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Southside Living History Project

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Southside Living History Project/Collection.

The Southside Living History Project/collection was the brainchild of Dr. Beth Higgs and Mr. Joe N. Rivers in 1995. A number of individuals in the community came together to assist in developing and completing the project. These individuals are Thelma and Charles Askew, Chenee Chisolm, Jennifer Crane, Dana Fleming, Mr. and Mrs. Dr. Arthur Hart, Dr. Willie Houseal, Mrs. Mildred Hunter, Mrs. Minnie Wilson Jackson, Nkwanda, Jab, Rosa Jordan, Johnny Kinchen, Tim Lee, and the African Theater Group. Mrs. C. H. Mitchell, Eli Powell Jr., Mr., and Mrs. Joe N. Rivers, Jewrell Rivers, Carol and Lionel Rozier, Jennifer Sutton, Rev. Minister and Mrs. Willie Wade, Mrs. Jimmie Walcott, Roy Williams, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wilson.

The Southside Living History Project/collection was shown locally for the first time in 1996 at the Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission's Cultural Arts Center by Ms. Roberta George and Mr. Joe N. Rivers.

The Southside Living History Project/Collection had three (3) curators in twenty-eight (28) years. The curators are Ms. Beverly Sanders, Director Southside Library, Ms. Rachael Bradley, Director of the Southside Recreation Center.

Minister Floyd Rose and Minister Jay Williams are the current curators of the Southside Living History Project/Collection.

Entertainment



Caption: Louis Jordan and the Tympany Five, 1946.

Other Businesses Surrounding the Liberty Club

In the same building as the Liberty Club, Dan Emmanuel, Jr. had a barbershop downstairs and a barbecue and deli upstairs. Next to Emmanuel's Barbershop on the first floor was Pompey's Pool Room. There was a liquor store downstairs, known as the "Hole in the Wall."

Back in the 1950s, next door to the Liberty Club was Murphy's Car Lot, another popular business. And nearby Johnny Kinchen's Soda Shop offered good entertainment for teenagers. (It was located next to what is now 508 S. Ashley St. and roughly on the site of the present day Leroy's Barbecue stand.)

Ferguson's Tile now has its business offices where the Liberty Theater once was located, at 115 Florida Ave. The Club was called the Valjapon Club after 1970.



Caption: Duke Ellington's orchestra, at Birdland, 1951. Trumpeter next to drummer Louis Bellson is Harold Baker; saxaphones are Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Willie Smith, Russell Procope, Harry Carney; trombones; Quentin Jackson, Juan Tizol, Britt Woodman (Bob Matthew)

Roy Van Williams (former manager of the Liberty Club) decided in 1969 to seek training as a television repairman at Val Tech. Soon he opened up his own repair shop which he still operates today (Van's TV Shop) at 106 E. Martin Luther King.



The Liberty Club

The Liberty Club, at 404 ½ S. Ashley Street, was one of the most popular clubs in town and one of the better clubs in the South during the 1950s. It hosted many fine entertainers including Duke Ellington and Louis Jordan. Ella Fitzgerald sang "My Little Yellow Basket" there. Other entertainers who performed there were Herb Jefferson (the singing black cowboy), Bill Eckstein and Fay Adams.

Roy Van Williams' first job right out of high school was managing the Liberty Club, the owner was "Doc" Williams. Van Williams bought the club from "Sco" Johnson around 1949 and kept it until 1954.

Williams described the club's success like this. "If I was just having a, regular dance that night... like the piccallo, people came around from Quitman ... Madison, Jasper... and Fargo and all these other small places like Adel and Hahira." One- hundred fifty to two-hundred people would be there on a big Friday or Saturday night. If there was somebody like John Lee Hooker or Little Richard performing, they came from Lake City, Madison, Monticello, Homerville, Waycross and Tifton.

Next to the Liberty Club and in the same building was the Liberty Theater, which showed movies with all black casts, including "Cabin in the Sky," starring Lena Horne and Ethel Waters.

Photo (above) of Liberty Club (circa 1960) courtesy of Lowndes County Historical Society.

