



Heritage Foundation Marks 40 Years

The Valdosta Heritage Foundation [VHF] will celebrate their 40th year at their annual dinner in May of this year. This newsletter was being completed during the Caronavirus warnings so we have no information if a possible postponement. The museum has an extensive VHF collection in our archives. This newsletter report only touches on the organization's activities over the years. The article below, taken from a VHF publication, concisely presents the early activity of the VHF. It is of note that the VHF was chartered in May as May is designated as National Historic Preservation Month. The article follows:

"In 1979, Mrs. Ola Barber Pitman left her home to "the people of Valdosta", and local architects, headed by the Richard Hill, and members of the Junior Woman's Club, began a clean-up campaign of the Barber House with an eye toward finding a permanent use for the home whereby it could be preserved. The next year the Chamber of Commerce was convinced that the Barber House could be utilized at its headquarters.

In March of 1980, the Cancer Society had the first historic Tour of Homes in Valdosta, which featured many of the homes in Fairview, and a church and homes along Central Avenue. In this climate of enthusiasm for preservation, the Valdosta Heritage Foundation, Inc., was chartered on May 22, 1980.

In 1981, through efforts of the Planning Commission, and members of the newly formed Heritage Foundation, the City of Valdosta adopted its Historic District Ordinance.

In 1982, the newly appointed Preservation Commission under the Historic District Ordinance began to function by classifying the historic properties in the community. Also [that] year, the Heritage Foundation began working with the Dalton family heirs in an effort to locate a purchaser for their family home located at 305 North Patterson Street. The Valdosta Junior Service League agreed to purchase, restore and make the "Converse-Dalton-Ferrell" House their permanent home.

In 1983-84, the Heritage Foundation was instrumental in implementing the Main Street Project and John Zuegner was hired as the Main Street Director. Much downtown revitalization and face-lifting was accomplished under the Main Street Program, fueled by loans made available through the Downtown Development Authority at preferential interest rates.

Many members of the Heritage Foundation have individually restored homes and downtown commercial properties, giving the preservation movement much credibility. The restoration of significant structures maintains a very key element in the historic fabric of the Valdosta community.

Because of the efforts of the Heritage Foundation and its members, much of Valdosta's heritage which would have otherwise been lost has been retained. It is hoped that future generations will appreciate these efforts and continue to fight."



1. Preservation Awakening
2. Restoration Participation
3. Protection Promotion
4. Historic District Ordinance
5. National Register Listings
6. Tours of Homes and Offices
7. Main Street Revitalization
8. Heritage Education
9. Neighborhood Associations
10. Historic Driving Tours
11. Decorator Showhouses
12. Georgia Trust Visit
13. Architectural Tributes
14. Curriculum Expansion
15. Foundation Awards
16. Streetscape Support
17. International Hosts
18. Heritage Room at Library
19. Roberts House Restoration
20. Preservationist of the Century
21. Survey of Lowndes County
22. First Book of Valdosta Architecture
23. Sunset Hill on the National Register
24. South Side Area Development
25. Woman of the First 25 Years

As planned by the late Louie Peebles White, the *above* card served as an informational favor for each guest, at the 25th Year Dinner. Also with each card was placed a box of WHOPPERS chocolate covered malt balls.

The information below is paraphrased from the VHF Collection in the museum archives. The "Foundation Review" was the early newsletter of the VHF. The "Georgia Rambler" magazine cited by the VHF is the publication of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation headquartered in Atlanta.

The Foundation Review News of The Valdosta Heritage Foundation

The Lawyer's Building

"Have you seen the Summer, 1985 issue of the "Georgia Rambler"? An article describing the restoration of Valdosta's Lawyer's Building, 109-117 N.[actually South] Patterson Street, and photographs of the building appear on page fifteen.

Main Street's first rehabilitation effort

For those of you unfamiliar with the project the Lawyers' Building was the Main Street Program's first rehabilitation effort and Valdosta's first Investment Tax Credit project.

