

YESTERDAY

&

TODAY

Newsletter of the  
LOWNDES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chartered September 1967

305 W. CENTRAL AVENUE  
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA 31603

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November & December 2005

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## Convention Emphasized Heritage Tourism

The tourism industry of Georgia met for their annual convention in September 2005 with Valdosta and Lowndes County hosting for the first time. The museum prepared four local history/ heritage cards and a Doc Holliday bookmark for the convention delegates without knowing that two weeks before the meeting Governor Sonny Perdue and other southern governors would hold a tourism summit announcing an emphasis on heritage tourism. Tourism ranks only behind agriculture in Georgia's economy.

The cards tied to locations visited by the delegates and/or related to ecotourism, agritourism, or local history. Upon arrival the delegates attended opening receptions at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts and the Crescent and a 'Pub Crawl' was optional that night in Remerton. The next day was devoted to seminars and that night the delegates took a trip to Wild Adventures, thus passing by Roberts Pecan Orchard.

The convention center forwarded an email to us that a delegate sent after returning home. A portion of it states, "I have to tell you that these cards are interesting and entertaining – and what a great way to promote a region. I ... see these as not only a fun tool for selling your area but educational for the staff in the Georgia Visitor Centers. If I had read the Wiregrass card [before leaving Valdosta] I could have sung *Jingle Bells* between Valdosta and Waycross before turning south to head back home."

A Governor of Georgia,  
A United  
Senator . . .



M. E. Thomson



W.S. West



Presidents Bush

and a  
President of the United  
have lived in  
Valdosta

**The 43<sup>rd</sup> United States Senator from Georgia, the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States, and the survivor of the Three Governors Controversy of Georgia, it a national embarrassment to the state, all lived in Valdosta.**

Col. William S. West was a teacher, lawyer, planter and in the lumber and sawmill business. In 1898 he built his beautiful home *The Crescent*. Although a United States Senator for only eight months in 1914, the *Saturday Evening Post* reported him as "the senator from Georgia who wanted to know 'Why?'" West died in Valdosta late in 1914 and is buried in Sunset Hill Cemetery. The domed signature building at Valdosta State is named for him – West Hall.

After graduating from Yale University, George W. Bush signed up with the Texas Air National Guard. He was assigned to duty at Moody Air Force Base, Valdosta, Georgia, where he learned to fly the F-102 jet fighter. When he graduated in November, 1969, his father, then Congressman George H. W. Bush, came to Moody to deliver the commencement address, and to pin the wings of an Air Force pilot on his son. During his months here Bush dated a Valdosta State cheerleader – and we know who she is.

The courts declared Melvin E. Thompson, elected Georgia's first Lt. Governor in 1946, as rightful governor in 1947 ending the Three Governors Controversy. Eugene Talmadge was elected but died before taking office. Herman Talmadge, son of Eugene, had the legislature elect him as governor. He moved in and changed the locks. Outgoing Gov. Ellis Arnall would not leave because of the problem and set up an office elsewhere in the capital building. In Thompson's short twenty months as governor he successfully accomplished the State of Georgia's purchase of Jekyll Island, then called Thompson's Folly, now a jewel for the people of Georgia. Active in real estate development and civic affairs, Gov. Thompson lived in Valdosta from 1948 until his death in 1980. Burial was in Riverview Memorial Gardens, Valdosta, Georgia.

**US 84 ... the Wiregrass Georgia Parkway**



First conceptualized in 1988 by a group of Valdostans, highway US 84 across South Georgia was theme named the ‘Wiregrass Georgia Parkway’ in 1995. Rich in historical significance, US 84 and almost all the towns on it exist where they are because of the railroad from Savannah which closely parallels it.

The term Wiregrass Georgia is especially appropriate as it celebrates the folk heritage of South Georgia and promotes knowledge and restoration of the longleaf pine/wiregrass ecosystem which is often referred to as *The Fire Forest*. A composite group is working with VSU to declare the Blazers “the flame in Wiregrass Georgia” as a part of the university’s centennial.

