

With Lowndes Approaching 200 Years, Historical Marker Texts Began Presenting Puzzles



In October 2023 I was among several messaged by John Quarterman of WWALS Riverkeepers concerning the existing historical marker at Troupville. It is located in the grass field north of St. Augustine Road and just off Val Tech Road. This stone marker was placed by the UDC Chapter 471 in 1927, soon after the Lowndes County Centennial in 1925. A Riverkeeper member had suggested to John Quarterman that perhaps this marker could be placed near the popular VLPRA Little River boat ramp and, thus, easily provide those with kayaks and boats a notice of Old Troupville. A river camp area is also proposed for this “Land Between the Rivers.” At that time we informed John Quarterman of the upcoming 200th Year of Lowndes County, 1825- 2025. He advised that the two standing markers give Troupville different establishment dates. When you further include the information from the third and missing marker, *text below*, the three markers now give three different years - 1833, 1836 & 1837 - for Troupville’s establishment. The “**Outline Notes**” on page two of this newsletter begin to sort the confusing circumstances of Troupville being established as the county seat.

Franklinville Georgia State Marker. Currently standing. Location: Franklinville Rd., east of Skipper Bridge Road. Text of marker & quot. SITE: FRANKLINVILLE. When Lowndes County was created December 23, 1825, Lawrence Folsom, Sion Hall, William Blair, John J. Underwood and Daniel McCaully were appointed Commissioners to select the capital of Lowndes County. The site which they chose, named Franklinville, was designated County Seat in 1828, and was located near the center of the Lowndes County area of 1825. In 1833, the County Seat was moved to Troupville, a small settlement about four miles west of present-day Valdosta. **092-3, Year Erected 1961..**

Troupville Georgia State Marker, Year Erected: 1961, Missing. Script below from Georgia Historical Society, *Marker Text: In 1833 the County Seat of Lowndes County was moved from Franklinville to Troupville, a small settlement about four miles west of present-day Valdosta. The town was named Troupville in honor of George M. Troup (Gov. of Georgia, 1823-1827). Troupville was incorporated in 1837. It continued as County Seat until 1860 when the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad surveyed for right-of-way in that area, bypassing Troupville. The County Seat was then removed to Valdosta in order to be on the railroad line. Among those buried at the Troupville Cemetery were members of the Briggs, Jones, Howell, Smith, Ellis, Hall, Griffin, Morgan, Treadwell, and Ayer families.



UDC 1927 Marker: Cathy Wells was contacted for information concerning the monument. She wrote a booklet on the history of this Troupville marker in 2002. The property, 15 feet by 15 feet square, was donated by W. P. Kendall, the deed recorded March 5, 1927. A newer UDC chapter in Valdosta, # 2582, is active, but the #471 folded. Cathy Wells stated the ownership and authority over the area and monument is now with the UDC, Georgia Division state office. The inscription reads. “Site of Troupville. The First Town and Stage Coach Line in Lowndes County. Settled 1836.” Erected April 26th 1927. **Left:** Marker at Troupville, photo by Jay Blanton.

ACTS of the Legislature Indicate Considerable Confusion Over Several Years in the Forming of Troupville. Now Searchable, the story can be made ready for Lowndes 200.

Below are "Outline Notes" only. They list Acts of the Georgia Legislature and also legal items from various state newspapers, 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837 and 1838. So much interesting information has been gathered that a booklet will need to be assembled to be available for the future. Information is now searchable that was not available to earlier Lowndes historians. The approaching 200th of Lowndes is the prompting of this search.

Two December 1833 Acts, one day apart, reveal there was evidently serious displeasure in Franklinville as the county site. The first Act was unknown to us, the second is cited in histories of Lowndes.