The building was purchased in 1984 with rehabilitation beginning in early 1985. The exterior renovation has been completed and work on the second floor has begun. Those who undertook this project are to be commended for a job well done."

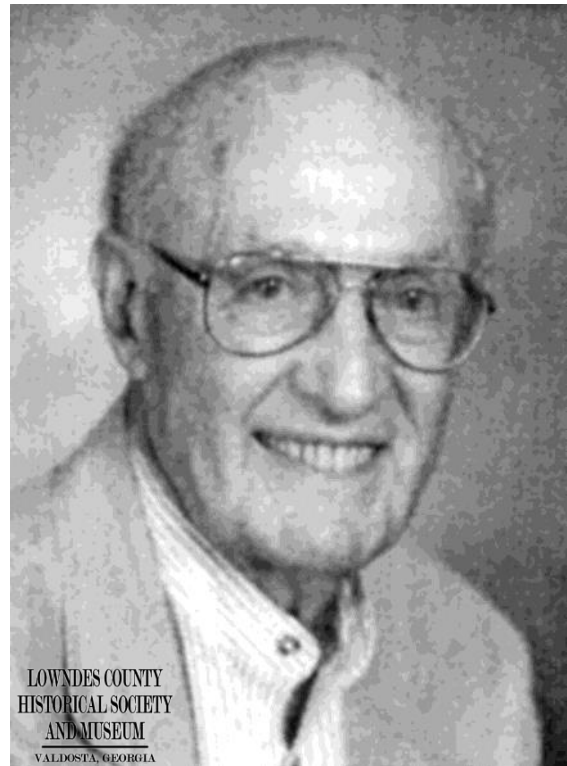
Note: The access to historical information on a building or address has grown exponentially since 1985. The first Valdosta City Directory is 1904. In it 111-1/2 S. Patterson is listed as the New Ashley Building and is the street address for second floor offices. The 1908 and 1913-14 City Directories list the name Ashley Building and offices continue upstairs. In 1917-18 the 111-1/2 address for the upper floor is the Belmont Hotel. The Belmont last appears in the 1940 City Directory. The next Valdosta City Directory was published in 1947. It lists the following professional offices as then occupying the second floor, several leading lawyers in the community.

201	Dewar, Robert Y.	lawyer
	Walker, Fred H.	lawyer
203	Odum, John B.	lawyer
	Young, Cam U.	lawyer
204	Varn, Geo. W.	Naval stores
205	Connell, Guy T.	lawyer
	Wilcox, Ernest H.	lawyer
208	Franklin, Eberhardt and Barham	lawyers
211	Nixon & Stevens	accts.
213	Coleman, Theo W.	lawyer

This location is directly across the street from the building formerly occupied by the Bank of America, which opened in 1970 as the C&S Bank, Thomson and Sanders Architects.

Presidents: Valdosta Heritage Foundation

Charles Wilson, Tom Bailey, Mike Dover,
Woody Dennis, Ken Rickett, Bruce Green,
David Sutton, Nancy Parris, Glenn Gregory,
Gloria Boyette Corker, John Bennett, Chris Roan,
Paul Cribbs, Harold Bennett, Gayle Golden,
Sandra Fletcher, Louie Peeples White (multiple),
Dr. Harry Hamm, Thomas Haller, Dr. Harry Hamm
Buddy Walker, Catherine Pendleton



Above : Harold M. Bennett is one name that must be recognized in historic preservation efforts in Valdosta. His activities led him to be proclaimed Preservationist of the Century and the City of Valdosta's high honor to an individual long involved in varying aspects of preservation is named the Harold M. Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Foundation Review News of The Valdosta Heritage Foundation President's Award Given

On Thursday evening May 17, 1985, Mr. Harold Bennett became the recipient of the Valdosta Heritage Foundation's first annual Presidents' Award. Mr. Bennett was selected by the foundation's board of directors for his demonstrated interest in Valdosta's preservation activities. Mr. Bennett began rehabilitating local buildings before rehabilitating became fashionable. His interest in local preservation helped to establish the city's locally designated historic district, and furthered the organizing of Valdosta's Main Street Program. His involvement in local preservation continues as he serves as Vice-Chairman of Valdosta's Preservation Commission. The Presidents' Award is given on an annual basis to individuals whose involvement in preservation extends into the community.