Stories along the highway include the composer of *Jingle Bells* James Lord Pierpont living in Savannah, Valdosta, and Quitman; Valdosta being the second place in the world to bottle Coca-Cola and peanuts being so important to the south Georgia economy.

So it may be said, “If you drive US 84 singing *Jingle Bells*, while munching on peanuts and sipping Coca-Cola, you are doing something very appropriate to the ‘Wiregrass Georgia Parkway’”.

**Wild Adventures --- Go ‘Nuts’**

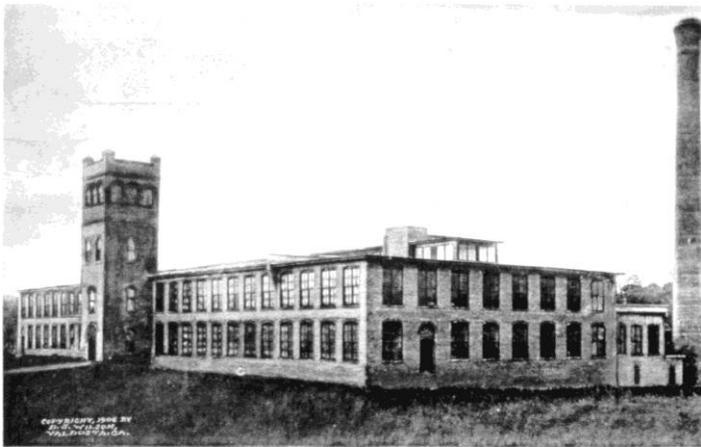


As you head to Wild Adventures Theme Park, to perhaps unwind and go ‘nuts’, be sure to notice Robert’s Pecan Tree Orchards on your left traveling south. The Georgia Pecan Growers Association said that a planting of less than 30 acres of pecan trees is called a grove and above 30 acres is considered commercial and is called an orchard.

Even though Georgia is #1 in pecan production pecan trees are not native to our state. A few soldiers brought native pecan trees from Texas to the southeast in the 1830s when returning home from the Mexican-American War. There is documentation of two producing pecan groves in north Florida in the 1840s

The pecan tree was introduced to the Lowndes County area in 1876 by Major Henry B. Holliday, father of the legendary Doc Holliday and multi-term mayor of Valdosta. A report by The Georgia Pecan Commission states that by 1886 ... several individuals had successfully produced and marketed pecans on a small scale near Savannah. In 1887 near Albany, Nelson Tift established a 500 tree orchard expanding to 2,500 trees in two years. But, by 1889, there were still only 97 acres of pecan trees planted throughout Georgia. In 1996, donated Georgia pecan tree wood was used to produce the 10,000 torches used to carry the Olympic flame to Atlanta.

**It’s a Pub Crawl Y’all.....  
in Remerton**

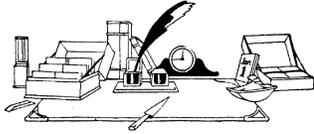


The license plates read Gwinnett, Glynn, Fulton, Bibb, Cobb, and Dougherty. Who would guess that they were in a town comprised of only 136 acres in deep South Georgia named Remerton? The drastic changing face of Remerton has been from a sedate mill village to an apartment and entertainment mecca for VSU college students.

The Strickland Cotton Mill was incorporated in 1899 on the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad and the town of Remerton was established for the mill workers. Now an island completely surrounded by Valdosta, then woods and farms were in between. The mill provided prosperity and economic growth to the area. Valdosta was the largest inland market for Sea Island Cotton in the world. Also during this era Valdosta was said to have the highest per capita income for a city its size in the United States.

Remerton marches to the beat of a different drummer. In 1996 Remerton voted to allow Sunday by-the-drink alcohol sales - while Valdosta has refused this measure. Next on the agenda in Remerton – private investors are restoring Strickland Cotton Mill!

