



Lowndes County Historical Society: Valdosta Project Change Collection, 1997-2003

MS/181

1999-2000

Valdosta Project Change

August 2000

For this and additional works see: <https://vtext.valdosta.edu/xmlui/handle/10428/6499>

Recommended Citation:

Valdosta Project Change. "Valdosta Project Change Scrapbook, August 2000," Lowndes County Historical Society. Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections, Valdosta Project Change Scrapbook Collection, 1997-2003.

This item is free and open source. It is part of the *Valdosta Project Change Collection* at the [Lowndes County Historical Society](#) and was digitized by the Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections. If you have any questions or concerns contact archives@valdosta.edu

Included Articles:

8/3- Paulk's move defies sound judgement- no author

8/9- Adel council meeting erupts over race: NAACP leader, Adel city manager exchange words- Tim Storey

8/10- Sheriff should rethink his decision- no author

8/11- Coming home: Tuskegee airman, WWII POW to be honored in native South Georgia- Dean Poling

8/14- Hispanics left out of storm plans- Associated Press

8/18- Justice will always prevail in the end- Floyd E. Rose, Valdosta

8/20- Weed and Seed picnic gets the word out: Gathering used to teach public about what project offers- Peter Failor

8/30- Hispanic population doubles- Associated Press

8/30- Valdosta hero who deserved better- Rev. W. F. Wade, Valdosta

THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

OUR OPINION

Paulk's move defies sound judgment

It is often difficult for a domestic violence victim to make the first steps seeking help, experts say, whether it is aid from law enforcement or another agency. Experts attribute this difficulty to many things, including concerns about the efficiency of the law as well as how officers will handle a family violence situation.

Domestic violence victims likely face more uncertainty now due to a personnel decision recently made by Lowndes County Sheriff Ashley Paulk.

Lowndes deputy John E. Dixon Sr. was suspended from duty in May when he was arrested on a charge of felony aggravated battery (family violence), according to a warrant. Dixon's warrant states he "did knowingly, willfully and unlawfully commit the offense of aggravated battery when accused maliciously caused bodily harm by seriously disfiguring her body when he broke her nose and a facial bone with his fist leaving both her eyes bruised, her left eye black, her right eye swollen and having to be admitted to the hospital. Said accused is the present spouse of the victim."

The charge, as written on the warrant, has yet to go before a Lowndes County grand jury, according to Assistant Southern District Attorney Laura Anderson, who adds that grand jurors will likely review Dixon's case either this month or in September.

But Dixon is back in uniform, back on active duty, thanks to Paulk. The decision came just days after Paulk won re-election in the July 18 primary.

Despite the "family violence" wording of Dixon's arrest warrant and pending review of the charge by a grand jury, Paulk said the deputy was returned to duty "because he was not charged as a family violence crime, therefore he did not have to be removed from duty. ... He's a good officer. He just did something stupid."

In the words of Forrest Gump's mama: "Stupid is as stupid does."

Paulk's decision to return this deputy to active duty before the charges go before a grand jury is devastating to anyone concerned about the trauma of domestic violence.

How can any domestic violence victim call the sheriff's department for help without wondering who will come to the door, without worrying even more if the charges will be taken seriously?

By reinstating Dixon prior to a grand jury review of the case, Paulk has now irresponsibly confirmed their worst fears.

Growing With Our Community

TODAY'S LOCAL NEWS

Adel council meeting erupts over race

NAACP leader, Adel city manager exchange words

By Tim Storey
tim.storey@thomnews.com

ADEL — Monday's Adel City Council meeting erupted in an exchange of words between the city manager and local NAACP representative Robert Jones.

A large group of citizens were on hand at the 7:30 p.m. meeting to witness the argument between Jones and Adel City Manager Jerry Permenter over the lack of minority police officers in the city. The exchange prompted Police Chief Kirk Gordon to demand order.

Jones first brought the issue before the council in January, concerning the lack of African American police officers patrolling the streets of Adel.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Jones passed out a group of questions and requests to the audience and council members. Among them was a request to promote and transfer police Sgt. Andrew Lane, now the Cook County Resource Officer, from the schools to the streets.

"We've been addressing these problems for awhile," Jones began.

As a nearly full room of citizens listened, most of them African American, Jones told the council that many in the minority community wanted to see an officer to whom they could relate. He said that includes himself.

"I can relate now at the age of 63 to a minority officer, than a non-minority officer because he knows where I'm coming from," Jones said.

"I don't think we're asking for too much."

