

## John Alexander O'Steen



No Picture Available

Born: 1767 Hadnot Creek, NC

Married: Ada Weeks

Died: 23 Jan 1842 Alligator City (Lake City), FL

Parents: William O'Steen & Elizabeth Davis

Info from: Judy Crabb Roberts-Oxford, Fla.

Jim Strickland lists John's birth date as abt 1772? and his date of death as abt 1840.

From *Pioneers of Wiregrass, Georgia*: by Huxford John O'Steen was born in North Carolina in 1772, a son of William and Elizabeth (Davis) O'Steen. The family moved to Effingham County, Georgia about 1791, then to Liberty County, then to Tattnall County. John O'Steen's wife was Ada Weeks.

More children have been found since this book was printed. There were 13 children in all, including Ada's illegitimate daughter, Phoebe, born in 1785. John O'Steen and family moved to Wayne County in its early days, 1810 or before, and also lived awhile in Camden County. Record is found in Camden of his service as an Indian spy in the Camden County militia under Major William Bailey in 1817. When Appling County was created, he became one of its first settlers in the 451st militia district which in those days embraced the whole of the present counties of Ware and Atkinson, Clinch and, Pierce Counties. He was first Lieutenant of the militia in that district, 1821-1822, he and his family were cut out of Appling into the new County of Ware, and when the new 586th district was formed out of the 451st it included the O'Steen home in present Clinch County. He was 2nd Lieut., of the militia in that district, 1830-1832. Mr. O'Steen was one of the Justices of Ware Inferior Court, 1829-1833.

John O'Steen died in Ware, now Clinch County, Feb. 15th, 1840, in his 69th year.

Census References: 1820 Appling; 1830, Ware

From *Families Remembered* by John Albert Burnett John O'Steen and family moved to Wayne County in its early days, 1810 or before, and also lived a while in Camden County. Record is found in Camden of his service as an Indian spy in the Camden County militia under Major William Bailey in 1817. When Appling County was created, he became one of its first settlers in the 451st militia district which in those days embraced the whole of the present counties of Ware and Atkinson, Clinch and Pierce Counties. He was first Lieutenant of the militia in that district, 1821-1822, he and his family were cut out of Appling into the new County of Ware, and when the new 586<sup>th</sup> district was formed out of the 451st it included the O'Steen home in present Clinch County. He was 2nd Lieut., of the militia in that district, 1830-1832. Mr. O'Steen was one of the Justices of Ware Inferior Court, 1829-1833.

Mrs. Ada (Weeks) O'Steen was a charter member of the High Bluff Baptist Church in present Brantley (then Wayne) County, when it was formed on June 30, 1819. Mr. O'Steen was baptized into the same church May 11, 1823, (see page 6) and on November 8, 1823 they were dismissed by letter to join in organizing the Kettle Creek Baptist Church in what was then Appling County, Georgia (But which became Ware County in 1825). Due to the loss of the latter church's records their subsequent church membership cannot be traced.

John O'Steen, late in life made a move with his family to Columbia County, Florida. He is shown in the 1840 census of Columbia County. John O'Steen died in Columbia County on Feb. 15, 1841. Ada (Weeks) O'Steen after the death of her husband moved in with her daughter, Mrs. Robinson who lived in Camden County, Georgia. Ada (Weeks) O'Steen is shown living with her in the 1850 Camden County census. She is thought to have died between 1850-1860. John O'Steen, and Ada (Weeks) O'Steen exact places of burial are not known.

There has been some controversy for several years over Phoebe O'Steen's birth being before John and Ada's marriage. During the colonial period it was very common for couples to live together and even have some children before

their actual marriage. Such couples were recognized as man and wife who later married when a minister was around. Earlier researchers upset over this birth incident before marriage have concocted several stories about Phoebe O'Steen. One was that she was a half sister of Ada Weeks-this is not true. Another is that she was a relative living with the family-also not true. Illegitimacy was a sticky issue in the colonial period. A

bastardy bond would have to have been posted for any illegitimate child. Carteret County, North Carolina records are quite extensive and no such bond exists for Phoebe O'Steen. She was the daughter of John O'Steen and Ada (Weeks) O'Steen that they had prior to their marriage.

