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Dixie County initiates Black History celebration



The covered picnic area at the park shows what is happening on Saturday in Cross City.

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © Feb. 26, 2018 at 6:38 a.m.

CROSS CITY -- Caroline Walker and five other women initiated what promises to be an annual event in Cross City -- Black History Celebration.



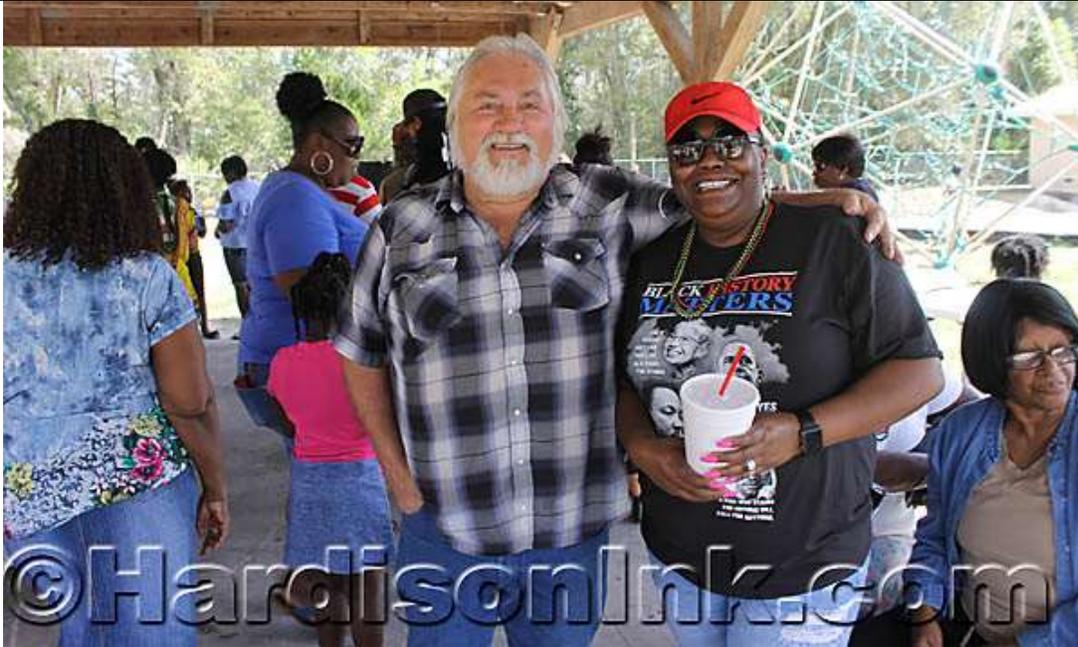
Caroline Walker shows the 'On The Move' theme for this first Black History Month Celebration in Cross City. She said the event is anticipated to happen yearly now.

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These nine photographs on a table are shown for people to recognize African-Americans of Dixie County who were among the leaders in the community. (front row, from left) Johnny Wilson is the first black Dixie County deputy; Dolphus Peppers is known for his community leadership and he served as an assistant principal; Prince B. Oliver founded the first black school in Dixie County; (middle row, from left) Heddie Bell Johnson is the first black mayor of Cross City (and she is still on City Council, and was present at the event); Tommy Carter Sr. is the first black police chief of Cross City Police Department; Appie Alexander is the first black Dixie County High School homecoming queen; (back row, from left) Wiley Walker was a community leader (he is a late husband of Chiefland Mayor Betty Walker); Doris Lee Williams was the first black City Council member in Cross City; and Willie Collins Sr. was a pillar of the community, serving as a deputy for many years. Among the people not pictured on this particular table are Nicholas Collins Sr., a DCHS student who was drafted to play in the National Football League; Mary Ruth Taylor, one of the first black history teachers at DCHS; and City Councilman Javonte Teague, who was present at the event. He is said to be among the youngest black men elected to a City Council from throughout Florida.

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Dixie County Commissioner W.C. Mills puts his arm around Caroline Walker. Commissioner Mills helped support this event, as did the Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition.



Mildred Davis, 94, is seen with flowers presented to her in recognition for her contributions to the community during her life. She is retired from the Dixie County School System. Another senior member of the community who was honored at the event with a presentation of potted flowers was Lucy McCann.

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While everyone in the community helped this event succeed, the leaders who joined Walker to make this celebration memorable are Angela Carter, Elsie Carter, Florence Carter, Shannon Driver and Jenesia Teague.

The inaugural event at Joe Greene Park (Northwest Cross City Park) on Saturday (Feb. 24) went from noon until 5 p.m. The park is located on Northeast 121st Street (Martin Luther King Jr. Street) and 221st Avenue.

Williams said one of the themes for this first event is "On The Move." And an overriding goal is to improve the community.

There was a display with photographs of nine black community leaders who were in the forefront historically in Dixie County. Other noteworthy individuals were honored that day as well.

Food, fun and activities carried participants through the day of celebration as well.

There was a spades card-game tournament with plaques awarded to the top two players.

Winners in the "Hot Shot" basketball tournament were awarded medals.

There was a cake walk with lots of cakes going to participants. Cloth bags heralding the day were distributed and there were a number of other door prizes given away as well.

Beyond the blanket purpose celebrating Black History Month, the local event provided an environment for fellowship. And as anticipated, a good time was had by all.