

# 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Macedonia First Baptist Church 1865-2005



Organized as the Macedonia First African Baptist Church in 1865 and as the Macedonia First Baptist Church on February 20, 1867, the congregation will celebrate their 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary on February 27, 2005. Mrs. Ruth Chastang, event chairman, said that the keynote speaker is Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin.

Mrs. Chastang came by the museum with a history of the church that was compiled by Rev. J. L. Lomax and Mrs. Stella Gilmore, probably written about 1960. Portions about the early history, which mainly center on the Rev. Charles Anderson, are included in this article:



Reverend Charles Anderson

Rev. Charles Anderson was born a slave in Savannah, Georgia in 1813, and died July 15, 1907 in Valdosta, at age 94. Upon death, his remains were taken from the home of his grandson, Oliver Bacon, to lay in state at the church until July 18, 1907. Rev. A. W. Bryant conducted the services.

Rev. Anderson was owned by the late Judge Warner of Savannah, and during his boyhood was thrifty and industrious. He was reared on a farm, and was later among the number of slaves who laid the track for the extension of railroads into the interior of Georgia. After working on the farm, at age 25 to 30, he entered the paint shop that was owned by his master. There he served as an apprentice and shortly became a skilled and artistic carriage painter. During a portion of the Civil War Rev. Anderson was forced by his masters to leave Savannah and work as a provisions packer for the Army of the South.

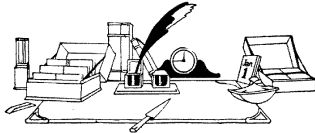
At the close of the War in 1865, Rev. Anderson was residing in Valdosta, then nothing more than a trading village. The town had moved a few years earlier from its site at Troupville to have access to the newly laid railroad from Savannah. In this new settlement Rev. Anderson began to hold religious services at various places in the community. He then organized the Macedonia First Baptist Church.

In the latter part of 1867 the church was holding meetings at the McKey Place now on St. Augustine Road. In early 1868 Rev. Anderson assembled a group that would become the church council. The members of the council gave credible evidence of their conversion. The council agreed and adopted the Articles of Faith of the Orthodox Baptist Church.

Mr. Joe Goldwire, white, a member of the old Troupville Baptist Church, and clerk of the new Valdosta Baptist Church was invited to assist in setting up the working plans for this Negro

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## Albert's Desk



by Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

## Family Funnies

Every family has favorite stories that are remembered and often retold through the years. Here are some of my favorites:

**John stories:** Lonie regularly took our children to the church nursery. On one of these occasions, there was a baby in a crib crying her eyes out. People gathered around trying to figure out how to stop the tears. Nothing helped. All of a sudden there was a terrific silence: John who had been placed on the crib next to her, took his thumb from his mouth and had put it into the little girl's mouth, and the other one in his own mouth. Both were happy.

When John was about four years old, he ran away on his trike, but instead of peddling he pushed himself with his feet. John pushed himself up White Oak Drive and took a right. He pushed himself up and down hill on Gornto Road and ended up on Terrace Boulevard at Irene Southwell's birthday party for her son. Since she didn't know who he was as he wouldn't talk, she put him in her car after the party and made a trip to her dress shop. There a neighbor spied him and said, "John Pendleton, What are you doing over here?" After that, Lonie put a dog tag on him. It read, "My name is Lulu and I belong to Albert Pendleton." The dog had died and this was the only tag we had.



**And Missy,** dancing ahead of us along the sidewalk spreading the good in her singsong voice, "I'm so happy, I'm so happy, I'm so happy,..." much to Andy's annoyance, Mama, make her stop!

**And Catherine:** When his dancing-instructor mother went out of town, John Youmans would take over the dance classes. On a day when he substituted, John greeted the students. When Lonie and child Catherine started for the door, Catherine stopped in her tracks. Lonie could not get Catherine to go into the building even though she pleaded with her. Why don't you go in? Lonie asked. "He ain't got no girl hair." There stood baldheaded John (balding since about the age of 20).

