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VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

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On December 20th the LCHS Board met at Emma and Joe Stevens for Old Fashioned Dinner. It was a proper day for soup, flooding outside and properly old fashioned inside. After we'd had the most delicious soup and many other good things, including a tasty sweet potato pie, the Stevens informed us that everything cookable had been thrown in the soup, even a squirrel!

Our conversation at the lunch was quite varied and everyone contributed information and new ideas, the main topic being microfilm and whether to continue our newsletter, both of which cost money. We decided favorably for both. The microfilm company in Utah wrote the Sheltons that the film had doubled in price. We need it and want it, for this film cannot be gotten anywhere. So we are ordering it. The Newsletter costs too; the more pages we have, naturally the more expense. We of the Board agreed to chip in donations of money to help defray the extra cost for much needed microfilm and (thank goodness) for the well liked Newsletter. It would also be nice if the people who write us for information would make a donation. It takes time to find out most facts, time to even search for it. We want to search for it for them--we want to help people who are interested in our county and city. We never even hear from some of these people. Jim Hall said he'd check with Rice Iron and Metal Works about the old jail bars we've seen there. We were told they came from the old City Hall and were probably part of the first jail here. Jim also reported on the Bass papers again. He has plans to copy them using the machines in several Valdosta businesses. The pictures will be returned to the Basses now, and the papers after they are copied (the History of Moody AFB). Thanks again to Emma and Joe for the good lunch. All hope it's an annual affair!

We continue to be grateful to Mr. Eanes and the group of Boy Scouts. Our grounds are well kept because of them. They do a fine job and a great service to the Society and us busy people.

At the risk of anticlimax, I'd like to report that our Old Fashioned Christmas Open House on December 12, 1971 was well attended and everyone really had a good time. Emma and Joe brought so many Goodies in the way of artifacts (the Denmark family), Pendleton Little loaned me the Dasher letters to and from Troupville (our great grandmother, Susan C. Dasher), and Jesse Mae Bassford's fruit cookies "went like hot cakes". Our gingerbread men and cookies were enjoyed too. They were made from an old recipe we found in "Tea Time in Old Pendleton", a recipe book from Pendleton, S. C. Jesse Mae gave us her recipe to print here. And here are both recipes:

Jesse Mae's Fruit Cookies (makes 100 cookies)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or oleo	2 scant tsp soda	$\frac{1}{2}$ # pineapple chopped
1 cup light brown sugar packed	1 tsp ground cloves	$1\frac{1}{2}$ # chopped nuts (6 cups)
4 small eggs	1 tsp cinnamon	1# white raisins
3 tbsls buttermilk	1 tsp nutmeg	12 oz. dates chopped
$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups plain flour (save $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour for fruit & nuts)	$\frac{1}{2}$ # cherries chopped	1 jigger whisky

Cream butter and sugar, add eggs one at the time. Add flour with spices. Mix buttermilk with soda. Add whisky. Add nuts & fruit mixed with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup saved flour. Refrigerate for a while for flavoring to set. Drop by teaspoon about an inch apart. Bake 250 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes. Will keep well. (Thanks Jesse Mae!)

Gingerbread Men

$2\frac{1}{4}$  cups, sifted flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. baking soda  
 1 tsp. ginger  
 1 tsp. cinnamon  
 1 tsp. cloves  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter  
 1 cup sugar  
 1 tsp orange extract  
 1 egg  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dark molasses

Sift together the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon and cloves: Cream the butter, sugar and orange extract: beat in egg thoroughly, then molasses. Stir in dry ingredients. Divide dough into 4 equal portions and chill until firm enough to handle. On floured board, roll out dough, one portion at a time, about  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick. Cut into desired shapes. Place on lightly greased cookie sheets, about  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch apart. Bake in a moderate (375) oven for 6 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks with wide spatula to cool. Store in airtight metal container. Yield will of course, depend on size of the cutters. (We found it took quite a bit of extra flour to cut and roll dough.)

Many people who visited Open House promised some things: Catherine Carter, some of Cousin Mamie's things (Mrs. McRee), Mrs. Lundie Smith promised some things, dresses, I believe. Others brought

things with them. Lena Jenkins Mathis brought a beautiful black beaded coat, a gift to the Museum. Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Richardson brought a picture of B. S. Richardson, one of our mayors. They also brought 1905 copies of the Valdosta Times. These are rare copies, not to be found on microfilm. They should be copied for microfilm files of the Times office, local library and VSC library.

