The Southern-Georgia Watchman

1858-1860, Our short-lived first newspaper that preceded the Valdosta Times

This is another newsletter where the planned article of emphasis changed because of information that presented itself in electronic searches. The Valdosta Daily Times began as the The South Georgia Times in 1867. It was soon renamed the Valdosta Times and in 1905 The Valdosta Daily Times. It is the longest continuous business in Valdosta. Some continuous family farmland ownerships in the county precede 1867.

However - Lowndes County, Troupville, Valdosta - had a newspaper previous to the Valdosta Times. It began in 1858. With no known copies of this newspaper in existence, information on it and its definite name have basically been “shrouded in mystery.”

The museum recently opened an exhibit, “Valdosta During the Civil War Era, A New Town Experiences Changes.” The exhibit emphasizes what was happening locally, about which little information exists. In searching on the internet for any mentions of Valdosta in early Georgia newspapers, clarification of the actual name of our first newspaper appeared. So far, the only correct historical recording of this name I have seen was by Jane Twitty Shelton in her book Pines and Pioneers which was published in 1976.

In the very few casual references over the decades that mention this first newspaper, the attempts at remembering the title varied. Some of the newspaper names were:

The Troupville Watchman
The Wiregrass Watchman
And The Valdosta Watchman

Researchers noting this newspaper often used a title listed from 1922 in The South Georgia Historical and Genealogical Quarterly, Vol.I, No.II., Lowndes History, by Folks Huxford:

The South Georgia Watchman

Folks Huxford credited the writings of Mrs. Hortense Baker for much of his information in the above mentioned journal. We, however, do not have Mrs. Baker’s writings.

When this paper began in Thomasville in 1853 it was named: The Georgia Watchman

But that paper is sometimes referenced as

The Thomasville Watchman

Also being published in Athens, Georgia from 1854-’82 was:

The Southern Watchman

As a standard practice newspapers repeated articles of interest from the papers of other towns. In this newsletter we “reprint” some of these very few articles from other newspapers, but taken from our community’s very first newspaper

The Southern-Georgia Watchman

One of Two Known Issues that Surfaced

The above graphic is taken from an electronic copy of The Bainbridge Post-Searchlight, February 17, 1916. In that day newspapers often, and soon, repeated interest stories from neighboring area papers. In attempting to see if the Valdosta Times told even more about this issue, one finds that the 1916 issues of the Valdosta Times did not survive to be microfilmed. B. T. Allen, in a historical article in the October 31, 1919 issue of the Pearson Tribune, (actual copy in Huxford files) happens to mention that the June 12, 1860 Watchman newspaper was “Volume 8, Number 9.” This allows us to note that the DeLyon brothers continued the volume numbers from the beginning of the Georgia Watchmen in 1853 in Thomasville after they purchased it in early 1858 and moved the paper to Troupville.

Southern-Georgia Watchman Information from the Bainbridge Post-Searchlight February 17, 1916

“Mr. W. R. Wells, son of the late Berry Wells, living near Adel, has an old newspaper, “The Southern-Georgia Watchman” published in Valdosta in 1858. The date on the paper is June 12, 1860. The editor of the sheet was Col. Lernoreon D. DeLyon. The paper is well preserved for its age and it contains many things of interest to residents of this section. Continued on page two
Among the interesting statements is one to the effect that subscribers are requested to call at the office of the Watchman for their papers until the post office was organized, which was anticipated at an early date. [post office for the new town Valdosta]

There is mention of the fact that in spite of the village being only a few short months old the wells of fine water supply plenty of cool drinks for man and beast and it is further stated that there are never sultry nights in the little village as a breeze always springs up to relieve the heat. Cool nights and splendid water are two of Valdosta’s boasts even to this good day.

There is an interesting account of the secession convention in Milledgeville, at which time a majority of the convention voted to affirm the “action of majority of our delegation in the Charleston convention, reappointing the entire Charleston delegation to represent the Georgia democracy in the Richmond convention and also in the Baltimore convention in the event that body adopts a platform recognizing the constitutional rights of the south as indicated in the resolutions referred to and nominate sound candidates thereupon.”