Jones also said an African American police officer on the street would help lessen tension between the minority community and the police.

"I might be wrong, but I think deep down inside if Sergeant Lane was in the street, we would have better communications with the police department," he said.

Permenter responded to the comments, telling Mayor

Richard Barr that there is no written criteria for the advancement of a police officer. Permenter then addressed Jones, telling him he could not just demand such actions from the city.

"I will not arbitrarily send a police officer from one place to another, not today; not tomorrow,"

Permenter said. "If Mr. Lane or any other police officer wants to change jobs, they have that responsibility to let someone know."

Jones told Permenter that he had spoken with Lane and that he wanted the transfer. Permenter replied that may be true, but that Lane has not spoken to him or anyone else about it as far as he knew.

Jones was not satisfied with Permenter's reply and continued to demand something be done — and soon.

"You better start making a change," he told Permenter and the rest of the city council.

Jones also asked Permenter about city employee Eddie Keeley. Jones said Keeley

wanted to run for the Cook County Board of Education and that the city manager had allegedly told him he could not run for a position on the school board as a city employee.

"That is a lie," replied Permenter. "I told him he could make a choice. I did not tell

him he could not run."

Jones shot back, wanting to to know how the city

manager could do that.

"The Board of Education is not city, it's county," he told Permenter.

Permenter told Jones he did not know what he was talking about.

"That just shows your baseless innuendoes here, that you have absolutely no facts on," he said.

Jones continued to argue with the city manager, prompting Permenter to ask where he was getting his information from.

"Have you ever seen the personnel policy?" he asked Jones.

At this point, Gordon interrupted the two men. He asked Jones to lower his voice and keep things civil, noting he did not have to shout with a microphone in front of him. Jones thanked the council for their time and abruptly left the podium.

Asked about the controversy Tuesday, Gordon said that like Permenter, he has not heard anything from Lane requesting a transfer from the schools.

"He has yet to talk to me about it," Gordon said.

Gordon said if Lane were to come to him and ask for a transfer, he would consider it. However, he added there is currently not enough money in the budget to hire a replacement for Lane.

Therefore, another officer would have to be willing to take his place.

"I would go to the entire department and ask if one of them would want to be the School Resource Officer," said Gordon.

"If none were willing, Lane would have to remain at the school for the time being."

"I don't have any openings right now," Gordon said.

To contact reporter Tim Storey, call 244-3400, ext. 280.

"I will not arbitrarily send a police officer from one place to another, not today; not tomorrow."

Jerry Permenter
Adel city manager

Thursday, August 10, 2000

6A The Valdosta Daily Times

Growing With Our Community

Sheriff should rethink his decision

Deputy John E. Dixon Sr. still is due his day in court. However, his boss' actions, I'm afraid, will have a chilling effect on the victims of domestic violence for years to come.

According to The Valdosta Daily Times, Sheriff Ashley Paulk returned Dixon to duty after a temporary suspension that came about when Dixon was charged with beating his wife. Paulk nullified the suspension apparently because of a technicality regarding the exact nature of the charges.

That issue remains puzzling.

Still, Paulk did not dispute what Dixon did. In announcing the deputy's return to work, the sheriff described Dixon as a "good officer."

If a "good officer" breaks a facial bone of someone he purports to love, what will he do to a victim of domestic violence who has the unfortunate circumstance of becoming a victim on his shift? I can't imagine he would be very sympathetic, at the least.

That Dixon's victim has returned to their household is sad, bless her heart, but irrelevant. Fortunately, domestic violence laws do not require victims to consent to charges being filed against their partners because of the many pressures placed on those victims, including the desire to keep a family intact as well as financial concerns.

The latter may well be why the victim thanked Paulk in a letter published in The Times for returning Dixon to his job. That letter, too, should be irrelevant because what Dixon did goes beyond the Dixon family.

I do feel sorry for the victim — who needs counseling, along with her perpetrator — for the odds are stacked against her. Domestic violence is a crime often characterized by a pattern of abusive behavior, verbal and physical, which escalates in frequency and severity over time. Recidivism rates for domestic violence offenders are high, and one study showed that they're even higher for police officers, perhaps owing to their high level of stress.

Regardless, what Dixon did was more than "stupid," as Paulk described the incident to The Times.

In fact, if convicted, it could cost him his right to carry a gun — and, as a result, perhaps, his job — thanks to the Domestic Violence Offender Gun Ban passed by Congress in 1996.

