

PINTLALA



HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

We have to figure out how to communicate the wealth of Pintlala's heritage to younger generations. It is important that we apply ourselves to this task with urgency, else our posterity will be making decisions in a vacuum of historical knowledge. The Bible states that there arose "a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph." Without the background of history, an Egyptian leader made decisions which forced the Hebrews to exist as slaves for centuries.

David McCullough observed, "Indifference to history isn't just ignorant; it's a form of ingratitude. And the scale of our ignorance seems especially shameful in the face of our unprecedented good fortune...I'm convinced that history encourages, as nothing else does, a sense of proportion about life, gives us a sense of how brief is our time on earth and thus how valuable that time is." Perhaps McCullough is right. A sense of arrogance makes us ungrateful for legacies left us. A quest for historical knowledge feeds effective leadership and a healthy view of life. We have a great challenge on our hands.

TWO NEW RESOURCES are available for use at the Pintlala Branch Library. They may be found in the Ethel Tankersly Todd Alcove. Checking them out is prohibited. Make good use of them:

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF ALABAMA, Volume 1, HISTORICAL LOCATIONS BY COUNTY and HISTORICAL ATLAS OF ALABAMA, Volume 2, CEMETERY LOCATIONS BY COUNTY. Both are edited by Craig Remington of the University of Alabama. Thomas J. Kallsen assisted in editing Volume 1.

GARY BURTON
President PHA

OCTOBER PHA MEETING: The Pintlala Historical Association will meet on Sunday, October 17, 2004 at 2:30 pm at Pintlala Baptist Church in the Fellowship Hall. PLANTS FROM LONG AGO is the title of our program to be presented by Jack McGaughy. Mr. McGaughy is retired from Alfa Farmers Federation as Director of the Horticulture Division and Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Division. He holds a Masters Degree in Landscape Design from Auburn University. Mr. McGaughy is also retired from the Alabama National Guard as a Helicopter and fixed wing pilot.

Our program will touch on plants that have been handed down over the years from one gardener to another. If you have a plant that is old or native to Alabama, please bring a sample or a pot to share with our group.

Please invite visitors to join us for this interesting program. **See you on the 17th!**

2004 SHACKELFORD-MOS(E)LEY REUNION: *(Special thanks to W. Clanton Mosley who sent this information TWICE - before and after Ivan the Terrible!)*

Over 30 people from Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama attended the 2004 Shackelford-Mos(e)ley Family Association Reunion on June 26th at Pintlala Baptist Church in southwestern Montgomery County, AL. William Earl Moseley of Montgomery was the oldest attendee. The SMFA includes descendants of George Shackelford (1779NC - 1852AL) and his wife Annette Jeter (1806SC - 1870AL), Edward Moseley (1771 VA or NC - 1834AL) and his wife Martha Butler (1775SC - 1831AL), and other related pioneer settlers of the Pintlala Community. The program was about their common ancestor Robert Moseley who died in 1796 in Edgefield District, SC. (Edward Moseley was a son and Annette Jeter was a granddaughter.) Copies of Robert Moseley's recently-discovered estate files were distributed to attendees. A marker for Robert Moseley (SAR) bought with contributions from SMFA members was recently placed in the Antioch Baptist Church Cemetery near where he lived along Cedar and Horns Creeks in Edgefield County. Early results from the Mos(e)ley y-DNA Project yielded exact matches for 12-marker tests for Earl Moseley and Clanton Mosley and showed that their ancestors Robert D. Moseley of Montgomery County, AL, and Robert Moseley of Edgefield were related. Attendees enjoyed a delicious covered-dish lunch and a great time of fellowship. Clanton Mosley (202 Fairway Drive, New Ellenton, SC 29809; e-mail: wcmosley@aol.com) is SMFA president.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHY: Since our last newsletter, we have lost several dear members and friends. PHA extends deepest sympathy to all those who have recently lost loved ones, including

the families of Eugene Neal, Hylan M. (Red) Law, Evelyn Wingard Neal, and Myrta Henry Hall.

WELL WISHES: PHA sends warmest get well wishes to Felix Lassiter, Billie Richey, Robert Sharpe, Mary Frances Dean King and all our members and friends who have been feeling "under the weather."

CONGRATULATIONS TO LUKE CASSADY! The son of Mike and Nancy Cassady of Pintlala, Luke attends Auburn University studying wildlife and fisheries. At the annual meeting of the Montgomery County Farmers Federation, Scholarship Chairperson Jane Russell introduced Mike as one of the county's scholarship winners. Way to go, Luke!