***Assented to 23 Dec. 1833,** "Whereas, the commissioners appointed by the legislature of the State of Georgia to lay out a town at Franklinville, in Lowndes County, and to sell said lots, **have all resigned, and refused to act in said capacity...**"

***Assented to 24 Dec. 1833.** To remove the public site of the county of Lowndes from Franklinville, to establish a site **Lowndesville** and courthouse and jail. *The Federal Union, Milledgeville, December 25, 1833.*
***No courthouse or site was developed by the new 1833 commissioners, so other new commissioners were appointed by the legislature in 1834, (see Act below). The name Lowndesville [GA] does not appear in print after the time of the Act of 1833 and the site evidently did not develop.**

***Assented to 20th December 1834.** To appoint commissioners to build a court house and jail in the county of Lowndes and to select a suitable place for the same. With the confusion or inactivity, the Act actually allows that the new courthouse and jail could be constructed in Franklinville. (*The Federal Union Milledgeville, Dec. 24, 1834.*)

***July 4th, 1835: Franklinville, big celebration. Orations & Toasts.**

***Assented to 23rd Dec. 1835.** To amend the first section of an act [of 1834], to appoint Commissioners to select a site for a court house in Lowndes (Thus no courthouse was constructed by the 1834 commissioners either.) *The Recorder, Milledgeville, December 22, 1835.*

*(The Act below implies the site selection under consideration might be the confluence of the Little & Withlacoochee Rivers)

Assented to Dec 1835. Act to render navigable the Withlacoochee River in Lowndes. *Southern Recorder, Milledgeville, December 22, 1835*

The first found public mention of the name Troupville. July 2, 1836
First Sale of Lots in Troupville

July 2, 1836. Date shown for Lowndes County Commissioners presenting notice that the first sale of lots in Troupville would be on September 20, 1836. *The Federal Union, Milledgeville, July 26, 1836*

The Second sale of these lots in Troupville.

November 22, 1836 Date shown for Lowndes County Commissioners presenting notice for the second sale of lots in Troupville on January 25, 1837. *Southern Recorder December 2, 1836 and The Federal Union, Milledgeville December 13, 1836*

Court house bid requests for Troupville, 1836 then 1837
First for a Brick structure, then for a Frame structure.

Bid request for a **Brick Court House. October 22, 1836,** is the date shown for Lowndes County Commissioners presenting notice of this bid. Bids to be received until January 25, 1837. *The Southern Recorder, December 2, 1836* **[Request for a frame courthouse soon followed]**

Bid request for a **Frame Court House. May 1, 1837,** is the date shown for Lowndes County Commissioners presenting notice of this

An Important Thank you.

A perhaps unexpected but "particularly important" thank you goes to John Quarterman of WWALS Riverkeepers. His inquiry concerning a Troupville marker further interested me in early Lowndes and led to considerable additional research.

With effective digital searching now possible, significant documents of early county seats and their governmental development will now be available in time for the 2025 story of Lowndes 200, 1825-2025.

In local history, much accumulation of knowledge begins from responding to questions from individuals. *Donald Davis*

bid. **June 2, 1837,** date for receiving bids. *The Recorder, Milledgeville, May 2 & 9, 1837.*

***Assented to 29th December, 1836.** To pay commissioners 2 dollars for each day they served as commissioners in determining a suitable site for public buildings and laying out this public site into lots.

***May 1837, Post office moved to Troupville**

***Assented to 14th December, 1837.** Incorporation of **Troup[s]ville** The town is **misspelled Troup[s]ville** each time it is written in the act.

***Assented to, 27th December, 1838.** Amended the Act of the 14th Day of December 1837 to incorporate the town of **Troupville**. It also amends, where needed, the Acts from the previous years.

***Assented to in December 1845.** The Act authorizes the sale of land in and around Franklinville that belongs to the County.

TROUPVILLE ERRATA: John Quarterman noticed, as others have, that on the Franklinville state marker the date for Troupville is 1833, and on the UDC stone marker at Troupville it reads "settled 1836." With interest shown for a potential Troupville marker site location, perhaps a duplicate of the already scripted **missing 1961 State of Georgia marker** could be supplied, or could the confusing dates potentially merit a marker message change? Although not included here, when possible, note the cautious text on the more recently installed **1978 Lowndes State of Georgia marker** on the 1905 Historic Courthouse square.

***Act in December 1838:** "An Act to alter and amend an act, passed the 14th of December, 1837, to incorporate the Town of **Troup[s]ville** in the county of Lowndes." Notice the name **Troup[s]ville** is used four times in the **1837 Incorporation Act**. However, all submitted legal ads and notices found in historic newspaper searches spell the name Troupville. But searching **Georgia Archives, 1838 Legislative Document Navigator, the Official Volume Recording the Acts of 1837,** gives the name **Troup[s]ville**. In **December of 1838 an Act of the Legislature** uses the name **Troupville** rather than **Troup[s]ville**.

