

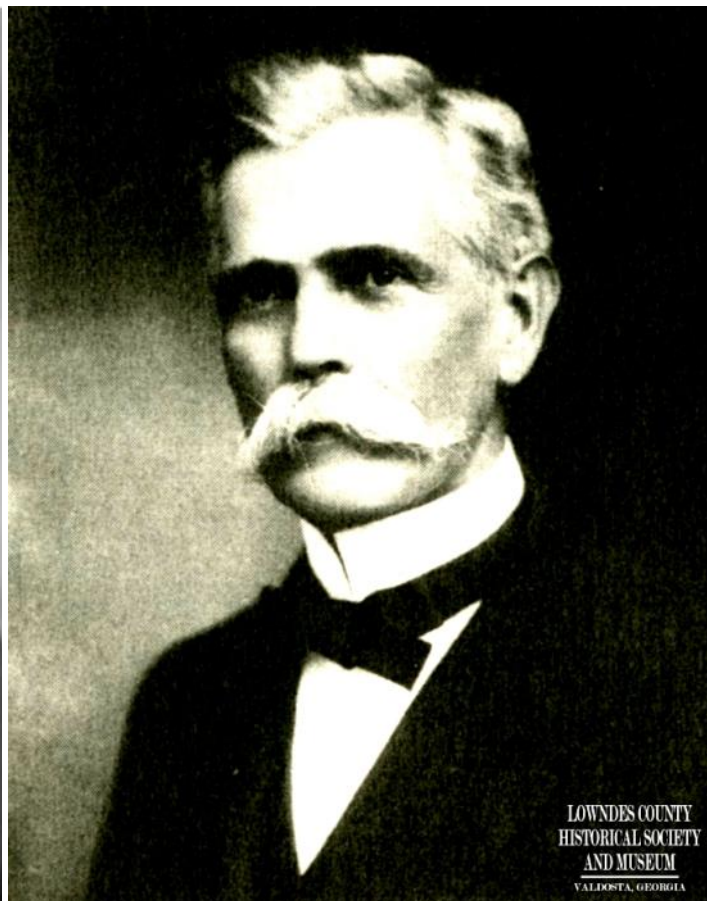


From a Search to find early local Brick Masons ... A Valdosta Resident U.S. Congressman Emerges, This previously not in our Knowledge or Archives

Not even the **History of Lowndes County Georgia, 1925-1941**, records John Randall Walker's three terms as a U S Congressman, 1913-1919. Listings in the book show Walker as a Lowndes County representative to the Georgia General Assembly in 1907-08 along with Cornelius Raines Ashley. It also lists him as a charter officer at the founding of the Valdosta Elks Lodge Number 728 in October 1901, with the position of Esteemed Lecturing Knight. Other charter Elks officers included Judge J. G. Cranford, Dr. D.H. Breedlove and Earle Sinclair McKey [Sr.]. Pages two through six in this newsletter provide insight into Walker's legal career, congressional service and his later life adventures.



LOWNDES COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND MUSEUM
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA



LOWNDES COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND MUSEUM
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Above: J. Randall Walker, U.S. Congressman and William S. West, U.S. Senator

At the museum, when learning and noting the time period of Walker's service, we checked immediately to see if it provided Valdosta an additional superlative to tell on occasion in narratives about the town. Our thoughts were confirmed, Valdosta is in the "rare-air" of a smaller town having a U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative in Congress - **at the same time**. Walker's first term was in the 63rd Congress from March 4, 1913 to March 4, 1915. W. S. West served as a U.S. Senator in the 63rd Congress from March 2, 1914. to November 3, 1914, filling the unexpired term of the deceased A. O. Bacon. West did not seek re-election. West would suddenly die back at home in Valdosta December 22, 1914. In addition to the two local citizens being a Senator and a Congressman at the same time, the 1913-14 Valdosta City Directory shows them living on the same street, the Walker residence at 600 N. Patterson Street and the West at 904 N. Patterson, the Crescent. Valdosta's population in the 1910 census, 7,656.

DOUGLAS ENTERPRISE. AUGUST 24, 1912

CARD FROM MR. WALKER.

