

YESTERDAY



&

TODAY

Newsletter of the LOWNDES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chartered September 1967

305 W. CENTRAL AVENUE
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA 31603

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July & August 2007

VOL. XXXVI

NO. 7 & 8

Remembering In the Spirit of Miss Natalie

by Donald O. Davis

Natalie Sirmans Williams was a founder of the Lowndes County Historical Society in 1967 and president of the society in 1977 during the move into the Carnegie and for the grand opening of the museum in September, 1977. This coincided with the 10th Anniversary of the organization.



We told the story of our founding, and the 20th and 30th Anniversaries, in an earlier newsletter. The story of the 10th is well told through the spirit of Natalie Williams. Natalie was a 1919 graduate of South Georgia State Normal College (VSU's first name). Her husband was the Packard automobile dealer. Natalie lived a long, productive life, passing away in 1996 at age 95. Her words reveal the spirit in which she led the society into a new home and the grand opening of the new permanent home.

Moving Day was April 1, 1977. The move was from the eight year temporary address at 1110 North Patterson Street to 305 West Central Avenue. The Dr. A. Griffin estate had allowed use of the Patterson Street home as a museum.

Natalie Williams wrote that one person remarked about the move, "It was just fabulous." Plans had been made and everything went accordingly. Frank Rose sent his truck and three men: Dick Davis brought two huge trucks and men: the County sent a flatbed truck and 12 men. She credits Mike Paine, Tom Shelton, Pete Livingston, John G. Hagan and Dr Durrenberger as being fine overseers, so good that they made Susie Thomas, Lonie Pendleton, Corrine Knight, Caroline Thomas, Margaret Baker, Nan Allen, Hazel Durrenberger, and Natalie Williams busy at the museum, working like mad. Natalie then wrote, "After all it was fun."

After the orderly move of the museum and its displays, the push was on to be ready for the 10th Anniversary in September. When preparations were ready, Natalie Williams wrote of the new museum home: "Fellow members, the time has finally arrived for the formal opening of the museum Sunday, September 25th (1977).... This is the 10th Anniversary of the Lowndes County Historical Society. COME – bring your family and all your friends. You will be agreeably surprised, I am sure, at what has been accomplished."

At our 40th anniversary, in the spirit of Miss Natalie, may we all come to see and be agreeably surprised at what has been accomplished.

Lowndes County Historical Society 40th Anniversary Celebration



Open House

Saturday, September 29, 2007

10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

305 W. Central Avenue

Indoor Feature Events

Jane Shelton book signing of the reprint of
Pines and Pioneers:

A History of Lowndes County, Georgia, 1825-1900

Dr. Joe Tomberlin book signing

Images of America, Lowndes County

Flag presentation in memory of Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

Indoor Feature Exhibits

Clothing Military

Doc Holliday Coca-Cola

Black Heritage including Agriculture

Native American artifacts

VSU items from our Archives and Library

It's VSU Homecoming – wear Red & Black!

Refreshments

It's a Co-Cola Party!

Favors

40th Anniversary magnets

Doc Holliday page markers

Train depot page markers

And one more page marker:

"I rang it!"

The 1889 Valdosta Institute Bell

Outdoor Feature Exhibits! – page three

Club Bulletins:

Humor in the Archives

By Donald O. Davis

Martha Gibson is chair of the Fortieth Anniversary Celebration. She plans to involve club attendance-for-reward as one emphasis during the function. Among the thousands of information folders in the museum archives are vertical clipping files on approximately 200 clubs and organizations, and many scrapbooks. People frequently research these files and scrapbooks.

Recently, Bill Booth, IPG local architect, asked if the museum had past copies of the Valdosta Rotary Club weekly bulletins the *Rota Reel*. He wanted to see images of earlier *Rota Reel* covers. I told him yes, in various collections.

A particular *Rota Reel* bulletin is archived in the Duggald and Leona Strickland Hudson collection. It is from the Rotary Club of Valdosta, ANNUAL LADIES NIGHT, Valdosta State College; Friday, 3 April 1959. This is back in the era when Rotary and most all civic and most social clubs were either 'all male' or 'all female.'

