

HURRICANE HELENE

During the early morning hours of September 27, 2024, Hurricane Helene made direct impact on Lowndes County and the surrounding area. Although our area had experienced Hurricane Idalia the prior year on August 30, 2023, Helene proved to be the most destructive natural disaster to occur in our community. Before, during, and after the storm, Lowndes County Emergency Management, city and county officials, and school officials provided constant communications and updates to area residents.



The downtown historic building housing Chez What (204 S. Ashley St.) was destroyed by Helene. *photo: Chez What FaceBook*

After leaving the area, the storm progressed through middle Georgia and caused extensive flooding and destruction in Asheville, NC. Lowndes County was one of 41 Georgia counties included in a Major Disaster Declaration which provided disaster assistance to our area. Schools and businesses remained closed for over two weeks while citizens assessed damages, made emergency repairs, sought new housing, and linemen began the arduous task of restoring power. Our area owes a grateful debt to those first responders, emergency personnel, and out of town volunteers who provided emergency assistance and rations.



By December, 1.2m cubic yards of debris had been collected.

photo: Lowndes County FaceBook

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

On December 17, 2024, LCHS Trustees recognized two individuals as "Honorary Life Members" for their decades of service to the Society.

Below: Ron Irwin, LCHS President, and John Bennett, LCHS Past President, present Donald O. Davis, former LCHS Executive Director, with Honorary Life Membership.



Right: Ron Irwin, LCHS President, and Michael Black, LCHS 1st Vice President, present J. Edward Willis with Honorary Life Membership. Ed served as the Society's president for two terms: 1975-1976 and 1999-2003.



³ While still cleaning up from Helene, Valdosta experienced extensive rainfall on November 6 and 7 which caused widespread flooding on the city streets and in neighborhoods. A cumulative total of 17 inches was recorded over this 48 hour period. Currently, a portion of Gornto Road and Country Club Drive remain closed. Helene's visible impact in our community has decreased, but the lasting impression on our psyche will be with us for many decades.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

As the year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on the strides we've made with your kind support and to share our vision for the year ahead.

The past year has been a time of transformation and growth. After being closed for nearly four years due to construction and unforeseen challenges, we reopened the museum in April 2024 and have already welcomed over 700 visitors, with expectations of reaching 900 by year's end. Seeing school groups return has been particularly rewarding, and we are working diligently to create programs that align with history curricula to enhance their educational experiences.

One of our proud achievements this year has been preparing the Bird Annex meeting room for its first exhibit. This space features a striking aerial view of downtown Valdosta, a photo of places that once shaped our county and some that continue to thrive today. This exhibit serves as a reminder of the people and places that built our community. Come and explore this newest addition and bring a friend along, there's something special about discovering history together.

Looking ahead to 2025, we plan to expand our exhibits throughout the Bird Building, adding exhibits one room at a time. With the bicentennial of Lowndes County on the horizon, this growth feels especially meaningful. To support these efforts, we are considering sponsorship opportunities for individual exhibits or even entire rooms. As a private nonprofit, we rely on the generosity of members and donors like you to fund our work.

Contributions of any size help us continue preserving and celebrating our shared history.

If you have photographs, documents, or artifacts related to Lowndes County's communities, we would love the opportunity to preserve and display these treasures for future generations. Even if you wish to keep the originals, we can scan and return them to you.

Many of you know that Donald Davis, a remarkable historian, left a year ago as LCHS's Executive Director. I was honored to step into this role once again, having previously served from 2000 to 2007. Donald's dedication to preserving the history of Valdosta and Lowndes County continues to inspire, and I'm grateful for his ongoing support with research and insights. I am equally thankful that Harry Evans, who worked alongside Donald for many years, chose to remain with us, providing invaluable advice and continuity. A big thank you also to our volunteers who dedicate their time and energy. Your hard work and passion are truly appreciated.

I value the support and thoughtful leadership of our Executive Board and Trustees. Their decisions have helped us navigate challenges and continue working toward keeping the Lowndes County Historical Society a valuable and vibrant resource for the community.

Take some time to visit the museum and experience firsthand the incredible history you are supporting. We look forward to welcoming you in the upcoming year!

Wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful and joyous holiday season and a wonderful start to the new year.

Warm regards,
Renate Milner



The Museum is OPEN Tues.-Thurs.
from 11:00am-4:00pm. If you have
not been in lately, drop by.