The minority members of the convention “neither indorses nor condemns the action of the Georgia delegates at Charleston; reaffirms the Cincinnati platform; recognizes the Dred Scott decision as the correction exposition of the constitution in regard to the equal rights of every citizen to settle with his property in the Territories, substantially pledges the support of the democratic party in Georgia to any nominee of the Baltimore convention who will give his endorsement to this proposition and suggest the appointment of a new delegation to represent the democratic party of Georgia at the adjourned convention at Baltimore.

There are so many interesting advertisements in the sheet, most of which are from Savannah. There are ads from commission merchants, dry goods and clothing houses, steamship lines and other various lines of business in Savannah, while there are insertions telling of stores in Albany, Thomasville, Blackshear and Quitman. All of these towns are older than Valdosta and for this reason were farther advanced at the time of printing this paper.

Interesting advertisements appear of lotteries in various parts of the country. Havanna lotteries on sale at Savannah predominate.

The paper was the official organ of Berrien, Appling, Ware, Brooks and Lowndes counties and advertisements of sales and other legal notices from these counties appear.”

Earliest Mention of Local Publishing

For the closest estimate as to the time of first printing of a local newspaper we are thankful the Georgia Telegraph (Macon) ran the notice below on March 30, 1858.

“The Southern-Georgia Watchman
Lowndes County”

“We have the first number of the Southern Georgia Watchman, recently removed from Thomasville to Troupville, by Col De Lyon, its enterprising Editor. It is an excellent paper, and we copy from its leading article, the following very interesting statistics of Lowndes County:”

The Telegraph followed the above commentary with a complete article from this first local Watchman issue that promoted the virtues of Lowndes County. [copy at museum]

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A Fishing Story: Georgia Telegraph June 22, 1858
From the Troupville Watchman
Hunting the Sein

“A party consisting of Mr. S. Bradford and seven others explored with a seine on the 7th inst, five hundred and ninety fish, and a large soft-shelled turtle, and killed an alligator six feet long. The seine was hulled in Little River, eight miles above Troupville, at a place somewhat famous for successful seining and where, we learn, a very successful haul had been made little more than a week previous.

At a single one of these fishing grounds, and they are to be found almost everywhere in this country, we are reliably informed, as many as one thousand fish, including trout, weighed nineteen pounds, and the finest brim are known to have been taken by one seining party.

The fish caught on the 7th inst., by Mr. Bradford and party, were principally perch and jack-among them some trout—no catfish.

Little River, at this place, Troupville, affords, also excellent line and bob fishing.- Troupville Watchman”

The Savannah papers are not a part of the Georgia Historic Newspapers, Digital Library of Georgia, search site. Additional repeated Watchman articles could be in them. Also, Special Collections of University of Georgia Library show having one copy of the Georgia Watchman, description, Volume 1, No.46, Nov. 30, 1853. 1853:11:30. Since the DeLyon brothers only added the name Southern to the title, this paper would probably provide us the template font.
“A Waterbound Village”
In 1859, Our First Withlacoochee Flood
That was Covered by Local News

News we never knew now comes from Southern-Georgia Watchmen articles, although few, printed in other papers. With current flood and waste management issues, and memories of the 2009 flood, it seems high water in the Withlacoochee still provides similar travails. In 1859, “excluded from communication with the world;” and in 2009, no Internet, no email, no cable TV, for some no home phones, “excluded from communication with the world.” Other comparisons can be drawn.

Note that the article describes the waterbound town in “hopeless incarceration.” Perhaps not prophetic, but it is interesting to note that houses of “incarceration” now exist in the old Troupville area between the two rivers.

Printed in The Georgia Telegraph (Macon), Tuesday Morning, March 22, 1859
(From The Watchman March 15, 1859)

A Waterbound Village
[The Telegraph notes] Affairs, during these rainy times, have gone on swimmingly about Troupville, if we may judge by the following from the Watchman of the 15th; and we judge they became no dryer very fast, after that Tuesday’s issue:-

“The mail crossed the Withlacoochee in a buggy, Sunday night, bringing the first intelligence from Savannah or from any locality eastward if this village, received here since the 3rd inst. Our rivers continued to rise until noon on Friday last, and have been higher than any period since January 1856. The flooring of Little River bridge, over which the water rose four feet, was replaced early Sunday morning, and the mail for Thomasville carried over in a one-horse buggy which, with considerable swimming, succeeding in reaching the hill beyond the river flats.

