

National Register Status for Sunset Hill Cemetery

After years of waiting, Sunset Hill Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 10, 2004. The sponsor for the application was the Valdosta Heritage Foundation. The proposal summary states, "the materials were prepared by the local historical society with the help of a consultant. The nomination is supported by the owner, the City of Valdosta." The consultant was Glaire D. Anderson.



Capt. William H. Briggs, who died in April 1910, had the first "motorized" funeral in Valdosta. His obituary states that he was one of the last surviving pioneers that moved over from Troupville and that he served in Civil War in a company under the command of Capt. Patterson, Briggs himself being later promoted to the same position.

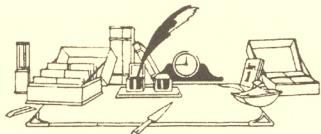
The National Register criteria included that there be Statements of Significance in "Architecture, Art, Community Planning and Development, and Landscape Architecture." Also required was a Developmental History/Historic Context article on your subject of application. The bibliography shows that much of the information came from Albert Pendleton's interviews and LCHS newsletter articles. Jane Shelton and Susie Thomas are also listed in the bibliography. Louie Peebles White, former LCHS president and current Valdosta Heritage Foundation president, said that there will be a ceremony celebrating this recognition, hopefully during Azalea Festival Week in March 2005. Portions of the Developmental History read as follows:

Sunset Hill cemetery is located on the northwest side of Valdosta, Georgia, the county seat of Lowndes County, in an area that is relatively flat. The cemetery began in 1860 to 1861 when the original parcel consisting of approximately thirty acres of land was donated to the city by C. O. Force. The cemetery has since grown to encompass approximately sixty-six acres. It is the oldest publicly owned cemetery in Valdosta. The cemetery is bounded on two sides by residential neighborhoods and on the west and north by Valdosta State University. The cemetery contains areas representative of late nineteenth century, early twentieth century, and contemporary cemetery landscaping and grave arrangements.

Sunset Hill has a park-like setting in the central and eastern sections, the oldest parts of the cemetery. There is a perimeter fence with seven entrances, but the main or formal entrance is on the east side opening onto Oak Street. At this entrance are the 1913 entrance posts and gates. Also at this entrance begin the winding paths and orderly rows of gravesites marked with a variety of headstones, mausoleums, and statuary. These winding roads were all a part of the 1915 plan. Contemporary sections on the outermost borders of the cemetery are laid out in a more linear fashion, with gravesites placed close to one another in rows. There are over 25,000 burials in the cemetery. The cemetery is divided into 23 sections labeled A through W. The first burial is thought to be that of Dr. T. W. Ellis who died in February 1861 and has a marked burial.

Grave markers can be found that are made of marble, granite, cement, bronze, brick, and some prefabricated out of other metals. Grave markers include tombstones with inscriptions, small decorative upright markers, decorative small obelisks, as well as some monuments with special motifs. James F. Holmes has a Coca-Cola bottle on his marker. Emma Tillman Lane has a marble statue, as does K. M. Howell. There is a very rare statue of a man, Charles Strickland, carved in Italy in his own likeness, and placed in

Albert's Desk



by Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

WAY BACK WHEN AND MORE

How did I get started about writing history? Well, I've always liked history and especially local history. My interest was heightened even more when I found out my family had a special part in the local history. Specifically, my great-grandfather founded *The Valdosta Daily Times*, the newspaper you still read today. His sons (one was my grandfather) carried on *The Times* for years following its beginning in 1867.

It took me a long time to follow family tradition and write for *The Times*. In 1990, I guess it was, *The Times*, accepted my "Way Back When" after one of their reporters put my name as the by-line, and since then I wrote them for about five years, maybe longer. It pleased me no end for people to tell me how much they enjoyed the "Way Back When" columns.

Another writing-of-history opportunity came along in the form of cemetery plays. Through a suggestion of Ed Willis and Louie White, I wrote two or three plays that are set in Sunset Hill Cemetery, not on stage. These plays involve small audiences walking about the cemetery from grave to grave as they hear the dearly departed (portrayed by live actors) tell of their past lives. These plays were almost as popular as the "Way Back When" column.

Would you believe? I have been writing the Lowndes County Historical Society's newsletter for thirty years!



