

WHO IS LAKE DORA REALLY NAMED FOR?

Taken from *About Some Lakes and More in Lake County* by Walter Sime, pp 202-207. See reference at end.

The first map that I have found, which records "Lake Dora", is "Map of the Seat of War in Florida, 1838", Compiled by the Hon. Joel R. Poinsett, Sect'y of War, by U.S. Topographical Engineers, Washington City, 1838. I do not believe this map because it also shows other lakes, such as Tracy, Norris, and Hawkins which were not named until 1846 - 1850. This map is nearly a duplicate of the 1861 -1865 map (Fig. 1, page v) except the graphics for the swamp areas are different. With discrepancies in the manner in which maps are produced, it is not easy to know the true story.

The earliest Lake County Historian, of record, was Professor William T. Kennedy, who published his book "History of Lake County Florida" in 1929. He states that "Lake Dora was named for Mrs. Dora Drawdy who lived at the east end of the lake". He continues with "Jim and Dora Ann (Drawdy) were the first recorded permanent settlers, who came from Augusta GA, with their three small children, Daniel, Martha, and Mary Ann. They claimed 164 Acres about 2 miles south of "Lake Dora". It is not clear as to when they actually moved to Florida, however records indicate that James Drawdy participated in the Civil War and died at Richmond VA., at the close of that war. After the war the brigands roamed the Florida countryside, looting and burning, and Dora Ann reluctantly abandoned her home- stead and moved to Seneca where other homesteaders were already congregating. Other historians, such as R. J. Longstreet in "The Story of Mount Dora", and Dave Edgerton in "Memories of Mount Dora and Lake County", also tell essentially the same story about the Drawdy's settling in the area, and of Dora Ann befriending the government surveying party which resulted in their naming the lake for her. The timing of these events varies widely between these three historians, ranging from 1846 to 1882.

For example, one detailed account states that it was in 1882, during the resurvey of the boundaries of Orange County, that the Government Surveyors ran their lines through this section of the country and John W. Weeks, a graduate from the Naval Academy at Annapolis and later Secretary of War, was one of the surveyors. They were invited to camp on the homestead of Dora Ann Drawdy, where they were made to feel at home. To show their appreciation for her courteous treatment, they gave the name "Lake Dora" to the body of water that adjoined part of her homestead. (Other data confirms that J. W. Weeks was still in the Navy until 1883, so he could not have been here in 1882.) In my attempts to more clearly understand what actually occurred, I found that there are many more records available to today's researcher than what was available 60 years ago. These records do not necessarily provide complete continuity in tracing events, but they are more comprehensive, enabling one to close some of the gaps that previously existed in the story.

Let us look at the data recorded by Deputy Surveyor James M. Gould when he was surveying T19S - R27E, during December 1848. He started surveying the west boundaries of the sections, working westward through the Township, and had completed 24 sections when he reached section 32 and recorded "crossed bay to Lake Dora". There is no further mention of the lake until he runs the North Boundary of Sec. 31, recording "Began at N E corner Sec 31, ran West 23.30 chains to Lake Dora". In March 1849, while surveying T19S-R26E, he makes frequent reference to "Lake Dora", however he does not make the statement "let's call it Lake Dora", nor any other statement to assign such a name to the lake, as he had done when reaching another lake, where he said "let's call it Lake Ellen Hawkins". From my research it seems we can logically attribute the naming of "Lake Ellen Hawkins" to Deputy Surveyor James M. Gould, circa March, 1849. However, due to the differences in how he made entries in his Field Notes, it may be that "Lake Dora" had already been named by C.C. Tracy when he surveyed

the Township boundaries in 1846. Unfortunately, neither Deputy Surveyor made any notation, or reference, as to whom the lake was named for.

The International Genealogical Index (IGI), compiled by the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints", a widely recognized authoritative source of genealogical data, in their records issued March, 1988 shows:

Dora Ann Fletcher - born 12 May, 1826, in Irwin GA.
Christened - 1829
Father - Joseph Fletcher
Mother - Mary Hendly

Dora Ann Fletcher married James Drawdy, 28 yrs old, March 28, 1843, Irwin GA.

Children:

Mary - born ABT. 1844, Irwin GA.
Daniel - born ABT. 1846, Irwin GA.
Martha Ann - born ABT. 1848, Irwin GA.

James Drawdy died in 1848 in Irwin Georgia. The cause of his death was not in the records.
(Ref. 6)

Dora Ann Fletcher (or Dora Ann Drawdy), married William Jackson Drawdy, 13 Sept., 1849, in Irwin GA.

(Reference 6 states that Wm. J. Drawdy was a First Cousin of James Drawdy and that the marriage was made so that Dora Ann's children would all have the same surname.)