WELCOME, PINTLALA BUSINESS SERVICE! Specializing in bookkeeping for small businesses including farms, Jean Ivy is now offering a wide variety of financial services from her home-office in Pintlala. Also, she is a notary public, and provides that service free of charge.

HURRICANE IVAN will undoubtedly go down in history as one of our most destructive natural disasters. We are so thankful to have survived the ravages of Hurricane Ivan with little significant damage. Being without services in our area for about a week may have isolated us, but it brought our community closer together. Neighbors we don't normally see very often came by to check on us, bring us ice, news and encouragement, and help us with moving debris. We must continue to keep our neighbors who lost so much - homes, jobs and orderly lives - in our thoughts and prayers, plus those who continue (often to the point of exhaustion) helping with the seemingly endless job of cleanup and restoration.

BEST WISHES OF THE SEASON! This holiday season, we should pause and reflect on past happy times, especially family Thanksgivings and Christmases. Many beloved family members who are now gone contributed so much to make our holidays bright, especially in "hard times." I particularly recall the Christmas I was eight - Papa had been sick and out of work. We had just moved from the Birmingham area to Elmore County and a rented house with no phone, water or electricity. Our grandmother and aunt helped decorate the tree we cut with bright paper chains and birthday cake candles. Mama and Papa had explained that "Santa is the spirit of giving - he doesn't actually *bring* gifts on Christmas Eve," so my requests and expectations, like those of my two older brothers weren't too high. But our three-year-old brother - too young to understand - adamantly *insisted* that Santa Claus would bring him a big red fire truck - the *expensive* kind: he would ride on it, and ring the alarm bell! We older children tried in vain to talk him into a more reasonable request and were very sad since we knew he would be disappointed. On Christmas morning, we were opening our few practical presents - socks, school supplies, and fruit - when a bell tinkled in the next room. Our little brother "tore out" as fast as he could, and triumphantly returned riding a bright red fire truck, ringing its bell! We were paralyzed with disbelief! It was not until a few years before Mama died that I learned "the rest of the story" - Papa had walked all over town, registering at each store that offered a prize for a drawing to be held on Christmas Eve. Merchants had offered nice gifts, but Silver's (later, H. L. Greene) gave the only prize that Papa ever won, the big red fire truck! (*"Yes, Virginia, there really IS a Santa Claus!" JCH*)

History of Fleta Lodge No. 223: The Fleta Era 1922 – Present

By Alan M. Davis

I have been asked if it was all right for me to go into detail about the minutes of the Lodge. One of the primary duties of the Secretary of the Lodge is to “*observe all the proceedings of the Lodge; make a fair record of all things proper to be written*”. I conversed with the Grand Secretary and showed him the material I have written about the history of the Lodge and he informed me that the information included in the minutes was not in any way improper to be written about for such a purpose.

I have written before, Masonry is often misunderstood as a “secret society” or a religion. In the true sense of the words *Freemasonry* is not a secret society but a society with secrets. Modern Freemasonry is a fraternity, not a religion or a cult. In a secret society no one outside that society knows who the members are. Masonry is visible to all. As I stated in the first segment of this history all *Shriners* are Masons, in fact they have to become a Blue Lodge Mason, next a Scottish or York Rite Mason and then third, a Shriner. The Shriners have built hospitals all over the United States for children, especially those who have been burned and those who need orthopedic surgery and rehabilitation and provide them with artificial limbs. All that is done at no cost to the child or to his or her family. Again secrecy is a common fact of everyday life. Our private affairs are ours, not to be shouted from the housetops. A man and his wife have private understandings for no one else to know as well. In the Lodge there are rituals that we perform, which are symbolic in nature and originated from the *Old Testament*, that have to remain in the confines of the Lodge. Many organizations have similar policies.