Historic Downtown Valdosta's Winterfest

December 4, 2004
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Open House

Historical Society Museum
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The trolley will run until 4:00 p.m.
Please plan to come by the museum for
refreshments and a bit of history.
Our tree this year will feature trains to
commemorate our caboose. We also have special
paper caboose ornaments that you can purchase
with a donation to the caboose and backyard
exhibit fund. Hang them on the museum tree or
take them home!

Available for Christmas 2004 *Way Back When – Volume III*

By popular demand the third volume in
Albert S. Pendleton's *Way Back When* series is at the printer.

We are currently taking orders. The book is paper covered and spiral bound like the two previous volumes and sells for \$25.00. Complete your set today!

If you would like to reserve a copy, contact the museum at 247-4780.
Or come to the Christmas Open House on December 4 where forms will be available.

Cold Weather! The Smokehouse & Hog Butchering

Jesse Felma Moore recently gave the museum two copies of his book, *And On More Thing... Life on a South Georgia Farm, 1932 - 1949, a Memoir*. He and his five sisters and three brothers were the children of Staten Felma Moore and his wife Laura Monk Copeland. His Moore ancestors came to Lowndes County in 1829 and his mother's Copeland ancestors came about 1840. He and his siblings grew up on a Lowndes County farm – ultimate size 502 acres – which straddled what is now Moore's Crossing Road. All nine of these children attended college, seven receiving degrees.

Jesse F. Moore graduated from Pine Grove High School in 1949. He has a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University and a B.S. degree in Agriculture from the University of Georgia. He served a four-year hitch (1953-1957) with the Air Force's Strategic Air Command as an electronics reconnaissance specialist on an RB-50 aircraft.

Following his military duty, he entered public service with the United States Department of Agriculture and spent most of his career in Washington, D.C., before retiring in 1994.

It took eight years for Jesse Moore to complete this wonderful book. He has graciously given us permission to print excerpts in our newsletter. The book is in local libraries or may be ordered from: Jesse F. Moore, 6033 Woodmont Road, Alexandria, VA 22307. E-mail J.Moore@cox.net.



Jesse Moore and his wife Nancy Burns

The recent cold snap and thoughts of Thanksgiving and Holiday feasts seemed to prompt the following selection from Jesse Moore's book. He dedicated his 350-page book 'In honor of the American farm family, past and present.'

Cold Day – Hog Butchering Time

by Jesse Felma Moore

I never saw Mother and Daddy work together as a team any better than on hog butchering days. Each thoroughly knew his or her own role, as did the hired help, and words were few and far between on this long day when much had to be accomplished. It was well understood by us children that distractions of any sort were forbidden. We watched with awe and admiration, pitched in and helped as we grew older and learned the process, and generally enjoyed all the hustle and bustle.

There would be as many as 12 hogs butchered on a given day; around eight was the norm. A very cold day was always chosen so the meat would not spoil. Activity got underway about sunup, with the huge kettle being filled with water and a fire built in the furnace underneath to heat the water to scalding hot. Then daddy, in his high top rubber boots with .22 rifle and butcher knife in hand, would strike out at a fast pace for the penned-up hogs where a couple at a time would be shot and bled.

I dreaded this part of the process, but always forced myself to be present lest someone think I was not tough enough to handle it. Daddy startled me on one such occasion by gently saying, "Jesse, I don't like doing this, but it's something that just has to be done." He must have been reading my mind. Later on, after I turned 14 or 15, he would occasionally turn to me and ask if I wanted to shoot one of the hogs; I surmised he thought I was going to be a farmer one day and would need the experience. I always said yes, and even felt pleased that he would ask me, but there was no satisfaction in carrying out the assignment.