**And an Albert, Sr. story:** In the 1930s and 1940s my father called on many of the small grocery stores and fruit stands that lined South Patterson Street "as far as Miami" (hence "Little Miami") and got to know the merchants very well. One day after lunch he called on Mr. Marangos. Suddenly Mr. Marangos said, "Albit! Why dun you rrrun from de Mayor?" Daddy answered, "I'm running from him all the time now, Mr. Maragos."

**And of course, family friends stories:** When teenagers several friends were at Felton Davis' house playing with a Ouiji board and as usual trying to fool the board. One of the boys suggested, "ask it what is my birth date?" One of the looked at him and began to cry. She said, "You mean you don't know when your birthday is?"

When Marion Plowden got married, her cousin Hyta Mederer invited the wedding party to her house several days before the wedding. While talking about plans for the wedding, Hyta seated herself on a footstool in the middle of the room. During this discussion, Len, her husband, began telling a story to the people in the room. When he got through, Hyta looked up at him sooo serious and said to him, "Sho nuff!"

Other family funnies are included among the many stories of *Way Back When, Vol. III*, now available at the museum.



The Albert Pendleton family visits Jekyll Island, November 1970. From left are Andy, Helen, Catherine, Lonie, Missy, John and Albert. (From Way Back When, Volume III)

### Way Back When Volume III

Available at the Museum

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

## Museum News

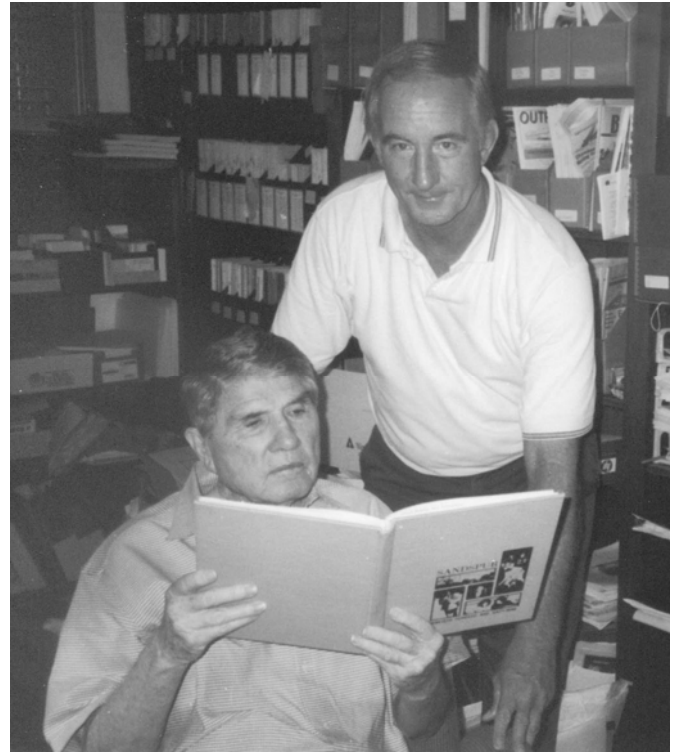


Renate uses the computer to show Jill Bridges of Morven, Georgia images of earlier Valdosta Post Offices. Mrs. Bridges was painting a mural for the new Northside Station Post Office.



Home-school parent Jonathan E. McLean of Ray City, Georgia toured the museum with his daughters. He particularly shared information on the Native American artifacts. He is a flint knapper and makes all sorts of Indian crafts.

## We Miss Puckett



Ed Puckett and Joe Clary

Ed Puckett has spent almost every weekday afternoon for over six years as a volunteer at the museum. Near the end of January he told us that the reasonable time for him to retire as a volunteer had come. We didn't want to hear these words but knew that Ed was doing what he thought necessary. During Ed's youth he lived directly behind the museum on Briggs Street in the Converse house that had been moved over from Troupville. When at the museum he was in his old neighborhood.

