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thomasvillehistory



# ANNUAL REPORT

2024



## MISSION

Connecting the Red Hills past with its present to inspire and enrich current and future generations.



## VISION

We are the gateway for the stories of the Red Hills, fostering an atmosphere that enhances a vibrant and innovative community. As the respected leader in sharing our distinctive history, we create experiences that are community-connected, dynamic, engaging, and inspiring for all.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## HONORARY DIRECTORS

Mrs. Marthalene Davis, Honorary Director (deceased)

Dr. Ben Grace, Honorary Director (deceased)

## CENTER STAFF

Anne McCudden, Executive Director

Amelia Gallo, Head of Community Engagement

Meme Greitzer, Curatorial and Programs Assistant

Ephraim Rotter, Curator

Leighann Wilson, Site Manager

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

We hope you enjoy reading through our Annual Report for 2024 as we are proud of all the hard work we accomplished, especially in regard to our Strategic Plan. Every year there are milestones in an organization and 2024 is no exception for the History Center. This plan provides a run-down of all the projects tackled and the effort put forth to bring you interactive and engaging content by telling you a little bit about each one. The completion Center's first Strategic Plan is a feat to be proud of. Whether renovating space at the Lapham Patterson House or adding a new historic structure to our campus, we accomplished these projects with the help of all our local partners.

There is much day-to-day hard work and dedication from our staff and volunteers. Visitors and supporters alike often say to us "you guys do such great stuff," and we do. It takes a passionate community to carry out all our programs and projects. We're so grateful for all those who take part in this work. I hope that you will read this report and gain a fuller understanding of what we do here at the Center. I also hope that it will become clear to you that we could not carry out as many programs or events as we do without the generous time, talent and treasure of ALL those who volunteer with us.

I am truly grateful for all the support shown to this institution by the community,

With warm regards,

*Anne McCudden*





# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## Apprentice Program

One of the great side benefits of coordinating the Apprentice Program is watching our students engage with museums and historic sites beyond Thomasville. In 2024, the Apprentice cohorts got to experience exhibits, programs, and behind the scenes tours at 5 different institutions in this region. In the spring, students visited the Florida State University Museum of Art where they received a guided tour and behind the scenes look at collections. Apprentices then visited the Tallahassee Museum where a few brave souls took part in the Tree-to-Tree Adventure ropes course. The mixture of history, ecology, and zoology at the Tallahassee Museum offered an opportunity to discuss visitor experiences and the care for living collections.

The second-year Apprentices visited Columbus and explored the Columbus Arboretum and the Columbus Museum where the curator took them on an extensive tour of their newly redesigned exhibitions and their collections storage spaces. Of particular interest was their visitor orientation area and the children's play learning space. These students also ventured afield to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton where they rode the steam train, spoke with living history interpreters about hearth cooking and fiber arts, and got to participate in milling corn. The enrichment provided by these excursions is valuable to their discussions of museum operations and fueled their creativity in designing their capstone projects.

## Untold Stories

Untold Stories tours, introduced in the fall of 2024, invited visitors to take a field trip to the History Center and view our exhibitions with a keen eye towards the story behind the story. Much like our Tiptoe Through the Tombstone tours, Untold Stories tours are designed to be a conversational glimpse behind the curtain of the research, design, artifact selection, and installation process of a museum exhibit.

Because museum exhibitions are limited in the square footage, and the number of words visitors are willing to read, museum staff must find the most compelling and concise ways to tell stories and engage. In our case, we've found that stories of people and places, illustrated by "things" has the most impact and potential for connection and learning. The stories we cannot tell have become a valuable way to share them with others!

## Programs, Lectures, & Events

- Strategic Planning Meetings took place on [February 2](#), [March 18](#), [April 15](#), [May 20](#), and [June 10](#). Meetings were held at various locations across the region and were attended by our Strategic Planning committee and board members. This hard work was led by Jana Ertrachter of Ertrachter Group. Our plan was approved at the September board meeting and work will begin in earnest in 2025.
- From [January 16-19](#), staff attended the Georgia Association of Museums conference in Athens.
- On [February 11](#), we held our 2024 Annual Meeting. The format this year was a "Show and Tell" where we shared various collection items with visitors and invited attendees

to explore the collection spaces led by Ephraim Rotter. This allowed us to show the community how we store and care for collections daily and some of the valued artifacts we were entrusted with through the year.

