Spragues Junction. Mr. Coke left today for his new position.

It is said that since the escape of the five prisoners from the Walter Brothers stockade a few days ago, it has been felt that it was necessary to obtain the services of a man experienced in the handling of dogs, for the betterment of the service.

WANTED—1,500 or 2,000 long leaf pine, cedar or cypress posts 6 feet long, by four or five inches in diameter. Walter Bros.
—1-3t

12 The Montgomery Advertiser Tue Oct 13 1914

11 The Montgomery Times Wed Jun 11 1913

NEGRO CITY CONVICT, WHO ATTEMPTED ESCAPE, DEAD

Charlie Phillips, negro city convict, died at a local hospital Thursday night from wounds received while attempting to escape from Walter Brothers' farm, this county, late Tuesday afternoon.

Phillips, while working in a field, feigned to be ill, and when Knox McClainey, a guard, approached him and laid down his gun, Phillips jumped up and struck the guard over the head with a hoe, inflicting serious, but not fatal wounds. Phillips then started to run in an effort to escape, and was shot three times by another guard who pursued him.

Both McClainey and Phillips were brought to a local hospital early Wednesday morning. McClainey is reported as rapidly recovering from his injuries.

Phillips was sentenced to 206 days in the Police Court Monday afternoon when found guilty of carrying a concealed weapon, and went to Walter Brothers' farm early Tuesday morning. Before he left police headquarters he told one of the officers that he was not going to stay on the farm, but was going to escape.

13 The Montgomery Advertiser Sat Jul 31 1915

LARGE ACREAGE IS GIVEN BY BROTHER, IN DEED RECORDED

*Farm Lands Figure in
Transfer by D. C. Walter
to J. B. Walter in Docu-
ment*

More than 1,500 acres of Montgomery County farm lands and an undivided half interest in 1,617 acres of farm property in this county, have been transferred by D. C. Walter to his brother, J. B. Walter, according to a voluminous deed, dated December 19, 1916, which was recorded Wednesday in the office of Probate Judge Teasley.

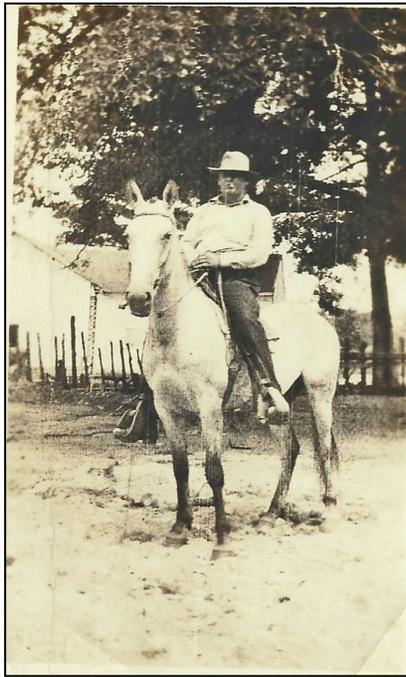
Some of the richest and best agricultural realty in Montgomery County is included in the conveyance. Mr. Walter states in the deed that the consideration is "love and affection and the sum of five dollars."

Property Transferred.

The lands conveyed in full are listed as follows: Sharp place, containing 120 acres, in sections 31 and 32, township 14, range 18; Hart place, containing 80 acres, in section 3, township 13, range 18; J. E. Sharp place, 60 acres, in section 8, township 13, range 18; McPherson place, 91 acres in township 13, range 18; Yarbrough place, 240 acres, in township 13, range 18; Carter Bell place, 40 acres, in township 13, range 18; McRee place, 240 acres, in township 13, range 18; Whatley place, 240 acres, in township 13, range 18; Gayle place, 160 acres, in township 13, range 18; Gardner place, 140 acres, in township 13, range 18; Ferrall place, in vicinity of Rocky Mount Road, acreage not stated; Underwood (Crump) place, 40 acres in township 13, range 18.

An undivided half interest in the following lands was conveyed: Sprague Junction place, 90 acres on Rocky Mount Road, in township 13, range 18; McDade place, 406 acres in township 15, range 18; Hogan place, 40 acres in township 13, range 18; The Store lot, 11.30 acres, in township 15, range 18; M. A. Wright place, 200 acres, in township 14, range 18; Henry place, 260 acres, in township 13, range 18; Adams place, 150 acres, in township 13, range 18; J. C. Walter place, 460 acres in township 13, range 18.