COMING IN 2025

- A new website for the Society & Museum to include options for online membership payment
- Events to celebrate the Bicentennial of Lowndes County (1825-2025)
- New exhibits in the Bird Annex
- Repair of the Valdosta Institute bell
- Options to reserve the Bird Annex for civic group meetings

MOODY PILOT REUNION

In October, LCHS hosted the Moody Pilot Reunion group for the 1970-2001 classes, led by Donald Davis. Participants were pleased with the event, and Lucy Green, their guest speaker, was a big hit! The organizer, Charlie Allison, donated a new flag to the museum.

OUTDOOR RENOVATION

BSA Troop 491 and parent volunteers have been busy restoring the train depot exhibit in the museum's outdoor area. Pictured is a completely new platform. The Museum welcomes interested scouts or other civic groups who want to volunteer.



NEW 2025 TRUSTEES

Welcome three new LCHS Trustees:
Bruce Green, Lucy Tomberlin, and
Matthew Lawrence.



RECEIVING LCHS EMAILS?

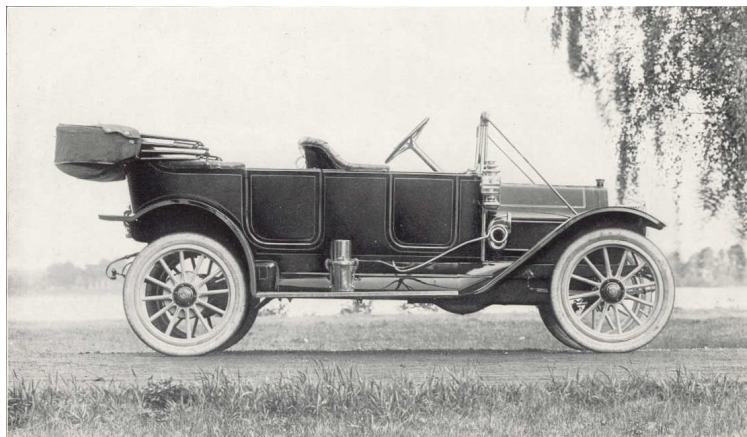
If you are not receiving our
meeting announcements and newsletter
by email, send your current email
address to research.lchs@gmail.com

TOUR THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

Visit the restored Lowndes County
Courthouse (100 E. Central Ave.)
in the heart of downtown Valdosta.
Join a tour on Mon., Wed., or Fri.
from 9:00-11:00 & 2:00-4:00.



In support of America250, the Col. Ebenezer Folsom Chapter DAR sponsored a bronze patriot marker dedicated to the revolutionary patriots buried in Lowndes County. Descendants of John Dees, R.S., (pictured above) attended the ceremony along with over 50 other community members (November 11, 2024).



If you were walking the streets of Valdosta in 1912, you may spot the 1912 E-M-F Touring model. E-M-F only produced automobiles from 1909 to 1912 and sold vehicles exclusively at Studebaker wagon dealerships. E-M-F produced over 26,000 vehicles in 1911, second only to Ford.

*photo: emfauto.org
ad: Valdosta Times, Jan. 27, 1912*



Ron Irwin (left) congratulates Arthur Roy (center) and Donna Hunter (right) as LCHS Outstanding Volunteers on Sept. 19, 2024. Each contributed over 100 hours of service to the Society & Museum in 2024. Donna has also joined the staff as the new administrative assistant. Welcome Donna!

Mosquito Lake.

Mosquito lake is a large, and some say a beautiful sheet of water. Its length, breadth and depth is variously estimated. It lays between Toombs street and the [Valdosta] Institute on Central avenue, and the citizens in west end, in the absence of street cars, are discussing the propriety of utilizing it for transportation purposes. Canal boats, skiffs, gondolas or something of the kind will likely be put on it soon. The recent heavy rains have swollen it some, and the school boys are organizing for a regatta club.

This lake is not a natural one. It is a monument to the engineering skill and labor of the street force of a few summers back, and it will likely remain as a permanent institution in our growing little city. Though largely unintentional, the builders built wiser than they knew.

*The Valdosta Times
Sat., Mar. 31, 1888, p. 3*

Thank you to Jennifer Altman who *retired* as a LCHS Trustee at the end of 2024.