To the people of the Eleventh Congressional District,

I desire to thank the people of the Eleventh Congressional district for the splended support given me throughout the campaign in my candidacy for Congress and which resulted in my nomination by such handsome majorities. Words fail to express adequately my appreciation for this great expression of the confidence of my fellow-citizens, and I know of no other way in which to show them how much I value this high honor bestowed than by endeavoring constantly to serve the people faithfully and to the best of my ability. My earnest and constant desire shall be to be the Representative of all the people of every county of the entire Congressional District, irrespective of whether the same supported me or not, and in this manner to seek at all times to serve my constituents in whatever official or peasonal manner I may.

Thanking every one for any kindness that has been extended in the campaign and assuring all that my every effort shall be directed constantly in the interest of the people's welfare, I am
Faithfully and obediently yours.

J. R. WALKER,

Valdosta, Ga. Aug. 22, 1912

J. Randall Walker moved to Valdosta in 1900. In February 1902 he married Susie Mae Hightower, her family of 700 N. Patterson Street. In November John Randall Walker, Jr. was born, Susie soon died from complications in childbirth. The son was raised by Pierce County relatives

In 1907 Walker married Mary Love Coggins of Madison, Florida. The news article on the event records a beautiful wedding. She was the daughter of Parramore S. and Lilla Fraleigh Coggins.

In 1907 Walker was elected a Lowndes County state representative. In 1910 the census records this family living on River Street. They soon moved to 600 N. Patterson as shown in the 1913-14 City Directory.

The couple had four children. In the 1920 census she and the children are in Madison County, Florida at the residence of her parents. J Randall Walker is evidently away on his oil well search as we did not find him in this census. In the 1930 census she continues in Madison and J. Randall Walker is an oil worker in Bossier City, Louisiana. The couple divorced.

The 1940 census shows Walker in Pierce County, occupation "lawyer." Walker died in 1942 and his grave was not marked for several years.

In 1912 Walker was elected to the US House of Representatives for the 11th District of Georgia, the 63rd Congress. He replaced William Gordon Brantley, Blackshear, who served terms from 1893 to 1913. In the 1910s this district included counties, from Brooks, Lowndes and Berrien east to Glynn and Camden Counties on the Atlantic Coast. J Randall Walker was reelected in 1914 and 1916.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Ed Hightower, current LCHS Trustee, interviewed a Walker nephew 10 to 15 years ago when seeking Hightower information. Ed supplied the museum archives a copy of his notes that include perspectives on Walker.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Collecting information on J. R. Walker began from a discovery when museum Researcher Harry Evans was assisting Gwen Redwine of Atlanta on elements of Valdosta Black history, especially Dasher High School. Harry realized he had memory of Gwen's father, Freddie Wright, a preferred brick mason in his era. This led into an undocumented area of local history being accumulated and recorded. Architectural historian Al Willis, Ph.D., has already prepared a program on local brick masons. Note (*on page 3*) the campaign ad for Walker contained the opportune "brick mason" reference.

THE VALDOSTA TIMES FEBRUARY 13, 1912

Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Walker returned last night from a three days' trip to St. Mary's, Cumberland and Dungenness, where Col. Walker went at the instance of a committee at St. Mary's to get a personal view of the harbor and the improvements that are needed there. He and his wife were given an automobile ride all over Cumberland Island and the great Carnegie estate. He says that it is the most beautiful place he has ever seen, millions of money being invested by Mrs. Carnegie.

1912, above right: Walker was visiting the district before announcing his candidacy, here to Cumberland Island.

Below: Page two of a large political ad placed in the Brunswick News, August 3, 1912, by Valdosta/Lowndes citizens.
Note: With the search finding "Brick Mason" in this ad, it led to the "re-discovery" Valdosta's Congressman.