Emma Stevens reported that for our January meeting (on third Thursday because of a conflict) we will have movies loaned by the Langdale company of Valdosta during the 1930's. In February, Sis West May will give us a history of the West family. Col. West was builder and owner of "The Crescent", where the Wests lived for half a century. It is our beautiful showplace now, owned and shown by the local Garden Club. Mr. & Mrs. Hagen said they would begin our Open Sundays this year on the 9th, which they did. Mrs. Williams reported on our bank account, also said Mrs. Robert Cork had some things to give us. It was Bob Cork who called to tell me what he knows about the Mr. Pierpont in our last Newsletter. This man settled in Valdosta for several years before going to Brooks County to teach and be the schoolmaster of an Academy there. Some info can be found in the Brooks County History book. Tom Shelton has been corresponding with the person who wanted these facts. Bob Cork says some men in Quitman told him Pierpont wrote "Jingle Bells" in Quitman.

Red Blankenship has taken over the taping of our talks on family histories and also the interviews. Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Hagen (and any of us) will still assist. Let us know of someone to interview. You'd be surprised how easy taping is. Everyone makes a face at the mention of "tape recorder". It's all in getting used to it. The rest is easy. Just talking.

Tom and Jane Shelton reported that they are using the Whitaker family Bible for research right now. It was given to the society by Mr. Will Whitaker and they would return it very soon. John and Catherine Deming told Mrs. Williams that if the people in Florida turn down his price on the little old house in their backyard, that they'd let us have a chance at it. It is a quaint place, full of things that people from all over the United States have given them to preserve. It is a little Museum in itself. Ann McDonald Cooper loaned me some Valdosta Times clippings of late 1905 after my request in the last letter. There were about three from October not on microfilm. She said she'd look for more and loan them. Hambone Larsen provided us with a copy of an early Junior Chamber of Commerce roster and promised to be on the lookout for old pictures, etc. He gave us a copy of the picture and article when "Middie" retired, which included a history of the Jr. C of C.

Mrs. Perlle Dorminey, who works at Grant's, and I've known for years, told Lonie that she'd bring us a picture of the Court House under construction. Her father was master finisher, and got so carried away with the fancy and beautiful top work, that he built himself right inside and couldn't get out until he did a little reconstruction work.

I had a long talk with Mr. Ed Ferrell the other day. He wants to help us any way possible and is eager to help us with our book. He joined four of his relatives and one of his great articles follows now. If I have a favorite among his stories, this is it. Thanks again, Mr. Ferrell.

#### THE VANDERBILT CUP RACES

Savannah, Georgia 1907

by

E. D. Ferrell

At the turn of this century the Affluent Society of Georgians had become fanatically automobile minded. The horseless carriage as many called it had gained popularity beyond measure and increasingly so as each year passed.

The city of Valdosta, Georgia had twenty-one automobiles in 1907. The owners of these were the "elite" in the eyes of the teenage and college groups. These cars were Reos, Maxwells and Buicks, the three most popular of the half dozen or so being manufactured at that time. One exception to those three in Valdosta was a Cadillac owned by Mrs. D. C. Ashley. Her lovely daughters, Laura and Anna who attended Lucy Cobb School in Athens, were very popular but no more so than their charming mother.

The fast growing popularity of automobiles naturally presented some serious problems to adjust to this entirely new way of life. Among the many problems (and most important) was the necessity of good roads. As late as 1907 the few nine foot brick paved roads were a rare luxury and only politically favored. Even these roads had disadvantages as their narrow width made passing almost impossible without going off the road. Fortunately, accidents like this were seldom serious as fast speed in a car was impossible.

Realizing the necessity of good roads, Georgia became one of the most progressive states in this endeavor. Efforts of many sorts were made to arouse interest. These efforts were opposed by tax payers and especially by farmers who looked on automobiles as a menace and a tool of the devil. Horses were so frightened by the new autos, they caused runaways that often were fatal. In later

years, of course, Henry Ford's 'Tin Lizzie' was a must for every farmer as well as Ford tractors.

One of the most effective promotional projects for popularizing autos was the advent of the annual Vanderbilt Cup Races. They were started about 1905 on a shell road winding course on Tybee Island near Savannah. The course was about twenty miles long and a race was for five hundred miles or so. At the outset these races became a Classic and attracted automobile owners from all states as the Indianapolis Races do today. The ten days of these races became an attraction as popular as the Mardi Gras and Kentucky Derby, and was a continuous round of parties in historic Savannah.