When I quizzed Leona, she said that it was her mother that kept this particular bulletin and that she always looked forward to the Ladies Night function. The Will Strickland listed below was Leona's father, a charter member of the organization.

We are very involved currently at the museum (and research center) and the humor of local citizens preserved in this bulletin came at a good time. This is a nice record of people that helped develop and build our community showing their lighter side. Remember that some of these men were born in the 1880s and preceded electricity and automobiles to Valdosta. Yes, there is humor in the archives.

RRR – Rotary's Roving Reporter

Just to show you that great effort has gone into the preparation for this hour which you now enjoy, Tot Amon and his able committee have interviewed some of the sagest and spiciest of our "Spokes" in the old style "roving-radio-reporter" technique (only our oldest will be able to remember the radio-age). Any unusual opinions expressed here may or may not be coincidental!

SLIM WARNER – "A woman's always ready to take what's becoming to her."

M. E. THOMPSON – "A woman's face is her fortune only when it draws a lot of interest."

WILL STRICKLAND – "In telling her age a woman is often shy in more ways than one."

GREGG SMITH – "Women of a few words set a rare example. But where is Exhibit A?"

TURNER ROCKWELL – "Women, deceived by men, want to marry them; it is a kind of revenge as good as any other."

HUGH PEEBLES – "The best way to tell a woman's age is a mistake."

RUDY MOORE – "Women rule a certain tribe of Indians in Peru, which indicates that American civilization is spreading."

JUDGE LANGDALE – "The first woman who started to do the driving from the back seat is said to have a husband who did the

Saving the Carnegie

By Botie Chitty

Editor's note: We appreciate very much Botie Chitty writing this story about the activity that saved the Carnegie Library. Botie Chitty is a life member of the Lowndes County Historical Society. Several years ago he donated Singing Americans items to the museum. He also compiled the book *The Valdostans: 99 Little Stories of the Way They Were*. He has given reprint rights of the book to the historical society. He and his wife reside in Cumming, Georgia.

Written July 22, 2007

In 1976, Fred DeLoach, Norman Bennett, and I (Botie Chitty) were elected county commissioners of Lowndes County. About that time the city building inspector, appeared before us and informed us that the old Carnegie, unoccupied was 'falling down,' and he wanted to tear it down. Lloyd Greer, a master architect designed and supervised the building and I could not believe that it would be 'falling down.' I made the motion that we three inspect the site before making a decision. Fred and Norman seconded the motion.

I called Felton Davis and asked him to meet us for the inspection. Someone called Veran 'Bubba' Blackburn and another called Bill Amos, a local builder. When we all arrived at the library, I saw Bill and a fireman, climbing up the ladder truck, getting up on the roof which had an access door leading to the attic.

Felton Davis inspected the west wall, that the inspector said was 'falling down', and said the wall was sound. Bill Amos got inside the attic and discovered that someone, years earlier, had neglected to fully close the access door. Rain had dripped on a ceiling beam and rotted it.

At a subsequent commission meeting, we voted 3-0 to make repairs and later voted to let the historical society have full use of it.

cooking from the dining room table."

Humor continued...

NOAH LANGDALE, SR - "The Modern girl admires spinning wheels, but she wants four of them and a spare."

INNES HARRELL – "If women's clothes did not change so often there would be more change in men's."

EMORY BASS – "I never expected to see the day when the girls would get sunburned in the places they do now."

TED DVORAK – "Women may not have more backbone than men but most of them show more of it."

OLAN LUKE – "An optimist is a man who whistles at a girl through false teeth."

HENRY HICKS – "Women can never be as successful as men because they don't have wives to help them."

EDDIE ZANT – "How come people old enough to know better seldom do?"

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS



The following are new members and renewals since we ran our list in the March-April Issue.