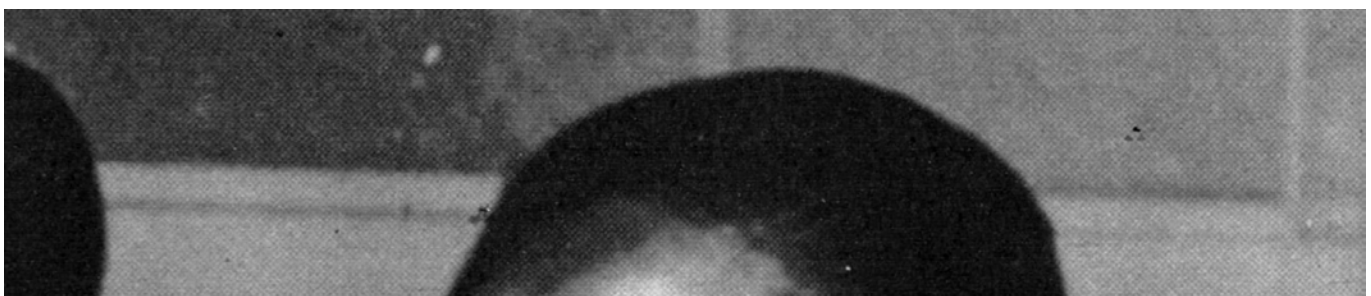




Caption: Jazz greats Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson (piano), Roy Eldridge (trumpet), and Max Roach (drums), 1952.

Liberty Club Area Businesses

Business Name	Dates
Dan Emmanuel's Deli	1950
Emmanuel's Barber Shop	1950
McLean's Bar-B-Que	1940
McLean's Pool Hall	1951
Opie Williams Southside Barber Shop	1940-1951
The Harlem Theater	1942-43
Walker Service Station & Garage	1940
Johnny Kinchen's Soda Shop	1951
Murphy's Car Sales	1940-1960
Everybody's Garage	1940-1960







Caption: Louis Jordan (*Down Beat*)

Grocery Stores and Cafes



Caption: C.H. Mitchell (above) and his wife Kattie Mitchell (below) served up what many locals called the "world" best barbeque at 515 S. Ashley beginning in 1953. Photos courtesy of Mrs. C.H. Mitchell.





Mitchell's Barbecue

Mrs. Katie Mitchell was born Katie Jewell in 1915 in Athens, Georgia. She moved to Valdosta with her husband, C.H. Mitchell, in 1939. She was the youngest of 11 children born to Mattie Fambro Jewell and Roger Jewell.

For 33 years, the Mitchell's ran what many people say was the best barbecue place in town, cooking 24 hours a day, in a little wooden building "where you could count the stars."



Mr. Mitchell was a Boy Scout master and the scouts cut wood to help build the fire which had to be going by 7 a.m. each day at the barbecue stand.

Mr. Mitchell had learned his cooking secrets from Luther Wimbush who had a barbecue stand in 1940. Originally, Mitchell opened up at 101 E. Branch Street (which is now Martin Luther King Street). They spent 16 years there until they could build their own building at 515 South Ashley, where they stayed another 17 years. In 1986 they turned the business over to their successors, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Miller. Photo of Mitchell's Barbecue (right) by Julie Barnes Smith.

Education

Dasher High School



Dasher High School, (pictured above) opened in 1929 and closed in 1956. The page (at the right) from the high school annual, *The Royal Purple* of 1945-46 shows the outstanding educators responsible for training all of Southside's African American students up until desegregation. The school was later known as Lomax Jr. High School. Yearbook page (below) courtesy of Joe N. Rivers



Name

Subject(s)

Name	Subject(s)
Prof. J.L. Lomax	Principal
Mrs. L.G. Kogers	Home Economics
Mrs. M.C. Brinson	Social Science
Miss C.M. Lissimore	Social Science
Miss. J.M. Clemons	English
Mrs. J.B. Hunter	Music, English
Miss C.M. Brown	Mathematics
Mrs. M.M. Hunter	Health Education
Mrs. G.O. Stevens	Health Education
Mr. C. K. Smith	Science
Mrs. B.J. King	English, Librarian



The Southside Luncheonette (above) was a very popular spot for Dasher High School students. At first, Mrs. Atlanta Boyd Wilson began selling snacks at the family home at 405 Holiday Street (across the street from Dasher High) in 1947. Students fondly remember buying her spam sandwiches, fish sandwiches, hamburgers, and hot dogs for 15 cents each, and small sweet potato pies for 10 cents each. Mrs. Wilson's son Willie built the white cinder block structure for her business which still stands today. The Wilson family, headed by Brister Wilson, included five children. The family also operated a wood yard on Holiday Street. One of their sons, Frank L. Wilson, became a teacher, coach at Pinevale High School, and school principal.