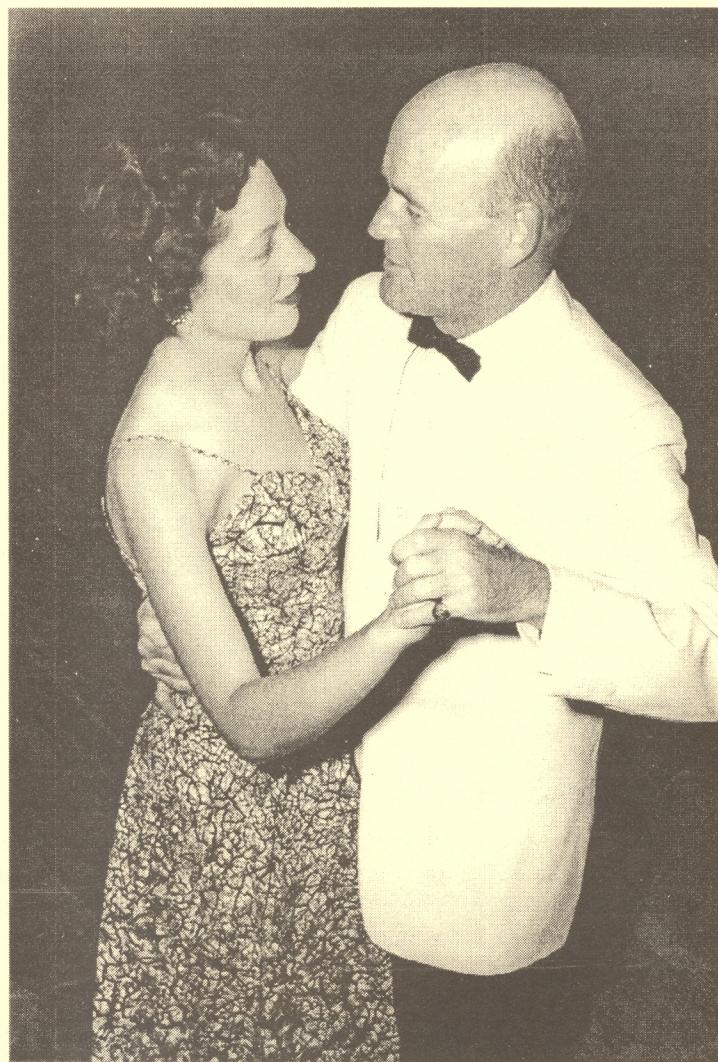
Mother did not participate in the butchering process until the cleaned carcasses had been removed from the gallows and laid on long wooden tables for cutting up. Up until this point it was strictly men's work. But for the rest of the long arduous day, she and Daddy were full working partners, each having clearly defined responsibilities.

As the meat was cut up, it was loaded into the family automobile. To accommodate the large quantity, the backseat was removed and the meat laid on a blanket of fresh pine boughs just broken from the trees in our woods. When all the carcasses had been cut up, the meat was taken to a commercial facility for salt or sugar curing. While Daddy was making this delivery, Mother would grind up the lean trimmings, then season and make sausage of them right on the spot. The cleaned small intestines were used for casing.

There were parts of the carcass that could not be preserved, since we lacked the means to freeze them. These included the backbone, liver, heart and brains. Mother usually cooked up a combination of eggs and brains for breakfast the next morning, and a liver and heart stew for lunch. Then in the next day or so, she would cook a big pot of backbone and rice. The balance of the unpreserved parts was distributed to the hired help, friends and relatives for immediate consumption.



Crockett Studio Christmas Dance 1952. Pictured left right are: Gloria Bland Roberts, Young Tillman, Pat Griffin Lindenmeyer, Johnny Haddock, Carole Rice Pinson, and Wade Coleman.



Lougenia (Lou) Gillis Gabard and John Youmans grace the dance floor. The photo is dated 1958.



Pigtails and pinwheel hat! Mary Dickey Gray.

She Taught Them to Dance

As we promised in the last newsletter, we continue spotlighting the Youmans-Crockett collection.

Marie Youmans was known as a dance instructor; among her many accomplishments. She also passed her dance talents to her son John Youmans who danced professionally and also taught dance. The Youmans-Crockett collection also includes programs from as early as 1922 through 1972. There are numerous photographs of other recitals and special studio events. Movie reels of some recitals are in the collection, however, we have no way to view them. If you would like to know more about the collection or view the photographs call the museum at 247-4780.



Billy Blocker and Evelyn "Teddy" Wilkes Schwandt. Billy Blocker helped identify the dance studio photographs. Perhaps having learned dance steps boosted his athletic skills when he was an SEC football player at Mississippi State University.



Wade Coleman and Carol Rice at the Crockett Studio Christmas Dance in 1952.



In the dance line are Eleanor Strickland McGowan, Jo Ritch Minchew, Marie Joyce, Frances Guess, Penny Williams and Shirley Lowe. We appreciate Eleanor McGowan and Sandra S. Anderson taking time to come to the museum and help identify people in the Youmans-Crockett collection.