In documents in the museum archives Mike Dover is shown to have received the second VHF Presidents' Award and that the presentation of this award was conceptualized by Bruce Green. **Note:** In 2017 Bruce Green was recipient of the Harold M. Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award.

**The Valdosta Heritage Foundation has a Facebook page.
You can also contact the organization at:
Post Office Box 1792
Valdosta, GA 31603-1792**

100 Two Times, One Hundred & Two, and To-gether 75 Years

In December we received a call at the museum from Ed Willis who was quizzing in regards to Gretchen B. McCoy's birthday. Ed at times sends cards on behalf of the Valdosta Chapter Sons of the American Revolution to DAR members and others. I told him she was probably near her 100th birthday and that her contact information in Atlanta was in the historical society's membership file. I was glad to contact Mrs. McCoy's daughter Gretchen McCoy Young and was surprised to be told that the call was actually on **one of her 100th birthdays**.

Gretchen Young knew that I needed explanation. She told that her mother's family lived in a remote area of extreme North Florida and the doctor did not complete her birth certificate immediately. When he did so he listed her birth on December 18th, but the family knew the birth had been on December 17th and is recorded in the family bible as such. Changing a birth certificate would have proved to be complicated so for legal purposes Mrs. McCoy was born on December 18th, but in reality on December 17th. Thus Mrs. McCoy celebrated her 100th birthday, as with earlier birthdays, two times. Gretchen Young said all four of her mother's children and other family were getting to Atlanta for the event(s) and they looked forward to a fun time and fellowship.

Two Society Members 100

With Gretchen B. McCoy turning 100 in December 2019 and Eleanor Morgan Howard turning 102 in November 2019 the Lowndes County Historical Society can boast having two society members age 100 or more. Eleanor Howard has recently donated several items from her estate including a beautiful beveled glass china and collectibles cabinet that will enhance our new exhibit space in the Bird Hospital Annex. Mrs. Howard has actually been by the museum since her 102nd birthday. While her son Riley had her out for appointments and errands he brought her by the museum and we had a good Briggs Street car-window visit.

To-gether 75 Years

Van Hastings, Valdosta Police Department retired, contacted the museum during 2019 concerning his parents upcoming 75th wedding anniversary and celebration. We thanked him for making us aware of this significant achievement and asked him to keep us up to date on plans. Van also asked if we were aware of any other 75th Wedding Anniversaries. I told him "no" and that I could personally only recall two 70th wedding anniversaries; Leo and Mary Nell Wells in 2013 and several years earlier, friends of my parents, Dr. Roy and Rosamond Puckett of Fitzgerald.

James P. and Rachael Salter Hastings grew up in Naylor. They married February 4, 1945 at Forrest Street Tabernacle Methodist Church (outside under a tent as sanctuary construction was not completed) A festive 75th Anniversary celebration occurred at Park Place on February 1. It included informative proclamations from the City of Valdosta, the Lowndes County Commission and the Office of the Governor Brian Kemp.

For the Record—Your Input is Needed

The Lowndes County Historical Society wants to begin accumulating and maintaining a record of our citizens that reach a 100th birthday and couples that reach 75th and 70th wedding anniversaries. Report by email to research.lchs@gmail.com or write to P.O. Box 56, Valdosta, GA 31603. We would also like for you to provide a photograph of the persons named.