Puckett's working early in life at the Ritz Theater, then selling automobiles and being in the Singing Americans, made him familiar with many people in town. Puckett helped identify and list items for the archives, gave tours of the museum, helped process mailings and effectively "held down the fort" when we at other tasks. Puckett and his wife Pat hosted the Society Trustees and employees of the museum at their home for a chili supper during the holidays.

Joe Clary made several visits to the museum getting photograph copies and checking other items for the Wildcat museum. Puckett and Joe Clary enjoyed recounting events of the "Ice Bowl" from the 1969 *Sandspur*. This state championship football game was played on Georgia Tech's Grant Field in Atlanta in bitterly cold weather. Joe Clary and Puckett's son Ralph were on the team. The Wildcats beat Forest Park 37-12.

When any of you see Ed Puckett please graciously thank him for his donation of over six years of service to the community as a daily volunteer at the Lowndes County Historical Society and Museum.

## James Oglethorpe Visits the Museum



When Gordon S. Varnedoe of Savannah came to the museum his visit included a trip to Sunset Hill Cemetery, where his great grandfather Samuel McWhir Varnedoe (b.1816-d.1870), and grandfather Samuel Lamartine Varnedoe, Sr.(b.1848-d.1902) are buried. S. M. Varnedoe established the Valdosta Institute in 1865. Gordon's father, Samuel L. Varnedoe, Jr. (b.1902-d. 1990) was a prominent Savannah attorney and the Islands Expressway Bridge is named in his memory. Gordon Varnedoe for years has portrayed James Oglethorpe in Savannah's Georgia Day celebrations and for many other educational and civic occasions. Gordon is on the Georgia Historical Society's 2005 Georgia Heritage Celebration committee. Gordon played football for one year in the late 1950s for the Georgia Bulldogs. He said he really enjoyed his visit to Valdosta and attended a VSU football game and booster lunch and enjoys following Chris Hatcher and the Blazers.

