

Alachua County Florida

A Proclamation

**Declaring February 23, 2025, as
"Mathew Lewey Day"
in Alachua County, Florida**

- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey's life spanned from December 18, 1848, to August 12, 1935; and
- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey enlisted in the Union Army in 1863 during the Civil War, in the 55th Infantry Regiment and was promoted to the rank of a Non-commissioned Officer; and
- Whereas,* On Nov 1864 he was shot on the battlefield, severely wounded at Honey Hill SC and was thought to be dead and in 1876 he moved to Newnansville; and
- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey entered into wedlock in 1883 to Bessie Chestnut; and
- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey served as Florida Judge AKA Justice of the Peace, Postmaster and Mayor of Newnansville, AKA Alachua in 1874, he served in the Florida House of Representatives in 1882; and
- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey was the first Black Florida Newspaper editor and began the Gainesville Sentinel in 1887; and
- Whereas,* In 1884 Mathew Lewey and other Black political leaders created the Independent Party of Florida, the first explicitly Biracial political party in Florida's history; and
- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey helped launch the Pensacola Streetcar Boycott against segregation in 1905 (50 years before Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks); and
- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey was named President of the National Negro Press Association; and
- Whereas,* Mathew Lewey's final resting place/gravesite is at Mt Pleasant Cemetery in Gainesville, Florida.

Now, therefore, through the authority vested in me by the Board of County Commissioners of Alachua County, Florida, I do hereby proclaim February 23, 2025, as "Mathew Lewey Day" in Alachua County, Florida.

Duly proclaimed this 11th day of February, A.D., 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ALACHUA COUNTY FLORIDA

By: _____
Charles S. Chestnut, IV, Chair

ATTEST:

J.K. "Jess" Irby, Esq.