## Albert's Desk



by Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

# A Christmas Story of Ho! Ho! Ho! or Who! Who! Who!

*Albert included this story in a newsletter several years ago and we felt it worth repeating. The article speaks of Grand Bay. Grand Bay was an almost unknown physical feature of Lowndes County when this article first appeared, but now is well known as a Wildlife Management Area with an educational center – complete with the fire tower from Kinderlou for observation of the wetland. Georgia Public Television and Georgia Magazine have done features on Grand Bay. Tourists in the museum frequently ask for directions to Grand Bay.*

*Botie Chitty wrote this article as the late Dr. Clyde Connell had related the story to him in a VSC sponsored bird watching class. Dr. Clyde Connell and his wife Dorothy lived in Naylor. He was long time head of the biology department at Valdosta State and she taught French at Valdosta High for many years. Botie submitted this article to Albert as Dr. Connell had told it.*



Dr. Clyde Connell



Dorothy Connell

It was Christmas in Naylor, Georgia. My daughter, her husband and five-year-old grandson were back visiting us from California. It was late in the afternoon and the womenfolk were in the house cooking, trimming the tree with more garlands, wrapping presents, etc.

The weather was balmy and I went out into the front yard to check on my camellia blossoms. As I was admiring a beautiful Betty Sheffield Supreme [camellia bush], I heard the “Who-Who-Who” cry of a great horned owl come from Grand Bay. I paid little attention because they were always carrying on down there.

I inspected a few more open blossoms on other plants and after this short time; I heard the cry, “Who-Who-Who,” again. The owl was closer to Naylor and my home this time.

A few moments later my grandson walked out to the front yard and began talking to me. He was just the right age to appreciate Santa Claus. He wanted to know everything about Christmas – what presents he was going to get, would Santa remember to bring his presents to Naylor? He was certainly full of spirit. I talked with him, answering all of his questions, and told him that Santa came to Naylor just like California, but after he leaves presents, instead of laughing with a “Ho-Ho-Ho” as he did in California, in Naylor he laughs with a “Who-Who-Who”.

At that moment, the great horned owl cried out, “Who-Who-Who,” from the large sycamore tree right across the street from us.

My grandson’s eyes got as big as saucers and he ran screaming into the house, “Mother, Mother,” he cried, “Santa Claus is right here NOW! He’s right across the street!”

In a few moments my daughter came outside, admonishing me by saying, “Now you’ve done it, now you’ve done it! I’ll never get him to sleep tonight – filling his head with your stories.”



**“Who! Who! Who!”**

## Dr. Bird and the 1918 Flu



Dr. Frank Bird

When Tony Smith of Cartersville, Georgia sent us this email over two years ago we were fascinated by the information. Tony is a frequent visitor to the museum and he and his mother, the late Billie Ham Smith, most generous friends to the LCHS. Having had a pregnant grandmother die of this flu, Tony's family sometimes discussed the pandemic. Tony said that besides his family, he heard the story of Dr. Bird from former Valdostans in his father's law firm in Atlanta.

We contacted Frank (Brother) Bird, III, who in turn contacted his oldest sister Rozzie, she having the late Dr. Bird's memorabilia. Rozzie told Brother Bird that she had nothing in writing about Dr. Bird and the flu but did recall hearing a like story as the one told to us by Tony Smith.

We did not print this in the fall of 2004 because of a looming, possibly dangerous, flu outbreak with no vaccine available for most. But this year with new concerns of a worldwide flu we thought you would find this interesting.

