### YESTERDAY

& TODAY Newsletter of the

#### LOWNDES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chartered September, 1967

305 W. CENTRAL AVENUE VALDOSTA, GEORGIA 31603

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January, February, March, April 2015 VOL. XLIV NOS. 1, 2, 3, & 4

# Cyrus G. Wiley, 1881-1930 A Most Distinguished Citizen - Rediscovered

### Wiley, Noted Negro Educator, Is Dead; Funeral Be Here

Rev. C. G. Wiley, paster of the New Bethel A. M. E. church of Atlanta, one of the largest negro churches in the South, died in Atlanta today, following a brief illness with pneumonia. Funeral services will be held in Valdosta, but the arrangements have not been completed.

Wiley recently resigned his post as president of the Georgia State College for negroes at Savannah to undertake the pastorate of the Atlanta church. Before going to Savannah he was principal of the colored schools in Valdosta, and was regarded as one of the outstanding school men of his race in the south. His sensational showing with the negro schools in Valdosta, which he built into one of the best accerdited organizations in Georgia, prought him wide attention and led to his election to the Savannah post.

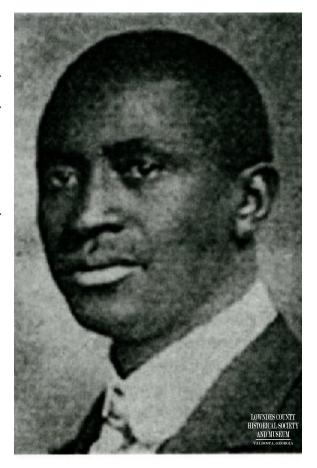
In his work with the Georgia trace College, Professor Wiley pressed industrial development for his race, and his efforts were largely rewarded. The school, despite a lack of funds at times, grew in importance and Wiley obtained national recognition for his efforts. He was an officer of many organizations of his race, social, traternal and religious, as well as one of the outstanding leaders in the educational field. He was a past-president of the association formed by negro educators.

After leaving Valdosta, Professor Wiley returned to this city often to visit the school system. He was highly esteemed by the people of this city, both white and black, and his death is deeply restretted.

Not long before the Holiday season last year we were contacted by the Savannah State Archives to see if we had photos of Cyrus Wiley who had been first principal of Magnolia High School here. In our archives we had only a photo of a stone marker that included his name.

Cyrus Wiley became the second president, of Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth, then the only state college for blacks, now current Savannah State, and later became pastor of Big Bethel A.M.E. in Atlanta, two exceptional positions to hold in the state of Georgia.

**Left:** Article from the VDT January 3, 1930. The VDT managed to publish the article the same day of his death in Atlanta



#### From the Atlanta Constitution, January 6, 1930

"Rev. Wiley was the principal of the high school at Valdosta for 15 years and later superseded Major R. R. Wright as president of the Georgia State College at Savannah. For four years he was president of the State Teachers' Association, dean of the college department of Morris Brown University for two years; pastor of the St. Paul A.M.E. Church of Macon for two years. During the last conference he was transferred to this city as pastor of Big Bethel. Which is not only the largest church in the state but one of the largest in the nation and one of the most historic race landmarks."

NOTICE: MUSEUM PROGRAM, SATURDAY MAY 23, 2015

VICTORIA WILCOX SPEAKING ON VOLUMES II & III
THE SOUTHERN SON: THE SAGA OF DOC HOLLIDAY
A GEORGIA AUTHOR OF THE YEAR FOR VOLUME I

See page three for details

### **Articles Offer Glimpse at Activity as President, Pastor**

Fortunately some newspaper records from the 20s and 30s have been digitized. Internet searches produced the two articles included here. They provide a glimpse into the activity of Cyrus Wiley, one when college president, the appeal letter at *right*, and the other during the period he was pastor of Big Bethel, *below, Atlanta Constitution*, December 18, 1929.