Children:

James A. - born ABT. 1850, Irwin GA.
George H. - born ABT. 1854, Irwin GA.
William J. - born ABT. 1856, Irwin GA.
Marie Jane - born ABT. 1857, Irwin GA.
Newton - born ABT. 1859, Irwin GA.
Georgia Ann - born ABT. 1861, Irwin GA.

(Note that only the year of birth is given for the children, which may indicate they were born at home without accurate recording of the date. Also, the 1992 issue of the IGI shows the "ABT", with source of information being by "family members". Further cross-checking of dates, made using U.S. Census data generally confirms these birth dates.)

1850 U. S. Census, Georgia, page 402, 22 Sept. 1850:

William J. Drawdy 19 yrs Farming Born Georgia
Dory Ann 24 d.o. Mary 6 d.o. 1844
Daniel 4 d.o. 1846
Martha Ann 2 d.o. 1848
James 2/12 (2 mos.) d.o. 1850

This data seems to confirm that William and Dora Ann were in Georgia as of this Census date. Also there is no entry for James Drawdy (Dora Ann's 1st husband) which confirms his death in 1848. A review of the U.S. 1850 Census of Florida, for Leon, Marion, Orange, and St. Johns Counties, did not reveal any "Dora Ann" who may have been known to the surveying crews, and for whom the lake may have been named.)

1860 U. S. Census, Florida, Orange County, Hawkinsville P.O., Roll 109, p541, 28-29 June, 1860.

Drawdy, Wm. J. 29 yrs Farmer Born GA
Dora Ann 34 GA
Mary 16 GA
Daniel 14 GA
Martha Ann 12 GA
James A. 9 GA
Wm. J. 7 *(4 yrs per IGI) GA
George H. 5 *(6 yrs per IGI) GA
Marie J. 3 GA
Newton 1 FL

* Except for these, the rest of the data correlates between the IGI and Census sources.

The 1860 Census would seem to indicate that this Drawdy family did not arrive in Florida until after 1850 but before 1860. Reference 6 states that Dora Ann did not move to this area until after the Civil War. The Hawkinsville P.O. would be the correct address for people living in the general area east of present day Lakes Eustis and Dora.

William J. Drawdy, enlisted in the Army of the Confederacy, Co. "G", 8th Florida Infantry. He fought at 2nd Battle of Manassas, Harper's Ferry, Sharpsburg, Chancellorsville, and Fredericksburg (Dec 11, 1862). He died December 16, 1862. While the cause of death was not recorded, it is probable that he was mortally wounded at Fredricksburg. (Ref.4) "Not long after the war, the widow and children moved to Lake Dora, Florida, where she reared her children to maturity and where she died. There is local tradition around Lake Dora and Umatilla that Lake Dora was named for Dora Ann Drawdy in 1848, but since Mrs. Drawdy was at that time a resident of Irwin County, GA., it is likely that the lake's name had no connection with her name." (Ref. 6). [This is somewhat in contradiction to the 1860 Census showing they were in Hawkinsville by that 1860 Census date.

While Surveyor James Gould makes frequent mention of "Lake Dora" in his field notes, did he really name the lake? The Florida Surveyor General's map (Fig. 28 page 35) showing "Status of Surveys, as of 1846", has named "Lake Dora", thus it was so named before Gould arrived on site. Perhaps it was Deputy Surveyor C.C. Tracy that named it when he was surveying the Township Boundaries in 1846. How did "Dora" get in the act?

REFERENCES:

1. "History of Lake County Florida", Prof. Wm. T. Kennedy, 1929. Reproduction copy Nov.1988 with introduction by Emmett B. Peter Jr.
2. "The Story of Mount Dora", R.J. Longstreet, Mount Dora Historical Society, 1960.

3. "Memories of Mount Dora and Lake County, 1845-1981" Dave Edgerton, (circa 1982)
4. "Soldiers of Florida in the Seminole Indian - Civil and Spanish-American Wars" 1903, Richard J. Ferry, Macclenney Fla., Prepared and Published under Supervision of the Board of State Instructions, 1903.
5. "International Genealogical Index"(IGI) - GEORGIA, as of March, 1992, pages 3,410 to 3,420.
6. "Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia", Compiled and Published by Folks Huxford, Author of "History of Clinch County, Georgia" (1916), and of "History of Brooks County, Georgia" (1948). This was published in at least 5 Volumes, which were reviewed at the Leesburg (FL) Public Library.

Reference

In his book *About Some Lakes and more in Lake County*, 1995, Walter Sime compiled a list of lakes and the origin of their names. He identified these from various Plats, Maps, Books, or Newspapers, at one time or another. His listing includes named lakes and contains multiple or variant names. Where multiple and variant names exist they have been cross-referenced. Material from this book is used by permission of the author.

About Some Lakes and more in Lake County contains a wealth of information on the history of Lake County and our lakes. This book is available for sale from the Lake County Historical Museum in the Historical Courthouse at 315 W Main Street, Tavares, Florida 32778. Their phone number is (352) 343-9600.