Salvaged Marker Carries a Significant Historic Story



The museum for many years had wanted a concrete post street marker to exhibit on the grounds. We would mention it on occasion and had a handful of people report having one. However, Jay Perryman was the only person that consistently reported that he had a marker that he would eventually get to the museum. He said the marker was from West Hill Avenue and one of the small side streets. During a construction period, the post had been removed from the ground and was exposed leaning against a wall of concrete block.

These old style markers slowly continue to disappear from Valdosta's early and mid-century street corners. I had long eyed the marker at the T-junction of Azalea Drive and Gornto Road near St. John's Catholic Church, but suddenly it was gone. Jay Perryman told that when he "acquired" this marker, he by himself could move and load the post although it was very difficult, however that now was not possible. He had always told it was from W. Hill Avenue (US84) and one of the small side streets.

Jay Perryman contacted Jimmy Stephenson, Air Depot, Inc., and Stephenson gifted his time, the personnel, and equipment to move the marker from Jay's home to the museum rear grounds exhibit area.

The *photo left above* shows the West Hill Avenue, Thomas Street marker when it was placed beside the caboose upon arrival. It is now installed in this area.



Before Jay and assistants brought the marker, I had asked him to note the name of the side street. When he reported "Thomas Street," we realized the museum was getting a marker from the area of one of the most historic intersections in Valdosta. Rerouted Thomas Street is now underneath and beside the U. S. 84 overpass. The overpass construction occurred from 2012-2014, and it would later be named in 2020 for Councilman Joseph Sonny Vickers. The historic Thomas house still stands on West Hill Avenue. The street name marker provides enhancement to a story of much historical significance. It is from the area of the US84 overpass, Thomas Street, near where the first railroad from Savannah, 1860, intersected with first railroad from Macon, 1889, and the story of Valdosta's growth began.

Above: From 2012 Google Earth historic photos, The Thomas house, Thomas Street, and street marker at Hill Ave. **At right:** Early, the extended Thomas house grounds included a small deer park running to Third Street. Note the very rare white deer. Large deer parks were known to be located on the estates of the northern wealthy.

The 1860 Atlantic & Gulf Railroad from Savannah, and the 1889 Georgia Southern & Florida Railroad from Macon intersected here; this union a most significant event in affecting the future of Valdosta and Lowndes County. Between 1890 and 1900 Valdosta's population grew by over 90 percent.





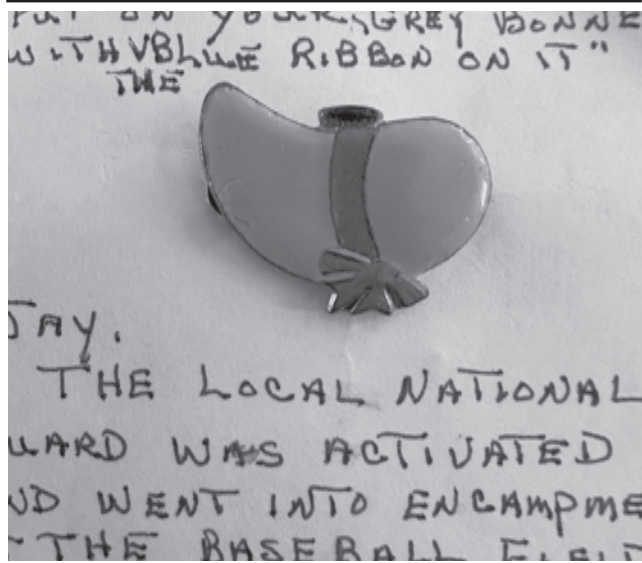
First Row- Alton D. Carter, Wallace R. McLeod, Tom W. McLeod, Lonzie H. Webster, Dayton E. Everetts, Bernard Strom, Steve A. Chitty, William A. Hagin. **Second Row** – Lewis Rykard, Charles W. Adams, Marshall H. Coker, Johnnie L. Green, James T. St. John, Frank Bird, Jack Powers, Glenn L. Stalvey, Robert E. Pindar. **Third Row:** Emory L. Connell, Homer M. Passmore, Porter U. Green, Jack S. Kendricks, Louis Cowart, Malcom Matthews, Freeman B. Johnson, Rondal Rykard, Robert S. Kilgore.



