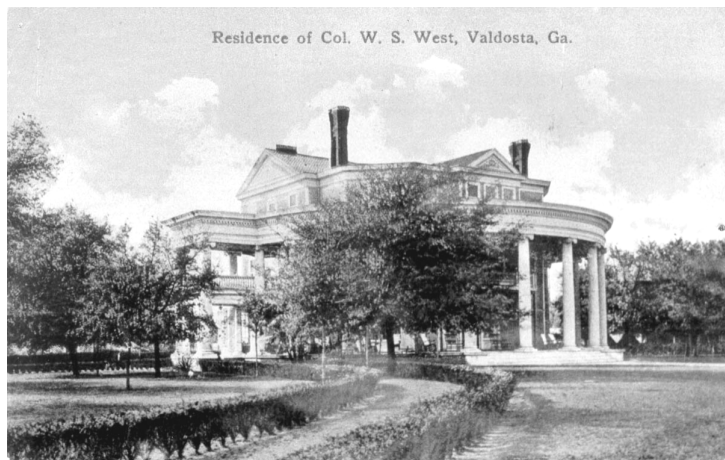


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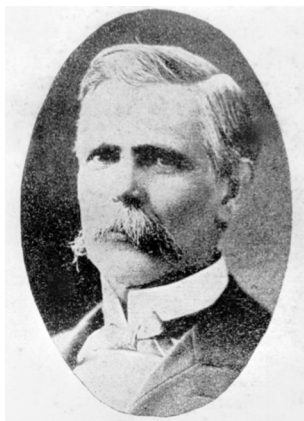
Lowndes County Historical Society

The Crescent



Early photograph of The Crescent showing the driveway that entered at the corner of the property.

Col. William S. West was born in 1840 and moved to South Georgia with his family in the 1860s. They lived in the part of Lowndes County which is now in Brooks County. He successfully operated an uncle's saw mill for a year, then he was sent to Mercer University.



Col. William S. West

West was a lawyer in Valdosta, but also taught school. He met his future wife, Ora Lee Cranford (born 1865) at school as she was one of his students. She was a talkative, impressive young lady and, in disciplining her, he finally resorted to the lethal ruler. After he smacked her hands twice in front of the class, she defiantly looked up and said, "I'll get even with you one day for this."

They became friends and a courtship began. They laughed at her words of "getting even." At the end of their wedding ceremony, however, she looked up with a sly smile and said, "I told you I'd get even with you one day."

He loved her and wanted her to have the grandest of homes. He drew the front circular porch for a building and said, "Here is where I want my front porch to be." He also wanted 13 white columns for the 13 original colonies.

In 1897, he began to build a mansion, The Crescent. It was completed in 1899, and cost \$17,000; it is the showplace of our town.

The Wests moved into The Crescent in Valdosta in 1899. Col. West planted oak trees, one out from each of the 13 columns.

Mrs. West decided on very little shrubbery, commenting that she would rather raise children than flowers. She and the Colonel had one child, William Jr. She encouraged children to play sports in her large front yard and to skate on her wide cement walk.

The Crescent originally had 23 rooms including a third floor ballroom.

In February 1914, Col. W. S. West was appointed United States senator from Georgia to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Bacon. West served well but all too short. West died in December 1914 after he had returned from Washington. He was 65 years old. Mrs. West passed away in 1933, and their son, William, died in 1937.

William's family continued to live at The Crescent. At some time the house was made into apartments with removable partitions.

In June 1951, the Garden Club women of Valdosta, led by Mrs. T. H. Smith, Mrs. Leonard Mederer, and Mrs. R. B. Whitehead wanted to acquire The Crescent, which had been bought for business property. They needed to raise \$35,000 and only had two months. All the women of the Garden Club went to work, and money was raised, and the house and property bought.

The rest is local history. Thanks to the Garden Clubs, The Crescent is still a showplace and the pride of Valdosta.



The information about The Crescent is from Way Back When, Vol. I, by Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

Did you know that Col. West was instrumental in bringing Valdosta State University to our area? OK, then it was called South Georgia Normal School and it's changed a lot, but in 1906, as president of the Georgia Senate, West got the ball rolling for a college in our town. The school finally opened in 1913. West Hall is named for him.

Col. and Mrs. West were also world travelers. In the spring of 1912, they and a group of Valdostans, set sail for Europe. Their tour took them from Italy to Norway, back again to Greece, the Holy Land, and Africa. The photograph was taken in Egypt. Their son W. S. West, Jr., was also on the trip and is the boy in the photograph.

Mrs. West may be the earliest football booster in Valdosta. Stories abound that she allowed local boys to play football in The Crescent's front yard. Was this early gathering of football enthusiasts the beginnings of the local football tradition that continues today?



The Wests and others in Egypt

Col. West and the Crescent Word Find - Are you up to the challenge?

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

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

CRESCENT
WEST
COLONIES

OAK TREES
CIRCULAR
GARDEN

FOOTBALL
SENATOR
BALLROOM

MANSION
HOME
COLUMNS

WEDDINGS
EGYPT
COLLEGE