For an excellent article on the 1918 flu go the website [www.stanford.edu/group/virus/uda/](http://www.stanford.edu/group/virus/uda/). This is an article by Molly Billings, June 1997, modified February 2005. The article begins, "The influenza pandemic of 1918 - 1919 killed more people than the Great War, known today as World War I, at somewhere between 20 and 40 million people. It has been cited as the most devastating epidemic in recorded world history. More people died of influenza in a single year than in four-years of the Black Death Bubonic Plague from 1347 to 1351. Known as 'Spanish Flu' or 'La Grippe' the influenza of 1918 - 1919 was a global disaster."

Another very good site is:

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/influenza/sfeature/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/influenza/sfeature/index.html) .

The following is the e-mail from Tony Smith:

April 14, 2003

"Here is a story about the 1918 flu:

The World War I flu of 1918 probably originated in March of 1918 in Fort Riley, Kansas, from whence it was taken to the trenches of Europe and to the homes of returning soldiers.

It killed over 20,000,000 people on Earth (including my pregnant grandmother, my father's mother Clara Dodd Smith on 29 January 1919, and over 600,000 other USA citizens.)

One doctor was successful in treating it.

When Dr. Frank Bird of Valdosta, Georgia, USA, was returning to the USA from Europe on a World War I troop ship many of the troops got the flu. Dr. Bird observed that most of the officers died and most of the enlisted men lived.

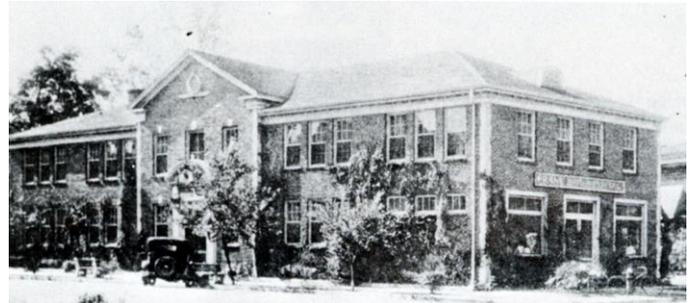
The enlisted men got no cool fresh air, no cold compresses, and no cold drinks, so that their fever was not artificially reduced.

When Dr. Bird arrived home in Valdosta, he treated his civilian patients by keeping them covered with blankets and maintaining high fever.

Other Valdosta doctors said he was crazy and inhumane, but their patients (who got fresh air and cold compresses) died, while Dr. Bird's patients lived.

Then other doctors copied Dr. Bird and said that he was brilliant.

PBS [Public Broadcasting] has a web page about the 1918 flu, but as far as I have read it does not mention Dr. Bird. However, it seems that no other doctor, either in the USA big cities (where the 1918 flu generated terrible panics) or anywhere else in the world, was as smart as Dr. Bird, because none of them are described as figuring out how to treat it."



Bird Hospital - 303 W. Central Avenue - Valdosta, GA

**VALDOSTA FAIR WILL OPEN**

**NOVEMBER 18th TO 23rd INCLUSIVE.**

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The opening of the Georgia-Florida Fair was postponed to protect visitors  
The danger of Influenza has passed—all restrictions removed—no masks  
required—you can come to the Fair with an open face and enjoy yourself

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**The Great Government Exhibits and all other Exhibits  
and Attractions Originally Contracted for**

See Full Descriptive Advertisement in This Paper.

J. M. ASHLEY, Secretary. O. D. DALTON, President.

This newspaper advertisement from the Pearson *Tribune* reflects the gravity of the pandemic. Events were postponed or cancelled - including the 1918 football season at Valdosta High School.