<http://www.woodenshipsironmen.com/Hurst/np10.html>

More information:

Postmaster in Waresboro, Ware, Georgia.

The age of John O'Steen was determined by his election in 1782, as a juror for the Petit Court of Carteret Co. for the term of 1783. As age of 21 was a requirement for jury selection, it is obvious John O'Steen, Jr. was born by 1761, or earlier. A comparison of census records, 1800 Beaufort District with 1790 Carteret Co. shows the magnitude of the movement of people. Levi Weeks and Theophilus Weeks, cousins, had married in Carteret Co. to Esther O'Steen and Ann O'Steen, dau. of John O'Steen, Sr. Thus, began a long interrelationship between the Weeks and O'Steen families, extending through many generations until the present day.

It is obvious that John O'Steen, Jr. and Ada Weeks had known each other since early childhood, their families were neighbors. Apparently, they fell in love, as a result of their relationship Ada Weeks bore an illegitimate child, Phoebe. In 1785, the law in NC required the father of an illegitimate child to post a bond to ensure that the child did not become a burden to the state. Such a bond was a Bastardy Bond. In the birth of Phoebe Weeks, no such bond was ever posted, which suggests the father was known and families involved would take care of her. In 1788, John O'Steen purchased a marriage license. While there is no record of their marriage, it is apparent John and Ada were married shortly after the license was purchased.

The children of John and Ada [Weeks] O'Steen are correctly as stated in PWG [vol. vi] with the exception that Phoebe Weeks should be added as the first born, so it is believed. The children of John and Ada were recorded in the family Bible of Theophilus Weeks. This was Ada's older brother by family friend James Brooks. Easter, probably Esther was the last of the children recorded. In 1801, Theophilus Weeks and other of the Beaufort District began their migration to GA. John and Ada remained in Beaufort District. It is believed other children were born to the marriage, but separation of the families precluded the recording of the additional children. A comparison of census records suggests the possibility.

John O'Steen, Jr. moved from SC to Wayne Co., GA sometime between 1805 and 1810. He was not in GA in time to register for the 1805 Land Lottery. He had departed Beaufort District, SC by the time of the 1810 census.

In 1821, he moved to Appling Co. and settled in the part that became Ware Co., in 1825. He was approximately 60 years of age, or older. According to the actuarial statistics and he was exempt from paying a poll tax, jury duty, and other civil function. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that he served in the Appling or Ware Co. militia, especially to being elected as an officer or as a Justice of Ware Co. Court. The John O'Steen who did serve in those positions was, undoubtedly, the son of William and Elizabeth [Davis] O'Steen. \*Not sure if this information is accurate\*

John O'Steen, Jr. continued resident in Ware Co. until last 1833. He then moved to the Alligator Settlement in Columbia Co., FL, joining family and friends. The widows' Esther and Ann Weeks, John's sisters were living in Alligator Settlement. As devote Baptist John and Ada were received in membership of the Providence Baptist Church, 2/8/1834.

John O'Steen, Jr. d. 12/3/1842, at his residence in Alligator Settlement. He was in his early eighties. His son, Reuben O'Steen as appointed administrator of his estate. His widow, Ada remained in Columbia Co. for a short while. She moved to Camden Co., GA to reside with her daughter, Easter, wife of James Robson [Robinson], Jr., before 1850. She died shortly before 1860.

Contributed by: Col. Milton D. Weeks, 8308 Tobin Rd. Apt. 12, Annandale,

VA

<http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:3096228&id=I5759>

The first justices of the Inferior Court in Ware county were William Smith, Solomon Hall, John L. Stewart, Jr., Philemon Bryan and Absalom Thomas, all of whom were commissioned March 2, 1825. They served until 1829, when the following citizens were elected and commissioned April 20, 1829: Mark Addison, John O'Steen, William G. Henderson, John J. H. Davis and Thomas I. Henderson. The latter resigned April 28, 1830, and was succeeded by Thomas Newborn.