Photographs by NKwanda Jah and Beth Higgs

Southside's "Downtown" Businesses



The McLean Building at 408 South Ashley Street was built by Arthur "Mack" McLean and housed many vital community businesses. Mrs. William's Beauty Parlor was located downstairs. Upstairs, there were three agencies—Edwin White's real Estate Agency, John Saunders' Agricultural Extension Agency, and Pilgrim Life Insurance Company. Henry White and James Lambert's Real Estate office was also in the McLean building. Next door at 405 South Ashley Street, J.L. Goodman had his New Deal Cafe.

Photograph by Julie Barnes Smith



Four different businesses operated in the building shown above. **Eddie Pompey's Billiards Parlor** was at 215 S. Ashley Street (above in the photo). In the center was **Robinson's Grill** (217 S. Ashley Street) run by Eddie and Tommie Robinson. Both continue to be the source of many stories of good times and good food. In the 1940s, Robinson's grill had a special piccolo (jukebox) with a screen. You chose the record and a picture of the performer would appear. It was 25 cents a play, expensive compared to the regular piccolo rate of five cents. Next door to Robinson's Grill was the **New Cleveland Cafe and Hotel**. The cafe was downstairs and the hotel rooms were upstairs. Later the **Red Top Liquor Store** opened up where the new Cleveland Cafe had been.

Photograph by Julie Barnes Smith.

Note: after the photo above was made for this exhibit in the fall of 1996, the building which formerly housed there four businesses was leveled (1997).



Above: A view of Branch Street. Today, renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., it has been the location of several of Southside's longest running businesses.

Photo (above) courtesy of the Lowndes County Historical Society.

Branch Street Businesses

Business Name	Dates
Irene Jackson's Lunch Room	1940-1955
V.E. Dasher's Grocery	1940-1960
Luther Wimbush's Bar-B-Q Stand	1930-1950
Owl Service Station & Cab Co.	1936-1980
Walker's Taxi Cab Service	1940
Anderson Blacksmith	1940
Scott & Son Funeral Home	1900-1990
Corra Jones's Beauty Salon	1940
Wade's Barber Shop	1946 to present
Groover and "Mama" Poole's Grocery and Hotel	1940-1960
Annie Williams Beer Shop & Lunch	1940
Stevens Funeral Home	1940 to present

Business Name	Dates
Henry Buckner's Grocery	1930-1960
Henry William's Duck in Cafe	1940-1950
John Mason's Shoe Shop & Repairs	1947-1990
Ice Man Pat's	1930-1960



Above: Washington's Mastery Barber Shop & Beauty Salon is located on S. Ashley Street.

Photograph by Julie Barnes Smith.



Owl Cab Company (1939-1980) We Lamar Parker started the Owl Cab Company in 1936 and made it one of the most successful businesses in town. He ran it on the corner of South Ashley Street and Branch Street until 1980. Drawing of the Owl Cab Company (above) by Jennifer Crane.

Community Services

Willie Bell Paisley's Boarding House & Cafe

Willie Bell Jordan ran a cafe and boarding house on South Ashley Street between 1940 and 1952, under the name of Willie Bell Paisley. It was located near what is now Mitchell's Bar-B-Q.

She was born May 10, 1912 in Atkinson county, Georgia. Her parents were William and Minnie Johnson and there were seven other children besides Willie. Willie married Lester Jordan, who was from the Valdosta area.

She is remembered by her niece, Rosa Jordan, who is still a Valdosta resident as a woman of compassion, "a good listener" with a warm heart.

At the two-story cafe Rosa fed Langdale workers upstairs. Behind the cafe were some rooms that she had rented to seasonal cotton and tobacco workers.





According to Rosa Jordan, it was her compassion and love for her neighbors which led Willie Bell Jordan to set up a cafe and a boarding house where she could cook and offer a place to dry to seasonal workers who came

to Valdosta during the 1940's.

Myrtis White ran the boarding house during the late 1950s after Mrs. Jordan left Valdosta. Willie Bell Jordan is pictured above.