The Atlanta Constitution, a progressive newspaper in progressive Atlanta in early 1907, launched a state wide 'Good Roads Tour'. It was to start at Atlanta and car owners from each town were invited to join the caravan as it made its way around the state. Some cities were designated overnight stops. The tour was advertised for months before the Cup Races as that was the main attraction. They were to stay in Savannah three nights instead of the usual one night. More than fifty cars were participants from Atlanta when the tour began -- this was considered remarkable, and almost unbelievable. The interest was running high, the tour planned to touch LaGrange, West Point and spend the first night at Columbus. Each city made visitors enjoy themselves and enlisted participants joined the tour in each city. The tour proceeded from Columbus to Bainbridge, Thomasville and into Valdosta, the second overnight stop. By the time they reached Valdosta over two hundred cars were on the tour. Even then the bad roads were causing delays and dropouts due to car failure. It became increasingly difficult for the appointed Marshalls to keep track of every one. Bad roads, sand-beds and mud swamps with no markings forced each driver to be on his own.

Since Valdosta was an overnight stop, we Valdostans were excited and looking forward to the tour. Valdosta was to have sixteen of its twenty-one cars join the caravan. This demonstrated Valdosta was progressive and the Atlanta Constitution printed a good write up about the city's spirit.

This is where Mrs. D.C. Ashley, Laura and Anna, come into the picture. The Ashleys owned the only Cadillac in town so were eligible to join the tour and would not have been forgiven by Valdostans if they had not entered. John Young Robert's father, Mr. J. T. Roberts, was the first Buick agent in Valdosta. Buicks were sold by his old established Wagon and Buggy Firm, located then on West Hill Avenue. John Young and I were nearly eighteen years old, and inseparable, close friends. We were in the young crowd with Laura and Anna and the D. C. Ashley (corner Patterson and Adair Streets) was truly a heaven of hospitality to all the boys and girls. Mrs. Ashley was young in heart and we felt so much at home with her. We loved her devotedly.

John Young was one of the few young people in Valdosta who knew how to drive. His father being the Buick agent gave him the rare opportunity to use the Buicks, sometimes on the pretense of demonstrating. I was lucky to be his best friend and spent a lot of time with him. I was only a passenger, of course. But how lucky can two boys be? Laura and Anna asked John Young and me to accompany them to the races, Mrs. Ashley was to chaperone and Alma Pierce from Columbus made the sixth member of our party.

John Young and I picked up our four ladies at daybreak and got under way for the 140 mile trip, with high hopes, reservations at the luxurious Desoto Hotel, and not a worry in the world. Our first objective was Homerville, twenty-nine miles east on the ACL Ry. The road we took ran parallel to the railroad to Homerville but a mile or so from the tracks. The winding narrow road was heavy in sand, the narrow guage of our car wheels being not fitted to the wider guage of the wagon ruts, slowed us down, but did not worry us. We reached Naylor, the first station, nine miles from Valdosta by nine o'clock. Not bad time considering we got stuck in the sand three times and had to dig out with a shovel. Being in low gear most of the time slowed us down and caused the car to heat up. We persevered and got to Homerville by noon. Mrs. Ashley had prepared a fine lunch and we were in high spirits but a little concerned about getting to Savannah before dark. We had not seen a single car from the Tour. Everyone was on their own, headed for the Races.

Despite our delays we continued in high spirits, Mrs. Ashley being a good sport and as young as we. (Look out Desoto Hotel!) As we neared Waycross on the northern perimeter of the Okefenokee Swamp, our sandy roads turned to mud. We only got stuck twice bypassing the city of Waycross but had to stop often to inquire directions from farmers. Mrs. Ashley and the girls were enjoying the trip and there was a spirit of adventure every mile into the unknown. We pressed on, but slowly. About dark we came to a wide branch or creek, and we seriously questioned our ability to drive through. John Young and I waded to the middle and while we were not too confident, we felt there was nothing to do but take a chance of driving through it. He put the car in low gear and gained all the momentum possible and started through. Alas, the motor choked down about as near mid-stream as if it had been measured, in the middle of a dark dismal swamp. It looked as though we'd have to spend the night. After thinking things over, we decided to try and find help. The girls were brave and John Young and I waded to the other side looking for a farm house, leaving the four girls stranded, but hopeful, in the middle of the water. The good Lord was with us and we found a farm,