Law officers not only should be expected to obey the very laws they enforce, they should be held to an even higher standard. And that means an officer charged with an act as shocking as Dixon's should not be allowed to return to duty until those charges are resolved, if ever. I implore Paulk to embrace victims of domestic violence and rethink his decision.

Cherie Hicks
Valdosta

COMING HOME

Tuskegee Airman, WWII POW to be honored in native South Georgia

By Dean Poling
dean.poling@thornnews.com

VALDOSTA — A Tuskegee Airman, who was a prisoner of war during World War II, is scheduled to be honored this weekend.

At 10 a.m. Saturday, at the Slave Memorial, Sunset Hill Cemetery, a service will be held honoring Carrol S. Woods, says the Rev. Willie Wade.

Woods, 80, a former Valdosta resident, now living in Montgomery, Ala., is expected to attend.

Woods was a member of the Army's first black plane pilots, known as the Tuskegee Airmen, who were trained during World War II.

"This was the beginning of the civil rights struggle," Woods said

in a May interview. "The NAACP and many others worked for the opportunity for black soldiers to fly."

These pilots were mostly assigned to escort bombers as they dropped their payloads, keeping the bombers safe from German planes. The men of 'Tuskegee never lost one bomber to enemy fire during the war, often sacrificing themselves to accomplish this mission.



CARROL S. WOODS DURING HIS DAYS AS A TUSKEGEE AIRMAN.

As for Woods, he flew 107 combat missions over Europe. "It was the same thing every mission. You visualize that this might be your last mission. Not getting hit for as long as I did was a miracle," Woods said.

But flying over Athens,

Greece, Woods' luck changed. His plane was hit by enemy fire. "All of a sudden there was an explosion under my plane," he said. He parachuted from the

damaged aircraft. "I remember I hollered a couple of times before I hit the ground."

Hiding in an abandoned house, Woods recalled "I was there about 20 minutes before the Germans found me. A guy with a machine gun." Woods was transported to a Nazi-controlled prison camp, where he bunked for the first time with fellow, white U.S. soldiers.

"No one ever minded," he said. "There was myself and a

guy from another squadron, and we were housed with white soldiers in a barracks of German Stalag 3. We all bunked side by side. There was no segregation of any kind there. The Nazis were tough on everybody with a lack of food, hot showers and just not knowing what was going to happen."

Woods remained in a Nazi prison camp until he and other prisoners were liberated by the U.S. forces of Gen. George S. Patton.

Then, he returned to the U.S. "As soon as we got off the boat in New York, segregation hit me again," Woods said, "that was when we were separated. But I didn't really think much about it then. I didn't expect things to change here. I was just happy to be back home, safe, and looked forward to seeing my family and things."

Woods remained in the military, seeing it become one of the first segments of the U.S. to accept integration.

Before joining the military, Woods was the tenth child of a South Georgia family of 12; he retired from the Air Force as a major.

The Rev. Willie Wade, a World War II veteran also, has long wanted to honor Woods for his heroism.

On Saturday, he hopes Valdostans, of all colors, will join Woods and his family to do so.

"As soon as we got off the boat in New York, segregation hit me again that was when we were separated. But I didn't really think much about it then. I didn't expect things to change here. I was just happy to be back home, safe, and looked forward to seeing my family and things." — Major Carrol Woods (retired), on the integration of a Nazi POW

camp and the segregation he faced at home

Monday, August 14, 2000

The Valdosta Daily Times 5A

Growing With Our Community

Hispanics left out of storm plans

SAVANNAH (AP) — The Hurricane Preparedness Expo had 50 booths featuring brochures with advice on everything from dealing with power outages to protecting pets. Problem was, it was all in English.

That has some concerned not enough is being done to prepare the nearly half-million Hispanics in Georgia.

"I haven't seen anything in Spanish about hurricanes," said Araceli Harper, editor and publisher of the soon-to-appear

Savannah Latina News. "I have lived here for three years and almost none of the information is in Spanish."

Other than a handful of public service announcements, Georgia state and local officials say little hurricane preparation information is offered in Spanish. Georgia insurance commis-

sioner John Oxendine, who helped sponsor Saturday's expo, agreed that more needs to be done.

"We're working on it," he said.

North Carolina, which also has a mushrooming Hispanic population, has made some progress in this area.

Friday, August 18, 2000

6A The Valdosta Daily Times

Growing With Our Community

YOUR OPINION

Justice will always prevail in the end

In a strange sort of way in our struggle for human and civil rights, men seem to always win by losing and live by dying. The creative genius of the Almighty is that he knows what we need, even when it is not what we think we want.

