

You Rang?

by Donald O. Davis

Now, instead of a ring it might be a buzz, a vibration or *The Star Spangled Banner* to signal that you have an incoming call. With the recent announcement that AT&T is approved to purchase Bell South, a review of early Southern Bell telephone facts about Valdosta might be interesting.

The telephone was invented in 1875, and by 1896 143 Valdostans were part of the Valdosta exchange. This first local phone company was the Valdosta Telephone and Electric Company. Southern Bell purchased this first Valdosta telephone company in 1903 when it had 208 stations. Southern Bell, however, had come to Valdosta in 1895 with a long distance line and one toll station.

The number of telephones in Valdosta increased through the years as follows:

1910.....759
1920.....1,515
1930.....2,080
1940.....2,664
1950.....6,971

The installation of the 10,000th was in the residence of Major and Mrs. Homer Smith at 2107 Fleming Street on November 24, 1954.

The 12,000th telephone installation in Valdosta was made at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Culpepper at 743 Lausanne Drive on May 17, 1956.

On March 29, 1957, the 13,000th telephone in Valdosta was installed at the White Oak Drive home of Mr. and Mrs. Rouse Vallotton. A note in our archives states that while installer J. M. Nitschke was converting the other telephone in the Vallotton home to dial he suggested an additional colored telephone for the patio.

These early telephone installations were considered milestones, showed the growth of the city, and were attended by phone company executives, Valdosta mayors, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and/or Georgia Public Service Commission members.

The 25,000th telephone was installed at Valdosta State College on May 19, 1970. (see photo) A milestone celebration was held at Valdosta Country Club. During an address to the milestone luncheon General Manager Rowland Knight stated "We elected to present our 25,000th telephone to Valdosta State College to emphasize our support of higher education and the technical growth this education makes possible."

Other notes in our archives on Southern Bell state that Valdosta cut to dial service on November 7, 1957 and that Valdosta was first in the state with Touchtone in May 1965. Direct Distance Dialing also came into use in May of 1965.



Valdosta's 25,000th telephone, a silver commemorative model, was installed May 19, 1970, at the office of Dr. S. Walter Martin, President of Valdosta State College.



Southern Bell displayed early handicapped access awareness. On October 19, 1978 they introduced the new 54 inch coin telephone to Valdosta. This unit was in front of the downtown post office. Left to right in the photograph are Joe Blackmon, of Disabled American Veterans; Billy Kelly, coin telephone development; Homer Barrett, of Disabled American Veterans; and Wiley Watt, now of Thomasville, vocational rehabilitation services.

Books and Authors

We have recently had several people by the museum that have completed or are working on books that relate to Lowndes County history.



Glenn Simmions, cover artist, and Emory Townsley, author, presented a copy of *Don't Make Me Hafta Come OUT There!* to the museum. The cover art is a print of an original painting of a Valdosta neighborhood scene. Glenn Simmions recently had a show at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

Emory Townsley moved from Valdosta early in his teen years. He now lives in Fredericksburg, Virginia. "Skip" Townsley received his Bachelor of Science degree and Juris Doctorate degree from Syracuse University in New York. He earned his Master of Law in International Law from the National Law Center at George Washington University. Townsley has had several historical articles published and has written many articles concerning military law.

Colonel Townsley, retired, is a former U.S. Air Force "JAG." Townsley at one time was assigned to Moody AFB and was told that he was the first black attorney in Lowndes County. Townsley said that this book is titled from his grandmother's admonitions that if she had to come out into the yard she was going wear him out. Townsley writes that his collection of stories covers "a rambunctious seven-year old black child whose oversized curiosity keeps him nosing around from one experience to another. In the ... speech of his childhood in Valdosta, Georgia, the author depicts the adventures of kids growing up in a small neighborhood in the South." The stories cover from cotton to Christmas, to cross-town kids, to bug boys in the alley, to "The Day Joe Louis Came to Town."