Genealogy Seekers	Joan Lee
Mrs. Nan Allen	Malcolm Liles
Edwin and Nancy Avera	Allen Peavy
Michael Black	Ruth Pitts
Ralph and Hilda Brown	Mr. and Mrs. Lane Renfroe
Mrs. Jane Caudle	Jeanne Davis Rountree
Frank Christian, Sr.	Mable Scruggs
Marion Anice Cross	Carl Smith
Alex M. Culbreth	Mrs. Edwina R. Smotherman
Karen Clary Cole	Mary Sue Southgate
J. Dewar, Sr.	Jeannette B. Strickland
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Dover	Roy Taylor
Dr. George R. Gaumond	Harrison and Mary Tillman, Sr.
Christina Gondek	Gordon Varnedoe
Mrs. Mack V. Greer	Horace R. West
Walter Hall	Hugh West
Mr. and Mrs. T. N. Holcombe, Jr.	Ed Willis
D. K. Hollis, Jr.	Garey Wood
Ron and Carol Irwin	Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Woodward
Carl L. Jones, II	Robin Yorke
Steve Joyner	
Sallie Shingler Kurrie	
Margaret J. Langdale	

MEMORIALS



A special gift
In loving memory of

Dottie S. West

By her husband and children

Horace R. 'Buddy' West
Jacquelyn Laree 'Ree' West Nichols
H. Reaves West, Jr.

George H. "Bouncer" Smith
By
Susan McKey Thomas

RING THE BELL—THE TRAIN HAS COME—AND LIFE ON THE FARM IS GOOD!

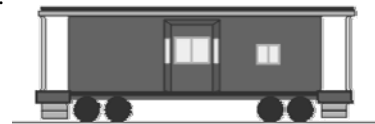
These words might have been heard in Lowndes County many years ago. Our progress in the areas behind the museum reflects these words today. Four years ago we embarked on an ambitious venture—creating an outdoor exhibit area behind the Lowndes County Historical Society Museum. We began in 2003 when Glenn Gregory helped us design a walking tour of Lowndes County history. The exhibits take you from the Mission Santa Cruz de Cachepile and end with the bell from Valdosta's first public school. Along the way you see how pioneers and farmers carved their livelihood from the frontier. How sweet life in Lowndes County can be! How the arrival of the railroad transformed the landscape. How an elephant made a lasting impression on a small town.

We've made good progress. Boy Scouts worked diligently to create planting beds and exhibits in the Native American and farm areas. An Eagle Scout candidate is working on seating in the farm and pioneer areas. The caboose is being refurbished as part of another Eagle Scout project. Historical society members and volunteers helped refurbish artifacts and build structures.



The Lowndes County community can truly call the backyard exhibits a group project. Our progress to date would have been impossible without the cooperation of those who helped:

- Develop our plans and help us get approval for additional structures in the yard.
- Store the caboose until we were ready to move it.
- Paint and move the caboose into place.
- Store the Valdosta Institute bell for many years.
- Raise needed funds to build the tower to house the Valdosta Institute bell.
- Donate time and materials to build structures in the Native American, farm, and pioneer areas.
- See the Historical Society as a place worthy of an Eagle Leadership Service Project.



Please join us on September 29th to see how far we've come.

Tour the caboose—Ring the bell—Stroll the grounds

Take a break and reflect on Lowndes County's rich and interesting past.



Dr. Frank Bird

We are most grateful to Rozzie Bird, of Atlanta. She recently donated the World War I uniform of her grandfather, Dr. Frank Bird, to the museum. Rozzie's brother, Frank "Brother" Bird, III, had told us that Rozzie had her grandfather's memorabilia when he came by the museum a few years ago. Brother Bird had made family inquiries for us concerning Dr. Bird's success in treating the 1918 pandemic Bird Flu, also called Spanish flu or LaGrippe. The fascinating story about Dr. Bird and the Bird Flu was printed on our November/December 2005 issue of the newsletter. The Dr. Bird uniform will be placed in the museum's permanent WWI exhibit along with the Eager trench shotgun and other items.

Dr. Frank Bird was born in 1889. He graduated from Emory Medical School with post graduate studies in New York and Baltimore. He began medical practice in Valdosta in June, 1914. Dr. Bird volunteered for WWI service in June, 1917 and was promoted to captain in February, 1918. He served in England and France and was discharged in February 1919. The Frank Bird Hospital, which is next door to the historical society, opened in 1926, with full interest acquired by Bird in 1932.



World War I uniform.