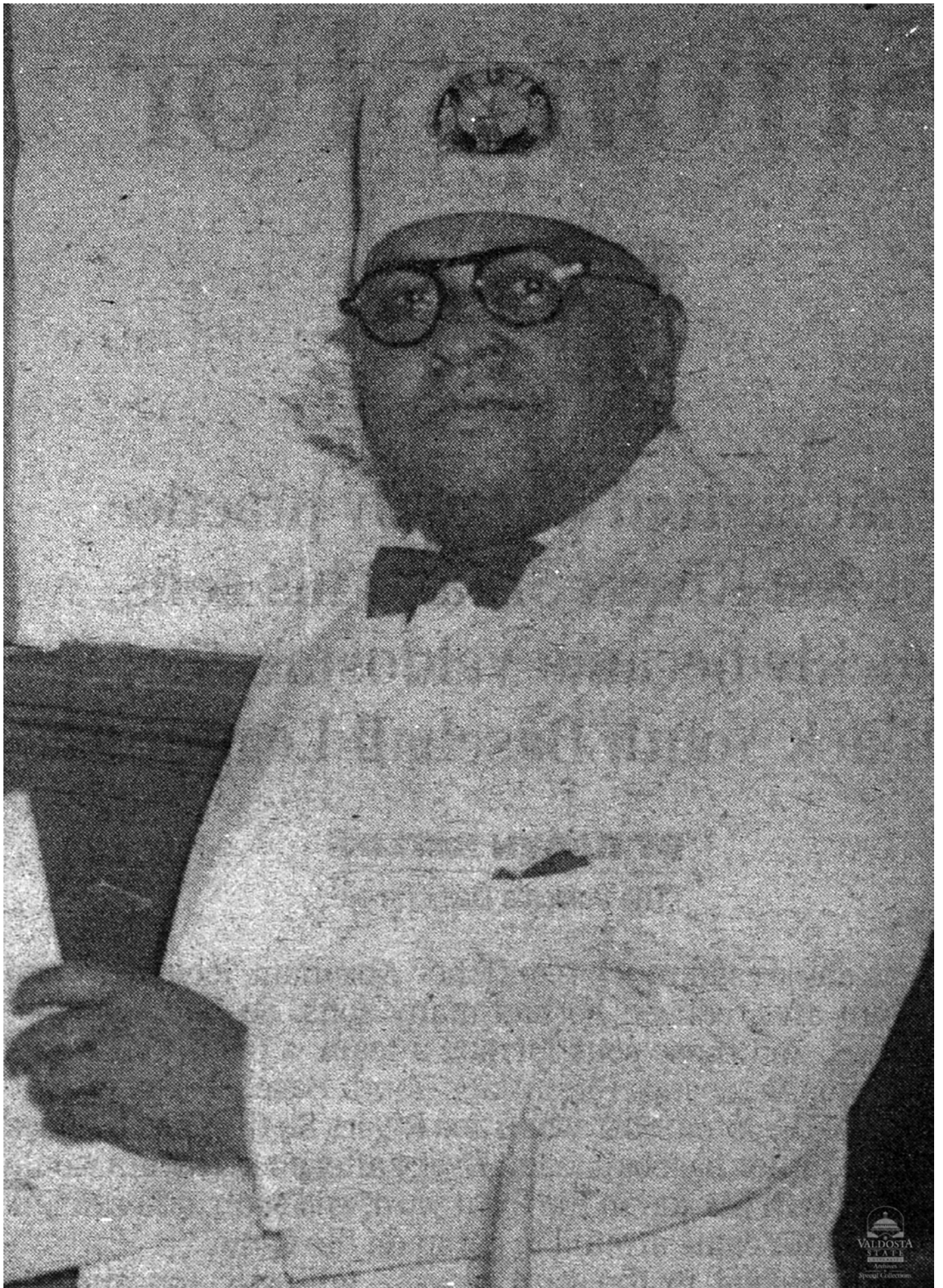
Photo courtesy of Rosa Jordan

Physicians, Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists

Name	Profession	Address
Lafayette Williams	Dentist	116 1/2 N. Ashley Street
Michael M. Dickson	Physician	116 1/2 N. Ashley Street
William H. Stafford	Physician	116 1/2 N. Ashley Street
L. W. Williams	Physician	117 N. Ashley Street
Albert Dockett	Pharmacist	Dockett Drug Co. 117 N. Ashley Street
E.A. Carter	Physician	



Three generations of dentists in the Williams family have worked at the clinic shown in the photo above. Dr. Lafayette W. Williams Sr. is shown in the photo to the right. Medical services were also provided to the African American community by physicians sharing the building which is now the Dosta Theater at 116 1/2 and 117 N. Ashley. Albert Dockett ran his father's pharmacy in that building. Photo (above) by Julie Barnes Smith





Business Name	Address
Bill Thompson's Room & Board	614 S. Troupe
Carne Jordan's Southside Inn	733 S. Lee
New Cleveland Cafe/ Hotel	112 E. Crane
Groover and M. Poole's Hotel	410 S. Ashley