14 The Montgomery Advertiser Thu Jan 4 1917



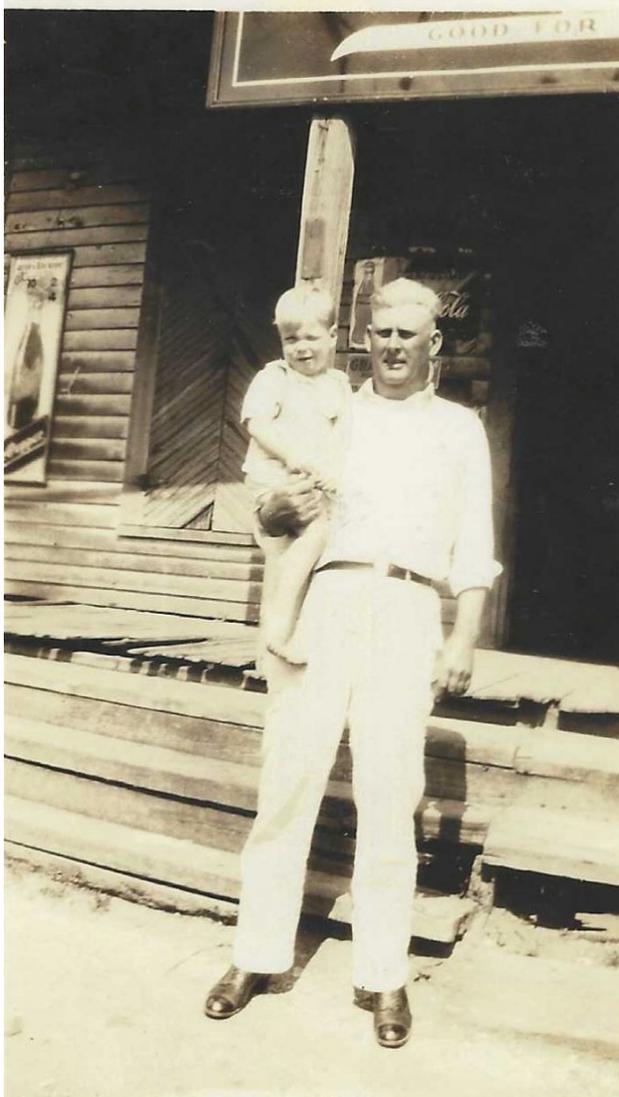
C. Knox McLaney, Sr. and the Walter Brothers Stockade

Cephus Knox McLaney , Sr. came to Sprague Junction from the Pike County community of Ansley in 1912 to work as a guard at the convict stockade established by the Walter Brothers Firm. It is believed that the stockade was opened around 1890. A documented date for its establishment was not found.

According to McLaney's grandson, Ricky McLaney of Sprague Junction, Knox, Sr. and his wife Zerah Larkin married in 1915 and lived for some time at a house in the stockade area. Knox, Jr. was born in this house (seen below). After the Walter businesses ceased operation in Sprague, McLaney, Sr. ran the store at the three-story Walter Brothers building which could have been built around 1880 according to Ricky McLaney. It was located near the rail tracks. No picture of the large three-story building has been found.

Courtesy Ricky McLaney





Knox McLaney, Sr. holding Sprague resident, Ray Goodman, at the Walter Brothers store, part of the large three-story building. Photo thought to be around 1930. Courtesy Ricky McLaney



Zerah, Knox, Sr. and Jr. McLaney pictured at the Rail Road Station, Sprague, ca.1923/24. This building was located in front of Walter Brothers three-story building which housed a store, business offices for the Brothers and hotel rooms on the top floor for men doing business with the Firm. Courtesy of Ricky McLaney

DENNIS MITCHELL HENRY NAMED PRESIDENT OF FAULKNER UNIVERSITY IN MONTGOMERY

Pintlala native son, Dennis Mitchell Henry, was born in 1967 to Margery Boyd Henry and the late Davis Garrett Henry, Sr. (1933-2022) both life-long Pintlala residents. Known to everyone as "Mitch," Henry graduated from Hooper Academy in Hope Hull, Auburn University and University of Alabama Law School. He returned to Montgomery after school to join the Rushton, Stakely, Johnston, and Garrett, P.C. law firm. In 2001 he formed his own firm with his colleague, Will Webster. This two-man firm grew to employ twenty-five plus attorneys in offices across Alabama and approximately fifty support personnel.

Over time, Mitch added to his professional agenda, teaching undergraduate classes at Faulkner University, classes at Jones School of Law at Faulkner and Agricultural Law at Auburn University. Mitch has also written a Bible study book titled *Cross Connections* and is completing a second book in this series.

His heart never left the farm life he grew up with in Pintlala. Mitch, his wife Cindy and their children maintained a registered beef cattle herd at their Prarie Oak Farm until his recent career change.

Combined with these many professional pursuits, Mitch, wife Cindy, children Mitchell (Rebecca), Lauren (Chase) and Ashby held dear their Church of Christ associations in Pintlala, Montgomery and other places of residence. They participated in leadership roles at these various churches.

