

WILLIAM HENRY WILLINGHAM 1816-1886

The following sketch has been researched, compiled and contributed by W. H. Willingham's great-great-grandson, Kyle S. VanLandingham, P. O. Box 1779, Ft. Pierce, Fla. 33450.

William Henry Willingham was born in Scotland, April 18, 1816. According to family tradition, at the age of seven years, he was lured aboard a ship and brought to America. The ship landed in Virginia where William escaped and made his way to south Georgia.

In Ware County, Georgia on July 23, 1838, William Henry Willingham was married to Anna E. Hilliard, daughter of Silas and Abigail (Bulloch) Hilliard. Anna, known as Annie, was born in Bulloch Co., March 19, 1815. William and Annie's marriage was performed by Mr. Benjamin James, Justice of the Peace.

The Willinghams resided in Waresboro, Ware County, until about 1846. William was a farmer and served several enlistments in militia companies during the Second Seminole War. First, in Capt. David Miller's company as a private, June 9 to August 19, 1838; and again for four months, August 20 to December 21, 1838, discharged at Ft. Floyd, Georgia. He later served as 1st Corporal in Capt. Sweat's company of Georgia Mounted Militia, August 19 to November 18, 1840; private under Sweat, Nov. 19, 1840, enlisting at New Orleans, and serving until June 1, 1841. On October 6, 1841, he enlisted once again under Capt. Sweat and served until December 3, 1841, being mustered out at Trader's Hill, Georgia. At the time of service he was described as being 5 feet 9 inches in height, with grey eyes, brown hair and florrid complexion.

About 1846, William and his family moved to Columbia County, Florida where they lived until about 1848, moving to Hillsborough County. William settled about 25 miles east of Tampa in the Alafia settlement, near the present site of Mulberry. He purchased 160 acres of land from Israel Green, Nov. 2, 1852, the land being in Section 9, Township 30 South, Range 22 East. William also acquired in other transactions, 80 acres in Section 10, 80 acres in Section 4, and another 80 acres in Section 9, all the land located in Township 30 South, Range 22 East. On Dec. 1, 1851 William H. Willingham applied for bounty land from the Federal government, based upon his prior military service in the Second Seminole War. In 1852 he received 160 acres on Bounty Warrent number 18,549.

Upon his removal to Hillsborough County, William Willingham became actively involved in the cattle business. During the Third Seminole War, he served first in Capt. Leroy G. Lesley's company, January 10 to Aug. 20, 1856. Later he served in Capt. John Parker's company, Oct. 8 to Dec. 15, 1856 and later in Capt. F. M. Durrance's company, Dec. 22, 1856 to June 22, 1857; and again from March 11, 1858 to May 9, 1858.

An interesting item appeared in the Florida Peninsular, a Tampa newspaper, May 24, 1856. It concerns an affidavit sworn to by Jesse Alderman before Daniel Sloan, Justice of the Peace. According to the statement, William H. Willingham had told Alderman that a group of men, including N. P. McDonald, John Tyre, and Ell Tyre had formed a club for the purpose of causing mischief in the pioneer communities. They were going to raid homesteads, burn houses, and blame it on the Indians. Willingham had been asked to join the "club" but refused. According to the affidavit, William had been threatened death with a dagger if he told anyone about the plans.

The war ended in 1858 and it was now safe to move into the eastern portion of Hillsborough County. On Oct. 18, 1858, William sold to Milton W. Johnson his stock of cattle for \$3,000. On the same day he sold to Johnson his 400 acres of land in the Alafia section for \$3,000. William