

Kids Page

Lowndes County Historical Society
March - April 2006

Our Courthouse

Each county has a town where the government offices are located. Lowndes County's first place of government was in Franklinville in 1825. Some stories say that before the county seat was established that county business was conducted at the home of Sion Hall on the Coffee Road.



Sion Hall's log home was used as the first Lowndes County Courthouse.

There was a courthouse in Troupville, but it burned in 1858. Unfortunately, so did many of the early records of our county. When the county seat moved to Valdosta in 1860, a courthouse was built, probably on the corner of Central and Ashley. Mrs. Thannie Smith Wisenbaker, recorded in her diary that it was "an old barn of a building." The 1885 view of Valdosta, below, shows the old courthouse where our courthouse is today.



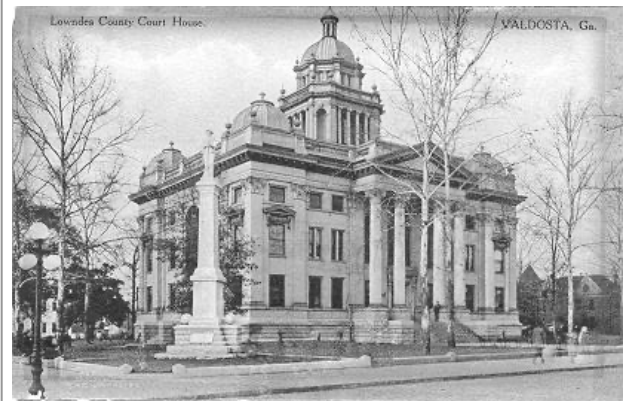
In November of 1900 the commissioners of Lowndes County accepted plans for a new courthouse—"The times were progressing and so should the town," said five grand juries. The courthouse cost \$60,000.00 to build.

What's a Courthouse for?

Traditionally a courthouse was the central place of government for a county—the heart of the community. The courthouse was of course where court was held and housed the offices of judges and law enforcement officers. The courthouse was where you paid your taxes, registered to vote, and registered your deeds for land. Important documents were stored there—anything related to county government, taxes, and land.



People often use the courthouse as a place to voice an opinion or to protest. The photograph above was taken during the vote on prohibition of alcohol in 1907. Those with an opinion on prohibition lined up outside the courthouse and the voters had to pass them to vote. Land that has been taken for failure to pay taxes has traditionally been sold on the courthouse steps. People get married in courthouses and meet on the grounds to celebrate. Courthouses are also used for other events. Our town has a festival signaling the beginning of the winter holiday season around the courthouse.



Our courthouse has several monuments on the square. The one shown above is dedicated to those who served in the Confederacy during the Civil War. Other is a granite "obelisk" dedicated to Spanish American War veterans. The third monument is an eternal flame designed by architect Otis Sanders.

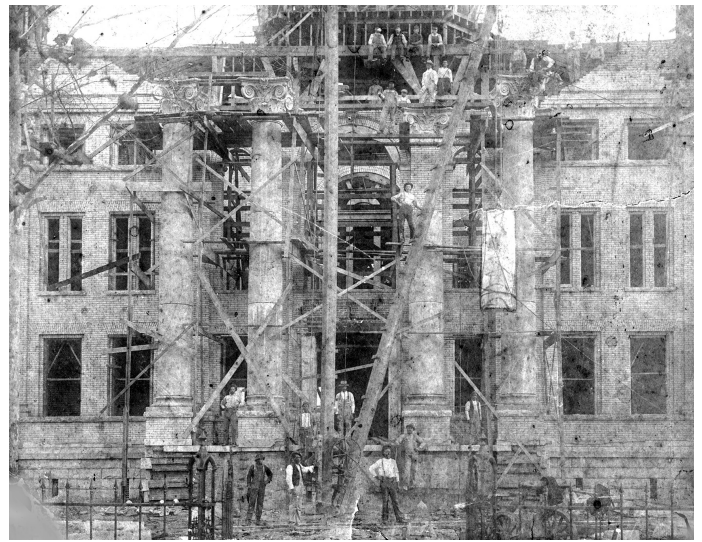
For more about history ask your parents if you may visit our web site at

www.valdostamuseum.org

The Kids Page is made possible through the Rudolph and Lilly Howell Endowment Fund

Did you know that Mr. W. S. Broome was a master carpenter who worked on our courthouse? His daughter, Mrs. P. J. Dorminey, donated this photograph of the courthouse being built. She also shared an interesting story about her father. While working on the beautiful dome of our courthouse, Mr. Broome became so engrossed in his work that he sealed himself inside the dome without realizing it. He had to remove parts of what he had built to get out; then had to rebuild that section. Can you imagine sealing yourself inside the courthouse dome? What an interesting story and a terrific photograph of the courthouse. Mr. Broome is one of the four men sitting by the dome at the very top of the photograph.

You can see in the photograph that they are putting the columns into place. According to an article written by Mr. Albert Pendleton about the courthouse, the sections of column weighed 11, 000 pounds and were raised one on top of the other.



Our courthouse was built from 1904 – 1905.

COURTHOUSE WORD FIND - Are you up to the challenge?

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

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

COURTHOUSE	MONUMENTS	JUDGE	WITNESSES	STEPS
CLERK	DEEDS	JURY	DOME	TAXES
DOCUMENTS	COURTROOM	CHAMBERS	FINIAL	LOWNDES