Both rivers are now falling rapidly, and may now be passed with comparative convenience and safety, but the threatening aspect of the heavens and sultry atmosphere, prevalent now several days, render very uncertain the continuance of the improving condition of affairs.

Pent up within impassible barriers, nearly two weeks, and excluded from communication with the world “the rest of mankind,” the “beauty and chivalry” of the village have been solacing the tedium of hopeless incarceration, in boat excursions over the swollen occasionally moonlit waters until recently nearly encircling Troupville.

As regards ourselves, we have only to observe what our readers will very readily conjecture from the appearance of our news and editorial columns the present week, that with the exception of two or three Savannah newspapers which came with the mail on Sunday night, we have not received a single one of our exchanges [other location papers] in twelve days; that we are totally uninformed in regard to events which have within that period transpired in the nearest neighboring town or village; and that we are disheartened and discouraged at the prospects of another indefinite detention or our paper in the Postoffice of this village.

As we go to press, the buggy has got in from Thomasville bringing a large mail.”

The Valdosta Watchman, a Revisit
Second of Two Known Issues That Surfaced

Because of Susie McKey Thomas’ clippings and abstracts we learn of a Valdosta Daily Times article on May 7, 1948 about the October 9, 1860 issue of the Valdosta Watchman. Susie had recorded the existence of this 1948 article from the “Backward Glance” column of the May 27, 1974 issue of the Times.

The 1948 article begins, “A copy of the Valdosta Watchman, dated October 9, 1860, probably the oldest newspaper published in Valdosta and still in existence, was brought to the Times by Tom Y. Ashley. It was preserved in the effects of his father, the late D. C. Ashley.”

The 1948 Times article is thorough in its coverage of the 1860 paper and Valdosta Watchman is the only title given to the edition. The 1948 writer tells of “Leonorean De Lyon who suggested the name ‘Valdosta,’ selected for the new county site. At that time he was editor of the South Georgia Watchman, presumed to be the name of his paper published in Troupville and forerunner of the Valdosta Watchman.”

So, in June 1860 the paper continued to be published as the Southern-Georgia Watchman but in October 1860 it is titled the Valdosta Watchman. In between these two dates on August 10, 1860, the Weekly Georgia Telegraph (Macon) ran a paragraph on the “Railroad Jubilee at Valdosta,” citing the Valdosta Watchman.

DeLyon Family Information Notes

The DeLyon family ancestry was Savannah and earlier Chasles-ton, SC. Leonoran DeLyon, as editor, and brother Issac De Lyon, as publisher, purchased the Georgia Watchman [Thomasville] newspaper very early in 1858 and moved it to Troupville.

Isaac DeLyon was the area census marshall in 1860. L. D. DeLyon is listed in Valdosta, occupation editor, and Isaac in Troupville, accountant, with a widowed sister-in-law, three of her daughters (his nieces), and a printer’s assistant. The DeLyon brothers moved individually to Texas after the Civil War, as did many people. The eldest niece (Leonora De Lyon Howth) from the 1860 census, went to visit in Texas ca.1870, but got married and did not return to Valdosta until 1915. Her visit was recorded in the Times, her remarks included: Leonorean named ‘Valdosta’ and taught school after the paper; Isaac was the first station agent for the Atlantic & Gulf Railroad; and after visiting in Savannah in 1860 she [age 11] returned to Valdosta on the first train to reach the town. The museum has more on the DeLyon family.
Exhibit: Valdosta the Civil War Era

The City of Valdosta was chartered in December 1860. Secession and Civil War came in early 1861, so the Civil War Era in Valdosta was the time of all facets of Valdosta’s establishment. The exhibit is named Valdosta During the Civil War, A New Town Experiencing Changes; Refugees, Soldiers, Churches, Education, Shortages, Troop Movements and Occupations, and Lives Lost.

One featured portion of the exhibit is the extensive museum collection of Col. Thomas Faries Civil War papers. Another featured area is a Lowndes County wartime family, John and Nancy Moore. They lost four sons, a son-in-law and two grandsons in the war. Jessie Moore of Alexandria, Virginia, has extensively researched the Moore family. For the exhibit, the museum’s rare textiles of this era are on temporary display. The emphasis of the exhibit is very local. The works of many area authors were used to compile information. The State of Georgia Tourism brochures on the Civil War include Valdosta as a refugee center and the museum for its collections.