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Lyndle E. (Lynn) Thomas, Jr.*

*Newly elected or re-elected to The Board of Trustees. **Buddy Johnson recently passed away but we respectfully include his name. Elections were held at the September 29, 2019 annual membership meeting.

*The Lowndes County
Historical Society and Museum
Gratefully Recognize a*

Gift in Honor

of

Anita Hatcher Shelton

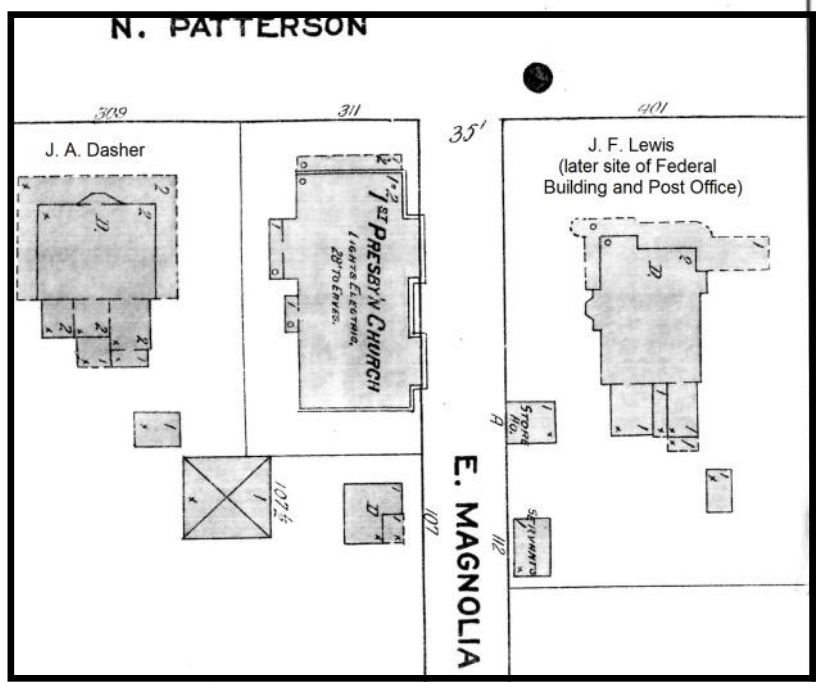
by

Mary L. Culbreth

Millwork from “Millionaires Row” Does It Survive In Cherry Creek Hills Subdivision ?

The John Folton Lewis Home 401 N. Patterson Street

At right: The footprint of the J.F. Lewis home from the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Also shown south across E. Magnolia Street are First Presbyterian Church and the J. A. Dasher home.



To the right begins an article from the March 19, 1956 issue of the *Valdosta Times*, by feature writer Joe Davis. It was supplied to the museum by Phillip Williams who dutifully records and presents copious amounts of local and area history detail on his website Wiregrass Region Digital History Project. The historical society was established in 1967 thus we do not have abundant clippings for the 1950s and these years are not available digitized. Now in the electronic age we hope to continue gathering images and stories of historic Patterson Street between downtown and the college that can be used in heritage tourism

When John F. Lewis and wife Mary Lamar Lewis moved to Valdosta in 1885 they purchased the 401 N. Patterson lot and constructed the family home. He established the Citizens Bank which occupied the building currently beside King's Grill. In 1900 he extensively remodeled and enlarged his home certainly as electricity had come to Valdosta. John Lewis appears to have had exceptional entrepreneurial abilities. In what abstracts we find, the Lewis family shows being active and community contributors. After marriages and moving no descendant remained here. This article introduces us to what was one of Valdosta's most impressive former homes about which we basically knew nothing. *(the article continues on pages 5 and 6)*

Article Begins: John F. Lewis Home

“One of the landmarks of Valdosta – a relic of an age of and an art long gone by the boards of time – soon will give way to progress and the inroads of modern business growth and trends.

