

Mrs. J. G. Hagen, President

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VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

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Everyone enjoyed Tom Shelton's talk on the Saltzberger Migration to Georgia, and many of us heard about our own ancestors and connections with each other. Tom and Joe Stevens presented the Museum with a book, Georgia Saltzberger and Allied Families by Pearl Rahn Gnann. Tom gave a package of H. D. Cigarettes, manufactured at Hahira about 1932. He couldn't talk any of us into trying one.

Our thanks to: Redden Hart for the gift of his excellent school exhibit of old homes in Valdosta; to Frances Tillman for old dresses; to Valdosta State College for papers and research materials; to Mrs. A. Winn for pictures of the cyclone that hit the buggy factory, a picture of her graduation Class of 1902, pictures of Army Reserve Corps just after World War I, and a copy of Muster Roll of Twelfth Georgia Regiment, CSA, June 14, 1861, copied for her by "Aunt Mec", America Young (Mrs. James) Austin. And thanks to Frances Klein Carson in Atlanta for getting so busy for us. And sending two priceless possessions soon, 1927 and 1928 VHS Annuals.

Remember I mentioned that Virginia Hutchinson Culpepper was a May Queen in 1934? Well, so was Catherine McRee Carter another year; and that makes Katharine Broun Carter, their grandchild, have two grandmothers who were May Queens at GSWC.

I would like to take space and mention the Georgia Writers Association. I am being made a Region Vice-President (membership) and want all interested persons to contact me. One of our members, Starkey Flythe, of Augusta, and nephew of Mrs. Edison Marshall, has just left Georgia, much to our regret, to be assistant editor of Saturday Evening Post. He is represented this year in the O. Henry collection of stories. Just thought you'd be interested.

Speaking of writing, here is a short piece by another of our members.

There Was Once a Radio Factory in Valdosta  
by

Frederick Treutlen Pindar

Back in a few years just before World War I, Mr. Jeter Pinkston, son of Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Pinkston was a well known young radio, or wireless operator, as it was known. All younger boys, including myself, clustered around him.

About the time Jeter finished high school and started in Georgia Tech the First World War broke out and he served in the U. S. Navy, for the duration, then finished at Tech.

After he returned home, before RCA began gobbling up all the radio and Victrola industries, he built a few Super Heterodyne Radio Receivers and found that he could sell them locally. This lead him to move his building operations from the upstairs of his father's dry goods store into a spare room in Mr. Howell's Filling Station, corner of Patterson and Valley. Here he set up a working model of his Wireless Set, as it was called. His hired help, Bill Holder was first until he tired of the tedious job. Then I took over, making an exact copy of every wire and placement of parts, of course under the watchful eye of Mr. Jeter Pinkston. Bill Thomas, the late son of the late Dr. Frank Thomas, was the salesman. As fast as I could put these sets together they were installed in many of Valdosta's prominent homes. They were entirely battery operated, as AC sets were in the future.

I often wonder if one of these ancient sets is still resting in someone's dusty attic now.

I was working in this Radio Factory at the time the Valdosta Street Railway ceased operations. I well remember this because the cars made so much radio interference, we counted the days to the end of the year when this wonderful event would occur.

Mr. Pinkston thought this would greatly boost his sales but competition soon swamped the industry and he closed and moved to Tampa, Fla. He married Arelia Parramore, sister of Redden L. Parramore.

I cannot exactly place the year, the street car line stopped operating but I know the dates in the April Newsletter are not correct.

The rest of you members should write a story of interest and we will publish it here. Isn't this a nice one? Thank so much Fred for this story. My sister remembers riding the street car from Hill Avenue to College in '24. Could that be the year they stopped?

Another of Mr. Ferrell's stories follows, more about the memorable Claude at the Valdes.

### Claude's Cats and Rats

by

Ed Ferrell

It has been a most pleasant surprise to me to learn that many of the young ones in our two large Dalton and Ferrell families want to read about the past and hear again the stories that I've told to some of them.

This is another story of my brother, Claude, and please don't get the wrong idea that he was a bad boy. He was not, but I never knew any young person with more pep and original ideas of how to enjoy life. Many that age take it too seriously and very few get the pleasure out of life as did Claude.

Being reared in a hotel is not always best for children, and this could have been disastrous for Claude, since he was exposed to so many adult salesmen, some of whom were pranksters and fun loving jokesters. Our parents kept a close watch on Claude and knew when to draw the line for him with his associations with these salesmen.

So don't think Claude was a bad boy at heart when I tell you some of his antics. This explanation is for those who are not familiar with "the old days".

My niece, Gloria, remembers hearing about how Claude used to persecute poor Giles Miller, one of the Negro head cooks at the Valdes Hotel and domineer him to do anything Claude wanted him to, even to cooking him special delicacies on the sly. Claude found out Giles Miller was deathly afraid of white rats, due mostly to the fact Miller felt one in his white uniform coat pocket. And he knew where from. Gloria rememberd how Claude was sick when the fire bell rang, and could not get down to go the fire on his pony as usual, but he saw Miller in the backyard near the pony's stall, and insisted Miller get on Oklahoma, the pony, and go to the fire or he would come down and put some rats on him. Even though Miller faced trouble from Father, he got on the pony bareback and rode to the fire as ordered by his "Commander". Fortunately, it wasn't meal time, and Father was not around.