Upper left: Mathew Woody of the Valdosta Daily Times and Tim Oliver on the rear grounds of the museum. Re-enactors pitched a soldier campsite and explained their living conditions during the Civil War. Center left: Re-enactors Shelley Decker at the museum entrance as Tommy Strom turns to greet a guest.

Panel photos below, left: The hours of the opening were set from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. so that children might be brought by on the way home from school. Included in this group are Cate Hunter and her children Russell and Richard. Center left; Morris Smith and Eleanor Howard view the exhibit in the upper gallery. Center right; Delores Parrish and Sara Crow as they enter the rear grounds to visit the campsite area. Far right; Jesse Moore, and sister, Laura Hutchenson.

For Hannah - Farewell, but first more Faries
At right: Hannah Parker and Geraldine Clifton. Hannah first came to the museum as an intern and then became an employee. She scanned and prepared the nearly 800 documents in the Faries collection for the digital age. Hannah came to Valdosta when her father, Rev. Rick Parker, came to Crossroads Baptist Church as Education/Administration pastor. She graduated from Georgia State in Atlanta and began her master’s degree online from the University of Oklahoma in museum studies. She completed her degree and on June 2 began work as cultural resources manager for the State of Oklahoma, where many relatives live. Geraldine Clifton had attended the Civil War exhibit opening during which ran a slideshow on the Faries collection that Hannah had prepared. Geraldine, in preparation for a program, returned to the museum a few days later for additional Faries information. Hannah and fiancée James Goodman are to marry August 30.
Valdosta Chief of Police Brian Childress presented for the museum archives photographs of police officers and staff from several recent decades. They have also been digitized.

W. Gus Elliott, former Superior Court judge and now of counsel to the firm Elliott, Blackburn & Gooding, donated his 1952 diploma from Emory-at-Valdosta, the first for our archives.

Leadership Lowndes made a somewhat abbreviated visit to the museum in May. Above are two members of the 2014 Class: Danny Knight, President, Knight Appraisal Group, LLC; and J. D. Dean, attorney with Young, Thagard, Hoffman, Smith, et al.

Above: On the right is author Thomas Cobb and at left his wife Randy Mott Cobb viewing the Doc Holliday display at the museum. They reside in Foster, Rhode Island, however he grew up in Arizona. He plans to write a historical fiction novel on Doc Holliday in autobiography form, so they visit areas that were part of Holliday’s life. Cobb has written other books including Crazy Heart that was made into a movie by that name in 2009. The movie starred Jeff Bridges, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Robert Duvall and Colin Farrell. Bridges won the 2010 Academy Award for Best Performance by an Actor being presented the Oscar for his role in Crazy Heart. He is Professor of English and Director of Performing at Rhode Island College.

In the photograph above are Tyra Howard and Carolyn Haigler. Haigler is the Speech Pathologist with Valdosta City Schools and is also active as with Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority alumni programs. AKA sponsors Miss Ivy and Little Miss Ivy contests that raise money for scholarships. Miss Ivy participation provides learning activities which this year included the museum slideshow, scavenger hunts and outdoor exhibits, presented to the young girls by museum staff member Hannah Parker. Tyra Howard, local Tourism Director, had brought her daughter Erin, a contest participant, to the museum. Also, Valdosta Heritage Foundation members provided a tour the Robert’s House on Wells Street. The ivy leaf is a symbol of Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Valdosta Chief of Police Brian Childress presented for the museum archives photographs of police officers and staff from several recent decades. They have also been digitized.
Class Reunions: VHS 1964 & VHS 1969
Simultaneous Visits to the Museum

For Saturday April 26, the planners of both the VHS Class of 1964 and the VHS Class of 1969 reunions offered visiting the Lowndes County Historical Museum as an optional event during their respective weekend reunions. Being their 50th year reunion Elaine Parrish McMillan and Lynn Thomas of the Class of 1964 had visited the museum and chosen several items from the archives to be available for their classmates to view.