## Christmas All Year



Jeanette Coody presented the LCHS with a copy of *This is a Pair of Levi's Jeans... The Official History of the Levi's Brand*. The book is a gift from the Azalea City Women's Club. A portion of Mrs. Coody's message written in the book cover reads as follows:

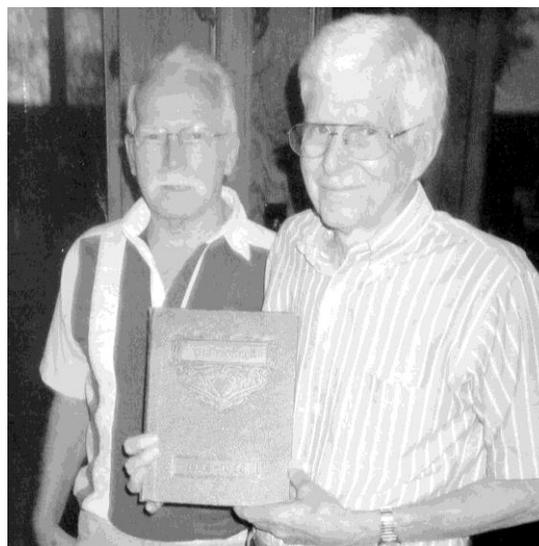
"Levi Straus & Company (LS&C) bought out Oberman Manufacturing Company June 1, 1966 and continued operation until November 1, 1999. There was a time when 1,100 employees made up the work force with three shifts. When LS&C closed the facility in 1999 there were 850 employees that made 125,000 pair of blue jeans daily.

The North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) forced the Company to close all 42 plants in the U.S.A. and go overseas to try to remain competitive. The Valdosta facility was one of the last to close....

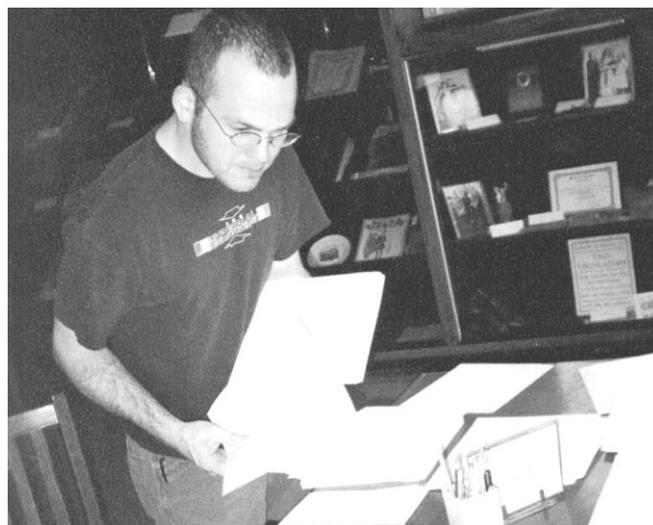
May the book be a reminder to each reader the great impact this great company had on our community through payroll and community grants for 33 years."



Catherine C. Corbett of Lake Park donated over fifty of the most recent issues of the Huxford Genealogical Society Magazine. We already had a comprehensive index to Huxford materials but did not have the recent years quarterlies. These magazines have proved most helpful.



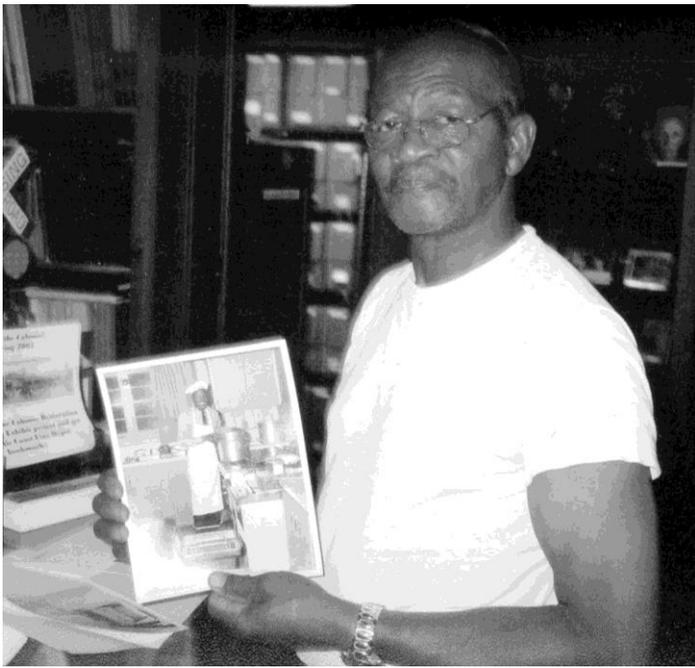
Gerald Weeks, pictured on the right, holds his copy of the first Clyattville High School Yearbook, *The Pioneer, 1948 - 1949*. Gerald donated his copy to the museum. He first scanned the yearbook into his computer. This is the first Clyattville yearbook for the museum and helps very much in tracing southwest Lowndes County information. On the left is Robert Davis of Lakeland, Florida, Gerald's first cousin who accompanied him to the museum.