### A.M.E. Launches Movement To Aid Mission Churches

The A.M.E Ministers' Union of Atlanta sponsored a city mission movement at its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary services observed at the Amanda Flipper Memorial Church Tuesday night. Bishop W. A. Fountain was master of ceremonies.

Dr. J.L. Butler, acting president and 126 ministers favored a program of aid to need churches.

**Dr. C.G Wiley, pastor of Big Bethel Church delivered the special sermon**. Drs. J. A. Hadley, H. D. Canady and J. H. McFarlin also spoke.

A paper on "The Golden Rule" by Rev. T. T. Ivey was discussed by Drs. C.A.Wingfield and S. H. Rene.

Rev. W. A. McClendon, Gary, Ind., in a short talk declared that there is no plan for Christian fellowship in the north equal to the ministers' union of Atlanta.

#### Cyrus G. Wiley Award

In 1974 Savannah State established The Cyrus G. Wiley Distinguished Alumni Award to be designated annually. Wiley was the first alumnus, Class of 1902, of the Georgia State Industrial College to become its president, 1921-1926.

#### Photo Right:

Magnolia High School Valdosta, Georgia ca. 1916. Cyrus Wiley was the first principal of this school preceding his becoming President of The Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth in Savannah and then pastor of Big Bethel A.M.E. Church in Atlanta. This building was demolished as were others of its era; Valdosta Institute, the 1905 Valdosta High, then 1922 VHS lost in a fire.

#### Statewide Appeal Letter by Cyrus G. Wiley

This letter was mailed in advance of the Industrial College Day upcoming on February 17, 1922. The heading includes, Georgia State Industrial College, Savannah, Ga., January 24, 1922.

The copy here was is from the *Daily Times-Enterprise*, Thomasville, Georgia, February 9, 1922. The index to the *Atlanta Constitution* also references this letter. The letter reads as follows:

Fellow Citizens of Georgia,

There is being erected on our campus a \$50,000 academic building. This money was given by the legislature of Georgia. This building, when completed, will be one of the handsomest and best appointed in the South. And further, every bit of the work has been done by the students in training at the Georgia State Industrial College.

Now, we have still an opportunity which we must improve, a long looked for opportunity to secure a Girl's Dormitory. We are called upon to raise \$19,000.00 of the \$26,000.00 to match \$25,000.00 which will be given to the General Educational Board. We are in sight of a \$50,000 Girl's Dormitory. Boys have been boarding students for thirty years. Aren't you willing to give the Girl A Chance?

State Superintendent M. L. Brittain has given us Friday February 17<sup>th</sup>, as "Industrial College Day." On that day and during that week two kinds of tags will be sold 10 cent tags for pupils and 25 cent tag for patrons and friends. Can you afford not to help?

The Commission of Georgia State Industrial College and the State Department of Education are a unit in helping us to put this great Rally over. We must not fail.

The Negroes of Georgia "put over" their quota in every drive during The World's War, whether that drive was for money, for food, for men or for victory on the battlefield. You are now called upon to push the cause of humanity by the aris of peace, enlightenment and culture rather than by the instruments of death and destruction.

With one concerted effort from Rabun Gap to the Okefenokee victory will be ours.

Yours for the cause of education and humanity, C.G Wiley, President



### Cyrus Gilbert Wiley's Career Clues Supplied Leads, then Answers

In learning about Cyrus G. Wiley we first thought that he had served as college president from 1921-1926 and then immediately became pastor of Big Bethel A.M.E. in Atlanta.

Information in the March 13, 1929 [VDT] obituary of Hattie M. Dixon, his mother-in-law, caused need for more search. Wiley would die January 3, 1930, about ten months after Hattie Dixon.

The obituary indicated that in early 1929 Cyrus Wiley and his wife Lucille were in Macon, not Atlanta. When we obtained an obituary copy from the AJC (text of on page one) the pieces began to fit.

We found in 1926 Wiley went to Macon, resigning the Georgia State Industrial College presidency, to become pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. Church. But how was he also a college dean of Atlanta's Morris Brown University, an A.M.E. college, for two years? Searches showed that Morris Brown had extension campuses from 1913 until 1929 when discontinued because of expense. The information now collaborated the Atlanta Big Bethel pastorate beginning during 1929.