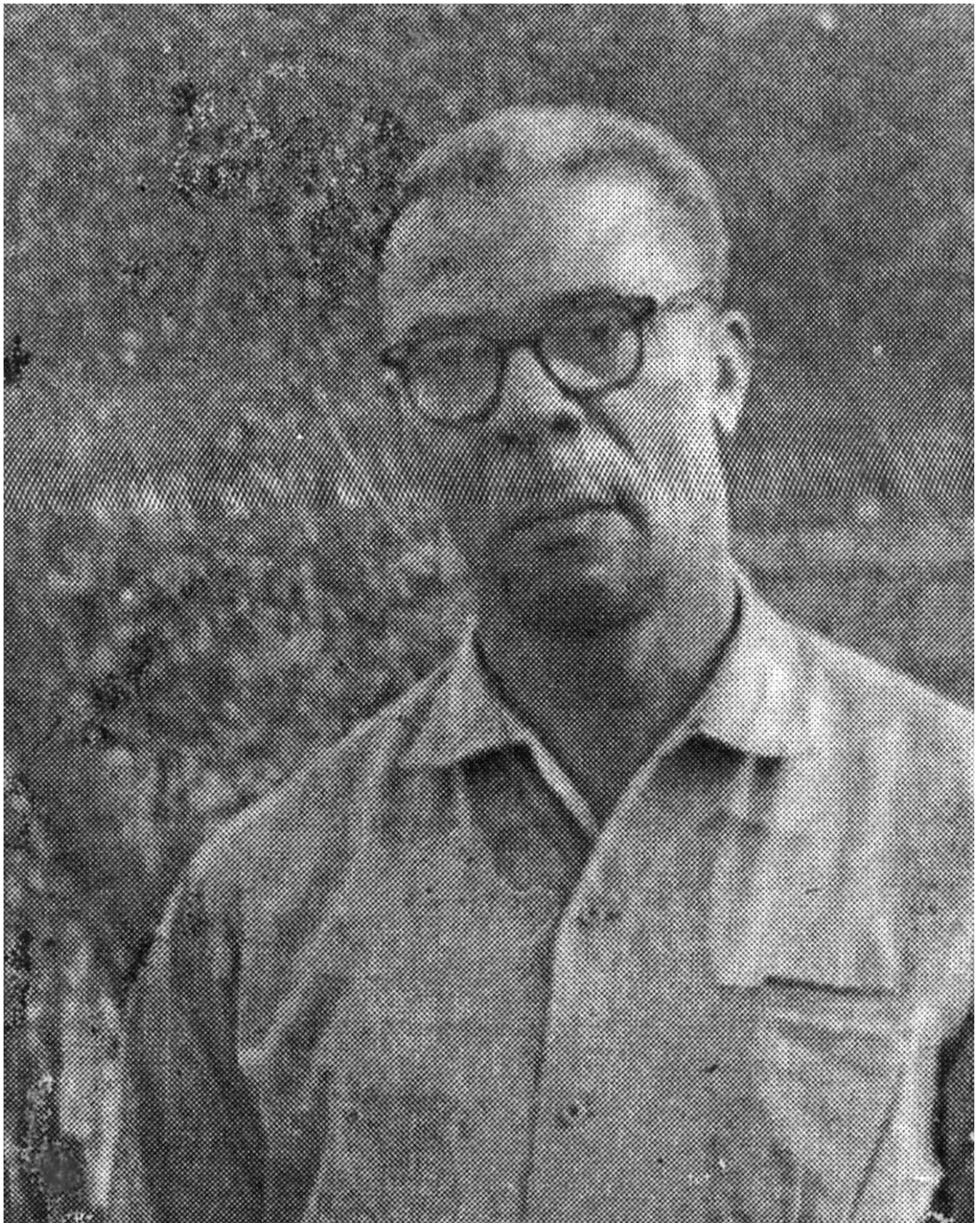
Photo of Poole's hotel and grocery (above) on Martin Luther King (formerly E. Branch Street) courtesy of Lowndes county historical society.

Barber Shops

Business Name	Address
Sanitary Barber Shop (Iemon Lee & Aaron Bryant)	106 E. Crane
Turner's Barber Shop	116 E. Crane
Southside Barber Shop (Opie Williams)	402 S. Ashley
Grimm's Barber Shop (Lorenzo Grimm)	414 S. Ashley
Five Points Barber Shop (P.M. Bell)	611 3/4 W. Adair
Jordan's Barber Shop	115 W. Hill
Palace Barber Shop (J. L. Goodman)	407 S. Ashley
Wade's Barber Shop	408 Branch St.