Birds in Uniform

By Donald O. Davis



Rozzie Bird is shown, (above right), in her Drum Majorette uniform from the 1968 Valdosta High School yearbook, *The Sandspur*. Rozzie was drum majorette her junior and senior year and received an award for band leadership. Rozzie was in school during the earlier years of Band Director Frank Butenschon. He brought many musical innovations, and 'swinging' half-time shows at football games to the forefront in south Georgia. Frank Butenschon was recently named to The National High School Band Directors Hall of Fame. Begun in 1985, this Hall names an average of two new members per year.

This photograph of Rozzie is taken from a special section of the yearbook, the faculty chosen Senior Superlatives, a high honor at VHS. Most schools do not have faculty chosen superlatives. According to U.S. Navy Retired Captain, Warren C. Graham, of Burke, Virginia, the practice came with the return of a yearbook to VHS in 1942. He was the 1942

Blackburn World War II Photographs

We appreciate Mrs. Joella Blackburn's donation of an exceptional number of snapshots taken by her late husband, architect Veran O. Blackburn, in Europe during WWII. His father owned Blackburn's Photography Studio in Valdosta. The photographs show many locations after bombing; troops on trains; landscapes; mangled heaps of Nazi aircraft; fox hole sites; Red Cross sites of interest; and over seventy-five portraits of fellow soldiers. Blackburn served in the 508th Military Police Battalion. This Battalion arrived in the European Theater in December 1944. Some of the photographs were taken waiting to cross the Rhine (see photo at left), and others in Lausanne, Düsseldorf, Munich and Czechoslovakia. This collection will be on view at the 40th Anniversary Open House.



We made GeorgiaTrend Magazine

by Donald O. Davis

Gary Sutherland, a writer with *Georgia Trend* Magazine, spent two or three hours with us at the museum several weeks ago. His major articles for the *Georgia Trend* issue were from interviews with Myrna Ballard of the Chamber of Commerce and Brad Lofton of the Industrial Authority, covering economic development and quality of life achievements in Valdosta and Lowndes County. He came to the museum and learned of the culture that built our town and of the progressive attitudes of leaders and thinkers that have for decades prepared this community for success. Sutherland's series of articles on Valdosta and Lowndes County were printed in the June 2007 issue of *Georgia Trend*. Excerpts from the article on the museum follow:

If you want to find the roots of Valdosta's modern day economic development success, they're within the aging brick walls of what was once a Carnegie Library and is now home to the Lowndes County Historical Society and Museum. Its exhibits tell the story of a community that has always known where it was going.

One item Sutherland noted from his discussion with Donald Davis was Valdosta's important and necessary efforts in getting the college started.

When the state legislature chartered a college in the city, but failed to appropriate any money, Valdosta city fathers put up the funds and donated the land to get it started.....

The article continued:

Records and exhibits tell of how the leaders also worked to get a [second and north/south] railroad line built through the city, one that remains a prime means for moving freight to the rest of the state and nation. And when other cities were fighting to keep interstate highways out of their backyards, Valdosta embraced the new road and the development it has generated over the past three decades.

The museum Is a virtual treasure trove of history. And its not just the story of Lowndes County, but the surprising impact that its natives [and residents] have had on national and world history.

Korean Visit Confirms

A recent quickly arranged visit of young Korean professionals to the museum seemed to confirm *Georgia Trend* writer Randy Southerland's statement when he wrote of our local history; "the surprising impact its natives [and residents] have had on national and world history."

I received a call at home early one Wednesday morning from Dr. Suzannah Patterson, VSU public relations professor. The Korean professionals were in Georgia for two weeks participating in the Group Study Exchange [GSE] program sponsored by Rotary International. At present procedures require that foreign citizens must have the approval of the wing commander to go on base at Moody. The new commander had been installed only a couple of days earlier and was out of town, so the anticipated afternoon trip to Moody could not happen. Dr. Patterson quickly arranged afternoon tours of the Valdosta State campus and the Lowndes

County Historical Museum. They would be at the museum over an hour.

Fortunately, our local history could provide important stories that related to the Korean visitors life experiences, but first we looked at an atlas and talked about where they were from and the other areas of Georgia they were visiting on their trip. The GSE team members were from Suncheon, South Korea, a picturesque coastal city.

The gentlemen had many questions about our Berlin Airlift exhibit. Thirty-two Americans died in this effort and one, Capt. William R. Howard, is buried in Sunset Hill Cemetery. The Berlin Airlift stopped the effort of the Soviet Union to spread communism across Western Europe just as the Allied Forces spared South Korea from the push of communism in Pacific Asia during the Korean War.