The landmark is the home of the late John F. Lewis built on Patterson Street for his bride nearly 80 years ago, and, with the wherewithal of a successful business man and financier added to as the family increased until it became one of the largest, most elaborately arranged homes in these parts.

Cost was no object in the efforts of Mr. Lewis to make his home what he thought his family deserved, and in the house now to be razed are wood workings, and accoutrements that belong to an architectural style never to be repeated.

From the front steps, that flange outward, and are bounded with buttresses topped with granite, through the interior, and even to the carriage house in the rear of the residence, there is evidence of planned perfection and beauty.

Two enormous and well pantried kitchens

The mansion when completed contained five baths, six upstairs rooms, including a family sleeping porch extending across the entire rear of the building, a custom in those days, the house was a show place of home arrangement: seven rooms downstairs, two enormous and well pantried kitchens, a butler's pantry, three large halls, a small entry foyer complete with loveseat.

Among the Centers of social activity

In the days when the Lewis home was among the centers of social activities in the area, it was customary for private homes to have their own ballrooms- country clubs down here, in that time were not known – and the Lewis home was there with the rest.

The upstairs would convert to a massive ballroom

The ball room was upstairs. The architects had so constructed that part of the house that sliding doors, and swinging doors lifting up to ceiling and attached there, converted the area into one massive ballroom, to accommodate the lively dances of the time.

Many a swain, in the spring of the year, when the fancies of a young man, according to the poet, lightly turned to love, perhaps stood about the ‘stag’ lines of that ballroom, his eye attracted to the trim ankle of the belle of the evening wicked and

Valdosta Millionaires

At left: The word millionaire had standing, even beyond as a reference to N. Patterson Street, during this period in Valdosta.

The pro baseball team formed here in 1913 carried the name Valdosta Millionaires. We had no photo of any Valdosta Millionaires until 2015 when Eric Leininger, Evanston, IL, supplied us this photo, in which his grandfather Fred Leininger is at left.

See online: Jan./ Feb./ March 2016 newsletter



LOWNDES COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND MUSEUM
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

brazenly displayed as she waltzed with some rival.

Parquetry unsurpassed in beauty

The ballroom floor was of heart pine. It is as solid now as it was the day Mr. Lewis selected it.

The flooring of the entire downstairs – with exception of the kitchens and some baths, was of parquetry, hardwood squares, that are unsurpassed in beauty and effectiveness in taking on wax and polish.

Beautiful curly pine paneling

The house contains what is now a rarity in the form of curly pine paneling; among the most beautiful of the woods suitable for paneling, curly pine is said to be irreplaceable now.

Its beauty is widely heralded. There are a number of other homes and edifices in the city with curly pine, the Lewis home, the Garden Center (Crescent) and First Baptist Church being among those with the most of it.

In addition to the curly pine paneling, there is old oak paneling in some of the rooms.

All rooms have massive fireplaces, and in some of these in are pine, some in oak, and some in what appears to be a form of

mosaic.

One of the bathrooms, probably the room reserved for the master and his wife, contains a lavatory of Italian marble.

The electric lighting fixtures are clearly of an earlier style, newel lamps at turns of the stairway stand tall, rigid and severe. Outside lights on the porch are in the form of old-style carriage lights.

Hand operated door bell

Although there is an electric doorbell button – it too is obviously of an earlier era, -there is a hand-operated door bell, inserted in the front door, a predecessor of the electric caller.

Butler buttons are to be found in the paneled walls of the living room and the dining room.

Cogged wheel-and-chain central heating

The home undoubtedly boasted one of the first central heating systems, an elaborate cogged wheel-and-chain control unit being found in one of the downstairs hall walls.

The front porch of the home is wide and swings about three-fourths of the outside area. There is a portico cover for a carriage and, later an automobile approach to the residence.