He knew Ashley Paulk needed another term in office so that the white community could see what the black community already knew — Paulk is a cunning, deceptive and abusive sheriff who in the tradition of Birmingham's Police Commissioner of the 1960s, Eugene "Bull" Connor, and Selma's Sheriff Jim Clark, with the blessings of the rich and powerful rules Lowndes County with an iron hand of fear.

More sophisticated than Connor and Clark, Paulk uses his money and power to co-opt other politicians and intimidate black leaders who dare question his tactics.

In his classic book, "Black Like Me," John Howard Griffin, the white novelist who decided to darken his skin and pose as a black man and travel through the South, concluded, "The majority, when properly informed will always act for the good of their community and the country. The great danger in the South comes precisely from the fact that the public is not informed. Newspapers shirk their editorial responsibilities and print what they think their

readers want. They lean with the prevailing winds and employ every fallacy of logic in order to editorialize harmoniously with popular prejudices and adhere to the long standing conspiracy for silence about anything remotely favorable to blacks."

Dr. Ari Santas, second vice president of the People's Tribunal, said in his speech at the Lowndes County Jail on the first anniversary of Willie James Williams death, "The facts can speak for themselves when they are allowed to speak." The pen is only mightier than the sword when it writes.

Recent editorials, bylines and featured stories in The Valdosta Daily Times regarding Paulk and his failures, in my judgment, may very well be the beginning of the end. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was right: "The arch of moral universe may be long, but it always bends toward justice. However mighty might be, in the end it must yield to right. It was not the strength and power of Goliath, but the skill of David that won the day. The giant was not too big to hit, he was to big to miss. Let us never forget that Caesar may have occupied the throne for a while, and Jesus the cross, but it was Jesus who rose from the dark domain and split history into A.D. and B.C., and even the life of Caesar must now be dated by his birth."

Floyd E. Rose
Valdosta

INFOCUS TODAY

Weed and Seed picnic gets the word out

Gathering used to teach public what project offers

By Peter Failor

peter.failor@thomnews.com

VALDOSTA — The City of Valdosta Weed and Seed program held a picnic in Olympic Park Saturday with enough food to feed 1,000 people, and an opportunity for the communities served to learn about what the program offers.

"It's going to be a gathering that will focus on our efforts and show the improvements we've made to this point," said Hollie Williams, who represents one of the three areas covered by Weed and Seed.

Just as the picnic served many purposes, Weed and Seed serves many functions in community improvement, from neighborhood policing to beautification.

"Weed and Seed is essentially a community revitalization program," said Chet Ballard, a sociology professor at Valdosta State University who has been a member of the program's Community Policing Subcommittee for nearly three years.

As Ballard helped place hundreds of sausages, hot dogs and hamburgers on the grills, he said picnics like the one Saturday serve many functions, but an important one is bridging the gap between the police and the communities they are sworn to serve.



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Della Lawton, wife of Weed and Seed director Jeremiah Lawton, helps serve Katrina Pittman, 12, Chris Pittman, 11, and their grandfather, Bobby Bryant, during the Weed and Seed of Valdosta Block Function party held at Olympic Park Saturday afternoon.

"It is a chance to get the Valdosta Police Department here in a picnic atmosphere to talk to residents," Ballard said, noting it is a good opportunity to improve relationships and build trust.

As a professor, Ballard said that in the last 50 to 75 years, power has become more centralized as the United States has grown, and there is always the danger of losing touch with one's community. He said Weed

and Seed works to bridge the gap.

Director Jeremiah Lawton said there are four strategies of Weed and Seed: Ridding

Please see PICNIC, page 3A

neighborhoods of criminal activity, encouraging the young to stay away from drugs and other dangerous behavior, community policing and restoration and revitalization. As Katrina Pittman, 12, stood at a table set up for art and watched her younger brother, Chris, draw, she said she is aware of Weed and Seed's efforts in her neighborhood.

"I know they go around and clean up," said Katrina, adding she likes that because the work "makes things look nicer."

Chris said Weed and Seed has given youths ages 12-15 a chance to sign up and help clean for pay, but he is too young to participate and found another way to help for Saturday's picnic.

"We had to help out, so we had to carry around fliers so people would come," he said.

Sara Blackwell, who set up the table of art supplies where fellow picnic goers Chris and Katrina worked, said she feels art is a good way to get through to children.