There are two mentions of Hattie Dixon's death in the same issue of the VDT, March 13, 1929. "Hattie Dixon, one of the best known colored women of this city died yesterday at the home of her son-inlaw in Macon. Her daughter is the wife of Prof. C.G. Wiley who for a number of years was the head of the colored schools of this city..... Her remains will be brought to Valdosta for internment in the cemetery here, Thursday March 14......The funeral services will be conducted at Macedonia Baptist Church tomorrow afternoon at 3:30p.m." Cyrus G. Wiley was buried in this same plot in Sunset Hill Cemetery

Cyrus G. Wiley was buried in this same plot in Sunset Hill Cemetery January 1930. Wife Lucile Wiley was buried there in 1960. They had no children, this perhaps contributing to a lack of knowledge of them.

# Valdosta Services at St. Paul's

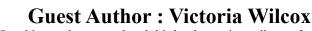
LOWNDES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Wiley's Funeral Today The funeral of Professor C. G. Wiley, well known educator and preacher, occurred in Valdosta today at one o'clock from the St. Paul's church, with Rev. Davis and other colored ministers officiating. Professor Wiley, as he was known when he was at the head of the colored schools here, joined the ministery after leaving Valdosta and was very popular with his congregation. death was His caused by blood poisoning. He was recognized as a man of unusual parts and had a great many friends among both white and colored people in this city.

# Program at the Museum: Doc Holliday Books

# The Lowndes County Historical Society and Museum



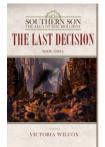


Speaking on her second and third volumes in a trilogy of novels

### **GONE WEST**

SOUTHERN SON: THE SAGA OF DOC HOLLIDAY

### THE LAST DECISION



**GONE WEST** 

Saturday, May 23, 2015 at the Museum
Opens 10:30 a.m.
Speaker 10:45 a.m.
Book signing after program

Refreshments provided
To reserve a seat please R.S.V.P.
229-247-4780 or research.lchs@gmail.com 305 W. Central Ave.

Author Victoria Wilcox will present a program on Volumes II and III of her trilogy Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday Saturday May 23 at the museum Volume two and three are respectively titled Gone West and The Last Decision.

#### Television appearance

Wilcox was a commentator in the recently aired Lies and Legends series on the Fox network. She also was named the 50th Annual Georgia Author of the Year for a First Novel for Volume I, Inheritance. "From cotton plantations in Georgia, to the cattle country and silver boomtowns of the Wild West, an epic tale of heroes and villains, dreams lost and found, families broken and reconciled, of sin and recompense and the redeeming power of love."

### Bessie M. Foster, 1938-2014, First Black Faculty Member at VHS









#### **Former VHS Librarian**

**Photo upper left:** Bessie Mae Johnson Foster from the 1968 VHS Sandspur yearbook.

Several weeks ago an obituary caught my attention as I realized the name was familiar. In checking it was the same Mrs. Foster that had been our librarian at Valdosta High from 1967-1969. As I recall, she was the first and only Black on staff before full integration in the Fall of 1969. She was married to James Foster and with their careers she was also librarian at Cook High, Lanier County High, Florida A&M in Tallahassee, Alcorn in Mississippi, public system in Pennsylvania and three colleges in Ohio. She graduated in 1955 from the Lowndes County Training High School, then from Albany State and Atlanta University.

**Photo above:** Some of the students serving as Library assistants for Mrs. Foster as identified in the 1968 yearbook: Phyllis Heirs (Killgore), Becky Southwell (Daffin), Teresa Sherwood (Steinberg), Phillis Karlip and Sandra Powell.

**Photo left:** Some of the students serving as Library assistants for Mrs. Foster as identified in the 1969 yearbook: Debra Beaty, Sherri Holman, Ingrid Hall, Emily Freeman (Reiley) and Sandra Weldon.