The photo **above** was supplied to the museum and the Vanishing Georgia project by the late Rudene Greene Harris. Her family had the photo because her father Harvey V. Greene was the driver of the vehicle. The float was the DAR entry into the 1926 Armistice Day Parade which was the Sesquicentennial year of the American Revolution. It became apparent that the unknown house in the background no longer stood. Architectural historian Alfred Willis, PhD, studied the photo for us and his research led to the home being identified as the residence of J. F. Lewis at 401 N, Patterson Street. Other than a blurred small aerial view image it is the only photograph of the impressive Lewis house in the museum archives.

Miss Caro Lewis: Her Commentary on Gypsy the Elephant was Remembered



LOWNDES COUNTY
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VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

Photo left: Caro Lewis, second from the left, entertaining friends. (our only photo of Caro Lewis)

Caro Lewis lived to age 103, 1886-1990. She is the Lewis family member that continued in our knowledge because of Gloria Dalton Sorenson, 1921-2016, whose family home was in the 300 block of N. Patterson. Gloria thought so much of Miss Caro from childhood on that she and husband John named one of their three daughters Caro Lewis Sorenson.

Gloria insisted I record Caro's expression from when she would relate the story of the 1902 rampage of Gypsy the elephant:

"For at least a decade! **Everyone** in Valdosta claimed that Gypsy the elephant had made eye-to-eye contact with them on the night of her rampage!"

Our thoughts to Gloria for preserving this "eye-witness" story.

Beveled Italian Marble on exterior chimney surfaces

Outside chimney surfaces are of fine, pressed brick – with in many instances, panels of beveled Italian marble.

A smoke house was on the property

To the rear of the big house, in addition to the carriage house, is what once was a smoke house. In it were cured and stored meats from the Lewis farms, until such time as they were moved into one or both of the two enormous kitchens and prepared to be served on the groaning board of some special event.

Once there was a well-constructed servants home in the rear of the big house. The home still is in use, having been moved to another location. It is occupied to this day, and serves as an adequate and comfortable home.

All.....will not be lost

The old home, handsome and stately as it is, as firm as are its heart-pine timbers and oaken supports, soon will fall before the inroad of progress and the advance of modern business.

Its like will never appear again.

But all its beauty, all its appeal, all its intrinsic and sentimental connection with an era now long gone, will not be lost.

Frank Rose owned the property

The present owner of the property Frank Rose – he acquired it in 1948 – will use the paneling, the parquet flooring (if possible) and other such treasures, in a new home he and Mrs. Rose plan to build soon."

End of the 1956 VDT article

Note: Frank D. Rose developed Cherry Creek Hills Subdivision. He and his wife Annie Laurie built probably the first house there. We at the museum certainly hope that some of the Lewis home "treasures" mentioned above became a part of the Rose home at Cherry Creek Hills.

Lewis Family Notes: The first child was Pearl born in 1885 in Hawkinsville. The next five children were born in Valdosta; Caro, 1886; Mary Frances, 1888-*d. 11 mos.*; Lamar, 1891; Hellen, 1892; and the only son John, Jr., 1899. Lamar's first husband Wilbur Oglesby died in WW1. She later married Julian Gammons, MD, Jacksonville. FL. Hellen married E.G. McKinzie, Macon. Most in this family, but not all, are buried in Rose Hill Cemetery, Macon, with others of the Lamar family.

1908 Automobile Adventure

VALDOSTA BANKER MADE AUTO TRIP

John F. Lewis Drove to Atlanta With His Children.

Special to The Chronicle.

Atlanta, Ga., Sept. 17.—John F. Lewis, a prominent banker of Valdosta, arrived in Atlanta Thursday morning, after making the 200-miles from his home to this city in an automobile, with his five children as companions.

The trip was made in a two-cylinder Maxwell car, and proved very pleasant. The return will be made by the same means.

Mr. Lewis is well known in south Georgia, and over the state in general. He is a brother of Congressman Elijah Lewis of the third district.