Hon. C. R. Ashley,
 Hon. W. L. Converse,
 Representatives from Lowndes.
 W. S. West,
 Ex-President State Senate.
 R. B. Myddleton,
 Clerk Superior Court.
 J. E. Gornto,
 Sheriff, Lowndes County.
 A. V. Simms, Ordinary.
 W. Lang, County Treasurer.
 U. C. Geiger, Tax Collector.
 C. S. Bacon, Tax Receiver.
 J. G. Cranford, Judge City Court.
 J. M. Johnson, Solicitor City Court.
 J. P. Coffee, Chairman,
 County Commissioners.
 John T. Roberts,
 Mayor of Valdosta.
 S. M. Varnedoe, City Recorder.
 C. Dampier, Chief of Police.
 Preston Brooks, Chief Fire Department
 R. E. Barfield, Mayor of Hahira.
 C. C. Crews, Mayor of Lake Park.
 R. H. Roberson, Mayor of Naylor.
 J. H. Dasher, Farmer.
 G. L. Dowling, Farmer.
 W. T. Staten, Farmer.
 R. Y. Lane, President Merchants Bank
 D. C. Ashley, Pres. 1st National Bank
 J. F. Lewis, President Citizens Bank.
 C. L. Jones, Vice President,
 Valdosta Bank and Trust Co.
 A. S. Pendleton, President,
 A. S. Pendleton Co.
 M. Curry, Pres. Curry Grocery Co.
 O. D. Dalton, Dalton Gro. Co.
 C. Strickland, President,
 Strickland-Tillman Hdw. Co.
 G. W. Varn, Naval Stores.
 W. H. Mashburn,
 Mashburn Drug Co.
 J. J. Newman,
 Southern Stationery Co.
 C. C. Jones, Manager,
 Briggs Hardware Co.
 D. W. Plowden, Manager,
 Valdosta Drug Co.

B. F. Strickland, Pres. Cotton Mills.
 T. H. McKey, Dougherty, McKey Co.
 W. B. Fender, Fender Lumber Co.
 B. G. Lastinger, Naval Stores.
 L. L. Webb, Farmer.
 W. T. Lane, Farmer.
 W. S. McRee, Farmer.
 J. T. Carter, Farmer.
 C. T. Corbett, Farmer.
 H. M. Zeigler, Farmer.
 Denmark & Griffin, Attorneys.
 Woodward & Smith, Attys.
 Patterson & Copeland, Attorneys.
 Whittaker & Dukes, Attorneys.
 E. K. Wilcox, Attorney.
 J. C. Wilson, M. D.
 F. H. Thomas, M. D.
 A. G. Little, M. D.
 J. F. McCrackin,
 Referee in Bankruptcy.
 A. Griffin, M. D.
 H. G. Hester, Carpenter & Contractor.
 J. F. Crosby, Carpenter & Contractor.
 I. A. Pounds, Brick Mason.
 C. C. Varnedoe, C. C. Varnedoe Co.
 A. E. Dimmock, Druggist.
 C. B. Peeples, Merchant.
 T. B. Converse, Converse Bros.
 M. R. Ousley, The Ousley Co.
 A. L. Davis, Davis Bros. & Co.
 C. C. Brantley, Editor,
 The Valdosta Times.
 M. J. Chauncey,
 Agt. V. M. & W. R. R. Co.
 J. H. Powell, Barton & Powell.
 J. P. Prescott, M. D.
 Lee L. Roberson, M. D.
 J. F. Stapler, Farmer.
 J. K. White, Merchant.
 Ewell Brown, Merchant.
 J. P. Carter, Merchant and Banker.
 R. T. Gupton, Naval Stores.
 W. J. Peters, J. P.
 J. D. Wetherington, Merchant.
 J. F. Courson, J. P.
 J. A. Stubbs, Farmer.

Varying News Items from 1910, 1915 and 1916

Right: One example of Walker's legal abilities being cited:

The Valdosta Times November 5, 1910. J. Randall Walker's abilities as an attorney appear in occasional digitized articles. He had been called from Valdosta to Green Cove Springs, Florida to handle this case.

Right below: Operation: *The Coffee County Progress* June 23, 1915:

An article from May 26, 1915 states that Walker is in Johns Hopkins in Baltimore where he went for a hernia operation. The June article here gives the location as Union Protestant Infirmary. Of particular interest is Dr. Finney, one of the most eminent surgeons in the U.S., being assisted by Dr. A. Griffin of Valdosta, Mr. Walker's family physician.