At top left are 1964 classmates Susanne Evans Smith of Newnan, Georgia, Foy Norwood (of football fame) from Middelton, Tennessee, and Beverly Gleason Hyde of Alpharetta. Susanne is a historical society member.

In the photo middle left are Elaine Parrish McMillan of Valdosta and Maxine Wilson Wilson of Westminster, California. Maxine married Emery Wilson of her high school class. Maxine helped bring home a region championship in tennis her senior year, and was State Tennis Doubles Champion with Nancy Simon. Elaine was a museum hostess for her class with Joan Weldon Gibson. Joan’s sister Shirley Weldon Harnage, with the 1969 class, was also at the museum.

At bottom left are Susan Wade Stewart ’64 and friend Rev. Dianne Shedd, Associate Pastor, Valdosta First United Methodist Church. Susan is a long time society member. Parents, other family and/or friends frequently accompany class members to these museum visits.

Identifications of VHS 1964 and VHS 1969 siblings:
The late Starr Howell Tart who resided in Valdosta and Jan Howell Moseley of Valdosta.
Sheila McCoy of Rome, Georgia, and Sally McCoy Branam of Macon.
Carole Steinberg Mizell and David Steinberg both of Valdosta
Shirley Stump Miller of Valdosta and the late John Stump who had resided in Valdosta. He died in 2006.
Marlene Taylor Peace of Montgomery, Alabama, and Diane Taylor Hingson of Chipley, Florida.
Valerie Weeks Ernst of Suwannee, Georgia, and Judy Weeks Malhotra of Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey
Joan Weldon Gibson of Valdosta and Shirley Weldon Harnage of Warner Robins.
Pat Whitten Shiver of Waycross and Dr. Carl Larry Whitten of Harrisonburg, Virginia.
The Wilson family moved soon after Maxine graduated from VHS, to New Jersey then Florida. Scott was then in Junior High. Scott was one that the 1969 class had wondered what happened to him. In talking with Maxine at the museum it was discovered that she was Scott’s sister. After discussion she dialed Scott and some 1969 members spoke with him, especially his nearby neighbor from years ago in Valdosta, Dr. Clem Brannen, now a longtime Atlanta dentist.
Sibling Connections
Discussion at the museum led to finding many sibling connections between the VHS 1964 and 1969 classes. The 1964 members are on the left side of each double column, thus the corresponding 1969 sibling photos are on the right. Most images are senior year Sandspur yearbook photos but there are some exceptions. Full identifications are on page six.
Her Grandmother Christened the Ship

Class of ‘69 Learns of the “SS Valdosta Victory”

The VHS Class of 1969 was familiar with Valdosta victories as their senior year included a 13-0 football State Championship season, won in the “Ice Bowl” at Grant Field in Atlanta, and the Marching Cats bringing home the first place trophy from New Orleans as The Greatest Band in Dixie. At the museum they learned about another Valdosta Victory, a WWII ship that was christened by Odessa Green McCrary, grandmother of their classmate Sissie McCrary Wall. Odessa McCrary died in 1958, the year Sissie turned seven years old.

Valdosta was greatly honored at the naming. Mrs. G. C. McCrary and Mrs. G. H. Tunison were chosen to christen the ship at Baltimore, MD, as each had contributed five sons to our country at war. Mrs. Tunison was unable to make the trip. We also have launch item photos of Josephine McCrary Lewis of Susanville, CA, another granddaughter, from 2003, when she visited Valdosta. For more information on, and photographs of, the SS Valdosta Victory go on the museum website to Exhibits, then Online Exhibits and then The Valdosta Victory Ship.

A Gypsy Pose

Left: Class of 1969 members are photographed with Gypsy the Elephant in the rear lawn exhibit area of the museum. Signage at the exhibit tells of her notorious rampage through Valdosta in 1902 and her ultimate demise.

Sissie McCrary Wall, Christening bottle and launch album from December, 1944

Sissie McCrary Wall, Leesville, SC
Jan Webb Roberts, Columbia, SC
Becky Southwell Daffin, Panama City, FL
Barbara Bowers Finn, Atlanta, GA
Jane Ferrell Burgsteiner, Valdosta
Debbie Holcombe Nagy, Valdosta
Millie Krug Olsen, Montgomery, TX
Joy Parrish McCall, Atlanta, GA
2014 memberships
Continued from previous newsletter.
Place of residence listed for those outside of Lowndes County.