On that same day, we participated in Super Museum Sunday. This endeavor is organized by the Georgia Historical Society as part of its Georgia History Festival and offers free admission to participating museums on that day. With over 100 locations representing 42 counties in the state, we welcomed 50 visitors to our campus.

On Saturday [February 24](#) we hosted 30 educators from Georgia and Florida for a day long workshop focused on the World War II and the Holocaust. The speakers were Dr. Kurt Piehler and Johnathan Grant from Florida State University and Maddie Davis, Education Coordinator at the Museum of History and Holocaust Education from Kennesaw State University, and our own Amelia Gallo who shared our standards-based digital games involving primary sources.

We partnered with the Thomasville Antiques Show Foundation for their annual antique show which raises funds for numerous non-profits across the County. On [February 21](#) we provided refreshments for the vendors who bring their wares to sell with visitors. The Center has received funding from this event since its inception in 1998.

In March, the Slides of March returned with two programs provided by curator, Ephraim

Rotter, that offered an alternative imagining of two key Thomasville properties: Vashti and Paradise Park. The lectures explored what could have been had the cigar factory, La Cubana, not failed in the late 19th century and how that property and the town itself may have developed differently. He also explored the various calls for a dedicated Rose Show Pavilion, once proposed to be constructed at Paradise Park. Together, Ephraim and the audience had a lively discussion of what might have been!

We welcomed the community into our fabulous backyard at another of our “History Hangouts” on [April 12](#). We had an amazing crowd who picnicked, chatted, and enjoyed the music of Jim Cable. These free community focused events are a great way for us to expand our reach to new families and neighbors.

Over Rose Show weekend, [April 26 & 27](#), the Apprentice class of 2023-2024 hosted an Open House to show off the hard work completed on their capstone projects. From creative imaginings of a drive-in movie fundraiser at Greenwood, to in-depth research into local experiences in the Vietnam War, the Apprentices projects were as varied as they were exciting to imagine. Family, friends, and community members had the opportunity to speak with each Apprentice and hear more about their process and inspiration.

Our 26th annual Camp Dawson summer camp took place from [June 3-7](#), and we had our largest set of campers to date! 40 students spent the week with staff,

volunteers, teachers and speakers, learning and generally getting tired out. The campers enjoyed everything from making biscuits to taking nature hikes in the forest of Gentian Creek Preserve. This camp is offered for rising Kindergarten through 5th graders and continues to grow each year.

From [June 17-21](#) we hosted a smaller more focused group of middle schoolers at Archi-camp where they explored the built environment and the historic neighborhoods of Thomasville in partnership with Thomasville Landmarks. Campers visited the Imperial Hotel, Jack Hadley Black History Museum, and Good Shepherd Church and met with local experts on city planning from the City of Thomasville and a landscape architect to discuss the redevelopment of West Jackson Street and the pedestrian experience.

In conjunction with the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute Safety, Health, and Environmental Services team, we hosted a free temperature extreme training on [June 27](#). Attendees learned about heat and cold stress signs and symptoms as well as heat related injuries and illness prevention. This free training was developed under the Susan Harwood Grant.

On [July 19](#), the staff of the Center attended a day-long training seminar with Ms. Yolanda Ferrell of “Yolanda Speaks.”

“Tombstone Tours: Murder & Mayhem” returned to introduce community members to the inhabitants of our local cemeteries on [October 26](#) and [November 2](#). The “murder

and mayhem” tours focus on some of Thomasville and Thomas County’s most thrilling controversies and tragedies. The sold-out tours delighted attendees and inspired many wonderful conversations, appealing to the true crime lover in us all!

What better way to thank all our volunteers than to throw them a party and NOT let them volunteer for it. We did exactly that on [August 15](#) at the Neel House and Tavern on Gordon Ave. The historic setting was a perfect spot for us to say Thank You to all those who help us carry out all that you read about in this report.

With four other community partners, we were honored to be part of The Bookshelf’s effort to honor local museums. On [September 10](#), we were part of “Museum Appreciation Night” along with the Jack Hadley Black History Museum, Pebble Hill Plantation & Museum and Thomasville Landmarks. Portions of proceeds from this event were donated to each organization.

On [September 13](#), we ventured south to the Tallahassee Senior Center’s Lifelong Learning Open House where organizations, historic sites, and resource vendors provided information about their offerings to participants. Soon after, the Tallahassee Senior Center brought nearly 30 active seniors to the History Center and Lapham-Patterson House for a tour!