At the same time that the justices of the Inferior Court were elected in 1825, the election for a state senator and a representative from Ware county in the legislature was had, which resulted in the election of Philemon Bryan as state senator and John L. Stewart, Sr., as representative. Mr. Bryan was succeeded next year by Joseph Dyall, while two years later John J. H. Davis was elected representative, succeeding Mr. Stewart.

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## 1838 VOTER REGISTRATION LIST FOR FORT CALL PRECINCT, COLUMBIA COUNTY, TERRITORY OF FLORIDA

This Voter Registration List for the Fort Call Precinct, Columbia County, Territory of Florida was copied from the records of the Florida Archives by **Alma Dees**, Lake Butler, Florida.

The election was held on October 8, 1838 at this precinct for the purpose of electing three Senators to represent the Eastern District of the Territory of Florida under the inspection of the undersigned.

We the undersigned do certify the above to be a correct statement of the above election, October 8th, 1838. Signed: William Scott, Cader Handcock, Benjamin Moody.

Allen Parish  
William Parish  
J. J. Carter  
Moses Cason  
Josiah Parish  
Edmond Stafford  
Reuben O'Steen  
Eden Parish  
Ezekial Parish  
Edward Williams  
Enoch E. Mizelle  
Thomas M. Moody  
William Moody  
William A. G. Broadway  
Fisher Ghaskins  
Benjamin Griner

William A. Tucker  
E. Carter  
James Brooks  
Lewis M. Tucker  
Charles Gibbons  
Daniel Barco  
John Mathews  
Augustus Sylvester  
Cornelious Barber  
Nathaniel M. Moody  
Martin G. Handcock  
Benjamin Moody  
Allen Thomas  
John Prevatt  
William Scott  
Zachariah Weeks

James Weeks  
 John O'Steen  
John Weeks  
Shadrack O'Steen  
Issac Williams  
Cader Handcock  
James O'Steen  
William O'Steen  
Richison Douglas  
Theophilus Weeks  
J. M. Prevatt  
W. W. Tucker  
Rigdon Brown  
James Cason  
Berrian Cason  
Bartholomew Cason

## History of Alligator City, FL

Historians tell us that there was an Indian town at the present site of Lake City as late as 1817, under a Seminole Chief by the name of HALPATTER TUSTENNUGGEE, also called Alligator. Chief Alligator gave his name to the village. By 1824 there were several white families living here in the village of Alligator. One family was named Edward's and at least two families by the name of O'Steen and a Mr. Noel Raulerson is said to have been the first white man to locate on the present site of Lake City.

A treaty was signed with the Indians in 1824. Under this treaty the Indians agreed to move across the state locating their villages south of a line across the state locating their new villages about the present site of Ocala.

CHIEF ALLIGATOR is reported to have been one of the most intelligent of the Seminole Indian Chiefs. He spoke English and mingled with the earlier settlers on the friendliest terms. Later he was embittered against the whites and became a cruel and crafty warrior and at last was transported to Arkansas along with the other Seminole Indians from Florida.

After the Seminoles were transported south the white families were forever in danger of Indian raids, making it necessary at times to abandon their farms and rush to the nearest forts for protection. Fort Alligator on Alligator Lake and Fort Lancaster on the spot where the Community National Bank building now stands were built by the early whites for defense against these raids.

In 1830 a census was taken of Alachua County showing many settlers in and around the town of Alligator. The names of many of these original settlers are shown on the tombstones in a number of old cemeteries in this area. Many of our citizens of today are the descendants of these first settlers.

