

# Kids Page

Lowndes County Historical Society  
July - August 2006

## VSU Celebrates 100 Years

How important is a good teacher? Ever wonder how you become a teacher? What kind of education does a teacher need?

In 1906, the State of Georgia needed teachers. The legislature approved a new college to educate teachers and decided Valdosta was a good place to build a school. They worked on the plan and finally came up with the money to start a teacher's college which opened in 1913. The school started as South Georgia State Normal College and it was exclusively for women and specialized in educating teachers. The enrollment was small and many thought it would not survive.



West Hall, named for Col. William S. West, opened in 1917. The building serves as Valdosta State University's centerpiece and administration building.

Subjects taught were those deemed proper to the higher education of young women—History, Literature, Mathematics, the Languages, the Sciences, Art, Home Economics, Physical Education, Music, and Vocal Expression. Teachers had to know a bit of everything!



Future teachers on parade.

The school grew steadily, a Bachelors degree was added, and the school was renamed Georgia State Womans College in 1922.



As the school grew, new buildings were added for classrooms and dormitories.

The school remained a woman's college through the 1940s. Some men were permitted to attend because Emory Junior College closed during World War II, but by 1950, the school was coed and was renamed Valdosta State College.



A new library building was dedicated in 1941. Eleanor Roosevelt spoke from the balcony.

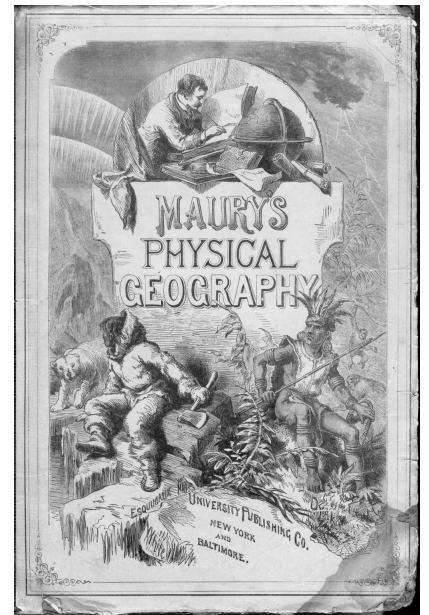
Valdosta State gained university status in 1993. The little teacher's college, that many thought would not survive, is now the cornerstone of higher education in South Georgia. Valdosta State still educates teachers. The College of Education offers advanced teacher education and the only doctoral degree at VSU. Because so many students earn degrees related to education, the College of Education has a separate graduation ceremony in the spring. In May 2006, 218 new teachers graduated from VSU—maybe one of them is yours!

For more about history ask your parents if you may visit our museum

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**Did you know** that we have many textbooks at the museum? They are very old and we use them to show how education and textbooks changed over time. Teachers need textbooks to help students learn, but for many years there were no guidelines for what books a teacher should use. Interestingly Col. William S. West, the same man who pushed for a teacher's college in Valdosta, introduced a bill to have a "uniform system of textbooks in the common schools in Georgia." This means that the schools would use the same or similar books and everyone would get a similar education. He introduced the bill in 1892 but it wasn't accepted. Col. West felt very strongly about the book bill and introduced it every year until it was accepted in 1903. He was a persistent man and we have good textbooks and a good college to thank him for.

The textbook shown also has an interesting story. The book was written by a naval officer named Matthew Fontaine Maury. He was in the United States Navy before the War Between the States. Being a southerner, he resigned and joined the Confederate Navy during the war. He never rejoined the U.S. Navy after the war and many of his accomplishments are not recognized. He was an important geographer and helped make shipping and sailing safer with maps and weather studies of the coasts of North and South America.



Geography textbook at museum.

### Teachers and Textbooks Word Find - Are you up to the challenge?

E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N	E	N	U	J	C	L	Y
A	S	P	M	N	S	A	R	E	G	E	L	L	O	C	O
V	T	F	F	R	C	T	A	N	E	S	S	D	N	E	E
B	E	L	L	R	H	O	M	P	N	R	D	G	F	K	T
H	X	A	Y	C	O	U	L	T	E	Y	G	E	E	R	A
Y	T	I	H	O	O	C	M	H	M	A	A	H	D	E	T
T	B	R	P	L	L	C	C	I	C	C	O	V	E	L	S
I	O	W	A	U	N	A	V	Y	N	I	S	I	R	C	A
S	O	E	R	M	E	N	E	E	G	R	L	L	A	C	T
R	K	D	G	T	L	M	E	C	O	E	S	E	T	A	S
E	S	D	O	S	N	L	R	R	T	M	A	S	E	I	O
V	T	S	E	W	H	G	I	R	M	A	U	R	Y	O	D
I	S	N	G	W	N	D	K	B	E	G	S	D	V	E	L
N	I	G	M	E	I	R	A	P	H	Y	O	T	A	E	A
U	W	L	O	N	O	I	T	A	U	D	A	R	G	I	V

Find the following words. They are written forward, backward, upside-down, and diagonally.

EDUCATION  
CONFEDERATE  
TEACHERS

TEXTBOOKS  
MAURY  
GEOGRAPHY

AMERICA  
SCHOOL  
BILL

COLLEGE  
WEST  
UNIVERSITY

VALDOSTA STATE  
NAVY  
GRADUATION