Article includes Walker's warnings concerning Sea Island Cotton:

The article *below* appeared in several south Georgia papers with this particular one taken from *The Coffee County Progress*, July 26, 1916. A portion of the National Magazine article reads: "Representative J. Randall Walker of Valdosta, Georgia has directed the attention of Congress to the unwarranted claims of many manufacturers that they are using sea island cotton whereas inferior grades have been substituted." ... "Walker's home city is the largest market in the world for this exceptionally fine quality of cotton." [ed. note Largest inland market]

Col. Walker's Great Victory.

Col. J. Randall Walker has been spending the greater part of this week at Green Cove Springs, Fla., where he was employed in the case of the state against Ira Thomas, who was indicted for embezzling \$15,000 from Clay county, Florida, while serving as county treasurer.

The case was called Tuesday and a hot legal battle was promised. The defendant raised a question of law which the plaintiff was unable to get around, so that the court directed a verdict in favor of the defendant.

The case has been pending in court there for a year and the disposition of it was regarded as a great victory for the defense. Col. Walker was congratulated on all sides for the able manner in which he handled the case.

CONGRESSMAN WALKER IN THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE

In the June issue The National Magazine, a close observer of official life in Washington, and one of the leading magazines in this country, had the following to say about Congressman Walker.

....."More stringent laws with reference to pure fabrics are needed in the broad field of legislation covering the safe-guarding of United States industries, merchandising and agricultural activities. Representative J. Randall Walker, of Valdosta, Georgia, has directed the attention of Congress to the unwarranted claims of many manufacturers that they are using sea island cotton, whereas inferior grades have been substituted. Sea Island cotton is grown only in sections of South Carolina, Florida and Georgia. Congressman Walker's home city is the largest market in the world for this exceptionally fine quality of cotton; and in keeping with the Congressman's well-known policy to look after home interests; his insistence upon action with reference to his pure fabric bill is entirely logical. Mr. Walker has been in Congress three years, and he is known as one of the

men who work hard—for the Representative who believe in the importance of little things which concern the individual in his district, or any part of the district itself, finds plenty to do. Men like Representative Walker who place value upon their relations with constituents, are the kind of public servants who get real results.

The Georgia Representative is in close touch, and popular with the heads of the different departments of the government, and is able to get anything within reason for his district. This is shown in results at the postoffice department, where fifty rural routes owe their origin to the personal efforts of the man from Georgia.

When Mr. Walker came to Congress he was given a position on the Committee on Foreign Affairs which is important in view of the disturbed conditions in Europe and Mexico. As a recognition for his faithful services he was later appointed to a place on the Judiciary Committee, where he has been active in advocating a repeal, or radical amendments to the existing bankruptcy law.

Coffee County Progress,

June 23, 1915

Congressman Walker Back After Operation

Congressman Randal Walker has returned to his home in Valdosta, after undergoing an operation at the Union Protestant Infirmary in Baltimore, for hernia, and an absence because of the operation and consequent revival from its effects for about three weeks.

Mr. Walker is in fine physical condition, and all that is necessary now will be for him to be careful with himself for a few weeks, after which he should enjoy more robust health than he has in years.

The operation on Mr. Walker was performed by Dr. J. M. T. Finney, one of the most eminent surgeons in the United States, who was assisted by Dr. A. Griffin, of Valdosta, Mr. Walker's family physician.

For clearer definition, this newsletter can be viewed online. Go to the Lowndes County Historical Society website, click on newsletters.

THE BRUNSWICK NEWS

BRUNSWICK, GA., TUESDAY MORNING JANUARY 9, 1917.

\$510,000 FOR THIS PORT

CITY INCLUDED IN RIVER AND HARBOR APPROPRIATION BILL

SUPERIOR COURT STARTS SESSION

NUMBER OF CIVIL CASES DIS-
POSED OF BY JUDGE HIGH-

“Brunswick One of the Few Southern Ports ... in the Bill for New Projects...” was one subtitle to the *above* article. In data searches earlier news items expressed hope that Walker’s Brunswick Harbor efforts would be successful.

Coffee County Progress.