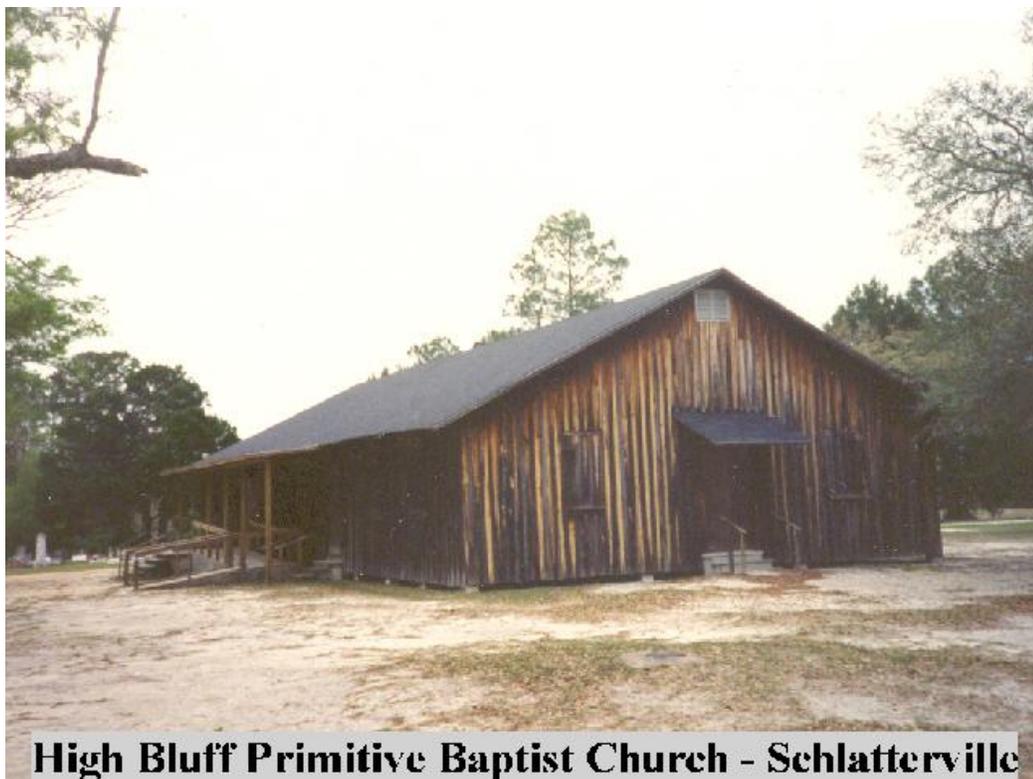
Columbia County was formed in 1832 from part of the original Alachua County with the town of Alligator as the county seat. Columbia County was Florida's 16<sup>th</sup> county. It originally included the present areas of Suwannee, Branford, Baker and Union Counties. The first post office for the town of Alligator was established in 1833, with John W. Robert's as postmaster.

When the first convention to formulate plans to apply for statehood was held in St. Joseph, Dec. 3, 1833, John F. Webb, Wilson Brooks and George McClellan were the delegates from Columbia County. After Florida obtained statehood, Adam Souder Goodbread was our first senator, 1845 – 1846. Giles U. Ellis, William B. Ross and George E. McClellan were our first state representatives, 1845

The beautiful fresh water lakes in and around their beautiful settlement with the great forests, fertile lands, exotic plants and green pastures brilliant in the warmth of the sun and the showers of this semi-tropical land brought a certain feeling of innate pride to these early settlers. They became impatient with the name Alligator and sought a name more in keeping with this sense of their appreciation of God's good earth where they had come to establish their homes, live their lives and pass on down to their children's children.

On Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1858, a legislative bill was introduced to change the name of the town of Alligator to Lake City and was suggested by Mrs. Elex Young and Col. Robert Brown, Columbia County representative, introduced the bill. The city was incorporated as Lake City on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1859.

Information from online research of "Alligator City", name changed to Lake City, town where John A Osteen and Ada are buried.



Judge Folks Huxford's notes revealed that the Raybon High Bluff Church was initially constituted on June 30, 1819, with the Piedmont Baptist Association. The settlement could have occurred prior to the establishment of the church.

They seemed to have come up the river in boats and some may have been members of Little Satilla Church (location unknown). The Presbytery of the Raybon High Bluff Church was Fleming Bates and Isham peacock. Others included, William and Elizabeth Dryden, **Aidey(Ada) Osteen**, John and Phoebe Roberts, Martha Hill, James Weare, Nancy Dryden, Sabra Taler, and some with family names of Dowling, Griffin, Roberson, Crews and Thrift.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gabrantl/church-19.html>



John A O' Steen buried in Price Creek Cemetery, Lake City, FL Picture taken 8/16/2008

