

Place Names of Walker County

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Did you ever wonder how places were named? Walker County has some unusual names. Many are obvious to their origin: Black Jack, Pine Valley, Oak Grove, and Sandy are named because of the physical surroundings. I will take a few of the more unusual names and give possible reasons they were thus named.

Gourd Creek, in southern Walker County, is a spring-fed creek. The early settlers could fill their gourd dippers with this refreshing water. Gourds were very plentiful in the area. Waverly was named by Maxey Lewis for Sir Walter Scott's Waverly novels. Lewis was very fond of Scott. Winters was named for James and Rhoda Beall Winters who arrived in 1832.

Thomas Lake Road was named for the Thomas family who came from Selma, Alabama, in 1854. This is near the landing on the Trinity River where the steamboats loaded cotton from the nearby farms. Bethea Creek was named for John and Elizabeth Bethea who settled in the area soon after 1830. Tacky Ridge is the humorous name for the Carolina Community. Shockley's Chapel was named for Rev. William Shockley, a Methodist minister in 1853. Kittrell was named for the Pleasant William Kittrell family. Dr. Kittrell was an early physician in the area. Osceola was named by Samuel Calhoun in 1845. This area later was named Tuscaloosa. The Calhoun Ferry crossed the Trinity River near this point.

McAdams Community was named for the family of John McAdams, who settled the area in 1836. It boasted a post office from 1888 to 1917. Manning-Brimberry was named for Revolutionary soldier Mark Manning, and James Andrew Brimberry, who married Manning's granddaughter.

Smith Hill was named for James Carroll Smith who, along with his brother S. R. Smith, was an early merchant in Huntsville. The Smith family lived in the area of this hill. Rogersville was named for Colonel Micajah C. Rogers. Colonel Rogers sold land to the freed negro, enabling him to build a home.

Bedias was named for the Bedias Indians, who were native to this area of Texas. Cook Springs was the area where the William A. Cook family settled in the mid-1800s. Crabb's Prairie is located on the Cook Survey, but was probably named for Hillary M. Crabb, first probate judge of Walker County.

Farris Chapel was named for Farris Chapel, Tennessee, former home of Hezekiah Farris, a very early settler of the area. Martha's Chapel was named for Mrs. Martha Almira Palmer, wife of A. C. Palmer. It is believed she was the first person buried in the adjoining cemetery. Some have suggested it was named for Martha Robinson. The early Robinson Settlement was named for settlers William and Elizabeth Robinson who arrived in the late 1830s.

Four Notch got its name from the notches cut in the giant live oak trees at the entrance of the road. Possum Walk is believed to have gotten its name because an opossum walked down the center aisle of the nearby Union Hall Church during a service. Moore's Grove was named in 1848 for brothers Absalom A. and James W. Moore. There was never a store or town here, but a church and school.

Along Tilley's Tap several switches were established. Some remembered are: Barretts Switch, Townley Switch, Petella Switch, and Kelley Switch.

As soon as a newcomer found a place to settle, it had to be named. Early settlers often named the newly settled areas for themselves, a nearby landmark, or a place they once lived. Some of the other interesting place names are: Goose Paddle, Frog Joy, Wolf Hill, Lick Skillet, Goshen, and Bath.