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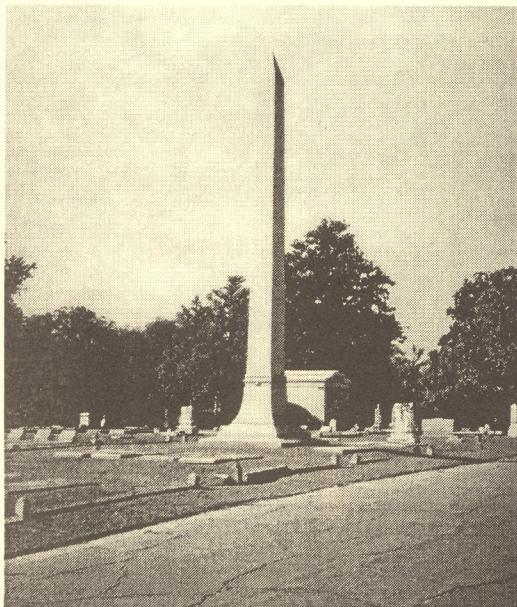
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Hogs continued on Page 7

Sunset Hill continued from Page 1

the cemetery by his son, B. F. Strickland. Funerary motifs common to 19th century American cemeteries can be found throughout. There are lambs representing children, or perhaps an angel. Crosses are found throughout, some of the largest are in the Greek Orthodox burial area. Most plots are family and many are delineated with marble coping to define the plot. Some plots have commemorative benches on them.

The largest and most impressive monument in the cemetery is the Lane obelisk. It is the tallest structure in the cemetery, and is placed over the graves of the Remer Lane and Walter Lane families; one of the descendants, Mills B. Lane, was a prominent banker in Savannah.



The Lane family obelisk is the tallest structure in the cemetery.

There are about 160 Confederate soldiers buried within the cemetery, but not in one plot. Seven are marked with government-issued tombstones and some are marked with the Iron Cross fashioned after the Southern Cross of Honor and placed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Other United States government-issued tombstones honor soldiers who fought in the Spanish American War, as well as wars of the twentieth century.

There are several historic granite and marble mausoleums, some with central entrance porticos. At least one, the Burdick Mausoleum, has a much more modern design to it. The larger house-like mausoleums represent some of the most prominent families in Valdosta, including the Burdette-Worthington, Langdale, West, and Strickland families.

The Jewish section, begun in 1931, has an overhead entry sign and many of the tombstones have Hebrew inscriptions and some have the Star of David on them.

The African-Americans were buried from the earliest days in what was considered a separate part of the cemetery and with later expansions considered to be Sections M-N-P-R-S and T. The area

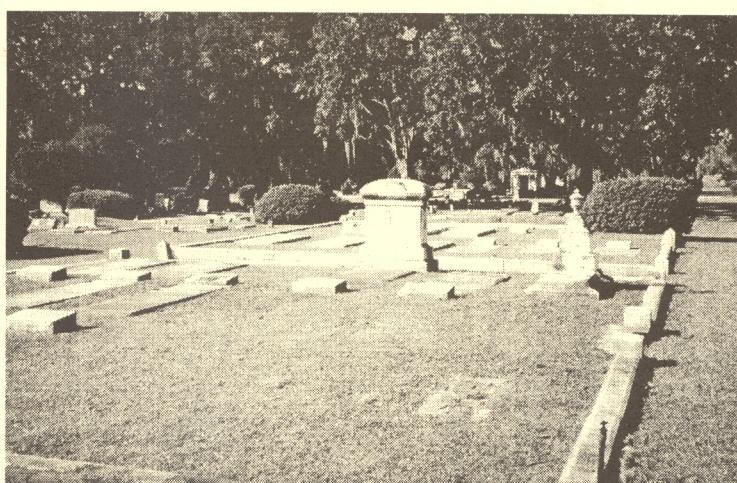
was once separated from the white section by a fence. In 1995 a memorial to former slaves buried in unmarked graves in this section was dedicated. The memorial contains an archway, benches as well as other commemorative markers.



The William B. Johnson family constructed the first mausoleum.

The cemetery is on flat land, typical of the coastal plain, with no significant natural features. There is a variety of trees, including live oaks in the older section and along Oak Street that date from ca. 1900, and many cedars. There are many flowering shrubs, particularly azaleas and camellias.

Changes to the cemetery include of expansions in 1882, 1892, 1918, 1932, and 1956. After the acquisitions of new land, the continuation of the cemetery plan, as well as the addition of landscaping elements, mostly trees, helped tie parts of the cemetery together into the 66 acres it represents today.



Attractive landscaping and beautiful trees at Sunset Hill.