In October 2021 the presidency of Faulkner University became open. The Trustees began the search process for a new leader of this private Christian university. Mitch and Cindy made the decision to pursue a whole new career path and Mitch applied for the leadership position at Faulkner University. On March 8, 2022, Mitch was appointed by the Trustees as the ninth president of Faulkner University.

In the midst of this exciting life-changing career move, Mitch's Dad, Davis Henry, passed away on March 23, 2022. Gratefully, he died knowing of his son's achievement.

Our community is proud of Mitch and extends to him heartfelt wishes for great success as Faulkner University's newly elected president. Congratulations to the entire Henry Family.



L to R: Henry Family: Mitch, Cindy, Lauren, Ashby, Rebecca and Mitchell
Courtesy Abbie Hardin



ADA BIRD BOYS

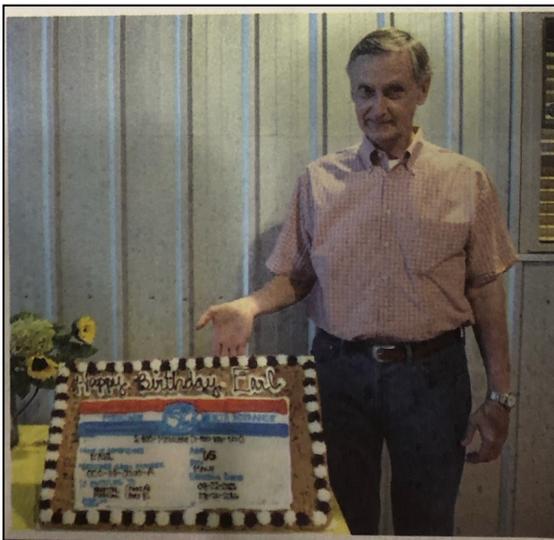
by Ricky McLaney

A group of men from the Ada/Sprague/Ramer area of Montgomery County began a tradition in 2001 of gathering in the fall for a social get-together, which the founders referred to as the Ada Pasture Party. The men were quail hunters together for many years and all had attended Ramer High School together. The founders are: Earl Russell, Weldon Payne, Carl Boyd, Ricky Webster, Dewitt Cowles and Hartley McLaney.

Their first gatherings were at the home of Dr. Robert Rex Payne in Ada, then moved to the former home of Duncan Campbell Walter (1839-1917) located a bit north of Ada. This property is now owned by the Payne family. The group fellowshiped in that location for several years until 2008 when Earl Russell constructed a new pole barn on his property in Ada and the party moved down the road a few miles (Hwy. 331). The group has grown over the years as each member was allowed to invite friends. In August the men and their wives have looked forward to good food, good spirits and lively music along with enjoyable conversation, which included stories that were embellished upon each year! The gathering attracted local politicians and businessmen, among whom have attended: Congresswoman Martha Roby, Probate Judge Reese McKinney and Morris Dees, founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center. The talk of the Walter Brothers and their use of convict labor on their plantation must have been interesting to Dees.

The Covid Virus has halted the gathering for the past two years.

Hopefully the fun can resume later in 2022!



The 15th Annual Ada Pasture Party was held on August 22, 2015 when hosts were: Earl Russell, Weldon Payne and Carl Boyd. Earl Russell was surprised with a Birthday cookie designed as a Medicare Card since he had turned 65 on August 15th.

All Ada photos courtesy Ricky McLaney

Sources for April, 2022 PHA Newsletter

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Newspapers.com at ancestry.com

Pitts, Adam. Winder, Georgia

Prim, Mary. *Miss Willie*. Privately Published. 1982

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Montgomery Independent

Walter III, John Adkin. Walter Genealogy

Writers recommendation: For a broader view of Alabama's use of the Convict Lease Law, please read: *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* by Douglas A. Blackmon, Published in 2008 and can be found at your local libraries.

Acknowledgements

My deep appreciation to the following who made this newsletter possible:

Gary and Jerrie Burton for their many searches on newspapers.com and printing Walter related articles

Adam Pitts for graciously sharing many Walter and Sprague related articles that he had located at newspapers.com

Ricky McLaney for his Sprague memories and photographs

Meredith McDonough and Amelia Chase of the Digital Assets Division of Alabama Department of Archives History



**PINTLALA HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION**

*c/o Pintlala Public Library
255 Federal Road
Hope Hull, AL 36043*

NEXT MEETING

**APRIL 24, 2022
2:30 P.M.
PINTLALA BAPTIST
CHURCH**

Join the Pintlala Historical Association
Please mail completed form & dues to:

**Pintlala Historical Association
Ina Slade
15212 Highway 31
Hope Hull, Alabama 36043**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Phone (Home & Office) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Areas of Interest _____

If you are interested in genealogy, please indicate family surnames _____

\$15.00 Annual Dues