
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 276

Brewton, Alabama 36426

Newsletter
May 3, 1974

Editor
Mrs. Carolyn Pugh McLendon

GARDEN PARTY MEETING - The May meeting of the Escambia County Historical Society will be held at the Alco Hill Home of Mr. and Mrs. John David Finlay. The meeting will be on Thursday, May 16th beginning at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6:30. For your reservation send your check for \$1.00 per person and the reservation slip at the bottom of this page, by May 10th (positive deadline) to Mrs. Harriett Miller or Mrs. Betty Campbell as indicated on the reservation slip. Members of the Society may bring their spouses or dates. Please wear informal clothing and good walking shoes for a tour of the historic home-place. If you have them, please bring portable lawn chairs. The Finlays have planned many enjoyable things for us, so be sure not to miss our second annual garden party. In case of rain the meal will be served in the gymnasium at the Jefferson Davis Junior College. A short preview of some of the interesting things to see on Alco Hill prepared by Mr. Finlay is contained herein.

NEW MEMBERS - Cyril Welch, Brewton; Mrs. Fred Gainer, Panama City, Florida; Earl W. McGowin, Chapman; Miss L. B. Strong, Cape Coral, Florida; W. E. "Gene" Garrett, Uriah, Alabama, making a total of 265.

There are a good many of you who have still not paid your dues. With the price of paper and postage going up, we need you and your membership dues, in order to continue to carry on.

OPEN COMMUNITY MEETING ON ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - In order to better inform the public of the efforts of the Brewton Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, a meeting has been scheduled for May 5th, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Bell Chapel of First Baptist Church.

2ND ANNUAL CLASS AA HORSE SHOW will be held at the T.R. Miller Stadium on Saturday, May 11th, at 1:00 p.m. Tennessee Walking Horse Show approved. Entries from 5 states.

IN MEMORIUM - Since our last meeting one of our most active members has passed away. Mrs. Jess (Claudia Kendall) Dixon of Andalusia, passed away just a few days after she attended our April meeting. During the short time that I knew her, she endeared herself to me, to the Historical Society, and I am sure to many more of you. We shall miss her very much. To her family we offer our condolences.

APPRECIATION is expressed to all of you who have shared with me my grief over the loss of my grandmother, Mrs. Dallas M. (Pearlie Rabren) Pugh, of Evergreen. Although she was partially paralyzed and could not talk, she had a capacity for love unsurpassed by anyone I have known. We are comforted by the fact that she now inhabits a place where there are no physical infirmities.

ALCO HILL

by
John David Finlay

Alco Hill was owned by my maternal grandfather, N. R. Leigh, Probate Judge of Escambia County for 24 years. My mother, Katie Leigh, owned it next and gave it to me before her death in 1929. I am the third generation to own this property but the first to live on it. The home was built in 1941.

The two columns on the lower drive have terra-cotta pieces and two heads from the court house erected in 1901 which was torn down in 1961. The head on the left of the drive, going up, according to The Library of Congress, is of Antonius Pius, a Roman Emperor, and that on the right is Michelangelo, Italian artist, when he was a young man.

A path on the East edge of the woods leads to traces of trenches used in fighting Indians. A fight with the Indians took place on Alco Hill. (Read of the incident in September, 1973 Quarterly, page 20).

On the northeast edge of the woods is a Torii. Shintoism is based on nature worship and the Torii was used as the entrance to a shrine to keep out evil spirits. We call our woods the shrine.

The northwest corner of the lawn is a path with two Foo Dogs at the top. The path leads down to a Japanese Garden with a reflecting pond. The bridge and the wooden lantern were taken from a Japanese print. On the path across the pond is a stone lantern carved in Japan.

Our son, John David, Jr., spent half of three years at Yokosuka, Japan which was the home port in Japan of the aircraft carrier USS Oriskany, CVA 34. He was an officer on this ship. He sent or brought us many things from Japan during those three years, and got us deeply interested in oriental art.

The round stone table is a mill-rock.

By the tennis court I have erected a fossil wall from beautiful pink limestone from Thomas McMillan's ranch, Jay Villa, in Conecuh County. This rock is filled with fossils of sea life dating back about 70 million years when under the sea.

There are a number of rare trees from many parts of the world growing on Alco Hill.

Alco Hill (continued)

On the second floor of the home, a former playroom, at the suggestion of my wife Emily, is now a museum. I think you would be interested in looking at the varied items in it which I have collected.

To the right at the top of the lower drive is a road leading to John David, Jr.'s home. The architecture of this home is unusual. He will welcome you to his home also.

We look forward to sharing with you on Alco Hill, the second annual garden party held by the Escambia County Historical Society.

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

Age is a quality of mind -
If you have left your dreams behind,
If hope is lost,
If you no longer look ahead,
If your ambitions' fires are dead--
Then you are old.

But, if from life you take the best,
And if in life you keep the best,
If love you hold--
No matter how the years go by,
No matter how the birthdays fly,
You are not old!

-Author unknown