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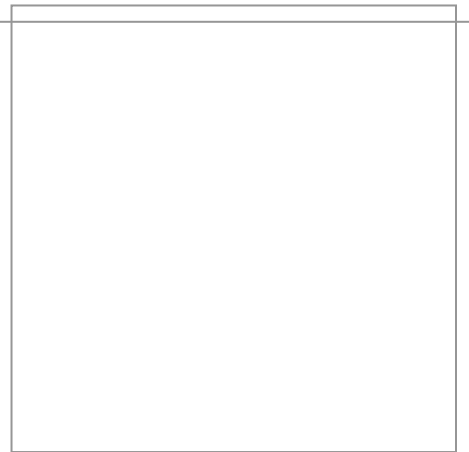
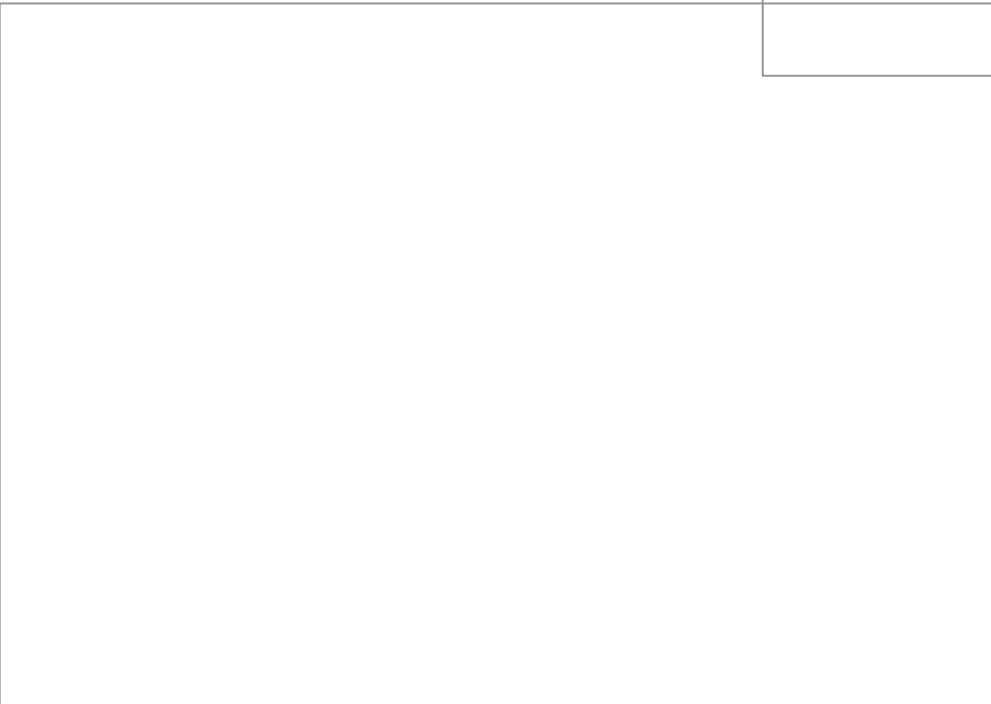
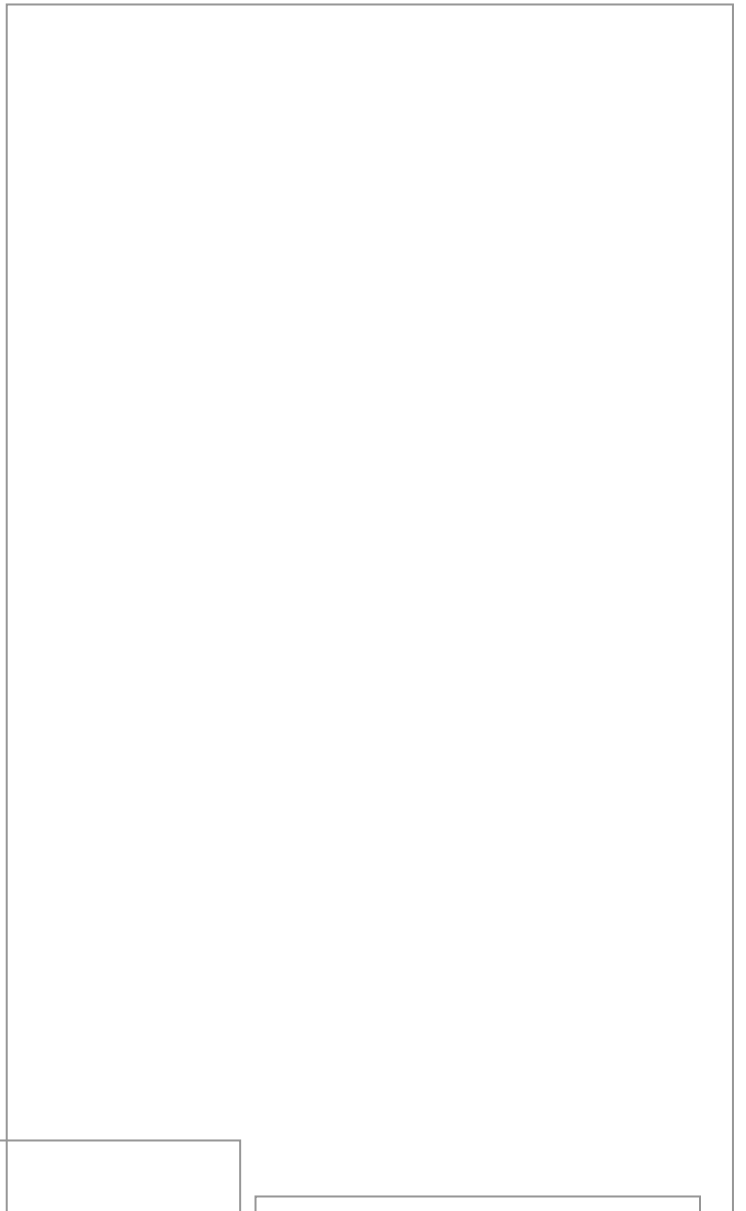
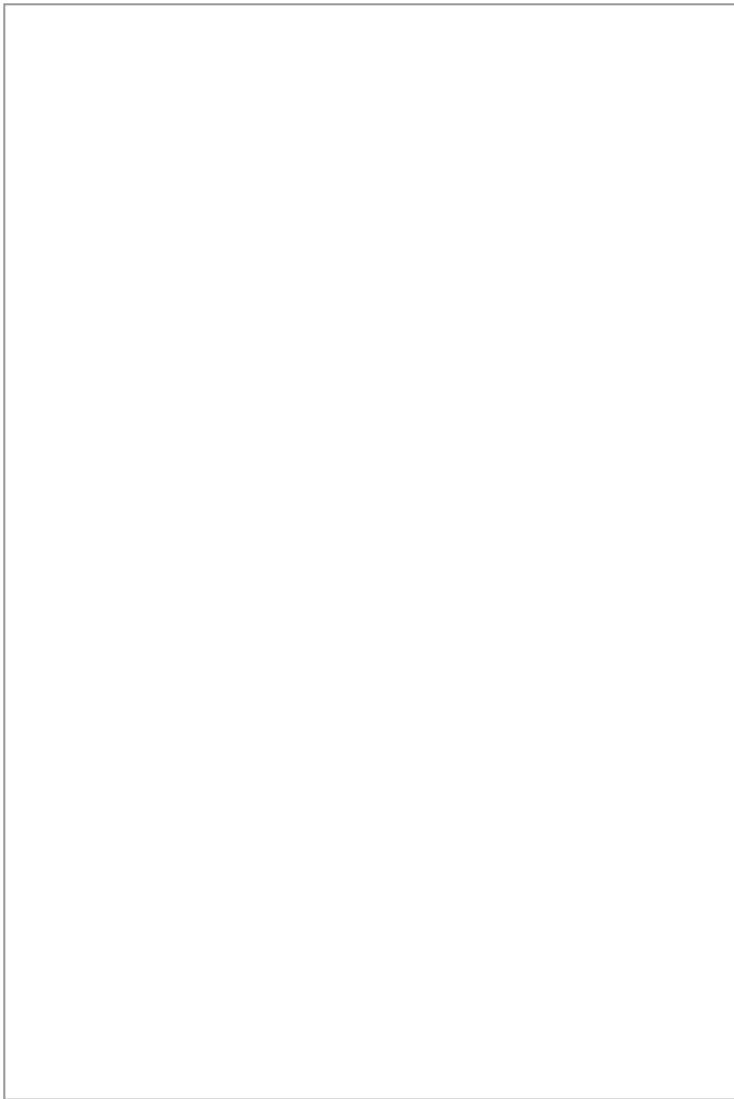
church. Mr. Goldwire then opened the first free school for Negroes in this section of Georgia. The school was operated in the new church building.