Jim Parrish, Dorothy Neisen, and Geraldine Clifton

Jim Parrish of Tallahassee, Florida is writing a book on the 50th Georgia regiment. This regiment included Lowndes County soldiers. He came to the museum to research and to get photograph copies of some Lowndes participants. For the 50th Georgia we had photographs of Major Phillip C. Pendleton, Augustus Hardee Lane, Benjamin J. Sirmans, Jeremiah W. Wells, and Reuben Thomas Roberds. Roberds was the first mayor of Valdosta and died in the Civil War. Wells was mayor of Valdosta in the early 1880s. These photograph copies were made easy to find because of the earlier work of Susie McKey Thomas and Cathy Wells with their update of Susie's book *The Confederate Soldiers of Sunset Hill Cemetery*. Geraldine Clifton and Dorothy Neisen came to offer information on Confederate burials referenced in their book *Church and Family Cemeteries in Lowndes County, Georgia 1825 - 2005*.



Judy and Harris Churchwell, Ronnie Harper, Renate Milner, and Faye Harper.

L. Harris Churchwell of Hawkinsville, Georgia is a 12th Georgia Regiment researcher. Faye Harper of Perry, Georgia is his research assistant. Soldiers in this Confederate regiment came mainly from middle Georgia counties; however Lowndes men were included in the group. Harris Churchwell is first writing a book on *Officers of the 12th Georgia Regiment*. He will include information on each officer and when possible a photograph of the soldier and his burial site. The officers from Lowndes in this regiment were Capt. James W. Patterson, Lt. John K. Goldwire, Capt. James Monroe Briggs, Capt. C. C. Grace, Lt. Henry Early Moore, Lt. R.W. Phillips, and 2nd Lt. Andrew J. Tucker. Patterson, Goldwire, Briggs, Moore, and Tucker died in the Civil War. Grace survived and is buried in Screven County. Phillips also survived. We were able to provide Churchwell with some information and a photograph of Patterson. After publishing the book on the officers, he will then write a book on the unit and its campaigns. Churchwell gave the museum photograph copies of the Patterson, Goldwire, and Tucker gravesites in Virginia and Grace in Screven County. While here, we showed Mr. and Mrs. Churchwell and Mr. and Mrs. Harper Confederate unit flags from the Faries collection.

Naylor Yearbooks

Ronnie Blanton recently donated two Naylor High School yearbooks to the museum. These are our first Naylor yearbooks and they are greatly appreciated. The volumes are 1949-50, named the *Pathfinder* and 1951, named the *Hornet*. These books belonged to Ronnie's mother the late Marguerite Norton Blanton, who taught at Naylor High School for many years. The yearbooks show that she also coached girl's basketball.



The principal of Naylor High School during that period was T. L. Gamble and faculty members included James Goolsby, Mrs. H. G. Moore, Mrs. L. C. Norton, Mrs. J. W. Baskin, Mrs. Frances Wilbur, Mrs. Jewell Landis, Mrs. T. L. Gamble, Mrs. C. E. Carter, Raymond Coppage, and Mrs. Ray Ledford. The visiting teacher was Elizabeth McLane; Speech and Dancing instructor, Dorothy Carter; and County Supervisor, Ola Ray Dupree.

Aside from her work with the Lowndes County School System Ola Dupree is also remembered as the most noticeable female in the Valdosta First Baptist Church choir. She walked in with the men and sat with them in the choir loft. She was not an alto or soprano—Ola Dupree sang tenor.

We appreciate Ronnie giving us our first Naylor yearbooks, and want to congratulate Ronnie, who at age 54, became a father for the first time. Baines Ronald Blanton was born to Ronnie and Bebo Blanton on August 8, 2006.



Marguerite N. Blanton



Ola Ray Dupree



Men's basketball team from the 1951 *Hornet*. Front row: Calvin Coker, Raymond Wilson, Dale King, Ray Cowart and Fred Wilkinson. Back row: Raymond Sutton, Charles Norton, Harry Corbett, Edwin Gamble, and James Moore.

Valdosta High Scrapbooks



Natalie Kennedy and Clay Lee of the Valdosta High School Library brought in student activity scrapbooks that date from the 1950s. Those from the 1950s and 60s are especially valuable to the museum because they are before Susie and Albert began our clipping files. The donation included other VHS publications and issues of the *Dosta Outlook* student newspaper dating back to the 1930s.