VOL. III. NO. 46. DOUGLAS, GEORGIA, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1916. Official Organ of Coffee County

DORSEY SWEEPS STATE FOR GOVERNOR

✻ ✻ ✻ ✻

CONGRESSMAN WALKER WINS 11TH DISTRICT

✻ ✻ ✻

1916: As Valdosta resident J. Randall Walker wins his third term in the U.S. Congress, Valdostan Adair Wilkinson Dorsey becomes the First Lady of Georgia



The *above* headlines from the *Coffee County Progress* would have greatly pleased many civic minded local residents in 1916. A congressional win, and with the Dorsey victory a Valdosta native became the First Lady of Georgia, The years would be 1917 to 1921. This gave Valdosta the First Lady entering the 1920s, and then Valdosta prided itself in also having the First Lady of Georgia leaving the 1920s, as Emma Griffin Hardman was wife of Gov. Lamartine Hardman. His term in office, 1927-1931.

Photo left:
Adair Wilkinson Dorsey

INTERESTING SIDE ISSUES OF RECENT DORSEY CAMPAIGN

**GEORGIA’S NEXT GOVERNOR IS FORTY-FIVE
YEARS OLD, MARRIED A SOUTH GEORGIA GIRL
ONLY FIVE YEARS AGO, AND HAS A LARGE AND
INTERESTING FAMILY CONNECTION**

Atlanta, Sept. 14, 1916

Hugh M. Dorsey, the next Governor of Georgia, was considered a confirmed old bachelor before he went to Valdosta, Ga., and married Miss Adair Wilkinson, which was on June 29, 1911. Mr. Dorsey was then forty years old and had served as best man to most of his col-

lege mates. He was in great demand for these occasions and frequently made long trips to stand up at the wedding of a friend. They had about come to the conclusion that Mr. Dorsey was determined to die a bachelor, until he surprised them on a day in June by following their good example. (Partial)

WILL RETURN TO LAW PRACTICE

CONGRESSMAN J. R. WALKER TO
RETURN TO VALDOSTA WHEN
PRESENT TERM EXPIRES.

The many friends of Mrs. Randall Walker will regret to know that she is critically ill of pneumonia in Washington City. Messages received here by Miss Annie Twitty yesterday stated that her condition was critical, but not hopeless. A fine girl baby was born to Mr. and Mrs. Walker yesterday. —Valdosta Times.

LEAVING CONGRESS, ADVENTURE BEGINS

Jan 17, 1919 Brunswick News
"Will Return to Law Practice." and other explanations
Jan. 26, 1919 Brunswick News, taken from VDT.
Mrs. Walker critically ill.

(His term and the 65th U.S. Congress ended March 3, 1919)

Feb. 13, 1920 Pearson Tribune
"An Oil Magnate" His interests worth a million.
Sept. 29, 1920 Thomasville Times Enterprise, from VDT
"Valdostans Waiting For Big Oil Gusher."

Walker an Oil Magnate.

The Georgia friends of Hon. J. Randall Walker, former congressman from the Eleventh district, will be pleased to learn that he has emerged from months of absence from Georgia as a full-fledged oil magnate. He is now vice-president of The Gatex Oil Company, composed of Georgia and Texas people.

Mr. Walker visited the oil fields of the West some months ago in the interest of a client, became convinced that he saw an opportunity, and went into the organization with a number of friends.

It is reported from Valdosta that his interests are worth a million dollars. If any of his friends desire to write to him, they can address him at Eldorado, Ark.

VALDOSTANS WAITING FOR BIG OIL GUSHER IN ARK.

Valdosta, Ga., Sept. 29.—A number of Valdostans, including former Congressman J. Randall Walker, Judge J. G. Cranford of the city court, D. B. Small, G. L. Patterson and others are at Eldorado, Ark., waiting to experience the joys of seeing an oil "gusher come in," which great performance they are expecting toward the end of the week.

These Valdosta people, along with a number of others of this city, own 4,500 acres of oil lands at Eldorado, and the oil has been struck and the casing being put down. As soon as this is completed the "gusher" will be turned loose and the Valdostans will celebrate.

They have not formed an oil company and exploited stock, but secured their land, put up their own money in regular Valdosta style and went to boring. That they have followed this direct business method without calling on the public to take the risk with them entitles them to all possible good fortune, is the opinion of the Valdosta people who enjoy the friendship of these nerry business men.