Business Name	Address
OK Barber Shop (H.B. Barron)	507 McDougal
Emmanuel's Barber Shop (Dan Emmanuel & Son)	404 S. Ashley

Dan Emmanuel ran a barber shop and a deli with the help of his son. He was also a deacon at the Morning Star Baptist Church (a local church established in 1886.) Photo (below., circa 1945) courtesy of F.L. Wilson.







Georgia Living History: The Southside Community of Valdosta

The Growth of Black Owned Businesses in the U.S.

African Americans have owned businesses in the U.S. as far back as the seventeenth century. Before the Civil War, some enterprising men such as John Stanley, a barber in North Carolina, even managed to accumulate enough wealth (in Stanley's case, \$35,000) investing in plantations to buy freedom for other African

Americans. In New Orleans in 1836, African Americans owned property that totaled nearly \$2.5 million in value. In Cincinnati in 1840, the property owned by African Americans was estimated to total \$200,000 in value.

After the Civil War, African Americans opened up several banks and insurance companies. This led Booker T. Washington to organize the National Black Business League in Boston. By 1929, this organization estimated that the number of African American business owners in the U.S. had grown to 65,000.

In these years of a segregated economy, African Americans had to own their own banks and insurance companies. The first black-owned insurance company was formed shortly after the Civil War in 1884 in Baltimore Maryland. In 1893, the Southern Aid Society was chartered in Richmond, Virginia, which later developed into Afro-American Insurance. By 1921, there were at least 13 different black-owned insurance companies centered around Chicago. Businesses that provided personal services and employment to their own neighborhoods became the backbone of the African American community during the first half of the twentieth century. Barber shops, catering services, funeral homes, hair styling and beauty shops were the most successful early businesses.

Black-owned businesses, like most businesses in the U.S., have been affected by the general trend toward fewer and bigger companies. The 1950 census showed that there were 42,000 self employed African Americans in businesses. This would represent a noticeable decline from the number listed for 1929 which was 65,000.

Source: The Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the African American. 1989 Harry A. Ploski and James Williams.

This program is supported in part by the Georgia Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A Note of Appreciation to Supporters

Special Thanks to all of you who have contributed a part of yourselves to the Southside Living History Project- Thelma and Charles Askew, Chenee Chisolm, Jennifer Crane, Dana Fleming, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hart, Willie Housel, Mrs. Mildred Hunter, Mrs. Minnie Wilson Jackson, NKwanda Jab, Rosa Jordan, Johnny Kinchen, Tim Lee and the African Theater Group, Mrs. C.H. Mitchell, Eli Powell, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Joe N. Rivers, Jewrell Rivers, Carol and Lionel Rozier, Jennifer Sutton, Rev. and Mrs. Willie Wade, Mrs. Jimmie Walcott, Roy Van Williams, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wilson.

The Local Story

Over 200 black-owned businesses have been identified in Valdosta during the period between 1930 and 1955. Among these were six boarding houses, 17 cafes, 25 grocery stores, 11 barber shops, six doctors, six cleaners, three cab services, four insurance companies, four show shops; a prominent night club and a black owned theater.

Sports

Joe River's interest in Southside history comes from his commitment to young people. In 1958, he founded the first Black Youth Baseball League in Valdosta. Prior to that time, there was the Boy's Club, but the young men in the Southside neighborhood where Rivers lived were too poor to pay the fees and were excluded from participating in that baseball league.

Returning home to Valdosta after military service in Korea, Rivers just wanted to be able to have a good time with his then eight-year-old son just playing baseball. And he wanted to see to it that all of the kids in his neighborhood got a chance to use their "God-given talents."

Every day for three years after he got home from work at the chemical plant, he went out to work with the local boys who wanted to play baseball. It got to the point where he put up tents in the area that us now Scott Park to accommodate the 110 local boys who wanted to play. No doubt, his experience as a Staff Sergeant in the Army helped him in working with these kids.

Rivers set up an agreement with the boy's parents. To play on Rivers' teams, each boy had to show his report card with all passing grades. Southern Stationary gave him a line of credit to buy gloves for the boys and let him pay fifty cents a week on them.

Rivers had already established his reputation as an athlete before he started the youth baseball league. He was a star football player at Dasher High School during the 1940s. In 1948, he played for a local semi-pro baseball team, the Trojans, which was managed by a local black businessman, Johnny Kinchen, who ran the hippest soda shop in town during the 1950s.

