

Joe Stevens, President

OCTOBER 25, 1973

VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

VOL. II No. 12

At the September meeting of the Lowndes County Historical Society, the following were nominated and elected to serve as officers in the coming 1973-74 year of our Society: Joe G. Stevens, President; Dr. J. A. Durrenberger, Vice-President; Miss Fredeva Ogletree, Secretary; and Mrs. John Williams, Treasurer. Joe immediately announced committees, and the work of the new year began. Our program was Jane Shelton telling about the Bi-Centennial plans for the county and news of the State's plans. Several of the Society's members are on the local committee.

### Discovering Georgia.

The heading, Discovering Georgia, is a most ambitious one, especially from one who has done little of it. But this writer has planned to do more in the coming year and write about it. The discovering will be done, not only in traveling, but in reading. I want to purchase the History of Pearce County Georgia, Volume 1, published several months ago in Blackshear by Dean Broome, a Blackshear resident and former editor of The Blackshear Times. We saw a little book in Jonesboro recently, which is a history of the area, but mentions Pidcock, Dixie and Grooversville in South Georgia. I have an autographed copy of A Glimpse of the Past, The History of Bulloch Hall and Roswell Georgia by Clarece Martin, a Vice-President of Georgia Writers Association. This book was reviewed several weeks ago in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. It is about Bulloch Hall, which was built in 1840 for Major James Stephens Bulloch in Roswell, Georgia. It was the girlhood home of Martha Bulloch Roosevelt, mother of President Theodore Roosevelt. The story is about this family before and during the War Between the States, the founding of Roswell, and of the early families who built the town. It is a story of courage, strength, and faith, passed from generation to generation, and may be said to be the story of our country.

There has been a recent publication in Thomasville about Thomas County, which is on my want list. As for traveling and stopping, we recently had the opportunity to visit Fayetteville for a second time. We were invited to Open House at the Fayette County Historical Society's new home, a room in the "Fife House." This house was built in the 1850's and first served as a student-teacher dormitory for the newly built Fayetteville Academy nearby. It remains the only completely unchanged antebellum home in the area and served as a private residence until 1970. The Fayette County Historical Society has a room in the upstairs part of the handsome home. There are three business offices downstairs. A lady with The Answering Service had so many visits and requests about the history of the house, she did some research and wrote a short history that she gives out to visitors. The "Fife House", by the way, was built by Dr. John Stiles Holliday, a medical doctor and surgeon, who later moved to Atlanta. It is said he loaned his newly built home to the Academy until their facilities could be built. He was the brother of Major Henry B. Holliday of Griffin and Valdosta, and the uncle of John Henry (Doc) Holliday, Georgian and Western Gunman-Lawman.

Another handsome, important building is the Fayette County Courthouse, the oldest original courthouse standing in the State of Georgia, and was built in 1825. It is still in use as a county courthouse. Fayette County is the 49th county enacted by the Georgia Legislature. Formed in 1821 from lands purchased from the Creek Indian Nation, it was named for the French nobleman General Marquis de LaFayette. The county celebrated her Sesqui-centennial the summer of 1971, holding an eight day celebration. All residents agree it was a celebration unequalled in the county's 150 years. The courthouse has two long benches outside said to be the longest anywhere. They were made from original timbers of the building.

Scoop Scruggs' two books are most interesting and the one on Historical Markers is quite useful -- we take it with us, and on our recent trip we would slow down, see which marker we were passing, then read about it in the book as we drove on. It makes an interesting trip.

While in Atlanta we visited some quaint shops, among them were The Lemon Drop and Granny Taught Us How. Then in Jonesboro we discovered The Attic, a Gift and Antique Shop. In downtown Jonesboro, the train station is being restored, but, more interesting than that, the small brick store buildings are done in different colors, giving them an old look with antique lanterns on the outside walls. The Attic seems to be in a very old wood store building.

#### From our Chamber of Commerce

Have you seen our new brochure from the Chamber of Commerce? The color pictures are very nice and are largely of local historic sites.

#### Questions From Our Members

Jean Rogers Malone called to ask more about the "Lost City in Lowndes" and how we could investigate or search for it. Does anyone have any ideas? Jean and I decided we should find the area and "regular row of trees" from the air in order to help find the area on ground. Any more information given to me or Jean would be greatly appreciated.

Some time ago John Gordon Hagen supplied me with copies of several newspaper articles about the possible lost town. I did not have them when I first wrote about the town.