2020 New & Renewal Memberships

*Con't. from previous newsletter
(Received through July 10)*

Place of residence listed for those
Outside of Lowndes County

The Historical Society Trustees
and Museum Staff greatly appreciate
your memberships as they affirm our
place as an important cultural entity
in Lowndes County and help us to
fulfill our mission—

To collect, preserve and present
the history of Lowndes County

*** designates Life Member

** designates Patron Member

* designates Contributing Member

Charles Barclay & Rena Dasher Barclay

Jim and Ingrid Carroll

Judge Richard and Jeanne Cowart *

Anthony and Vivian Cody

Lee R. and Mary Grizzell Cook *

Decatur, GA

Jim and Beth Sullivan Copeland *

Statham, GA

Ralph and Ruth K. Council

Charles and Carolyn Cox *

Irene Allen D'Amato

Daugharty Service Station

Robert T. Daugharty, Jr.

Sara Katherine 'Kate' Evans *

George and Mary B. Harrington

Nelda F. Harris

Michael and Jean Hill

Glen and Mary Holcombe

Orange Park, FL

Jim E. Jarvis

Jerry and Kay Jeannette ***

Frank and Jean Johnson

Marilyn H. Kemper *

Karen King

John and Ann Lukens

Emma Lou Sheffield McConnell

McConnell Pest Control

Sandi Turner Mills

Charlotte, NC

David R. Moore

Thomasville, GA

MEMORIALS

Martha Bell Blackburn

by

Dr. Bill and Virginia Mixson Story

Shelby, NC

Wayland Hendry 'Bo' Blalock

by

Glen and Mary Holcombe

Orange Park, FL

Lena Dykes Bosch

by

Donald O. Davis

J. Edward Willis

Charles C. 'Charlie' Clark

by

Dr. and Mrs. William W. Oliver

Macon, GA

(Memberships Continued)

Sue Ellen Patterson

Athens, GA

Gwen Wright Sommers Redwine

Douglasville, GA

Charles and Jan Samuels

Lakeland, FL

Von T. and Peggi Shipman

Anne Stump Sockwell

Birmingham, AL

Wesley and Julie Scott Street

Harry A. 'Sandy' Stump

Pensacola, FL

George and Polly Talley

Varn Turpentine and Cattle Co.

Jacksonville, FL

Bill and Kathy Adams Wenck*

Marjorie Noell West

Columbia, SC

Victoria Wilcox

Peachtree City, GA

Christopher Chappel Coleman

by

Marilyn H. Kemper

Robert Thomas Daugharty, Sr.

by

Marilyn H. Kemper

Helen Womack Green

Woodstock, GA

by

Patsy T. Giles

Ed and Rita Hightower

James A. Horton

Quitman, GA

Valdosta Heritage Foundation

Mary Odom Jeter

by

Donald O. Davis

Alton M. 'Buddy' Johnson, Jr.

by

Dr. Bill and Virginia Mixson Story

Shelby, NC

Catherine McKinnon Minor

by

Ida Little

Hawthorne, FL

Archie Melvin Waldron

by

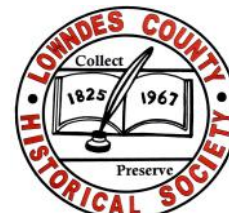
Marilyn H. Kemper

Joe H. Wilson

by

Dr. and Mrs. William W. Oliver

Macon, GA



2020 Membership Application, Lowndes County Historical Society, P.O. Box 56, Valdosta, GA 31603

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Membership Category

Individual \$25. _____

Family 30. _____

Business 25/50. _____

Contributing 100. _____

Patron 250. _____

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

President, Patsy Giles; 1st Vice President, Sally S. Kurrie; 2nd Vice President,
Mary Young Manning; Secretary, Sandra Connell ; Treasurer,
Edward Hightower; Ex Officio, Julie Smith; Anita Shelton

**The museum remained Closed to the Public
at press time for this newsletter.**

Our core staff of three continues flexible “distancing” work schedules.

**We will follow the advisement of officials and our
Board of Trustees for reopening to the public.**

Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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Web page:

<http://www.valdostamuseum.com>

YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of
Lowndes County Historical Society

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Executive Director.

Amy Brown
Textiles Curator and Research.

Harry S. Evans
Special Collections, Research
Newsletter Graphics

Adam Doughty
Drew Johnson
Social Media

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