Current or recent Lowndes County Historical Society members in the photos include Becky Daffin of Panama City, FL; Teresa Steinberg, Valdosta; Emily Reilly, Orange Beach, AL; and also an assistant, Susan Eye Wheeler, Valdosta, not pictured.

### Georgia Day Program 2015

At the Georgia Day program Alfred Willis, PhD, spoke on the topic: "Six Georgia Houses Connected with Governor and Mrs. John B. Gordon: An Architectural Romance of the Old and New Souths." Valdosta's Crescent house is one of the six houses included in the topic. The meeting was held in conjunction with the James Jackson, Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter. Georgia Day is observed February 12 commemorating the day in 1733 when James Edward Oglethorpe landed ship *Ann* and Georgia began. In the photo *at left* are Al Willis, speaker, Jerry West, DAR president and Donald Davis, Museum Executive Director.

### "Teeny" Tells Tales of Naylor

We had a very pleasant visit from "Teeny" Cowart at the museum. Very interesting was that in 1937 Naylor High School had only two graduates, Teeny Carter and B. M. Junior Laurus. They were the class officers and were named to every Who's Who superlative in their class, each winning: Cutest, Best Dressed, Most Athletic, Quietest, Biggest Flirt, Most Intellectual and Best All-Round. She donated her 1937 high school diploma, a rare document since there are only two. The diploma was signed by A.V. Folsom, County School Superintendent, L. W. Blanchard, Superintendent of Naylor High School and C.E. Connell, Chairman, Board of Trustees, familiar early citizens.

She also donated clippings; photos, including the basketball team below; family history and Naylor Baptist information including a program copy from the Naylor Baptist Church First Annual Homecoming.

A different recent acquisition brought us items of another early Naylor resident, Hillery C. Cowart, 1874-1958. His valise containing various items had been kept by a cousin the late Trollie F. Cowart of Jacksonville, FL, whose son Craig O'Quinn Cowart, M.D., of Palm Harbor, FL made the donation. A surprise item in the valise was a 1920s men's wool swimsuit of the Twin Lakes development era.



**Above:** At right at the museum is Ernestine Ruby "Teeny" Carter Cowart and, at left, her daughter Linda Tout from North Carolina. "Teeny" grew up in Naylor, and she and her husband E. L. Cowart, of the Naylor area also, lived many years in Savannah She has been in Valdosta for several years living at Langdale Place.



Naylor High School Basketball Team 1936-37

From left: Elerleen Pittman, Mary Alice Baldwin, Teeny Carter, Sara Goolsby, Helen Blanton, Coach Virginia Rainey, Lucille Mullis, Christine Touchton, Ava Nell Pipkin, Leona Hughes

#### 2015 New & Renewal Memberships

As of March 31, 2015 \* Denotes Life Membership Place of residence listed for those Outside of Lowndes County

The Historical Society 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.

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William T. 'Billy' Dennis Marietta, GA

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Ladson and Gayle Golden Tim and Ellen Golden

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O'Neal and Faye Grant Mary D. Gray

Sarah U. Green Macon, GA

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Powder Springs, GA

Wm. Al Turner Continued on page 8 Continued from page 7
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Dr. Owen and Joann Youles Gretchen McCoy Young Powder Springs, GA

### In Memory: Redden Parramore Hart 1957-2015



Above: Redden Hart Valdosta High School yearbook Senior portrait 1976 Among the many of Redden's civic activities he was the "long suffering" treasurer of the Lowndes County Historical Society. He thus also served on the society's Board of Trustees and Executive Committee. He diligently watched over our funding.

The Society Trustees and Museum Staff extend our sympathy to Redden's widow Judy and to his parents Judge George and Lilla Kate Parramore Hart, his mother a Society former president.

He himself an Eagle Scout, Redden's chief civic love was the Boy Scouts. He was Scoutmaster of Troup 403 that met in the First Baptist Youth Building a few steps from the museum side entrance. He received the highest recognitions given to adults in scouting When Redden attended Georgia Tech he joined his grandfather's SAE chapter. Redden recently shared the story of his grandfather, ca1920, sponsoring the entire chapter to Ocean Pond, which included famous golfer Bobby Jones. We will make sure the details of this story get recorded.