The Trustees and Museum Staff greatly appreciate your memberships as they affirm our place as an important cultural entity in Lowndes County and help us to fulfill our mission—to collect, preserve and present the history of Lowndes County.

New Life Member
Craig O’Quinn Cowart, M.D.
Palm Harbor, FL
***
John and Lynda Copeland Buckholts
Forest Park, GA
Walton and Jan Carter
Tommy A. Clark
Belmont, MS
George L. Converse
Cincinnati, OH
Marjorie Dickerson
Dan Coleman & Carolyn Eager
Becky Southwell Daffin
Panama City, FL
John P. Dennis
W. Gus Elliott
Wm. Otis and Beverly M. Fletcher
Dr. Edward J. and Paula Fricker
Mr. and Mrs. Emil Girardin
Kathryn Hansen
San Antonio, TX
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Jack and Jane Hearn
Elizabeth Dean Heller
Lake Placid, FL
Dr. Charles F. and Nancy G. Hobby
James C. Jones, Jr.
Athens, GA
Nina S. King
W. Sidney Lanier
Jonesboro, GA
Michael and Floye Luke
Tommy A. Moore
Mr. and Mrs. W. N. Nunn, III
Rutland Low Voltage Systems, Inc.
Riley O. and Rhonda Rutland
Carey and Susanne Evans Smith
Marietta, GA
Jeannette B. Strickland

2014 Membership Application, Lowndes County Historical Society, P.O. Box 56, Valdosta, GA 31603

Memorials

Helen Pafford Bennett
by
Dr. Charles F. and Nancy Hobby

James Lovett Dewar, Jr.
by
Eleanor Morgan Howard

Lougenia ‘Lou’ Gillis Gabard
by
Donald O. Davis
Patsy T. Giles
Eleanor Morgan Howard
Jane Twitty Shelton
Richard W. and Jane Shelton
Morris Smith
J. Edward Willis

Betty Phillips Googe
by
Class of 1969
Valdosta High School

John T. Langdale
by
Marvin and Lyn L. Dickey

Katherine ‘Honey’ Hill Lewis
Waynesboro, GA
by
Catherine L. Redles

Rebecca Caldwell Odom
by
Marvin and Lyn L. Dickey

James Stephen Oliver
by
Jeannette B. Strickland

Adair Myddelton Nunnally Pizer
by
Jeannette B. Strickland

Dr. Malcolm F. Rainey
by
Dr. Charles F. and Nancy Hobby

Jeanne Redwine Davis Rountree
by
Marvin and Lyn L. Dickey
Martha Norwood Gibson
Eleanor Morgan Howard

Mabel Scruggs
by
Donald O. Davis

Elzie Leighton Wilkerson
by
John and Lynda C. Buckholts
Forest Park, GA

Jane Burr Rogers Willis
by
Marvin and Lyn L. Dickey
Eleanor Morgan Howard

John Capers Woodward, Jr.
by
Jane Twitty Shelton

Family Memorial

Mary Judson Lilly Eye
by
James and Susan Eye Wheeler

Gift in Honor

Joyce Bullington Paine
by
James and Susan Eye Wheeler

Membership Category
Individual $25. ___
Family 30. ___
Business 50. ___
Contributing 100. ___
Patron 250. ___
MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Ongoing Exhibit....................Valdosta During the Civil War Era
Closed for Independence Day ... July 4 & 5
July 10 & 24..........................Valdosta D.A.R.E. Groups
Closed for Labor Day.............August 30 & September 1
October 27 & 29.....................Tatting by Amy Brown with
VSU Learning in Retirement
November 15.........................Victoria Wilcox, “On the Trail of Doc Holliday,
From Southern Son to Texas Outlaw”

Officers and Executive Committee
President, Patsy Giles; 1st Vice President, T. Davy Shelton; 2nd Vice President,
Martha N. Gibson; Secretary, Joseph Tomberlin; Treasurer, Redden Hart;
Past President, Julie Smith; Mary McRee, and Anita Shelton

Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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Yesterday & Today Newsletter of
Lowndes County Historical Society

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Donald O. Davis

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Executive Director
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Hannah Parker
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