2024 Lowndes County Historical Society Members

We greatly appreciate our members. In 2025, we will make membership even easier with online payment options, including an option for automatic membership renewal.

*** Life Member

** Patron Member

* Contributing Member

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Charles Adams *
Buzz Akins *
Phil H. and Cathy M. Alday **
Scott and Tina Alderman *
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Marcia Alexander
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Howard K Beaty *
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Emerson and PJ Bell **
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Catherine Daughtery
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Allan Dear **
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Phillip and Vickie Everitte *
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Louie and Sharon Flythe
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Curtis Fowler
Barry D. Fuller *
Zella Fuller
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Periodicals
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L. Emil Girardin *
David Girardin
Tim and Ellen Golden *
Alan and Dale Golden *
Ladson and Gayle Golden
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Norman Greene
Dr. Lucy R. Greene, PhD **
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June Greer Mercer
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Lee R. and Mary Grizzell Cook *
Linda E. Grondahl
Mike Gudely *
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Edward Hart
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Scott Herring
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Frank and Nancy Hjort
David Hobbs
Charles and Nancy Hobby *
Susan Hellstern and Daniel Hoffman *
Sharon Holland
Bruce Darby Hornbuckle
James Horton and Jamie Holland
Riley and Jenny Howard ** (continued)

2024 Lowndes County Historical Society Members (continued)

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Ginny Bridges Ireland
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Gloria Johnson
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Bonnie Rainey
Anita Reames ***
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Tim Reeder
Fred and Brenda Register Carter
Emily Freeman Reilly
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Anita and Vance Renfroe
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Marie Smith
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Wilbur Warner
Mary H. Watson
Tommy Weldon
Ron and Cathy Wells
Anne Paine West
Reaves and Amy West
Jerry West

(continued)

MEMORIALS

as of December 31, 2024

Joyce Allen

Mike & Martha Dover

G. Norman Bennett

Richard & Laurie Liles

Myra Jane Holman Brice Bird

Richard Liles

Mrs. Lee W. Griffin

George R. and India Blanton DeLoach

J.E. Jarvis

Lavonne L. Davis

Richard & Laurie Liles

Hamilton Langdale Dickey

Virginia M. Langdale

David Goodale

Julie Magruder

Wayne Hall

Jim Hathaway

Molly Huckaby Hardy

Janet Booth Scott

*The Lowndes County Historical Society
depends on the generosity of its patrons all
around the world to carry out our mission.
Thank you to all contributors.*

Valwood School fifth graders visited the
museum in November. They completed the
museum's scavenger hunt and learned fun facts
about local history.
photos by Valwood School

2024 Lowndes County Historical Society Members (concluded)

James and Susan Wheeler
William White
Butch and Susan Wiggins *
Bob Wiggins
Victoria Wilcox *
Frank C. Williams ***
Bion and Jenny Williams
Ron and Lynn Williams
Danny Williams
Kathryn Williams
J. Edward Willis ***
Alfred Willis
Vonda Willis Buzanski
John Russell Wilson *
Emery and Maxine Wilson
James and Judith Wisenbaker
Mark Wisenbaker
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Steve Wansley

Dr. Alfred Willis

Robert Winter III

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Elizabeth Kelly

Steve & Leslie Kelly

Frank King and Comer Cherry

William Oliver, Jr.

John Wesley Langdale, Harley

Langdale, Jr.