Carla Goldie with her quilted pillow in the Flying Dutchman pattern and the newly arrived red 'klompens' and WWII gift 'klompens.' Mrs. Delsing's father-in-law made the rough hewn WWII set and her late husband made the bright red lacquered pair for her.



Annamaria Delsing, 86, in her home in Echt, Holland. She related stories of WWII and the Delsing family to Sjouke Haan, the real Flying Dutchman. She also identified Delsing family members in this 1945 photo from my father's WWII scrapbook (*below*).



The Real Flying Dutchman

by Donald O. Davis

In mid August Carla Goldie of Jennings, Florida, and president of the Withlacoochee Quilters Guild came to the museum with other quilters to prepare the layout for their "20 Years of Winners" exhibit that showed September 5 through October 13. The ladies were most convivial and before leaving Carla Goldie said that during the quilt exhibit she might show me "a Flying Dutchman." I then shared that I knew the "Real Flying Dutchman" and that he was sending red shoes but they had not yet arrived. Mrs. Goldie inquired for more information. I told her that the red shoes would arrive soon, and when she showed me what a Flying Dutchman was to quilters, I would tell her the story of the red shoes and the real Flying Dutchman.

WWII Gratitude

My father never talked about his activity during WWII, but a symbol of WWII has been on display in the home for 50 years - usually on an end table or bookshelf - a fascinating small pair of rough hewn wooden Dutch shoes. They may have been missiles a time or two in childhood, but we found out that mother's aim with a paddle was much better than our aim with the wooden shoes. On the sole of the shoes was written W. Delsing Echt, Holland. My father always spoke kindly of these people and of their thoughtfulness during this perilous time in Europe and in the lives of young soldiers.

In the early 1990s I ventured into the home attic to a remote corner for WWII mementoes and a partially assembled scrapbook. The scrapbook contained an unidentified photograph of the Delsing family who quartered my father and three other American soldiers for a few weeks in 1945 while the Allied forces were preparing to cross the Rhine River for the final assault on Hitler and Berlin.

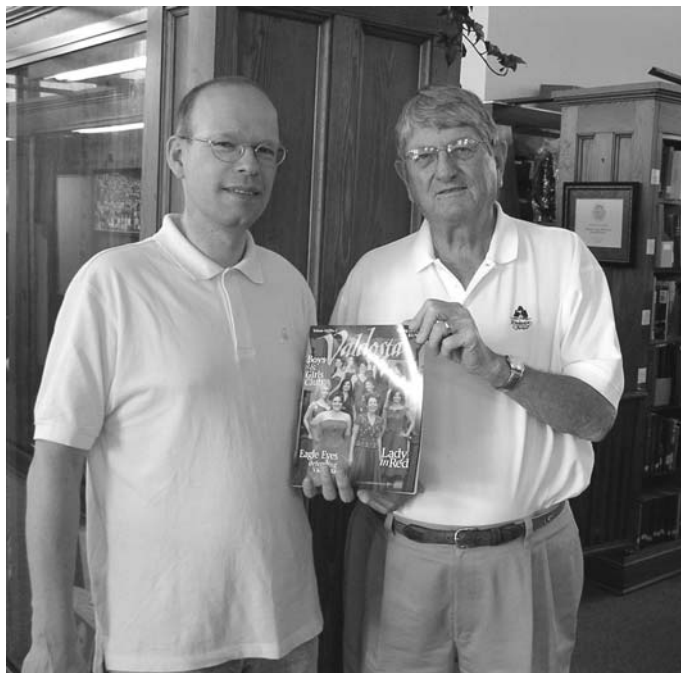
Jump to 2005. It so happens that a man from Holland, Sjouke Haan, comes to tour the LCHS museum. He was in Valdosta visiting American friends that had been stationed in Europe. Sjouke was impressed with the stories of European history told in our exhibits of local history, especially the Eager trench shotgun in WWI and the Howard exhibit on the Berlin Air Lift. After discussion on the exhibits I quizzed him if he would translate a label for me in relation to some Dutch wooden shoes. Sjouke returned to the museum before leaving for The Netherlands (Holland), and in telling him that I would one day like to tell Delsing descendants that their kindness to my father was never forgotten, Sjouke kindly "self imposed" it to be his mission to locate this Delsing family.