One of the best gifts we received all year was a trio of VSU interns. In the photograph is Mike Holt. Mike spent many hours organizing the Chamber of Commerce photograph collection. Mike sorted the hundreds of photographs into such topics as politicians and celebrities, industry, construction, agriculture, recreation, arts and entertainment, education, downtown Valdosta, aerial photos, Moody AFB, Valdosta Airport; churches, homes and buildings, etc. The collection is now an effective museum asset.

Julie Lumsden helped to organize for and prepare scripts for exhibits, indoors and out. She also quickly understood the scope of our archives and library and was effective in assisting researchers.

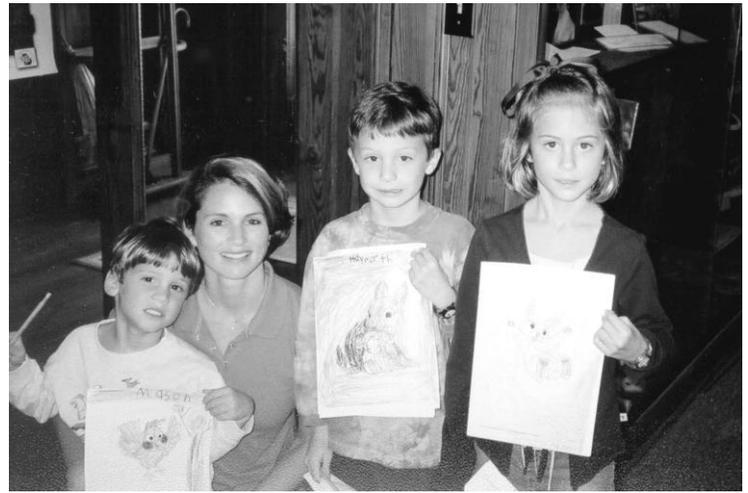
R. B. Smith separated the Ethnic - Black clipping file into categories including educators, politics, businesses and professionals, religion, Pompey murder case and others, 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays and others, Liberia, slave monument, Black Historic Calendar, etc.



Dennis Hampton, Jr., was pleased to discover this photograph of his father, the late Rev. Dennis Hampton, Sr. From the Owen Prewitt Collection, the photograph shows Rev. Hampton dressed in chef's apron and hat preparing for a 'big cooking' at Saddlebags. The Prewitt collection includes many photographs of downtown, parades, civic and social events, golf, building demolition and other subjects. The photos concentrate on the 1950s and early 1960s.



Our proximity to Florida always brings hurricane evacuees to Valdosta and the museum. We had over twenty-five Hurricane Wilma evacuees sign the guest register and some do not sign. In this photograph are Ruth and Mel Finley and Jim and Lottie Barnes. They were not acquainted but were in the museum at the same time. The Finley's home is Ruislip, England. They live in Naples, Florida for the fall and winter. The Barnes live on Anna Maria Island near Bradenton, Florida.



Cadden Anderson with her children Hayworth, Mason and McKinley. The Andersons are members of the Valdosta Area Home School Association and had completed local history activities on the museum's website.