Johnny Langdale

John W. & Margaret Langdale

Anonymous

Sybil Taylor Langdale

Robert H. Langdale

Virginia M. Langdale

Susan Leonard

Laura Leonard

Jimmy Manning

Ronnie & Bebo Blanton

Joyce Evans

Charles & Bebe Joiner

Charles & Cathy Perry

Gregory & Arlene Sparks

Stephen Martin

James & Dorothy Cruse

Sidney Morris

Lila Kate Hart

H. Arthur McLane

Carl L. Smith

Edward Douglas Puckett, Jr. and

Dr. John M. Miller

Patricia S. Miller

Joseph E. Vallotton III

Richard Liles

DONATIONS HONORING

Gloria Johnson

Mary Young Manning

Lowndes County Historical Society

Michael Beck

Pat Bezona

Scott Herring

W. P. Langdale

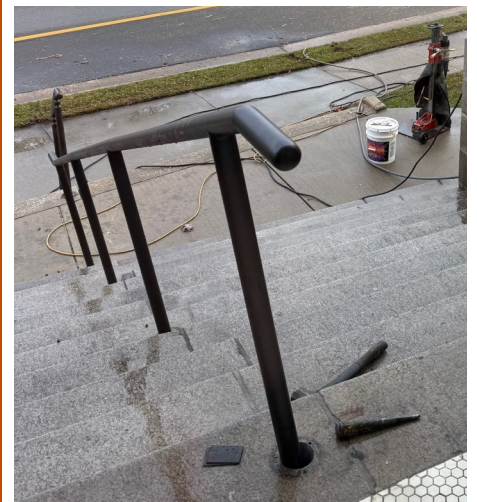
David and Leslie Parker

John and Eleanor McGowan

Ron and Carol Irwin

Renate Milner

Ron and Carol Irwin



Brooks Welding installed a new handrail
at the front entrance of the museum.



Brigman & Brigman Cabinets, Inc., Hahira, donated 10, custom-made shelves for two cases in the Carnegie Museum. Mr. Brigman enjoyed seeing our exhibits especially the museum's collection of old yearbooks.

Left: Arthur Roy and Mr. Brigman unpack new shelves

HELP NEEDED

If you can assist in any of these areas, please contact the museum at 229-247-4780.

- Newsletter Editor (*paid position*)
- Publicity and Marketing (*volunteer*)
- Handyman for repairs (*paid*)

EDITOR'S CORNER

The LCHS is indebted to Mr. Donald O. Davis who served as the steadfast editor of *Yesterday & Today* for over two decades. The Society is seeking nominations for a new editor. We welcome your submissions and articles about local historical places, people, and events. Contact the museum at 229-247-4780 or email Dr. Michael Black at mmblack1@outlook.com

Hospital Items Donated

Billie Bird Bennett, Dr. Bird's granddaughter, donated two wool blankets which were used in the Bird Hospital during its operation. We are pleased to welcome these items *home* to the Bird Annex.

Bird Annex Additions

In December, SOGA Graphics, Adel, installed a mural (right) featuring a landscape of '50s downtown. Bill Shenton installed an adjustable picture hanging system suitable for rotating museum exhibits. And a 100" TV on a mobile rolling cart was added to better present programs to groups.



Gulf South Conference Champions Hometown football team, the VSU Blazers, completed a 13-1 season and played in the NCAA Division II National Championship on December 21, 2024 in McKinney, TX.



2024 Membership Record

The Society achieved an all-time membership record with 400 members in 2024. Join us in 2025 using the form below.

Lowndes County Historical Society Membership Form

Please return with dues to:

Lowndes County Historical Society
P.O. Box 56

Valdosta, GA 31603-0056

If this is a gift membership, please print your name and address on the back of this form.



✓	Membership Categories	Amount
☐	✓ Check if new member	
☐	Student	\$ 15.00
☐	Individual	\$ 30.00
☐	Household	\$ 35.00
☐	Business/Organization	\$ 50.00
☐	Contributing	\$ 100.00
☐	Patron	\$ 250.00
☐	Life	\$1,000.00

Name

Email Address

Address

Phone Number

City State Zip

Your personal information will never be shared with a third party.

MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS**Officers and Executive Committee**

President, Ron Irwin; 1st Vice President, Michael Black; 2nd Vice President, Mary Young Manning; Secretary, Carol Irwin, Treasurer, John R. Bennett; Immediate Past President, John R. Bennett

Jan. 21, 2025 Trustees Meeting, 4:00pm
Mar. 18, 2025 Trustees Meeting, 4:00pm
Mar. 20, 2025 Membership Meeting, 4:00pm
May 20, 2025 Trustees Meeting, 4:00pm
May 22, 2025 Membership Meeting, 4:00pm

Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

305 West Central Avenue
P.O. Box 56 Valdosta, GA 31603-0056
(229) 247-4780
Fax: (229) 247-2840
E-mail: research.lchs@gmail.com
Coming soon: a new website address
www.facebook.com/LowndesCountyHistoricalMuseum

YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of
Lowndes County Historical Society

Newsletter Editor
Michael M. Black

Museum Staff
Renate Milner
Executive Director

Harry S. Evans
Special Collections and Research

Donna Hunter
Administrative Assistant

Thank you to all our volunteers!

YESTERDAY & TODAY

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