The first building was little more than a shanty, made of pine slabs, with rough planks for seats, and pine straw for the flooring. It soon became unusable, and the minds of the people were set on securing another house of worship. In the meantime the old Troupville Baptist Church was dismantled and the lumber was stored in the backyard of Judge Neal's home on West Central Avenue. The Valdosta (formerly Troupville) Baptist Church built an entirely new structure on east Central Avenue. [now

The members of Macedonia, being unable to build, were fortunate in having a pastor who took on the responsibility of achieving this goal. Rev. Anderson secured the materials of the old white Baptist church building for about \$130.00, an enormous amount of money for a recent slave to even think about. Rev. Anderson worked out the cost of the lumber by hiring himself to various white families and having them pay directly to the owners of the second-hand lumber.

A larger frame church house was constructed a few years later. The current sanctuary was erected in 1909 when A. W. Bryan was pastor. The frame structure was destroyed by fire on the night of June 3, 1913.

The compilers of this history, Rev. J. L. Lomax and Mrs. Stella Gilmore credited Deacon George Washington and Rev. T. A. Lomax for collecting and preserving the early history of Macedonia First Baptist Church, especially Rev. T. A. Lomax for writing down the elderly Rev. Charles Anderson's accounts of his days as a slave, coming to Valdosta, and the founding of Valdosta first black church.