To shorten a story of intrigue, after several time consuming attempts Sjouke was successful and found that after some family tragedy only one member of the Delsing family remained, 86 year old Annamaria Hendrika Mathide Vrehen Delsing. She said that her father-in-law Willem made the shoes. She married son number three, Willem II, in 1946. The Delsing family had a wooden shoe factory from the 1920s until 1952 when they began making concrete block. She was touched and very glad to know of the years of remembrance of the Delsing family from distant Valdosta.

Sjouke Hann returned to Valdosta in spring 2006, toured in the Southeast and attended the Air Show at Moody AFB. When he came to the museum he told more stories of the Delsing family

and the area during WWII. How the shrapnel in the trees affected the wooden shoe business and of the clock stand and housing in Mrs. Delsing's home made of shell casings retrieved from the forests around Echt, Holland just after WWII.

Sjouke said that he, with his wife this time, was going to visit Mrs. Delsing again during the summer. After this second trip to Echt, Sjouke sent an email that he would be shipping me a gift from Mrs. Delsing, a pair of red wooden shoes that her husband, Willem II, had made for her almost sixty years ago. These "klompens" arrived in time for my mother's 86th birthday party. All relatives gathered were told the WWII story of the Delsing family and the Klompenfabriek in Echt, Holland. And the red shoes fit the small feet of my late father's first great-grandchild as if she were trying on Cinderella's slipper.



Johnny B. Lastinger, right, happened to come by when Sjouke Haan, left, of The Netherlands was in the museum. He presented



Principal, coach and student: When the Jordan High School Beetdiggers of Sandy, Utah flew east to play Valdosta High in football, their visit to the museum covered not only Doc Holliday but also the quilted pioneer symbol of Salt Lake City.

MEMORIALS



Jean Dill Bellinger

by
Dr. and Mrs. Bill Story

Willie Clare Sims Copeland

by
Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Willis

James Lovett Dewar, Sr.

by
Nic Daugharty
Mr. and Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty
Eleanor M. Howard
Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lastinger
Alex B. McFadden
Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Willis

Mary Houston Dickey

by
Eleanor M. Howard
Alex B. McFadden

Dr. William M. Gabard

by
Harold and Virginia Bennett
Donald O. Davis
Mr. and Mrs. Felton Davis
Mr. and Mrs. George H. Hart, Jr.
Eleanor M. Howard
Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lastinger
Hank and Claire Lee
Hazel Mobley Lee
Alex B. McFadden

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Helen Mobley
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Leona Hudson Strickland
Mr. and Mrs. William A. Story
Susan McKey Thomas
Georgia Smith Thomson
Mr. and Mrs. John R. Wiggins
Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Willis

John O. Hensley

by
Nic Daugharty
Mr. and Mrs. Robert T. Daugharty

Howard and Sarah Lincoln

by
Alex B. McFadden

Dorothy Morgan Mackey

by
Mr. and Mrs. J. Converse Bright
Eleanor M. Howard
Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lastinger
Mr. and Mrs. William J. Perlman
Mr. and Mrs. John R. Wiggins

Martha W. McKey

by
Alex B. McFadden

Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

by
Mr. and Mrs. William C. Banks, Jr.
Dr. and Mrs. George H. Hart, III
Alex B. McFadden

Mildred Griner Sage

by
Martha Norwood Gibson

Francis Wayne Smith

by
Georgia S. Thomson

Dr. John F. Tomlinson

by
Margaret M. Culbreth
Donald O. Davis
Lougenia G. Gabard
Mili E. Hunt, D.M.D.
Dr. and Mrs. Deane Mink
Valdosta Civitan Club

Vera S. Tomlinson

by
Seventh Day Adventist Church of
Valdosta

James Gostin Tunison, Sr.