The Valdosta Times, April 22, 1905 quotes an article by "Helen Harcourt in the Sunny South":

...There is ten miles north of Valdosta, a dead, ancient town, or city, in sharp contrast to the living modern town. It is, in very truth, a forgotten city. All trace of what it once was, has long since passed away, except the lines of noble oaks, set in parallel rows about thirty feet apart and extending for nearly a mile. Each street of this ancient town is thus laid out. They were evidently about forty feet wide, and intersected each other at right angles. There were many of these streets, for the town was fully a mile square. These hoary old oak trees show their great age, towering heavenward far above other trees near by, that are yet very far from being in their infancy.

...The western end of the forgotten city overlooks a high bluff, at the foot of which the Withlacoochee river flows on its winding course. For ages the waters have been busy at the foot of the bluff, washing away huge pieces of the sandstone, of which it is composed, and making its way up to the streets that were nearest to the stream. Whatsoever race located and built the ancient city, had an eye both to beauty and defense. The river just there makes a deep, sharp bend in the shape of a crescent, encircling the town site. From a point just above the most northern line of trees and extending in a semi-circle a little below the southern boundary, may still be traced a line of earthworks. This line was plainly the ancient wall that defended the town, and is one of the few known instances of walled towns in what is now the United States. In some places this old wall is still easily to be traced; in others it can scarcely be distinguished. Its entire length can be followed all through the piney woods on the side. Immense trees of yellow pine have sprung up from the broken summits of the wall thus proving, if further proof is needed, the great antiquity of the crumbling structure.

On the bank of the Withlacoochee, about half way of the crescent bend, rises a large mound. Huge now, even after ages of crumbling away, but showing plainly that it has once been still more huge. Why it was put there, and when and by whom the immense amount of work was done, no one knows, no one can even hazard a theory on the subject....This big mound is a fine field for the researches of antiquities and savants. The wonder is that it has not long since been dug into and thoroughly explored....Perhaps some day the government servants will roll up their sleeves and go delving below until they get at the heart of this mystery, and then, perhaps, we, too, shall know all about it.

This forgotten city was as much of a mystery to the Creek Indians who lived thereabouts for many generations, as to their successors, the whites. The Indians

were removed by the government in the 30's, but the county was not so fertile as to attract a large number of settlers, and as their conditio obtains still, it is even now but thinly settled. The Creeks had no town or village of their own anywhere near the old town. In truth, they were afraid of it as the abode of spirits, whether good or evil, they knew not, but either way, it was a place to be avoided. Their hunters would not go near it, and the wild animals who sought refuge within the bounds of the forgotten city, were perfectly safe from pursuit. The old Indian lore was full of traditions, but there was never one word about this strange spot. But from time to time, tangible evidences, beyond the walls and streets have been found that an alien race once had its being there. Bits of ancient pottery, of styles and skill unknown by the Indians, and queer stone implements, with flint knives and arrowheads. These have been found along the bluffs, and were strange to the Indian tribes, strange to every one of them, who inhabited America at the time when it was discovered by Columbus.

It is not alone within the bounds of this ancient city that strange things may be seen. Trending to the northeast for ten or fifteen miles, are regular crescent-shaped embankments, about three-quarters of a mile apart. Their convex sides always face toward the northeast, and the inside of the semi-circle partly incloses three mounds, a larger one near the embankment, and two smaller ones at short distances, ranged in a direct line from northeast to southwest. These embankments represent an immense amount of labor, being from one-half to three-quarters of a mile in length. They are as mysterious as the forgotten city itself. Did they mark the approach to some great temple, or palace, or were they erected as a monument to a great victory? Some day, perhaps, our savants will tell us all about these also.

The article goes on to tell about how the river mysteriously goes under ground. And I understand it really does. But more about that in another letter. The Times states in an article that the town was mostly likely Franklynville (Franklinville), and that the writer "evidently drew upon a vivid imagination for some of the facts."

Our meeting this month will be Albert Pendleton and Susie Thomas telling about their new book, In Search of the Hollidays, The Story of Doc Holliday and His Holliday and McKey Families. The book is just off the press.

Many of you have not renewed your membership with the Society. Please use the form below, invite your friends and relatives to join also. ANYONE CAN BE A MEMBER!!

Albert S. Pendleton, Jr.

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TO: LOWNDES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. BOX 434  
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA 31601

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

How many joining: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$5.00 for each person joining)