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Members,

Happy New Year! Thank you for your continued support of the Lowndes County Historical Society. If you have not yet renewed your membership for the 2004-2005 Membership year, please remember to do so now. We are currently updating our membership database and if we have not received your dues we will be in touch.

Our 30<sup>th</sup> 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 to celebrate the railroad in our county's history. Please plan to come aboard and join us for an evening on the rails.

We had a great turnout at our Christmas Open House. The Museum saw a steady stream of visitors and we had a great response to our tent at Winterfest. Special thanks to students in Renate Milner's class who volunteered to help with the tent. We also had a great response to our holiday caboose ornament. Fifty caboose ornaments were on our tree at the end of the holiday season—you only had to make at least a \$1.00 donation so kids and adults alike contributed. We have our contributors named at right.

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.

Sincerely,

*Julie Smith*



Mrs. Maxine Connell Steinberg brought by framed prints of early railroad engines and of the former Georgia Southern and Florida depot in Valdosta. These prints will be used in the caboose exhibit. Accompanying her to the museum was her daughter, \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_, Georgia.



Special thanks to the following people who bought ornaments to support our Caboose project.

Tim Boyd Family	Ashley Millad
Diane Carter	Venetta Miller
Taylor Church	Albert Monill
Trace Church	Malachi Payne
Tyler Church	Danete Perry
Diane Coche	Sarah Perry
Patricia L. Current	Renee and Storm Petty
Leon Devo	Jamie Powell
Russell Dorminey	Jessie Powell
Shelia Dorminey	Shane Reynolds
Coley Giovanni	Kendall Roberts
Keith L. Gunter	Teretha Scott
Mr. & Mrs. Harmon	Amanda Smith
Katherine Jenkins	Andrew Smith
Bauer Johnson	Bootsie Smotherman
Ella Jones	Bonnie Sorenson
Katherine Mayer	Gloria Sorenson
Camryn McCallum	William Stokes
Dayna McCallum	Carla Thomas
Kelci McCallum	Carol Wild
Shannon McCormick	Casey Young
Carter & Sandra McDonald	
(McDonald Realty Group, Inc.)	

Deb, David & Katrina  
Tomenski  
Gemini  
Visitor (4)

# MEMORIALS

**Charles W. Adams**

by

Barneta O. Davis

Donald O. Davis

Mr. & Mrs. J. Edward Willis

**Abraham S. Dennis**

by

Mr. & Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty

**Gwen Winter Goodloe**

by

Mr. & Mrs. J. Edward Willis

**Theron Roberts Henderson**

by

Susan McKey Thomas

**Frances D. Kafoure**

by

Mr. & Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty

**Christine T. McIntosh**

by

Barneta O. Davis

Donald O. Davis

**Willis L. Miller, Jr.**

by

Mr. & Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty

Donald O. Davis

**Voncile Fleming Slone**

by

Mr. & Mrs. J. Edward Willis

**William G. Talley, Sr.**

by

Mr. & Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty



**We don't want  
to lose you!**

If you have not paid your  
dues, please do so now.  
Keep the history coming!



If you misplaced your membership form or did not receive one,  
call the museum at 247-4780 and we will send one to you.

## MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 13	2:00 PM	Trustees Meeting
February 28	7:00 PM	Sons of Confederate Veterans
March 18	6:00 Social	30 <sup>th</sup> Annual History !00 Dinner
	6:30 Dinner	"All Aboard in History"
March 28	7:00 PM	Sons of Confederate Veterans

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## YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of  
Lowndes County Historical Society

### President

Julie Barnes Smith

### Newsletter Editor

Donald O'Quinn Davis

### Editorial Advisor

Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

### Museum Staff

Donald O'Quinn Davis

*Administrative Director*

Renate K. Milner

*Museum Director*

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## YESTERDAY & TODAY

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