Above: From the *Augusta Chronicle* Sept. 18, 1908. This trip to Atlanta seems to reflect this family's active approach at experiencing life. The first automobile ownership in Lowndes County is noted in 1904 to John Hodges of Hahira. So it was a bold under taking to drive to Atlanta and back in 1908, and with your five children, ages near nine to 23.



MEMORIALS



Martha Bell Blackburn

by
Mary D. Gray
Lucy R. Greene, PhD.

Wayland Hendry 'Bo' Blalock

by
Ronnie N. and Bebo Blanton
Dan and Carolyn Coleman
Donald O. Davis
Marvin H. and Lyn Dickey
Mary D. Gray
Paul B. "Bud" Hatcher, Jr.
Martiele Sineath Schroder
Atlanta, Ga

James Wilson 'Jim' Bowen

by
Donald O. Davis

Joe Virgil 'Bud' Dasher

by
Dan and Carolyn Coleman

Robert T. Daugharty, Sr.

by
John and Sandra S. Anderson

Jane Lumpkin Ferrell

by
Wade H. and Geri Coleman
Highlands, NC
Marvin and Lyn Dickey
Clint and Barbara Slocumb
Jeannette B. Strickland

Rutledge Avalon 'Rusty' Griffin, Jr.

by
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Wade H. and Geri Coleman
Highlands, NC
Mary L. Culbreth
Marvin and Lyn Dickey
Paul B. "Bud" Hatcher Jr.

Alton M. 'Buddy' Johnson, Jr.

by
Donald O. Davis
Patsy T. Giles
Mary D. Gray
J. Edward Willis

Kathryn McKinnon Minor

by
Mary L. Culbreth

Nicholas James 'Nic' Quinif, M.D.

Highlands, NC
by
Jay and Connie Mullis
Pelham, AL

William Patrick 'Bill' Reeves, Jr.

by
Donald O. Davis

Brannen Paulette Sineath

by
Mary D. Gray
Margaret E. Langdale

James Brooks 'Jim' Sineath

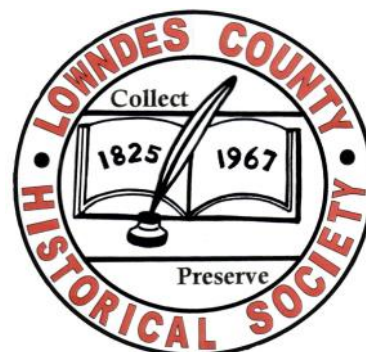
by
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Atlanta, GA

Warren Trenton 'Trent' Taylor

by
Donald O. Davis

Tally Marcus Wisenbaker III

by
Donald O. Davis
Edward and Rita Hightower
Margaret E. Langdale



Family Memorial Gifts

T. G. Connell III

by
Tommy and Sharon Connell

Rusty Griffin

by
Barbara Talley Griffin

Molly Huckabee Hardy

by
Janet B. Scott

David S. Waller

by
Sharon D. Waller



Please Join Us! Show your support for LCHS. Membership has no obligations.

2020 Membership Application,
Lowndes County Historical Society, P.O. Box 56, Valdosta, GA 31603

Name _____
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Phone _____
Email _____

Membership Category

Individual \$25. ____
Family 30. ____
Business 25/50. ____
Contributing 100. ____
Patron 250. ____

MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS & DATES**Officers and Executive Committee**

President, Patsy Giles; 1st Vice President, Sally Kurrie; 2nd Vice President, Mary Young Manning; Secretary, Sandra Connell; Treasurer, Edward Hightower; Ex Officio, Julie Smith; Anita Shelton

**The museum was Closed to the Public at press time for this newsletter.
Our core staff of three continues, flexible if needed, work schedules.
We will follow the advisement of officials for reopening to the public.**

The 2020 Membership List will appear in the next newsletter.

Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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Web page:

<http://www.valdostamuseum.com>

YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of
Lowndes County Historical Society

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