

## Mrs. Peeples is Oldest Member at 102!

By John Colquitt Peeples

Audrey Bray Peeples was born in Cecil, Georgia, December 13, 1896, daughter of John N. and Corra Brinson Bray, one of eleven children. This was only 31 years after the War Between the States. More than seeing her 103 birthday, she looks forward to Y2K, at which point she will have lived in three centuries. During her life, she has witnessed tremendous changes in the world, particularly in the town of Valdosta, the place she loves nearly as much as parades, automobiles, friends, church, the Braves, and her family.

She started her education when she was sent away from home to attend Sparks Collegiate Institute, a Methodist school just north of Adel. She recalls her first night at school at age six when, as she knelt to say her prayers, an older sister sprang from under the bed to scare her.

In 1907, Audrey and her family moved from Cecil into a new home at 1203 N. Patterson Street. There they enjoyed such innovations as electric lights, running water, indoor plumbing, and a telephone with a number (1!). Most importantly, there was a school. Valdosta was, of course, much smaller than now. Paving and sewer lines extended no farther north than Gordon Street (site of the Crescent). Traveling on their horses and in buggies on Patterson Street, north of Gordon, one had to ford One Mile Branch (at now Drexel Park), as there was no bridge.

In Valdosta, Audrey continued her education under Miss Mattie Sallas and Miss Cora Mahone. Miss Mahone was an excellent, though stern, instructor. Audrey and her classmates were crushed in 1908 when the annual Vanderbilt Cup Races passed through town and Miss Mahone drew the window shades to prevent her pupils from being distracted.

Audrey graduated from Valdosta High School in 1915. At that time the school was on Central Avenue next to the First Baptist Church. VHS offered only two sports at the time, football and basketball. Audrey played the latter.

The high school graduation dress, in which she is pictured, was designed and made for her by a local dressmaker, Hattie Mathis. It was white silk with pearls all over. She termed it "a perfect fit and the prettiest dress I ever had."

After graduating, Audrey went on a tour of the West, at the urging of Mrs. E. K. Wilcox whose daughter, Marie, had been a good friend of Audrey's before her untimely death when the girls were twelve. There were several highlights of this summer of 1915 trip, including the Panama - Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. The Exposition was organized to



**Audrey Bray,  
1915  
Valdosta High  
School  
graduation  
photograph.**

showcase the city's rebirth following the Great Earthquake of 1906. Exploring all of the newly opened National Parks and the Canadian Rockies made a lasting impression on the young woman.

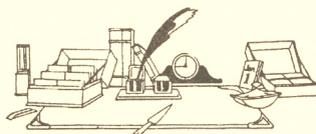
Audrey's life-long fascination with the automobile peaked when she was twelve. Heretofore, whenever the family wanted to use their car, they had to call the livery stable where it was kept, and ask for the car and a driver to be sent to the house. To remedy the situation, Audrey became the first driver in the family.

World War I came along together with parades and bandage rolling. In 1918 there was an influenza epidemic which resulted in an ordinance banning public gatherings. As a consequence, she married Will Peeples with only immediate family present. The young couple made their first home in Anniston, Alabama, where he was stationed at Fort McClellan with the U. S. Army Infantry.

Over the next 13 years she had three children, Henry William (Billy), John N., and Corra Clare. She lost her husband Will to pneumonia in 1932. Like other Valdostans, she endured the Great Depression with help of such new marvels as phonographs and radio. As her children grew up and moved out of the home, she satisfied her active curiosity through music, learning, reading, travel, and gardening.

*John Colquitt Peeples is the son of H. W. (Billy) and Camille Colquitt Peeples, and grandson of Audrey Bray Peeples. He is a graduate of David College and Mercer University School of Law. He married Jane Lawrence of Savannah, who is also an attorney. Mr. Peeples practiced law in Savannah before returning to Valdosta, where he is President of the J. N. Bray Co. They are expecting their first child this month.*

## Albert's Desk



by Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.  
VHS Class of 1942

### Ouch!

#### The First *Sandspur* is being born

It was in late spring 1942 that the *Sandspur* Annual of Valdosta High School was given to the seniors. They opened their books and it said: "THE NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-TWO *SANDSPUR*." It had been a year in the making.

Turning the page, there was a photograph of J. P. Mott, principal for many years at Valdosta High—he retired the freshman year of the Class of '42. On two pages, we read: "WE DEDICATE THIS ISSUE OF THE *SANDSPUR* TO J. P. MOTT." It read: "To our dear friend and former principal, J. P. Mott, whose direction led us so ably during our freshman year; whose leadership taught us more than books; whose ideals radiate about us and whose character is our example; whose life designates him as a scholar and a Christian gentleman...we do respectfully and affectionately dedicate this volume."