But Joe Rivers distinguished himself most of all through his dedication to these 100 young men. One of them, Willie Houseal, went on to become a Valdosta city councilman and he attributes a great deal of his success to Joe Rivers. He says that Rivers helped restore his self esteem.

Above: Southside's first youth baseball league members in 1958: Top Row (left to right) Unidentified team member, unidentified team member, Charles Hubbard, Calvin Gosier, "Skeeter" McCaskill, unidentified team member, Ralph Moss, Calvin Busie, Collis Sholtz, Warrick (Tuffy) Taylor, Coach Mr. Hayes. Bottom Row (left to right) Willie Houseai, Rawly Britt, Aaron Hayes, unidentified team member, Nunnally Jackson, Joe Rivers Jr., Wesley Gosier, Nathaniel Houseal, Charles Bryant, Ronnie Bythwood, Sammy Lee Belcher.

Photograph courtesy of Joe Nathan Rivers

Joe Rivers (below) has contributed a great deal of time and effort in assisting with the "Southside Living History Project". He sees it as a continuation of his years of work to help local young people build respect for themselves and for their cultural history. The photo above was taken during the first local showing of the exhibit, November 3-15, 1996, at the Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission's Cultural Arts Center.

Photo courtesy of Roberta George

Franklyn Johnson, shown at the far back left, stands with one of Valdosta's first black baseball teams wearing uniforms donated by Coca-Cola after the league received its charter.

Neighborhood Folklore: How They Got Their Names

Kill Me Quick - Here's one story.... There were lots of jooks and moonshiners there during Prohibition. In fact, so many moonshiners, "they had to wear name tags to keep from selling each other whiskey." There was one especially notorious gambler named George Fatty who lived out there. The saying went he would "kill you quick." His contemporaries included "Kid Rolley", who is now 89 years old and "Boy Green," who was killed and thrown into a well sometime in the 1980s.

Bray's Quarters - Local people say that back in the 1930s, John Bray had the biggest saw mill in South Georgia. He built 60-100 mill houses for his company workers on Hill Avenue, Magnolia, and Rogers Streets. They used company script to buy all their food and household supplies at the commissary which still stands next to the present-day Bray's Temple Missionary Baptist Church (on the corner of Lee and Burrows Lane.) Bray also provided them with medical care. He sent his son-in-law, Dr. C.C. Giddens, to the doctor the people in the mill town. These men worked in turpentine and they dipped gum, too. Although all of the mill houses are gone (many bought by individuals and moved to other parts of Valdosta), the area keeps this name as a reminder that in that area Bray once provided living quarters for his mill workers.

Little Miami - During the Great Depression or shortly afterward, FDR built a road that ends near the airport in Jacksonville. It was a long, winding road built specifically to create jobs. Since the road (Statenville Highway) began at Troup Street, and since the neighborhood was the first on the way to Miami where the road was to end, the neighborhood was named "Little Miami."

Cafes

Grocery Stores

Grocery Store	Address	Owner(s)
McCoggle Grocery Store	1216 W. Hill	R.E. & Mozena
Brown's Grocery	205 *6 Chandler	Wilkins Brown
Strickland's Grocery	709 S. Lee	H.O. Strickland
Branham Grocery	730 E. Force "Tom Town"	Mint Branham
Poole's Grocery	217 14 E. Branch	Groover & M.M. "Mama" Poole
Powell's Grocery	516 S. Lee	Eli and Viney H. Powell
Bivins Grocery	723 Jackson	Annie B. Bivins
Boykin's Grocery	Fork-Lake Park & Holiday	D.C. Boykin
Bryant Grocery & Market	615 Jackson	Guy & Mable Bryant
Rivers Grocery	1209 W. Hill	Charles & Frances Rivers