"If they get creative, they can easily say no because they can use their own minds," said Blackwell, noting she grew up in an area she referred to as "Tomtown," in the area of Brookwood Drive and Gordon Street, and she wants to restore it to the beauty it enjoyed in the early 1960s.

Blackwell said she is happy to work with Weed and Seed because it will help to ensure a good future for everyone.

"It's time to get them ready to take care of us," she said of the next generation.

To contact reporter Peter Failor, please call 244-3400, ext. 247.

Growing With Our Community

STATE & REGION

Hispanic population doubles

WASHINGTON (AP) — Georgia's population has grown by almost 1.3 million since 1990, and the number of Hispanics has more than doubled, according to estimates released Tuesday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

All of the state's 159 counties saw an increase in their Hispanic populations, with a few tripling and even quadrupling the numbers from a decade ago. The state's 239,566 Hispanics represented a 120 percent increase over the 10-year period, trailing only Nevada, North Carolina and Arkansas.

The count was also higher for other Georgia minorities. There were 2,235,897 blacks, up 28 percent; 160,566 Asian and Pacific Islanders, up 109 percent; and 18,717 American Indian and Alaska Natives, up 37 percent.

The state's 5,373,060 whites represented only a 16 percent increase.

Georgia figures to receive at least one and perhaps more new congressional seats when the official Census 2000 results are released starting in late December. State officials say an estimated 142,500 Georgians were not counted in the 1990 census, causing the state to lose out on more than \$2 billion in community block grants and funds for education, transportation and social service programs.

Doug Bachtel, a University of Georgia demographer, said despite the skyrocketing numbers, the state's Hispanic total was likely underestimated by at least half.

"One just needs to drive around and keep your eyes open to see this burgeoning Hispanic population," Bachtel said.

Hispanic growth

The top 20 counties in Georgia for percentage increase of Hispanics from 1990 to 1999, showing the U.S. Census figure for 1990, the Census Bureau estimate for 1999 and the percentage increase:

County	1990	1999	%Incr.
Quitman	1	5	400
Dawson	39	187	379
Forsyth	643	2,835	341
Paulding	268	1,177	339
Henry	468	1,948	316
Coweta	386	1,320	242
Pickens	44	150	241
Cherokee	1,083	3,633	235
Effingham	169	553	227
Gilmer	102	332	225
Union	48	150	213
Gwinnett	8,639	26,731	209
Fayette	1,014	3,112	207
Walton	338	1,017	201
Camden	629	1,861	196
Murray	136	401	195
Bryan	148	429	190
Barrow	253	731	189
Towns	18	52	189
Fannin	62	179	189

Wednesday, August 30, 2000

6A The Valdosta Daily Times

Growing With Our Community

YOUR OPINION

Valdosta hero who deserved better

On Saturday, Aug. 12, a ceremony was held honoring a true American hero, Major Carroll S. Woods. Woods is one of the original Tuskegee airman and World War II POW.

Several hundred people were in attendance at the site of the Unknown Slaves and Soldier's Monument in Sunset Hills Cemetery. Woods was honored in recognition of his service and that of the other Tuskegee airmen for what they were able to accomplish, under great odds, at a time when the contributions of African Americans were largely ignored.

Joyce Evans appeared on the program representing Lowndes County government. Commander Johnnie Fason and members of Valdosta Police Department were on hand to direct traffic and take care of other duties. The superintendent of the cemetery worked tirelessly to make sure equipment and other matters were handled in a professional manner.

Speaker after speaker made every effort to emphasize the importance of this event and appreciation to Woods for his accomplishments. If ever a person should receive the "Key to

the City," Woods should.

In spite of the fact that the mayor's office was notified two weeks in advance, no representative of his office or other members of Valdosta City Council chose to appear. So, Mayor Rainwater, Councilmen Vickers, Williams, Sharper and others, the question is, why were you not there? It was an embarrassment to the city, Woods' family and all others in attendance.

An examination of Woods' record underscores and attests to his importance as "our hero." He grew up in Valdosta and flew 107 combat missions over Europe. His fighter squadron destroyed 103 enemy aircraft during World War II and earned more than 100 distinguished flying crosses. He was shot down and captured by the Germans in Greece and placed in solitary confinement by SS troops.

I am asking all area veterans not to attend any of the planned programs for Veterans Day in November unless the mayor and council members make an official apology. Their actions, or lack thereof, are an embarrassment to the people of Valdosta. It is a level of disrespect that cannot be ignored.

Rev. W.F. Wade
Valdosta