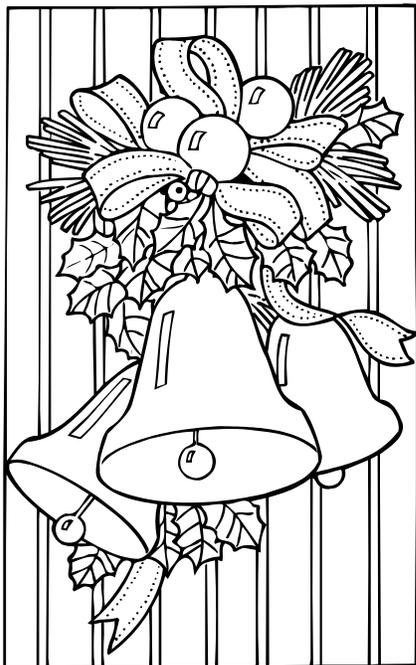
**Thanks to the following people who renewed their memberships.**

- VaNelle K. Anderson
- D. L. Bland
- Ben I. Copeland
- John Kent Edwards, Sr.
- Charles F. Exum
- Mr. & Mrs Wendell Godbee
- Lamar Golivesky
- Robert M. Hall
- Mr. and Mrs. T. N. Holcombe
- Hank and Claire Lee
- W. Paul and Brinkley McNeal
- Mrs. Emma Murrah
- Rebecca C. Odom & Becky Odom
- Mrs. Joyce Paine
- Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Smith - Gift from Helen Purdy
- John W. Thomas
- Mary Catherine Williams
- Alfred Willis

**Welcome New Members and New Gift Members:**

- Julian Q. Copeland
- Henry Joiner - Gift from John and Helen Thomas
- Buford Joiner - Gift from John and Helen Thomas
- Mrs. Bea Sherwood – Gift from Margie L. Dasher

**Join us as we  
Ring in the Holidays**



**with our  
Annual Holiday Open House  
featuring our Jingle Bells Tree  
and  
Downtown Valdosta's  
Jingle Bell Festival**



**Saturday, December 3, 2005  
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Special Showing of the  
World War II Power Point at  
11:00 a.m. and  
2:00 p.m. at the Museum.**

**Special Introductory  
Holiday Gift Memberships**

Think a friend or family member might like to be part of the Lowndes County Historical, but you're just not sure? Give an introductory membership for six months. The recipient will receive the newsletter through the summer and will receive a renewal in August where they can join for the regular membership year.

Introductory Gift Membership: \$12.50  
January through July

Name of recipient \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person giving gift  
\_\_\_\_\_

A Special Holiday Card acknowledging your gift will be sent to the member in December and they will receive the January/February newsletter.

**MEMORIALS**



**Henry B. Cannington, Sr.**

by  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

**Dugald Walker Hudson**

by  
Donald O. Davis  
Dr. and Mrs. William M. Gabard  
Dottie M. Mackey  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.  
Jane T. Shelton  
Gloria D. Sorenson

**Betty Freeman Lovett**

By  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

**Kitty Davis Nolan**

by  
Dr. Ben H. Jenkins  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.  
Gloria D. Sorenson

## MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>December 3</b>	<b>Museum Open House</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.</b>
	<b>Special Showing World War II</b>	
	<b>Power Point</b>	<b>11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.</b>
	<b>Jingle Bell Festival</b>	<b>12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.</b>
	<b>Christmas Parade downtown</b>	<b>5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>January 22</b>	<b>Trustees Meeting</b>	<b>2:00 p.m.</b>

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### Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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<http://www.valdostamuseum.org>

## YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of  
 Lowndes County Historical Society

### President

Julie Barnes Smith

### Newsletter Editor

Donald O'Quinn Davis

### Editorial Advisor

Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

### Kid's Page Editor

Andrew P. Smith with  
 Julie Barnes Smith

### Museum Staff

Donald O'Quinn Davis  
*Administrative Director*

Renate K. Milner

*Museum Director*

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### YESTERDAY & TODAY

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