Grocery Store	Address	Owner(s)
Mitchell's Grocery	1311 W. Savannah Avenue	V.T. Mitchell
Leola's Place	1411 Kingdom	Leola Kingdom
Tomlin Grocery	148 Twitty Lane	Carl & Rosa Tomlin
Warren's Grocery	216 I4 Wisenbaker Lane	Alberta Warren
The Checkerboard Store	405 Holiday	W.M. & Winnie Pittman
Jackson's Grocery	503 S. Lee	Lorenzo "Lo" Jackson
Mill's Grocery	509 McDougal	H. Q. Mills
Lind Grocery	518 Dasher	Minnie Lind
Ward Grocery	603 Way	Charlie & Pearlie Ward
Jones Grocery	800 Nardo "Kill Me Quick"	Minnie Jones
Ousley's Grocery	922 W. Magnolia	W.A. Ousley & Maude
Lahoud's Grocery & Convenience Store	S. Patterson	
Landy's Grocery	S. Patterson	
Buckner's Grocery	West Street	Henry Buckner
Hudson Grocery Store & Market	601,606 S. Lee, York St.	Chauncey & Emily Hudson
Dennis Grocery	414 S. Ashley	Abe Dennis
Bryant Grocery	511 S. Ashley	James & Minnie Bryant
Eddie & Betty's Grocery	S. Lee Street	Eddie & Betty Evans
Dasher Grocery	Corner-Lee St. & Branch	V.E. Dasher

Above: Drawing of Eli Powell's Grocery

Artwork by Jennifer Crane

Cafe Name	Address	Owner(s)
Toppie's Restaurant	405 S. Patterson 3U	Toppie Davis
Mack's Place	405 >2 S. Lee St	Author E. & Alberta McLean
Zelner Lunch Stand	90S Nardo "Kill Me Quick"	Wiley Zelner
Young's Cafe & Hotel	112 E. Crane Ave	Charlie Young
New Cleveland Cafe/Hotel	410 S. Ashley St.	Groover & M.M. Poole
Kinchen's Soda Shop	502 S. Ashley St.	Johnny Kinchen

Cafe Name	Address	Owner(s)
Wimbush Bar-B-Que Stand	101 E. Branch St.	Dr. Luther Wimbush
McKinzey's Hot Dog Stand	415 s. Lee St.	W.L. McKinzey
Brown Soda Shop	414 S. Ashley St.	M. & Edelle Brown
Bright Light Cafe	205 % Chandler St.	Wilkins Brown
Daniel's Eat Shop	214 H Wisenbaker Lane	Daniel Warren
Jackson's Lunch Room	214 E. Branch	Irene Jackson
Robinson Cafe	217 S. Ashley St.	Eddie & Tommie Robinson
New Deal Cafe	405 S. Ashley St.	J.L. Goodman
Cozy Inn Lunches	717 W. Magnolia St.	J. and Ruth Baker
Emmanuel's Deli	402 S. Ashley St.	Dan Emmanuel, Jr.
Miss Rachel's Cafe	408 E. Branch St.	

Above: Eli Powell, Sr. who ran Powell's Grocery, was born in 1879. In this photo taken in the 1920's, he stands in front of the family home on McDougal St.

Photo courtesy of Eli Powell, Jr.

Jewish and Lebanese Presence in Southside

An often overlooked part of life in Southside during the Jim Crow years was the mixed nature of the community. Many Jewish and Lebanese businesses were heavily relied upon by Southside residents to meet their daily needs. Some of the best known were Abe Dennis' Grocery (in the Wells Shoe Repair complex), Lahoud's Grocery and Convenience Store, "Cut Rate Joe's" Auto Parts Store, and Landy's Grocery and Market. Also, many African American businessmen rented their buildings from the Mallahans and from Ernie Nijem.

The Wells Show Repair Complex was another hub of business activity on South Ashley Street. Immediately to the right of Wells Shoe Repair was Brown's Soda Shop (414 S. Ashley Street) run by M. And Edelle Brown. To the left of Wells Shoe Repair was Grimm's Barber Shop (see yellow section in the photo below). Afro-American Life Insurance (414 *1/2 S. Ashley Street), run by C.H. Williams, was to the left of the barber shop.

Abe Dennis, a Lebanese grocer, had his store to the left of Afro-American Life. His fresh fruit stand out front was a favorite with many school children. Gaines Hunter ran a service station and garage at the far left end of the complex, facing Branch Street. Today, Roy Van Williams operates Van's TV Repair Shop where Hunter's Gas Station once was. Photograph (below) by Julie Barnes Smith

"Cut Rate Joe's"

Here is the story of one of these businesses as recounted by one long-time African American resident of the community. Joe Handleman got to Valdosta in 1936 by accident. He was a lawyer headed down to Florida to join a law firm. He found that there was a need for an auto parts store. Handleman rented a place from the Landey's (next door to Landey's Grocery) and he lived in the back of that store until he died in 1973. If you needed any auto part, you could pay a dollar for it across town or you could go to "Cut Rate Joe's" at 522 South Patterson Street and get it for 50 cents.

Photograph of Landey's Grocery (above) by Julie Barnes Smith