Front Row -Robert J. Allison, A.E. Zant, Goss C. Rice, R. R. Clements, Edwin A. Rehberg, E.W. Tullis, Purdie K. Kemp, Arthur L. Strom. **Second Row- Kenyon O. Miller**, James Price, Samuel P. Webb, Robert E. Lee, Robert W. Rudd, James L. Watson, Maxwell Stalvey, Herbert R. Johnston. **Third Row** – David Steinberg, Jerry W. Brooks, Glenn E. Ratliffe, Lionel L. Deming, Lonnie E. Gornto, Emmett H. McCrary, Benjamin B. Parramore, John Lane, James L. Dees.

Page opposite: James W. Davis, First Lieutenant John W. Burrows, Second Lieutenant.

The Grey Bonnet pin donation led to other treasures in our archives, the Items of WWII casualty Kenyon O. Miller, 1922-1944



At left: The 'Grey Bonnet' military pin Jay Perryman donated to the museum had belonged to his mother, Annie Grace Stephenson Perryman Brantley. She had recently graduated from VHS in 1941 when she received the pin. Her note, *at left*, and *transcribed below*, shows that the pin is a part of local history.

"Jay, The local National Guard was activated and went into encampment at the baseball field (SGMC Parking Lot) in December 1941. They wore this pin on their caps. Don't know the detachment number."

Searching the museum archives one additional pin became evident in the Military section prepared by Amy Brown. It had belonged to Kenyon Miller, who lost his young life in WWII. He very much enjoyed airplanes. He and his father, County Agent R. E. Miller, flew with global aviator Wiley Post in his airplane the *Winnie Mae* during Post's tour stop visit to Valdosta in December 1931.

More searching showed the museum had Kenyon Miller's copy of the *Georgia National Guard Pictorial Record*, (*photo bottom left*) It is a state yearbook, published in 1939, which includes the Valdosta Detachment.

Page opposite: The 1939 Guard photos *at left* contain images of many that are remembered in Valdosta/Lowndes. They are a valuable resource as VHS did not publish yearbooks from 1928 to 1942 and County schools began them in 1949. I asked Ed Willis, now 94, if anyone informed him about these National Guard photos when he published the important 1990s WWII veteran pictorial calendars, and he gave a regretful reply, "No, they did not."



At left: Kenyon Wells of the VHS Class of 1965 was named for Kenyon Miller, as his father, Leo Wells, was his friend. *Below:* The *Guard* yearbook features a portrait and introduction by Gov. Ed Rivers of Lakeland.



Gray Bonnet 121st Georgia National Guard

The 121st Infantry Regiment has a "**Distinctive Unit Insignia**," also called a **DUI** or unit crest. It might be the only example of an insignia whose design was inspired by a song, "Put on Your Old Gray Bonnets." It was adopted by the Regiment as its official air [song] in 1928.

"Not only was the unit given the Special Designation as the "Old Gray Bonnet" regiment, but also designed the image to be on its unit crest, "A Gold metal and enamel device 1 1/16 inches in width overall consisting of an 'Old Gray Bonnet' Proper."

The insignia is also one of only a few that is worn in pairs with the orientation based upon which shoulder loop it is placed. It was originally approved for the 121st Infantry Regiment, Georgia National Guard, on 27 June 1928.

Much of the above information on the Gray Bonnets is from the website of *The Salute Uniforms* which is a certified manufacturer of uniforms and insignia.

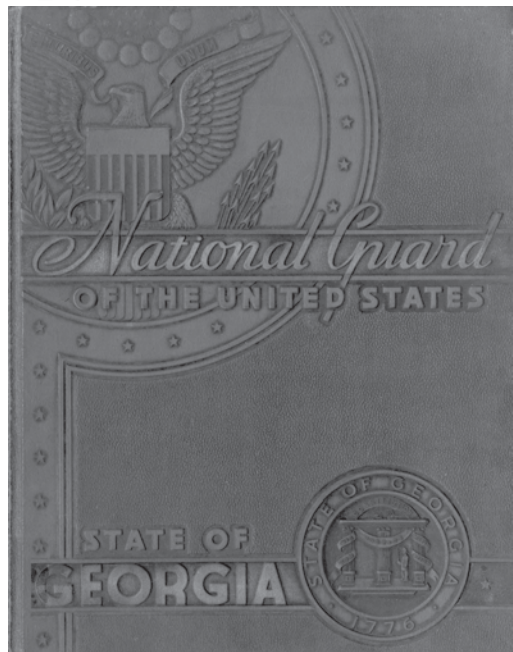
Company G First Battalion, 121st Infantry Valdosta, Georgia