The 1942 Valdosta High School annual was the first one since 1929. The depression years must have made the annual expense prohibitive. The last annual, in 1929, was called *The Dosta*. With war hanging over the shoulders of the Class of 1942, they produced an annual fit to be greatly praised. In the forward is this: "In compiling the material for our first *Sandspur*, we have tried to seal within its pages the essence of our school spirit which will best serve as a foundation for future reminiscences. May it ever prove a source of solace and enjoyment."

Turn another page and see the Board of Education: Julian Strickland, Dr. E. F. Thompson, Tom B. Smith, Sam Register, R. H. Snow, Mrs. W. G. Southwell, Sr., R. L. Stump, President, Dr. A. G. Cleveland, Superintendent, and A. J. Little, Secretary-Treasurer.

Photographs of Principal, W. H. Bridges and Superintendent, Dr. A. G. Cleveland follow. Turning the pages you will find snapshots of the faculty. Fronting the student photographs are the officers of the Class of 1942, Warren Graham, President; Aline Parrish, Secretary-Treasurer; and Lawrence Stalvey, Vice-President.

Go to the next page, there they are, the proud seniors, all smiling, a few with slight grins, looking at you, so happy and alive. I remember each one of them, each, I might say, in a different way. More pages, pages and pages, dignified, still all very happy. All graduates were not photographed. At the end of the pictures is a list of all 1942 graduates, 163 of them. Big class! Fifty-one are deceased now, about 20 are lost. At least 10 did not graduate with our class, but finished in 1943. We picked up a few others misplaced by World War II. Out of 163, we lost two in the war, Tippie Brummitt and Emory Whiting. Charles Worley was lost in the Korean Conflict.

The Class of 1942 is having their 7<sup>th</sup> reunion, 57 years after graduation, the weekend of September 10, 11, and 12. Activities are planned for each day.

Some time in 1941-42, there was a contest to name the high school annual. "Sister" West (now Mrs. Jack May) won with the *Sandspur*, "because it always sticks to you." We know about sandspurs. And we know about the *Sandspur*. It sticks with you. And we have reunions around it.

As recorded in the annual, the first Editorial Staff was: Dick Whitaker, Editor-in-Chief; Lamar Newbern, Assistant Editor; Tom Howell, Sports Editor; Caroline Rose, Editor of Photography; Veran Blackburn, Staff Photographer; Marjorie Ferguson, Junior Representative; and Rubye McKinney, Faculty Advisor. The Business Staff included: Virginia Snow, Business Manager; Barbara French, Assistant Business Manager; Elizabeth Kelly, Circulation Manager; Tommy Campbell, Advertising Manager; Fredeva Ogletree, Faculty Advisor. Assistants were: Aline Parrish, Doris Terry, Faye Carroll, Betty Mayes, Betty Hutchinson, Virginia Bolen, Margaret Porter, Akie Joyner, Emory Hatcher, and Betty Sue Grant.

As memorable as the *Sandspur* was the school paper, *The Dosta Outlook*. The Editorial Staff was: Warren Graham, Editor; Margaret Porter, Assistant Editor; Lamar Newbern and John Gibson, Exchange Editors; Virginia Bolen, Majorie Ferguson, Betty Hutchinson and Georgia Mobley, News Editors; Martha Norwood, Society Editor; Tippie Brummitt, Grantland Miller, "Sister" West, Mary Catherine Pindar, Aline Parrish, and Georgia Smith, Editors Feature; Tom Howell, Sports Editor; Wallace Wilkins, Associate Sports Editor. The Business Staff: Emory Bass, Bookkeeper; Betty Sullivan, Copy Writer; Harold Krieger, Advertising.

All other school organizations were included and there were plenty of them. Wright Bazemore came in 1940 and football kicked off—making plenty of history. Another bright spot in remembering VHS of 1941-1942 was the cheerleaders, lively, happy, smiling, and YELLING!! All that and good lookin' too. They were: (in a conga line) Dick Whitaker, Faye Carroll, Aline Parrish, "Sister" West and Lessor Chitewood. "Le-et's Go-o Dos-tah!!"

And how about the large band, Hugh McGarity, director? and high steppin' Emma Lou Wisenbaker, our class member and head majorette with Martha Register, Mabel McElvey, Ann Pafford and Sherla Miller. With music, marching, marching, all marching to a beat.

Memories like these will never die! They, like the sandspur, stick with you.