On [September 17](#), we partnered with St. Thomas Episcopal Church for an evening lecture by Reverend Wallace Marsh. Rev. Marsh provided a comprehensive history

on The Rev. C.I. LaRoche. His presentation was entitled Faith and Flourishing in Thomasville and was well received by a crowd of over 100 attendees. This event took place in the sanctuary of St. Thomas which also allowed our guests to view the Tiffany windows and other architectural features of the property.

We welcomed over 30 guests to the Genealogical Society of Georgia's quarterly educational seminar on [September 21](#). Led by Lillian Wingate, the Director of the Society, and the lead presenter, Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL, the topic was "Genealogical Masterclass: Ethical and Legal Genealogy." Attendees came from across the Southeast and learned a lot about what is and isn't allowed when doing genealogical research.

[October 3](#) saw us host our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Crate to Plate fundraiser. This year's theme was "Olive to Lemons" with a nod towards Provence and all its delicious-nous. The event was a smashing success both in terms of crates sold and in dollars raised. This redesigned event has become a community favorite and since we now accommodate those who want to sit with us and eat and those who want to take their faire to-go, we continue to expand our reach with this format.

The John Lee Nansemond Chapter of the National Colonial Dames presented the O.C. Ewart Bowling Alley with a lovely commemorative plaque on [October 15](#). The dedication ceremony was led by Jinanne Parrish and other chapter representatives.

We once again were part of Hands-On

Thomas County's volunteer day on [October 19](#). A group of four volunteers joined us at our Young Street property to help clean up inside and outside and get the property prepped for renovations.

For the third year, we were honored to be a part of Jonina Farms' Clip & Sip event. On [November 2](#), we spent the day with visitors to the JoNina orchards in Ochlocknee, sharing history and children's activities. Lindy Savelle and the team at JoNina Farm generously donated part of the day's proceeds to the History Center and continues to be a fabulous supporter of our work.

For the 32<sup>nd</sup> year, we hosted Chicken Pilau on [November 5<sup>th</sup>](#). This year's Pilau was one for the books. We hosted well over 100 people in the backyard and ran out of everything but good times and good conversation. Sponsored by Thomasville National Bank, we served over 1300 meals and exceeded our fundraising goal.

We joined 2100 other museum stores representing all fifty states, the District of Columbia, twenty-five countries, and five continents [December 1](#). This event encourages consumers to "Shop with Purpose" and support museum stores throughout the year. This is our second year participating and with our new retail efforts, The Lobby was on full display for folks to do their holiday shopping.

On [December 14](#), the Lapham-Patterson House hosted a festive workshop where attendees crafted ornaments.

# COLLECTIONS

The following items were donated to the History Center in 2024. All items were reviewed by our Acquisition Committee before they were formally accepted into the collection.

## 2024.001

“Classic Cracker: Florida’s Wood-Frame Vernacular Architecture” by Ronald W. Haase, 1992. A review of 19th and early-20th century log house and wood-frame structures that were common in North Florida and South Georgia.

## 2024.002

Account ledgers from Thomas Everitt for 1848-1851 and the firm of Swift, Dekle, and Herrell for 1858-1859.

## 2024.003

Street and traffic study of Thomasville, and open letter and membership list from The Association for the Preservation of the Old Monticello Road as a Scenic Route in and to the City of Thomasville, 1969-1970.

## 2024.004

Four oversized photographs of Broad Street that used to hang in Judge James Hardy’s office at the Thomas County Courthouse.

## 2024.005

Tourism, and business-related booklets: The Winter Resort Among the Pines, program for the 1954 Rose Show & Festival, and the Classified Business and Professional Directory for Thomasville in 1948.

## 2024.006

Wedding dresses owned by sisters Carolyn Frederick (Glenn) and Helen Frederick (Smart) from 1969 and 1964.

## 2024.007

Framed-and-enlarged photograph of Flewellyn Evans Strong in her wedding gown before her marriage to William Howard Flowers on November 23, 1905.

## 2024.008

Collection of programs, photographs, and a costume top from the Thomasville Music & Drama Troupe, 1978-2018.

## 2024.009

Collection of objects, documents, and postcards from Alice Mae Ansley Brandon and Thomas Jones of Greenwood Plantation.

## 2024.0010

Collection of yearbooks from (Thomas County) Central High School and Girl Scout badges and insignia from Pamela Davis (Arceneaux) of Thomasville between 1966-1972.