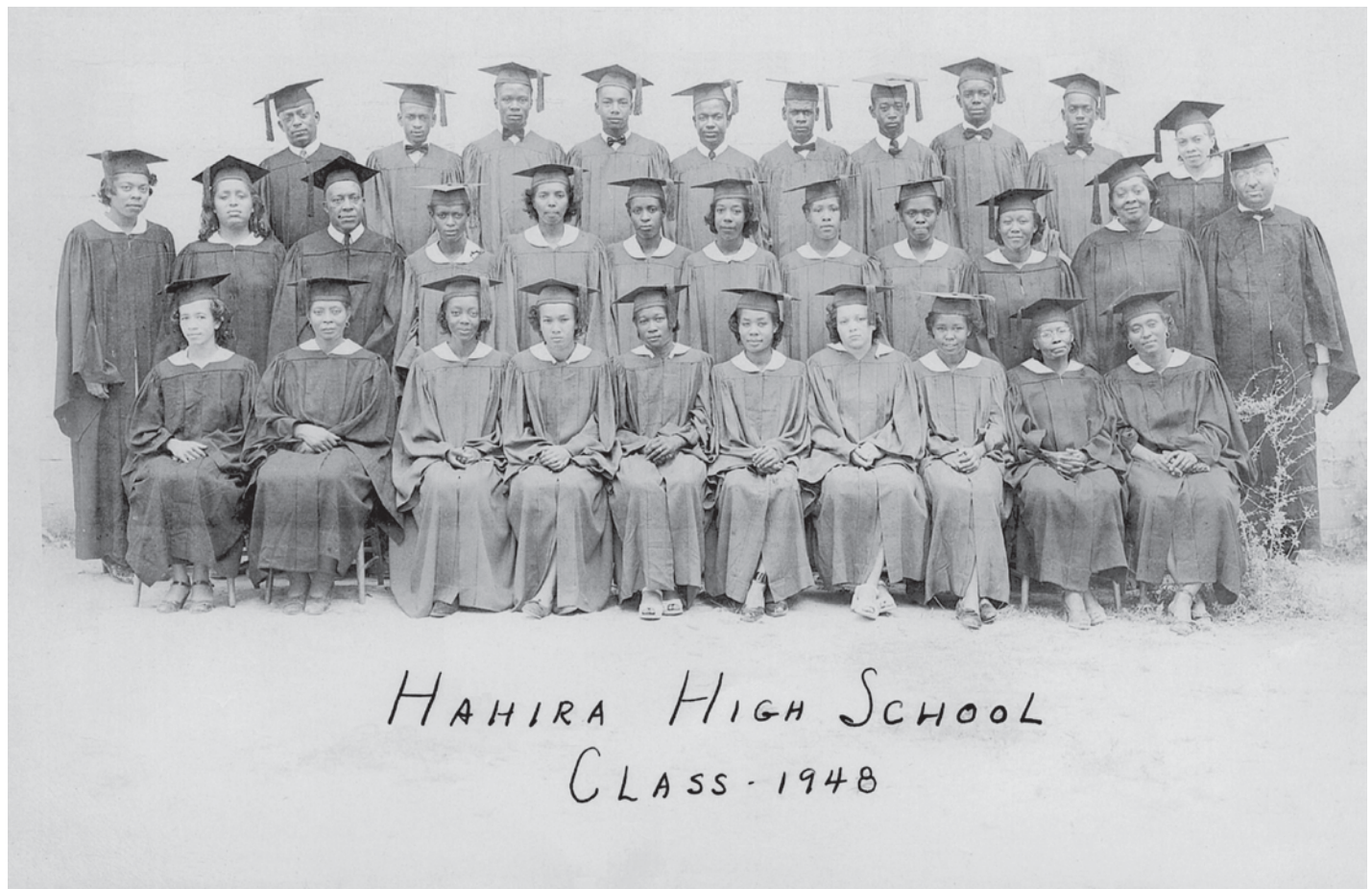
The Valdosta Videttes were organized in 1887 and officially known a Company B, 4th Infantry, Georgia State Troopers. The first officers were Captain J.O. Varnedoe, the organizer, 1st Lieutenant Henry C. Bridges [Briggs?] and 2nd Lieutenant J. F. Lewis. This organization was disbanded in 1912, when Captain Abial Winn was the commanding officer. The Valdosta Videttes were reorganized and became federally recognized June 20, 1916.

