

Niceville is one of the oldest continuous communities in Florida. ¹Originally it encompassed land not only on the East side of Boggy Bayou but also the portion on the West side that is now Valparaiso. Niceville, first known as Boggy, dates back from before the ²Civil War when it was situated in Walton County. After the ³Choctawhatchee National Forest was established in 1909, and first ⁴headquartered at the head of Rocky Bayou, the community's growth accelerated.

The name Boggy was changed to Niceville in ⁵1910 ⁶(as a more euphonious name) when it was still in Walton County. In 1915 Okaloosa County was created and Niceville was included in its boundaries.

⁷The 1930 Niceville Census enumerated that Niceville had 202 households and a population of 824. The first census for Valparaiso was in 1930 with 38 households and a population of 99.

At that time, the Choctawhatchee National Forest office at Niceville had moved to where Jackson Guard is today. Niceville had a public school, a doctor, the Niceville Hotel, telephone service, a post office, several stores, a barber shop, a laundry, public utilities, a golf course, a pool room, light plant station, real estate office and an automotive garage. Industries included boat building, fishing, lumbering and turpentine. Carpenters and painters were kept busy and highway construction was well underway.

Niceville was fortunate during The Great Depression because it had one of the first Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps in the nation, established in 1933, the first in the state of Florida and the only one in Okaloosa County. Some local men (known as LEM's) were employed to help train and work with the CCC Enrollees. From 1933-1942, the CCC improved roads, built bridges and fire towers and made numerous other contributions including work instrumental in the establishment of Eglin Field.

A petition for Niceville to be incorporated was signed on ⁸July 6, 1938 but it was not until ⁹May 25, 1939 that state legislation was signed "to establish a municipality of the City of Niceville". By 1938 the highway system through Niceville had been constructed and it was reported in *The Okaloosa News Journal* on June 24, 1938 that "Niceville is on the direct thoroughfare of the upper part of the Gulf Coastal highway, the DeFuniak Springs to Fort Walton highway and the Crestview-Fort Walton highway and all points north." Niceville's important road system was vital to the economic growth of the ¹⁰Bay Country.

It was suggested to the Niceville City Council that an established date be added to the City Seal as ¹¹July 21, 1868 when the first mail service was established to the community by the Florida Legislature. A vote by the City Council made it official.

While there are many oral accounts about the establishment of Niceville, its early history is now well documented on the Niceville Florida Online History Center website established in 2010 as an educational not for profit information source. To learn more about the early history of Niceville and the surrounding area, visit boggyflorida.com/Niceville.

¹ Walton County Farm Map 1910 (courtesy Baker Block Museum; Baker, FL)

² Letter from (2nd Lt.) John L. McKinnon (Walton Guards) at Boggy Bayou, Florida to (Rev.) John Newton, April 2, 1862

³ Choctawhatchee National Forest Established (*The Pensacola Journal* December 5, 1909)

⁴ 1917 Florida National Forest Western Division Map

⁵ Post Office Records (courtesy: Baker Block Museum; Baker, FL)

⁶ *The Breeze* DeFuniak Springs March 23, 1911

⁷ Niceville, Florida 1930 Census (April 4 - 10)

⁸ Niceville Ballots on Incorporation, July 8, 1938 (*Okaloosa News*)

⁹ House Bill No. 1302 "to establish a municipality of the City of Niceville" was introduced to the Senate on May 18, 1939 and passed on May 25, 1939.

¹⁰ Auto Line From Crestview to the Bay Country Will Make Round Trip Each Day From Crestview to Camp Walton. Fare \$4.00 Round Trip: (*Okaloosa News* 05/05/1916)

¹¹ Florida. *Laws, statutes, etc. Acts and Resolutions adopted by the Legislature of Florida. No. 16*, pages 190-191.