**2024.011**

Documents and a photograph related to the Inman family of Thomasville.

**2024.012**

Three photographic copies of pictures of the original Hollywood Plantation house, and one of the second Hollywood Plantation house.

**2024.013**

Collection of photographs, documents, and objects related to Dan Bain of Thomasville and Neel's Department Store.

**2024.014**

Collection of documents from MacIntyre & Edwards Insurance, 1930-1960.

**2024.015**

Two articles written for the Tallahassee Democrat newspaper by Theresa Kindred Brown of Thomasville about her trip to Bangkok and Saigon, Vietnam in March 1972 to visit her husband Joe Brown, an officer in the United States Army. The articles were published in May 1972.

**2024.016**

Three-ring binder of the corporate records of the Lapham-Patterson Society as an incorporated 501c3 non-profit entity, 1994-2008.

**2024.017**

Collection of books about Georgia plantations, railroads, and counties.

**2024.018**

Yellow "mustache" mug sold in the gift shop of the Lapham-Patterson House while still operated by the State of Georgia, c.1995.

**2024.019**

Architectural drawings and site plans from Finney General Hospital - Veterans Administration Domiciliary - Southwestern State Hospital in Thomasville, 1942-1995.

**2024.020**

Harness-racing sulky from Pastime Racetrack in Thomasville, and a hay rake and singletree from the Singletary farm in Thomas County.

**2024.021**

Three photographic copies of Thomasville photographs and postcards; two of Downtown Thomasville and one of Wilson & Terry Drug Store.

**2024.022**

13 photographs of the Olympic torch passing through Thomasville on the way to Atlanta for the 1996 Summer Olympics on July 11, 1996; and one photograph of the Showboat Theater at Melrose Plantation on September 5, 1995.

**2024.023**

Thomasville High School "The Pines" yearbooks from 1948 and 1949.

**2024.024**

Two framed certificates of election as a Georgia state senator for Daniel Irwin MacIntyre III of Atlanta, Georgia to the Georgia State Assembly for the 1963-1965 and 1965-1967.

**2024.025**

Thomasville High School Bulldogs letterman football sweater owned by David Langley Brandon Jr., 1937. David Brandon was the grandson of William Herndon Brandon, who was the son of Dr. David Smith Brandon and Harriet Lavinia Jones of Greenwood Plantation in Thomasville.

**2024.026**

Collection of documents and photographs from The Rescue Mission School in Thomasville and its founder and leader Erlene "Mother" Douglas which operated from around 1992-2015 as a private Christian school for at risk students.

**2024.027**

Sterling silver brush-and-mirror vanity set engraved "M N W" for Marguerite Neel Williams, believed to be a gift for her marriage to Thomas Lyle Williams Jr., 1936.

**2024.028**

Collection of documents from the 1980s related to the Thomasville Center for the Arts (Cultural Center), Rose Festival, and Thomasville Landmarks collected by Sarah Martha Edwards.

**2024.029**

"Georgia Made: The Most Important Figures Who Shaped the State in the Twentieth Century" by Neely Young, 2021. The book is signed by the author.

**2024.030**

Wood rocking chair from the Three Toms Inn on Gordon Avenue, c.1940.

**2024.031**

Collection of objects, documents, and photographs owned by, created by, and collected by Stern Tittle, superintendent of Sinkola Plantation in Thomasville, and his wife Helen Baker Tittle. Most of the collection was inherited by Ricky Sanders, who grew up on Sinkola with the Tittles.

**2024.032**

Collection of documents related to the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976 and the Thomasville Entertainment Foundation between 1958-1984 collected by the Hunt family of Thomasville.

**2024.033**

Plaque, first aid book, polo shirt, & apron from the Sunnyland Packing Company of Thomasville.

**2024.034**

Digitized copy of the Stephens-Mauldin family of Boston, Georgia and Cairo, Georgia genealogy as kept in "Wilmore's New Analytical Reference Bible," 1891.

**2024.035**

Collection of Native American artifacts found in MacIntyre Park through the years by a lifelong Thomasville resident.

**2024.036**

Stuffed plush toy named "Izzy" the official mascot of the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, purchased by the donor in Thomasville on the day the Olympic torch passed through Thomasville, July 11, 1996.

**2024.037**

Collection of land deeds and some other legal documents mostly related to the land holdings of John L. Dixon of Thomasville between 1900-1940.