They were then pleased to learn how an event that took place in their country during the Korean War helps us locally tell about the advancement of civil rights. Valdostan Joe Rivers went to Korea as the Sergeant of a patrol squad with the 15th Infantry, Third Division, K Company known as "The Can Do Boys." While in Korea, Staff Sgt. Joe Rivers was among the first African American soldiers to command white troops in combat.



Bong Jae Oh, Jae Hyun Kwon, team leader Dong Myung Yoo, Kyeong Moon Na and Jeong Ki Kang at the museum with the Black History Month exhibit panel that includes the story of Joe Rivers during the Korean War. The Joe River's photograph is also in the permanent military exhibit in the museum lower floor gallery.

Most of them had knowledge about the American Wild West and enjoyed learning that Doc Holliday, of the Gunfight at the OK Corral, had lived in Valdosta. Some had their photograph made with the large painting of Doc Holliday. We discussed development of agriculture and transportation and the tour ended with them getting some Moody AFB information after all. They were told the story and shown a photograph of the Valdosta State cheerleader that now President George W. Bush dated during his flight training at Moody. This brought more questions than I had anticipated.

We parted glad to have met each other. On Thursday the group was headed first to Kinderlou Forest (but no time for golf), next to Wild Adventures, and then on to other parts of Georgia.

Remerton Timeline

By Donald O. Davis

Consultants, from as far away as Rhode Island recently, steadily visit the museum checking early aerial photographs for historic uses of property. Often the parcels being researched are in the mall, Interstate 75, and Baytree Road area. The early aerial photographs covering this area show the Remerton mill village standing alone, apart from Valdosta. Consultants often quiz about 'the houses in a row' and the story of Remerton. The inquiries of consultants led to the concept of developing this timeline. I did not have documents at hand to be specific on a couple of event dates, but felt those items needed inclusion in this list. Thanks to Nina Singletary King and Susie McKey Thomas for their assistance.

1880s

- 1889 – February, Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad (GS&F) construction from Macon was completed as far as Valdosta.

1890s

- 1899- Strickland Cotton Mill incorporated. Constructed along side the GS&F railroad tracks, began operation September 11, 1900.

1900s

- 1900- Remerton established, named for banker Remer Y. Lane
- ca.1900-GS&F extended off its main right of way a rail line direct to the Pine Park fairgrounds, which became the foundation for the Valdosta Street Railway (trolley line) to expand to Remerton in October 1900, on what is now Alden Avenue.
- 1901- February 10, Factory Church organized, later named Remerton Methodist.
- 1902 – February 25, *Valdosta Times*, "The Strickland Cotton Mills are said to be overrun with orders, having shipped two hundred thousand yards of cloth to San Francisco yesterday."
- 1904 – Earliest marked burial in Remerton Cemetery, Rubie Harp, 9 months old.

1910s

- 1915- Benjamin Franklin Strickland, organizer and president of Strickland Cotton Mill, dies. Central in the large family plot is a life size statue of "Mr. Strickland" atop an obelisk facing towards the mill.

1920s

- 1922 –The diagram of Remerton in the 1922 Sanborn Insurance Maps of Valdosta shows 71 houses plus the mill, Methodist Church, Church of Christ, and school house.

1930s

- c1934 – During the Great Depression control of the mill passed to another branch of the Strickland family headed by A. J. Strickland, Sr., a brother of the late B. F. Strickland.
- 1936 – An addendum to the 1930 Sanborn Insurance Maps of Valdosta shows that the names of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Streets were changed to Sycamore, Plum, and Poplar respectively.

1940s

- 1940 – Valdosta City Directory states that Sustella Street (Avenue) continues as Remerton Road.
- 1943 – Early aerial photographs show the mill village with farms, fields and woodlands between Valdosta and Remerton.
- 1945 – October 16, elevator cable snaps with Mr. Strickland and nine college girls on board who were touring the mill. Dr. Reade, GSWC (VSU) president, reported to the Board of Regents that only one student was "at all badly hurt." Mr. Strickland was badly injured with broken collarbone and ribs.