During the years when Claude was 7 & 8 years old, in addition to his pony riding hobby, he maintained a regular circus of cats and white rats behind the pony's stable. He had no opposition from Mother and Father, until later.

In those days, before the unscrupulous manufacturers had devised so many rat poisons and scientific methods of rat extermination, many of which were worthless, the surest way to be free of rats was to have a cat that was a good mouser. The chamber maids at the Valdes had one or two cats in the large linen rooms on each floor, and made real pets of them. So, Claude made capital of this, and with a modest start of four cats he soon had an increase and he found some of the kittens were pretty smart and gradually trained some to do cute tricks. We all know how kittens will slap at a string and play with each other. Well, Claude had two that were pretty smart and he devised little boxing gloves for their paws and taught them to box each other, and they were really cute to watch.

Also, he had two others that he had taught to run around in a circle trying to catch up with the tips of their own tails. I don't know whether he had something on the ends of the tails or not. But they sure did take the job seriously, and we wondered if Claude hadn't found a way to encourage this with the use of hot pepper, or maybe honey, or sugar. But Claude was too smart to give his secret away.

Sometimes he would get his four cats on the long front porch and put on a free show for some of the salesmen friends who encouraged him. Two of the cats would box and two would chase tails, to the enjoyment of the crowd. It was a good show.

Claude's white rats and cats were surprisingly friendly. He had one or two devices rigged up for the rats to perform on, and he was constantly experimenting with new ideas.

Time passed and Claude wasn't getting many thrills from the little tricks the cats and mice were doing, so he made a real discovery. Then came the climax.

The Valdes Hotel had a very wide long hall with marble floor, and this ran from the

large wide entrance doors on the Toombs street side the full length of the hotel to the main dining room doors which were at the extreme west end of the building. The large lobby and registry desks were halfway down this wide hall. The lobby was always filled with guests sitting around in the large chairs, and the salesmen were always out for fun.

Claude's discovery, which he put to such valuable use for a while, was this. He learned that if he blew up a paper bag, about a 2# size bag, and tied the end of it tight and then with a string tied it to the cat's tail, that as it bounced around behind the poor cat, it frightened him to death, and the faster he ran the more scared he was. It was cruel, some thought, but Claude didn't hurt the cat, he said, so what? He had things planned for a while, but he knew he might get into some trouble with Father so he sought to pick his time to launch his well thought out cat-race down the Valdes wide marble hallway.

Late afternoon of his selected day, when the lobby was filled with people, he got his two cats harnessed up with the paper bags tied to the tails. He had one cat under each arm and stepped into the wide hall from the Toombs street side porch, and carefully put the cats down on the floor and shooed them both off to a flying start, and he stepped back just outside the door to watch the race. The cats were both frantic and pawing each other as they ran faster and faster down the hall to the Hotel lobby. The crowd in the office and lobby heard all the commotion and thought all sorts of things as they were in complete ignorance what the noise was as it zeroed down on them. When the two cats reached the crowd they bounced and bounded among the frightened and confused guests, and the guests and salesmen began jumping and turning to see what the screeching racket was all about.

Finally, the bellboys caught the cats and relieved the situation for the frightened bunch of people. Father was in his private office and of course was as equally puzzled as the guests. After he saw the paper bags tied to the cat's tails, he smelled a "rat" and told the bellboys to bring Claude to him at once.

The lobby crowd began to laugh and tell their version of the raid of the "wild-cats".

Well, that was Claud's first and last class race of cats in the Valdes, as he knew Father meant business when he threatened to take the pony and the cats and white rats away from him. The salesmen laughed heartily with Father, but all the while he had to keep a stern attitude when he was laying the law down to Claude. I have a feeling he was laughing up his sleeve too, and I think he was proud of Claude for his original ingenuity.

If any of you young nieces and nephews of mine (or anyone's) think Uncle Claude was a bad boy, I'll say again. He wasn't bad. He was a sweet little boy when he was asleep, and FULL-O-PEP when awake.

Thank you, again, Mr. Ferrell. Please write us some more. You have made us love Claude Ferrell just as much as you do. And that's what it's all about.

Last, but not in any means least, I want to tell you of a visit that Susie Thomas and I made last weekend. Susie had called Mrs. Hattie St. John of Melrose Drive to ask if we could come by and talk about Mrs. Eloise Wilcox, Miss Hattie's sister, who taught expression here for many years, and had such interesting times with her pupils. Miss Hattie said she'd do just that, but she wanted to tell us about all her relatives, give us some important things for our museum. Everything was neatly laid out, old letters, invitations and most important, she gave us the original land deed to the R. T. Roberds property on Valley street and Roberd's Confederate sword. She said that R. T. Roberds, her grandfather, was indeed the first mayor of Valdosta. Roberds went to the Civil War, but did not return. He fought at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, wounded at Knoxville, Tenn. and died there. He was a brave hero, as letters say. He is buried in a public cemetery in Knoxville, but his family have been unable to find the grave. These are wonderful gifts from Mrs. St. John and we of the Society are most grateful. She has loaned us a picture of R. T. Roberds, and also one of his father.

In the Progress Issue of the Valdosta Daily Times there will be my article about this visit. Be sure to get that issue....there's more.

Emma Stevens wouldn't tell me what our program is this week at the Museum, but for all members and visitors to come and bring pencil and paper. I wonder what she's up to???

See you at the meeting....Thursday, May 25th.

Albert Pendleton