**2024.038**

"Women, Southerners, Americans: An Analysis of the Daughters of the American Revolution and United Daughters of the Confederacy in Thomasville, Georgia" by Kayla Reeves, Spring 2024. Undergraduate thesis for graduation with honors by a student at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida.

**2024.039**

Photograph of William Howard "Bill" Flowers Jr. showing off a car, c.1935.

**2024.040**

Collection of Thomasville Antique Show posters from 2008-2024; brass name plate from office door for the Thomasville Antique Show Foundation, 2005.

**2024.041**

Collection of books mostly designed for school-age children about topics related to Jews and Judaism owned by the Altman family of Thomasville, 1950-1960. Photo album of Thomasville attorney Sol Altman's family while growing up in Coffee County and Brunswick, Georgia in the 1920s and 1930s, other photographs while serving in the United States Army during World War II and in Thomasville.

**2024.042**

Archbold Memorial Hospital booklet from 1975 & a State of Georgia chauffer medallion, 1934.

**2024.043**

Magnolia High School Class of 1955 reunion program and directory, 2023.

**2024.044**

Silver plates awarded to Josephine "Jo" Craig for being president of the Thomasville Entertainment Foundation 1953-1954 and the Pilot Club 1955-1956.

## 2024.045

Collection of unidentified daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, 1850-1860.

## 2024.046

The Watkins Legacy by Jeffrey Rodengen, 2024. Book about Watkins Associated Industries, which was founded in Thomasville as the Watkins Produce Company, and later Watkins Motor Lines.

## 2024.047

Collection of documents and scrapbooks from the Moore family of Thomasville, including scrapbooks and documents from Dr. Thomas Murdock McIntosh, 1880-1940.

## 2024.048

Yearbooks from Thomasville High School for 1955, 1956, 1957, & 1958.

## 2024.049

Bingo cards from the Thomasville Elks Lodge and funeral fans Whiddon's Funeral Home, c.1950.

## 2024.050

Collection of petrified coral and wood from the Withlacoochee River near Quitman, Georgia; two Thomasville High School yearbooks; and a hand-carved boat oar and Evinrude propeller from the former owner of Bellamy's Boat Shop.

## 2024.052

Photograph of nurses from the Thomasville chapter of the American Red Cross during World War I, 1918.

## 2024.053

Large collection of photographs both printed and in digital form on CD-ROM, and one street corner newspaper vending machine from the Thomasville Times-Enterprise newspaper, 1980-2015.

## 2024.054

Digital copies of photographs of the Henry Mash family of Thomasville, 1900-1930. Henry Mash was a popular pharmacist from a pioneer Thomas County family who owned several drug stores in Thomasville during the first half of the twentieth century.



# VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs. Pamela Arceneux**

**Ms. Charnie Beverly**

Mrs. Mary Jo Beverly

Dr. Chip Bragg

**Mr. Richard N. Bradner**

**Ms. Rebecca Cunha**

Mr. & Mrs. James D. Dorris

Ms. Alanis Flecha

Mr. Paul Flemming

Ms. Deann Garcia

Ms. Rhonda Grim

Mr. Mrs. John S. Hand

Mr. Mills Herndon

Mr. & Mrs. David Hutchings

Brandy Kirkham

**Mrs. Nancy Inman**

Ms. Leslie Johnson

Mr. Steve Kinsey, Jr.

Ms. Kay Kramer

**Ms. Olga Lami-Schmizzi**

**Ms. Sally Lewis**

Ms. Ruby Lloyd

Mrs. Kha M. Thomas McDonald

Ms. Katie McCloud

Mrs. Ella Lucille Morris

Ms. Catherine Oglesby

Mr. & Mrs. David Orr

Mrs. Vanessa Patz

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Ms. Melissa Rigsby

Mr. Don Rome

Ms. Ashley Rush

Mr. & Mrs. Martha and David Sherman

Mr. Arthur Smith

Mr. Willard Steele

**Mr. Bruce Summer**

**Ms. Nancy Tillinghast**

**Ms. Claire Thomas Timm**

Ms. Susan Vann

**Ms. Mercer Watt**

Ms. Whitney W. White

Mrs. Angela Willers

Ms. Lynn Williams

Ms. Alexendria Willis

Ms. Leigh Womble

Mr. Paul Woody

Mrs. Pam Wright

Volunteers listed in **bold** are recognized for contributing 50+ hours of their time to us this year.



725 N. Dawson Street, Thomasville, Georgia 31792