Remerton:

Named to Honor Remer Young Lane

Remerton was named for the banker, Remer Young Lane, who provided the loan to get Strickland Cotton Mill in operation. We have the two photographs below, in our museum archives; they were also used as prominently displayed photos in a separate publication in our archives, *The Southern Citizen, The Special 70th Anniversary Edition*, published in 1957 by the Citizens & Southern Banks in Georgia. In 1957 the C&S system termed itself the largest and best in Georgia—It is now Bank of America. The publication states of the early R. Y. Lane Banking Company in Valdosta "This bank was ultimately to become, as Mills B. Lane, Sr. used to say, 'the father, mother, uncle and aunt of the C&S system today.'"



R.Y. Lane at the head of the table and other directors of the Merchants Bank: H. Y. Tillman, E.P.S. Denmark, Mills B. Lane, R.Y. Lane, E.W. Lane, W.R. Strickland, Lowndes W. Shaw and Frank Strickland.



Growers with bales of Sea Island cotton on Patterson Street in front of the R. Y. Lane Banking Co., 1880s.

- 1947 – Valdosta City Directory shows that Baytree Road had been constructed, connecting to Remerton Road, the latter taking the Baytree name.
- 1947-48 – Size and productive capacity at the mill was doubled.

1950s

- 1951- Remerton incorporated as a municipality.
- 1955- Remerton school replaced by Parker-Mathis Elementary.

1960s

- 1960- Population 571
- 1960 –Wagon Wheel package store opened at the corner of Baytree Road and Melody Lane.
- 1966 – Last plant expansion at Strickland Cotton Mill.



Mrs. Joella Blackburn recently gave the museum this oil painting of Sycamore Street, now Baytree Place, in Remerton. Painted in the early 1970s, the artist is Mrs. Blackburn's son, Veran, Jr.

1970s

- 1970- Population 523
- c1972- Jerry Jones Road realigned to connect directly with Melody Lane at Baytree Road. Melody Lane paved and directly connected to Lankford Drive.
- 1977- June, fire station completed.
- 1979- January, Strickland Mill closed.
- 1979- March, Strickland Mill sold to Wipo, Inc. who did business as Sugar Creek Textiles.

1980s

- 1980- Population 443
- 1981- Apartment building and businesses begin to give Remerton a new look.
- 1981- Remerton develops own water system, had used water from the mill. Sewerage treatment continues contracted with City of Valdosta.
- 1981- October, first woman is elected to Remerton City Council, Grace Brantley.
- 1981- December, Remerton levies taxes for the first time.
- 1982- Remerton Community Center and Ball Park are closed.
- c1982-3- Hagan's Clover Farm Food Store closes.

- 1982- November, Piggly Wiggly (later Harvey's) Grocery store opens.
- 1983- Attempt to revoke City Charter, the legislation was discarded.
- 1985- first woman becomes Mayor of Remerton, Myra Darlene Courson.
- 1985- May, L. E. Davis family buys Strickland building from Sugar Creek Textiles.
- 1986- December, Wilkinson Textile Company purchases old Strickland Mill.
- 1987- For promotion of mill house businesses, the name of Sycamore Street was changed to Baytree Place.

1990s

- 1990- Population 468
- 1991- First Cotton Patch Festival
- 1994- First Mayfest celebration.
- 1996- February, first 24 hour police
- 1996- July, voters approve Sunday alcohol sales by the drink
- 1996- October, new City Hall opened
- 1997- March, Remerton United Methodist Church destroyed by fire.
- 1997- New water tower erected

2000s

- 2000- population 847
- 2006 – Announcement of plans for rehabilitation of Strickland Mill into residential, professional and retail units
- 2007- February, Cornelius Holsendorff became first black on Remerton city council
- 2007- Old Harvey's Grocery location remodeled to "mill style" retail space named Remerton Square.



Pictured above with the caboose are students from Genesis Christian School which is located in Remerton. On the left is Dr. Debra Tann, school administrator. The museum had approximately 800 student and youth visitors in the spring and summer of 2007.

MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- September 16th Members meeting and elections - 2:00 PM at the Museum
September 29th 40th Anniversary Open House – 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM



Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of
Lowndes County Historical Society

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