

Alachua County Florida

A Proclamation

Declaring December 18, 2023, as “Matthew Lewey Day” in Alachua County, Florida

- Whereas* Matthew Lewey's life spanned from December 18, 1848, to August 12, 1935; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey enlisted in the Union Army in 1863 during the Civil War, in the 55th Infantry Regiment and was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer; and
- Whereas* On November 30, 1864 he was shot on the battlefield, severely wounded at Honey Hill SC, and was thought to be dead; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey moved to Newnansville in 1876 and he entered into wedlock in 1883 to Bessie Chestnut; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey served as Florida Judge also known as Justice of the Peace; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey served as Postmaster and Mayor of Newnansville also known as Alachua from 1875 to 1877; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey served in the Florida House of Representatives in 1882; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey was the first African American Florida Newspaper editor and began the Gainesville Sentinel 1887; and
- Whereas* in 1884 Matthew Lewey and other Black political leaders created the Independent Party of Florida, the first explicitly Biracial political party in Florida's history; and
- Whereas* he helped launch the Pensacola Streetcar Boycott against segregation in 1905, and this was before Civil Rights movement of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey was named President of the National Negro Press Association; and
- Whereas* Matthew Lewey's final resting place is at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in Gainesville, Florida.

Now, therefore, through the authority vested in me by the Board of County Commissioners of the Alachua County, Florida, I do hereby proclaim December 18, 2023, as “Matthew Lewey Day” in Alachua County, Florida.

Duly proclaimed this 23th day of January, A.D., 2024.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ALACHUA COUNTY FLORIDA

By: _____
Mary C. Alford, Chair

ATTEST:

J.K. “Jess” Irby, Esq.