Hogs continued from Page 3

By now the big kettle, used in the day for scalding the hogs in order to remove the hair from them, had been drained and cleaned and was ready for the fat trimmings. A fire was again built in the furnace underneath the kettle and the small chunks of fat were rendered into lard. The lard was poured into five-gallon cans, with a cotton cloth serving as a strainer to catch the solids, or "cracklins". It was usually dark or later before this last phase was completed.

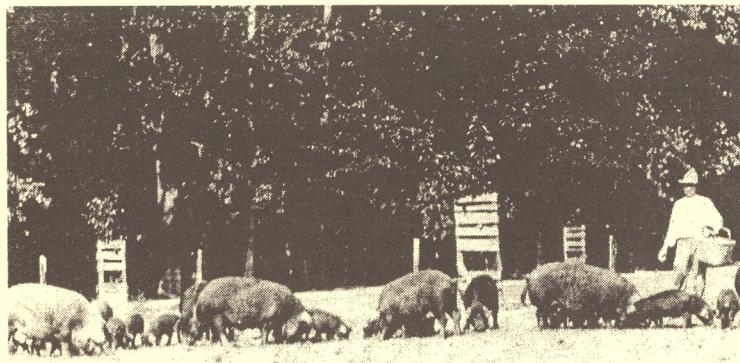
Finally, all the activity came to a close. It had been a long day. Everyone looked forward to a sumptuous meal and then off to bed. I'm certain Mother and Daddy had no trouble falling asleep on nights such as these.

The Smokehouse

After the meat was either salt- or sugar-cured for several weeks, it was brought home and prepared for smoking in our own smokehouse. Each piece of meat had bailing wire or twine attached to it so it could be hung up in the smokehouse over the smoke pit. The meat was also dusted with a compound to repel flies and other insects.

A fire was started in the smoke pit of the smokehouse and enough sawdust added to create smoke instead of flame. The meat was smoked like this for several days, and then left hanging there until consumed by the family. When Mother was ready to cook a meal, she would go out to the smokehouse and cut individual slices of meat straight from a ham or shoulder as it hung there, or cut off a section of sausage and take it back to the house for cooking.

Non-farm visitors always wanted to see the smokehouse, and would be amazed at all the meat they saw hanging there. It was especially a sight for them to see during World War II, when meat was in such short supply that it had to be rationed at the grocery stores.



This photograph of a hog farm is from the Agriculture collections of the Lowndes County Historical Society.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

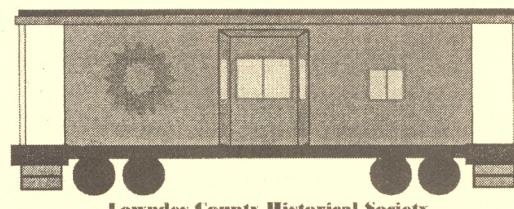


Dear Members,

As we move into the 2004 holiday season and I reflect on the past year I can only say that we have accomplished a great deal. Special thanks to those who helped us with our many projects. Thanks also to the Officers and Board of Trustees for their support and dedication. Special thanks to Donald and Renate for holding down the fort.

We are holding a special Holiday Boost the Caboose fundraiser. For a small donation to the Caboose restoration and backyard exhibit project you can hang an ornament—either on our tree or yours. The ornament is shown below.

Holiday Boost the Caboose



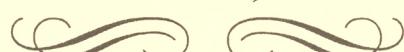
Our 30th Annual History 100 Dinner is set for March 18, 2005 at the Valdosta Country Club. Since we now have our caboose in place we decided that this year we will celebrate the railroad in our county's history. Please plan to come aboard and join us for an evening on the rails.

As we always say, if you would like to get more involved with the Lowndes County Historical Society and would like information about volunteering at the Museum, call Donald Davis or Renate Milner at 247-4780. Please plan to attend our Christmas Open House on December 4 and our History 100 Dinner on March 18.

Sincerely,

Julie Smith

MEMORIALS



Susie Lindstrom Kebler

by

Mr. and Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty

William 'Bill' Howell

by

Mr. and Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty

MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 29	7:00 PM	Sons of Confederate Veterans
December 4	10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Christmas Open House Winterfest – Downtown
January 31	7:00 PM	Sons of Confederate Veterans
March 18	6:00 PM	30 th Annual History 100 Dinner

Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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Web page:
<http://www.valdostamuseum.org>

YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of
Lowndes County Historical Society

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Julie Barnes Smith

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Donald O'Quinn Davis

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Museum Staff

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Museum Director

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