

# Caruthers Family History

I have not been able to locate much information on the Caruthers side of the family. I have located to articles which have been attached to this report. Unfortunately, I do not know how they relate to Preston Caruthers, so I cannot link this information to the family tree. Perhaps sometime in the future I can do more with this data.

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Ocala Star Banner

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## **Farmer's prospered from 1842 land act**

**By David Cook**

The Armed Occupation Act of 1842 was designed by the federal government to lure new settlers to Florida and provide a buffer zone against the Indians. It proved most effective.

The inducements were a dream come true for farmers and would-be farmers in the farmed-out areas along the eastern seaboard. Property not exceeding 160 acres was made available to settlers for \$1.25 an acre. They were required to establish homes and defend those homes.

Many rushed to do just that. Between December 1842 and August 1843, 300 three hundred permits were issued for lands located within a radius of 20 miles from Fort King, which later would become the county seat of the new county of Marion.

Florida was still a territory. What became Marion County was still a part of an extremely large area called Alachua, with the county seat at Newnansville about 50 miles from Fort King. Ocala was not even a dream.

Belligerent Seminole Indians had been pushed south, for the most part, and small groups fought desperately to retain some of Florida for themselves. Most of the Indians already had been removed west of the Mississippi in one of the saddest chapters of American history.

The interior of Florida was still a dense wilderness accessible only through limited military and Indian trails or navigable rivers.

The St. Johns and Ocklawaha rivers became a highway into the area that soon would be known as Marion County, named for Gen. Francis Marion. However, most of the settlers came down in wagons or oxcarts, usually with the milk cow tied behind, grinding their way through heavy sand.

The three Caruthers brothers, Samuel, James and William, were among those who took advantage of the opportunity to get virgin land for practically nothing and came south looking

for a place to settle. Their home was Burke County, Ga., where they had been involved in farming and manufacturing.

Records show James and William obtained land under the Armed Occupation Act in 1843. There is no record the oldest brother, Samuel, received land under the act, but apparently he and his wife, Mary, came south about the same time.



William Wright and Rebecca Duncan Caruthers

The territorial legislature established Marion County in 1844, a direct result of the new settlers who poured into the area to take advantage of the Armed Occupation Act.

In 1850, Samuel and Mary are shown living in this county. Family members surmise Samuel settled in that southern part of Marion County that later became part of Sumter County when it was established in 1853. The 1860 census shows Samuel residing in Sumter.

James and his wife, Elizabeth, were born in Georgia around 1800. They received Armed Occupation Act permit 389 in May 1843 and settled at Sandy Brook in Sumter County.

James established and operated a saw mill there. He is listed in the Marion County Commission minutes as the builder of the first county courthouse, a log structure, in Ocala.

The sturdy building was only 20 by 28 feet in size, with heavy wood doors swung on massive handwrought hinges. James was paid \$225 for the job, with an additional allowance of \$80 for a judges' bench, jury boxes and other interior furnishings.

Records from the first courthouse at Fort King were brought to Ocala, and the new building was first used by the county commission on Sept.7, 1846.

James apparently died in 1848, leaving Elizabeth and six children. Marion County records show Elizabeth recorded her mark and brand Dec. 13, 1850. Her oldest son, Thomas, had recorded his mark and brand in May.

James' son, William Wright Caruthers, served in Capt. J. J. Dickison's famed Company H of the 2nd Florida Cavalry during the Civil War. He enlisted at Flotard Pond, when the company was formed, and was mustered out May 20, 1865.

He drove cattle for the government during the time when cattle were driven to market in huge trail drives that rivaled anything the wild west had to offer. He died in Sumter County April 27, 1892.

William. Wright is the great grandfather of Dr. D.C. Albritton of Ocala.

James' brother, William, claimed his land under the occupation act April 17, 1843, and received permit 365 at the land office in Newnansville. A year later he married Delila Hall in Alachua County.

He originally lived on land in the present Marion County, but in 1850, he bought acreage from Joseph G. Hall, his brother-in-law, in present-day Sumter County. Hall had homesteaded the land under the Armed Occupation Act.

At the present, this land is owned and occupied by the great grandchildren of William Caruthers.

Several descendents of the three Caruthers brothers have remained in Sumter and Marion County, working the land and contributing to the progress of these counties.

This information comes from Kay McGehee Love and her brother Lee McGehee, Ocala's police chief. They are great, great grandchildren of James and William Caruthers.

*David Cook is associate editor of The Ocala Star-Banner.*

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*Salty Crackers*, Volume 2, by Beatrice Mim Sheppard and Sybil Brown Bray, pgs 35-36, 1985

## **CARUTHERS**

**By Kay McGehee Love  
Great Granddaughter of Elizabeth Caruthers**

In 1843, Florida was still a territory. It had been only one year since the last Seminole Indian war had ended. The interior of Florida, still mostly unexplored, was a dense wilderness accessible only through limited trails or navigable rivers.

Into this frontier, however, came strong and independent people, lured by the dreams of settling new land. They were encouraged primarily by the Armed Occupation Act of 1842, a federal law which was in effect from December 1842 until August 1843. This Act provided inducements to those individuals who would settle and defend the land.

Three men who were attracted to the center of Florida by the Act were the Caruthers brothers: Samuel, James and William. Energetic and adventuresome, they resided in Burke County, Georgia where they worked in farming and manufacturing. But in 1843, James and William were accepted as recipients of land under the Armed Occupation Act and journeyed to Florida.

Samuel, the oldest of the brothers, is found living in Marion County with his wife, Mary, in 1850. There is no record that he received land under the Occupation Act. While not proven, it is surmised that Samuel Settled in the southern part of Marion County, which was later established as Sumter County in 1853. The 1860 census shows Samuel as residing in Sumter County.

James and his wife, Elizabeth, both were born in Georgia around 1800. He received Armed Occupation Act permit No. 389 in May, 1843. They settled in Shady Brook (Sumter County) where he established and operated a saw mill. James is listed in the Marion County Commission minutes as building the first courthouse (a log structure) in Ocala.

James died in approximately 1848, leaving Elizabeth and six children. Marion County records show that Elizabeth recorded her mark and brand on December 13, 1850. Her oldest son, Thomas, recorded his mark and brand on May 24, 1850.

William claimed his land under the Occupation Act on April 17, 1843 at the land office in Newnansville with pert-nit No. 365. One year later - October 30, 1844 - he married Delila Hall in Alachua County. He originally lived on land in present Marion County but in 1850 purchased acreage from Joseph G. Hall, his brother-in-law, in present Sumter County. Hall had homesteaded the land under -the Armed Occupation Act.

Now, 140 years later, this land is owned and occupied by the great grandchildren of William Caruthers. It is still farmed and cattle are raised on this homestead.

Several descendents of these three Caruthers brothers have remained in Sumter County, working the land and contributing to the progress of a county so rich with the Florida pioneer spirit.

#### THE CARUTHERS MARKS AND BRANDS

Elizabeth Caruthers recorded her mark on December 13, 1850. It is a mark crop in the right ear and a swallowfork in the left ear.

Thomas Caruthers, the son of Elizabeth and James, recorded his mark and brand on May 24, 1850. The mark was an underbit and a swallowfort in one ear with an upper bit in the other ear.

Cely Hall, the daughter of Elizabeth and James Caruthers, recorded her mark and brand on May 24, 1850. The mark was an underslope and crop in one ear with a swallowfork in the other ear.