the home of a prosperous farmer with a gracious wife, two grown sons and three daughters. When we two birds called "Hello!", they wondered who could be outside in the dark. I rather suspect they welcomed a little cause for excitement and amusement. They heard our story and were intensely concerned about the ladies in the creek alone. Ordinarily, I imagine our story would have sounded wierd and doubtful to them, but they had been reading about the "Good Roads Tour". The father and boys got two mules with harness equipment for towing the car. We hiked to the creek and you can imagine what a welcome sight we were to the ladies. The two boys were calm and masters of the situation as they proceeded to hook up the tow lines for the mules to pull on. John Young and I were city-slicker ignoramusses and these country boys became heroes in the eyes of the girls. We didn't mind and meekly let them do the work while we steered the car. Washington crossing the Delaware couldn't have felt more victorious than we, landing on solid ground, assisted by country allies. It was a glorious feeling to be freed from the brink of that dark watery grave.

We drove the car ahead of them to the house with them behind us in their more reliable mode of travel. The wife insisted we come in and have buttermilk, chicken sandwiches and tea cakes. The hour spent with them will ever be fresh in our memory.

Baxley, a town of two thousand, was eight miles up the road. We arrived there and were able to get rooms at the small twelve room hotel by the railroad station. John Young and I just happened to have a bottle of snake bite medicine in our bag and felt it an appropriate time to take a few doses. We were called early for the hotel breakfast was served from six to seven a.m. Hotels were run on the American plan. The rates were high, \$2.50 per day with meals, cheaper hotels were \$1.50.

We departed for Savannah about seven a.m. The day was uneventful and we reached the DeSoto about five p.m. Only two days from Valdosta to Savannah wasn't bad. It proved an irresponsible time table we had hoped for. Savannah was festive with visitors from all over the nation. The DeSoto was the center of attraction for dances and good times. We made no effort to see the Races as there was no grandstand or any point to watch from. The Racers drove the twenty mile course winding all around Tybee Island on the shell track, running against time to compete. The winner, as I recall, broke all records that year by reaching the speed of sixty miles an hour!

Laura and Anna had several Lucy Cobb girl friends there and the Georgia Tech boys arrived in droves. We were able to make up for our lost day and spent three days in Savannah. The Marshalls's reorganized the tour and we left in a blaze of glory to drive enmasse to Atlanta. The overnight stop was Dublin. Our party made that stop but then turned back south to Valdosta as our stem had run too low to drive to Atlanta with that wild bunch. The automobile was reliable but we were weak.

I recently drove from Valdosta to Savannah and made it easily in three hours. It would be hard to estimate the number of cars I passed, and to realize the progress from 1907 to 1970.

/// (end--E. D. Ferrell)

Thank you again, Mr. Ferrell for allowing us to publish this and your other articles. When you members and visitors come to the Museum, I want you to see the handsome set of maps that Mr. Ferrell has presented to the Society. They will be a great help to us and are most interesting.

Missy's fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Finleyson, called last week to ask Missy to bring back to the school her Georgia History scrapbook and ask her parents for info about Indians in this area. We wanted to help them on this subject they are studying and sent our pottery pieces from the county area, believed to be Indian, our flint and copies from the local history book about Indians in Valdosta and surrounding area. I've come across a couple of articles in the film and will send them. If any of you can supply more facts, please do so. We are asking Mrs. Finleyson to give us facts that she collects from sources other than LCHS.

Thanks to James Beck for pictures, one of himself, his father-in-law, Mr. Mathis and his brother, Henry Beck, two former mayors and a councilman. James also gave us a post card of 1919 vintage, sent to him in 1968 from a gentleman who said he worked for a jeweler here fifty years before that. Our member, Mrs. Iedford, in Naylor, has promised to look up some things for us, possibly pictures and info about Naylor. We need help from Hahira, Clyattville and other areas. This is a County Historical Society and we wish for County wide participation. Robert Pinkston is trying to help us locate the large scale model of the Converse home, now the Dalton home on N. Patterson Street. This replica used to be in Robert's father's store downtown. In microfilm: on May 21, 1900, it was reported that Valdosta may have a roof garden. Where was it and what? Did we ever get it? On May 21, 1903, at Miss Lillian McKey's "all played Rickety Am". What sort of game was that? Recently someone told me about "progressive train". Do you know? On May 25, 1906 a love-making couple (publicly) were arrested, and on July 11, 1906 a couple were arrested for kissing on the street. My, how times have changed! And speaking of recipes, do we have a copy of The Valdosta Cook Book, edited by Mrs. J. G. Cranford, mentioned Dec. 20, 1906?

Don't forget, the meeting is third Thursday this month. See you there.

Albert Pendleton