## BRIDGING THE CENTURIES: A LOOK BACK

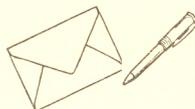
Thursday, September 16, 1999 at 7:00 p.m.

As we approach the next millennium and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our theme will be **Bridging the Centuries**. We will launch this with a look back featuring two Valdosta State University scholars, Dr. Marvin T. Smith, Department of Anthropology and Dr. Joseph A. Tomberlin, Department of History. Each will make a brief presentation followed by ample time for questions. Please plan to attend, bring a friend and plenty of questions. There will also be a short business meeting.

The meeting will be held at the LCHS Museum in the lower level. Please use the side entrance. Additional parking is available across the street at the First Baptist Church lot or next door on the lot of Thompson Group.

We will look forward to seeing you on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

### PRESIDENTS LETTER



First, please let me tell each of you how much I appreciated the cards and calls during my recent surgery. Your thoughts and prayers were most helpful for me. I am happy to be able to tell you that I received a "clean bill of health" after my surgery.

Necessarily, there has been a bit of delay in getting my "program and platform" on the road. Julie Smith and Alan Morgan are doing a magnificent job and I hope to be back working with them soon. There are so many exciting things to accomplish at the museum.

The year 2000 approaches and the next sixteen months will bridge the gap between the two centuries. We have a lot to accomplish preparing the way for another millennium.

Think for a moment of the many changes wrought during our lifetime. A simple one, the way we travel. Unpaved roads have been replaced by non-stop travel on the Interstate Highways. Jet aircraft have supplanted those "fast trains" that took days to cross the nation. We have truly been blessed by the many scientific and engineering innovations and advancements.

J. Edward Willis

### MEMORIALS

A gift in memory of Mr. Robert Belcher  
by Mr. and Mrs. Wilby Coleman

## KIDS DAY



This month come learn about  
**Archaeology**  
with Dr. Marvin Smith

**Saturday, September 18**

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

ages 5 – 12 years old  
accompanied by an adult

at the  
Lowndes County Historical Museum

## Collection Spotlight

### The Richardson Collection

Maryan Holt, of Brunsville, North Carolina, gave a collection in honor of her parents Ralph and Anna Richardson. This is an interesting glimpse of Valdosta's history and a source of genealogical material. Mrs. Richardson was quite involved in researching family history as part of her D.A.R. membership. The collection includes numerous files and transcripts of documents related to her research. Mrs. Richardson transcribed the memoirs of Thannie Smith Wisenbaker. Entitled *Recollections of Valdosta in 1863*, it is a handwritten recollection of Mrs. Wisenbaker's memories of Valdosta when she arrived as a refugee with her family in 1863. The original document is housed in the museum and is quite difficult to read. The transcription by Mrs. Richardson was indeed no mean feat.

In the Richardson collection are photographs of early Valdosta, including photographs of several Richardson Service Stations, a family bible, and many newspapers and clippings.

The collection is currently being catalogued and will soon be available for researchers.

## Don't become part of our past-- Renew your membership!

Membership is from September 1<sup>st</sup> annually. Dues notices were mailed last month. If you have already renewed, thank you. If it slipped your mind, mail your renewal today. If you have any questions regarding dues, please direct them to our Membership Chairman, Anita Shelton 244-1706 or Alan Morgan at the Museum 247-4780.

We are continuing to update the mailing list and we urge you to advise us of any changes.

**Last Call! The Heritage of Lowndes County, Georgia**  
Deadline for submission September 30, 1999

## Remember the way it was? Want to contribute to the newsletter?

Oral history and personal memories are vital to a community's history. We need member contributions to the newsletter. You may want to share special memories of life the way it was—stories of life on the farm, shopping trips into town, school experiences. You may also have stories and memories of the wars of this century. Please contribute a one to two page article. The story need not be polished or typed, we will take care of that with your involvement. Old letters and diaries may also be submitted. Photographs are always interesting.

Other contributions to the newsletter are welcome. Again, inclusion is at the discretion of the editor. All articles and notices must be at the Museum by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month for inclusion in the next month's newsletter. If you have questions regarding ideas of articles or notices, call the Museum at 247-4780. Newsletter items should be brought to the Museum at 305 W. Central Ave., mailed to P. O. Box 434, Valdosta, GA 31603-0434, or faxed to (912) 247-2840.

We look forward to your contributions to your newsletter.

We continue to seek the identity for last month's newsletter mystery picture!

### **YESTERDAY & TODAY** Newsletter of the **Lowndes County Historical Society**

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J. Edward Willis

**Newsletter Editor**  
Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

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