On May 31, 1921, it was reorganized as Company G, 1st Infantry. After three other short term designations on June 9, 1924, it received the designation, Company G, 121st Infantry, Georgia National Guard and was officially named the Valdosta Videttes.

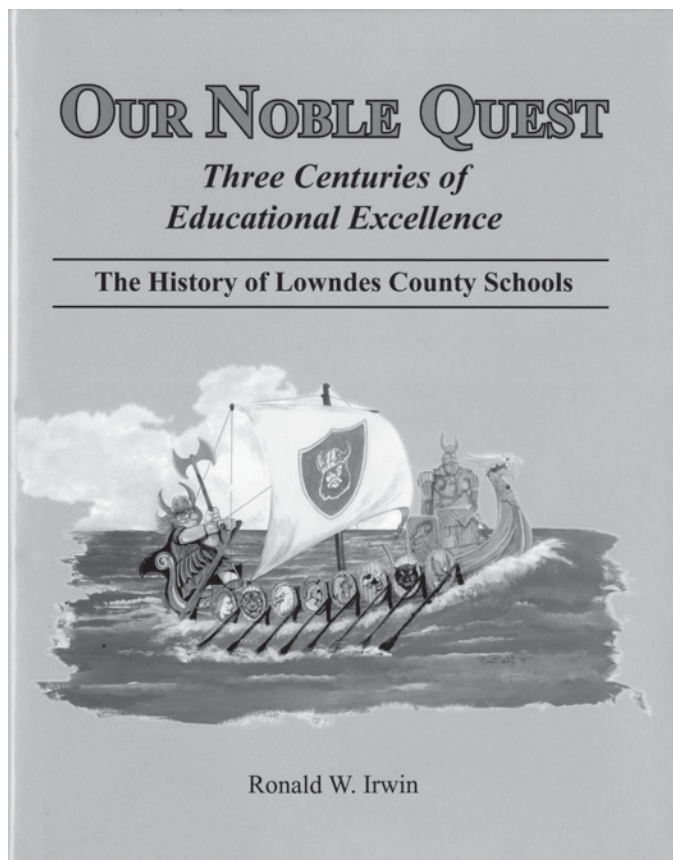
The first Company Commander of the organization was Captain J. L. Newbern.

The 1939 officers, *pictured in the column at left*, were Captain Walter Nelse Holcombe, *left top*, who had commanded since 1926; 1st Lieutenant James W. Davis, *left middle*, commissioned in 1929; and 2nd Lieutenant John W. Burrows, *left bottom*, commissioned in 1932.





Above: A Recently donated image of the Hahira High School Class of 1948,



The above photograph and a dozen more school images/clippings were a recent digital acquisition for the museum from Kathy Daniels of Hahira.

Kathy is making sure her items are well archived. Living in Hahira she donated the original photographs to the Hahira Historical Museum, but had scanned them and brought the digital copies to the Lowndes County Historical Museum on a jump drive. Please contact the Museum with any identifications.

Left: Ronald W. Irwin's "Our Noble Quest ... The History of Lowndes County Schools." Hahira High, then Webb-Miller, information below:

"A brand new Webb-Miller School opened in 1957 on the same campus that housed the Hahira School.

Hahira School had been torn down to accommodate the new school. The school's name came from W.W. Webb (former Lowndes County Board of Education member) and Butler Miller (prominent Hahira farmer). Other area black schools (Bemiss, Cat Creek, Franklinville, Mineola and Red Flag) were closed, and children attending these schools moved to Webb-Miller.