by
Mr. and Mrs. William J. Pearlman
Dr. and Mrs. William A. Story

Minnie Roberts Williams

by
Susie McKey Thomas

415 Scouts and Cubs Helping With Outdoor Projects

by Julie Smith

We are fortunate to have the support of Boy Scout Troop 415 and Cub Scout Pack 415 from Park Avenue United Methodist Church. The Scouts and Cubs are helping us with many projects in our Outdoor Exhibit areas. Last Spring, Wade Ingram coordinated and supervised the slab for our farm exhibit as his Eagle Project. On Labor Day a group of scouts working on their Family Life merit badge met at the museum and helped with yard work. Many family members joined them as did Historical Society member Catherine Redles. The scouts and their families weeded the existing flower beds and helped build planting beds for the agricultural area. They then met inside the museum for a discussion on families and what families mean in our culture and community.



Jared Koebble, Andrew Schaeffer, Will Campiglia and Andrew Smith, Scouts working on their family life merit badge, met at the museum with their families and museum volunteers to help with yard work.



Historical Society member and trustee, Catherine Redles, works with Boy Scouts pulling weeds in the Museum yard.

On September 16th, the Bear Cubs of Pack 415 visited the Museum as part of their requirement for advancement. The Bear Badge has an historic preservation component where the boys must visit a museum and historic homes. We toured Fairview with Catherine Redles and she told about many of the homes in the area, including the Roberts House. We then walked back to the museum where the Cubs completed the scavenger hunt. The day ended with what we called "the ultimate carwash". The Cub Scouts and their parents gave the caboose a much needed cleaning. Everyone had a wonderful time and the caboose is once again a bright and shiny red! We hope the Bear Cubs next year will carry on the tradition and make the museum and caboose a part of their community involvement.



The Cub Scouts had a wonderful time washing the caboose.

On September 23rd, Troop 415 made the museum their monthly troop service activity. We worked on several projects including putting the fencing around the planting beds in the farm area, cleaning the caboose interior, and building an Indian style shelter in our Native American section. Historical Society members helped including Marvin Smith and Catherine Redles. Many of the Scout's parents also chipped in. After working several hours the scouts and their families had a cook-out and grilled hot dogs behind the museum.



Cullen and Drew Trelkeld, Christopher Hewitt, and Matthew Findlay were among the Scouts who helped clean walls inside the caboose.



Andrew Schaeffer, Chaker Fares, and John Vaille helped with an Indian style shelter in the Native American area.



After a couple of hours of hard work, the Scouts and their families had a cook-out behind the museum.

It's exciting to see the museum as a place for young people and their families to get involved with their community while they explore the past.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members,

Remember to attend the History Festival on November 4th from 11:00 AM until 4:00 PM. With the new construction and added exhibits there is a great deal to see. Our committee has planned many new activities and we also will feature our traditional hotdogs and coke, popcorn, biscuits, and boiled peanuts. See you as we once again blast into the past for a bygone experience. If you would like to volunteer please contact the museum.

Membership renewals will be mailed in early January. Please plan to renew then.

Sincerely,
Julie Smith



Discover History's Mysteries

at the

The 3rd Annual Blast in the Past History Festival

Saturday, November 4th

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

at

The Museum

2:00 PM

Special Presentation by Dr. Mary Block
Valdosta State University, Department of History

**Experience history with old-fashioned characters,
food, and fun.**

**Festival food includes hotdogs, popcorn,
boiled peanuts, biscuits and honey,
Italian ice, and Coca Cola**

Admission is free!

**Purchase ticket for food and
activities at the door - \$2.50**

**Join us for a good time, but as we always say:
Be careful -- you might learn something!**

**For more information
Call (229) 247-4780**

MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 30	Son's of Confederate Veterans
November 4	History Festival
	11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
	2:00 PM – Dr. Mary Block
November 27	Son's of Confederate Veterans
December 2	Museum Open House as part of
	Jingle Bells Festival - Downtown
	10:00 AM – 5:00PM
December 10	Trustee's Meeting 2:00 PM

Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of
Lowndes County Historical Society

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Newsletter Editor

Donald O'Quinn Davis

Kid's Page Editor

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with Julie Barnes Smith

Museum Staff

Donald O'Quinn Davis
Administrative Director

Renate K. Milner
Museum Director

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