**Above:** Redden Hart and Jerry West, President of the James Jackson Chapter of the DAR at the 2014 Georgia Day program at the museum. The event was cosponsored by the DAR and Lowndes County Historical Society

For the past few years Redden was President of the Valdosta Chapter Sons of the American Revolution and at each meeting he led the chapter in the following pledge and recessional.

PLEDGE

"We, descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution, who by their sacrifices, established the United States of America, reaffirm our faith in the principles of liberty and our Constitutional Republic, and solemnly pledge ourselves to defend them against every foe."

#### RECESSIONAL

"Until we meet again, let us remember our obligations to our forefathers, who gave us our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, an independent Supreme Court and a Nation of Free Men."

### **Eagle Scout Project**

With his keen interest in Boy Scouts, Redden Hart would have been pleased to see the completion of Thomason Gilchrist's, **photo below**, Eagle Scout project in the outdoor exhibits behind the museum. Thomason repaired the Native American hut replacing boards and the palmetto frond roofing. Several of the troop members participated. Thomason's troop meets at First Christian Church, Frank Richards, Scoutmaster. Thomason is the son of Lisa Gilchrist and Rob Gilchrist.





# **MEMORTA**

January, February, March 2015



#### Marjorie Webb Dees

Patsy T. Giles Beulah Exum Hennly J. Edward Willis

#### Hallie Hinshaw DiMascio

Eleanor Morgan Howard

#### Franklin Jefferies Eldridge

Patsy T. Giles

#### Redden Parramore Hart

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#### **Betty Hutchinson Holcombe**

J. David and Esther Paine Lifsey Atlanta, GA Jane Twitty Shelton J. Edward Willis

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#### Dr. Jerry G. Purvis, Jr.

Patsy T. Giles J. Edward Willis

#### James 'Jim' Brooks Sineath

J. Edward Willis

#### Joseph Raymond Slocum, Sr.

Donald O. Davis

#### **Betty Jane Barlow Smith**

Donald O. Davis

Dr. Joe C. Stubbs

Beulah Exum Hennly Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lastinger

#### Iris Hooker Webb

J. Edward Willis



### Tatting Class by Amy Brown

## **Lowndes County Historical Museum**

In Conjunction with VSU Learning In Retirement Monday May 4, 2015 at 10:30 AM -12:00 PM

### Tatting II: A Sequel to Tatting I

For this second tatting class series, you should comfortable making tatted rings. We will make a chain and read tatted patterns. Please bring your tatting shuttle, ball of thread, and scissors back to class with you.

2015 Membership Application, Lowndes County Historical Society, P.O. Box 56, Valdosta, GA 31603	
Name	Membership Category
Address	Individual \$25
Phone	Family 30 Business 50.
Email	Contributing 100.
	Patron 250

#### MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 4.....Tatting II by Amy Brown May 23.....Victoria Wilcox Program Doc Holliday Trilogy, Vols. 2 and 3 May 25......Closed for Memorial Day May 29,30.....The Society of Georgia Archeology July 3,4......Closed for Independence Day

#### **Officers and Executive Committee**

President, Patsy Giles; 1st Vice President, T. Davy Shelton; 2nd Vice President, Martha N. Gibson; Secretary, Joseph Tomberlin; Treasurer; Past President, Julie Smith; Anita Shelton

#### **Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum**

305 West Central Avenue P.O. Box 56 Valdosta, GA 31603 (229) 247-4780 Fax: (229) 247-2840 E-mail: ddavis.lchs@gmail.com

Web page: http://www.valdostamuseum.com

#### YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of **Lowndes County Historical Society** 

> **Newsletter Editor** Donald O. Davis

**Museum Staff** 

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Amy Brown Textiles and Research.

Harry S. Evans Special Collections and Research

> Adam Doughty Drew Johnson Social Media

#### YESTERDAY & TODAY

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