In 1961, Webb-Miller's high school students were transferred to Westside High School. Students in grades one through eight continued attending [Webb-Miller] until school integration in 1970. That year, all students in the Hahira Elementary School attendance zone were brought under one roof, and Webb-Miller was closed.

Lamar Copeland was Webb-Miller Elementary School's only principal."

MEMORIALS

Bettie Fowler Bazemore

By
Donald O. Davis
John Kent and Vikki Edwards

Carol Buescher

By
Hank and Claire Lee

Juanita Mixson Cox

By
Charles E. Bryan
Atlanta, GA

Hamilton Langdale Dickey

By
Virginia M. Langdale

Martha Norwood Gibson

By
Lilla Kate Hart

Lamar Golivesky

By
Lilla Kate Hart

Dorothy Greene

By
John Kent and Vikki Edwards

James Roger Hastings

By
John Kent and Vikki Edwards

Barry Zeke Hyatt

By
Donald O. Davis

Sybil Taylor Langdale

By
Virginia M. Langdale

Vicki Majis

By
John Kent and Vikki Edwards

Sidney Morris

By
Mary D. Gray
Lilla Kate Hart

Warren 'Flash' Roberts, Jr.

Columbia, SC
By
Donald O. Davis

Thomas M. 'Tim' Vinson

St. Simons Island, GA
By
Mary D. Gray

FAMILY MEMORIAL

Sybil Taylor Langdale

By
Robert H. Langdale

FAMILY REMEMBRANCE MEMORIALS

Thomas Guy Connell, III

By
Tommy and Sharon Connell

Molly Huckaby Hardy

By
Janet Scott Booth

Paul and Martha Hatcher

By
Paul B. Hatcher, Jr.

Ralph Hendrix

By
Sara Hendrix

**Earl J. Kelly, Sr.
Julia Elizabeth Kelly**

Ivan Kelly
By
Steve and Leslie Kelly
Tega Cay, SC

**John Wesley Langdale
Harley Langdale, Jr.**

By
John W. Langdale

Dr. John M. Miller

By
Patricia S. Miller

Edward Douglas Puckett

By
Patricia S. Miller

Taylor Crockett Williams

By
Ron and Lynn Williams

More Adventure in Wiregrass Georgia: In Establishment, Lowndes and Thomas Counties have a surprising and curious union.

With the "confusion" reflected in the Acts of the Georgia Legislature in 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836 and 1837, concerning the formation and the incorporation of Troupville, I decided to check into the official Acts of the establishment of both Lowndes County and Thomas County in 1825. I had for decades remembered noticing that Lowndes and Thomas, beginning as neighboring counties (no Brooks County until 1858), were established on the same day in late 1825, "assented to" **December 23.**

Observing quickly, most counties seemed to be established individually with their own Act of the Georgia Legislature. However, Lowndes and Thomas have a surprising and curious union, not only being established the same day, but jointly established together in one Act of the Legislature, and in this Act, not listed alphabetically, having Thomas County listed first.

Mail to: LCHS
P.O. Box 56
Valdosta, GA 31603

2024 Membership Application

Lowndes County Historical Society

Membership Category

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Individual	\$30. ____
Family	35. ____
Business	50. ____
Contributing	100. ____
Patron	250. ____
Life	1,000. ____

MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Officers and Executive Committee

President, Ron Irwin; 1st Vice President, Michael Black; 2nd Vice President, Mary Young Manning; Secretary, Carol M. Irwin; Treasurer, Ed Hightower; Past President, Ex officio, John Reid Bennett.

January 15Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observed
 February 13.....Washington's Birthday observed
 March 21, 4 PMMeeting and Program
 Gloria Barrow Johnson.... DNA Finds Her Father, Korean War Casualty
 March 29-31Good Friday/Easter observed
 April 5Museum open for First Friday
 May 23, 4 PM.....Meeting & Program, Miracle on Central Avenue
 May 27Memorial Day observed
 June 19.....Juneteenth Day observed
 July 4, 5Independence Day observed

Lowndes County Historical Society & Museum

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 Fax: (229) 247-2840
 E-mail: research.lchs@gmail.com

Web page:
<http://www.valdostamuseum.com>

YESTERDAY & TODAY

Newsletter of
 Lowndes County Historical Society

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Donna Hunter
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Philip Williams
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