Between October of 1917 and February of 1922 the members of Mt. Carmel Lodge No. 223 voted on and accepted, built, and moved the Lodge to the southwest corner of the crossroads above Mr. William C. Norman’s store and changed the name to Fleta. The last time the name Mt. Carmel was used in the minutes was on a Special Communication held on Saturday January the 21st, 1922. The Lodge began using the name Fleta from that time forward. At that time and now Lodges have to have the Grand Lodge’s permission to change its name. “In selecting names for Lodges, those as a rule should be chosen having ethical, moral, poetical, historical or Masonic

signification". Usually when Lodges were formed in a town, especially a small town, the members named the Lodge after that town as they did in Fleta and Ramer. On the night they voted to change the name of the Lodge, Nov. 20, 1920, Bro. James Nathaniel Dean made a confession to the Lodge that *"he had been guilty of unmasonic conduct by the reason of having operated an illicit distillery in the manufacture of whiskey against the peace and dignity of the State of Alabama"*. On motion he was suspended indefinitely from the Lodge. There must not have been too much condemnation toward Bro. Dean or he must have made good whiskey, because on Jan. 15, 1921, "upon a vote of the Lodge Bro. Dean was restored to the full rights and privileges of Masonry". He was voted back into the Lodge after presenting his petition for affiliation at the February meeting and was voted back a member in March of that year. It is to mention at this point that the Eighteenth Amendment (XVIII) being the "Prohibition of Manufacture and Sale of Liquor" was made a part of the U. S. Constitution, January 29, 1919 and was repealed in 1933 by the Twenty-first Amendment (XXI). A lot of men during that that time profited from the sale of such distillates, which contributed to, and caused many of the various problems we have today.

Upon reading and deciphering (especially some of the handwriting) the minutes it appears the Lodge was meeting in the newly built Meeting Room above Norman's Store by January of 1920 because the minutes recorded instructions to the Building Committee to move the lumber and furniture from the "Old Lodge" up to Fleta. The total cost to build the upper story was approximately \$150.00, a sum that was loaned to the Lodge by Bro. Drury H. Johnson. On the meeting of October 16th, 1920 they insured the structure for \$500.00 for three years at the cost of \$42.50 with the Home Insurance Company; Bro. S. M. Mitchell of Lapine Lodge No. 201 was the agent. At the meeting of February 14, 1920 the Lodge had to elect a new secretary because the current secretary, Bro. Joseph B. Stockard was confined in an asylum at Tuscaloosa. It was common in those days when a person suffered from dementia, senility or other like diseases, which may have been what we now call Alzheimer's disease, to be placed in such an institution. Families back then were still extended families and most of the time the family took care of their aged love ones at home. Health care has advanced in numerous ways and at the same time digressed as well. Bro Stockard evidently recovered quickly because he is listed as in the

minutes of July 1921 and remained active until his death in 1929.

Included with the minutes of Fleta Lodge are copies of the minutes of the Third Communication of the Lapine Masonic Conference, which had taken place on August the 18th 1920 in Lapine. This conference was composed of and formed by Masonic Lodges in the following towns; Lapine No. 201, Mt. Carmel No. 223, Panola No. 734, Petrey No. 728, and Ramer No. 243. Sadly only Mt. Carmel Lodge No. 223, which is now Fleta Lodge No. 223, is the only Lodge listed above still in existence. Ramer Lodge No. 243 merged with Fleta in July of 1997. The author was initiated an Entered Apprentice, passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft and raised to the sublime Degree of Master Mason in the fall of 1987 at Ramer Lodge No. 243. I was elected to and served six of the eight elected officers of the Lodge and served as the Worshipful Master of Ramer No 243 in 1994-95 and was serving as Secretary when Ramer merged with Fleta in July of 1997. I had just served as Worshipful master of Fleta Lodge 2003-04 and am currently serving as the Historian. Prior to that I was elected to and served as Senior and Junior Warden, Senior and Junior Deacon. The elected officers of a Lodge are as follows: The Worshipful Master, Senior Warden and Junior Wardens, Treasurer, Secretary, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon and the Tiler. Appointed officers are the Chaplain, Marshal, Senior Steward, Junior Steward and the Historian. To get back to that conference at Lapine, it lasted three days. Conferences today only last one half of a day, one whole day depending if there are any special events scheduled and are composed of by the Grand Lodge of the State of Alabama into 5 Groups and 46 Districts. There were several committees appointed that first day, which were the Finance, Hospitality, Resolutions, Time & Place, and a committee on Necrology. The committee of Necrology is one that offers Resolutions of Respect and Memorials to the members of the conference who died during the time of refreshment since the last conference. At the end of the minutes they appointed the officers for the next conference to be held at "*Fleta*", Alabama on the third Wednesday in August 1921.

In the 1880's there was a railroad line built which was part of the Atlantic Coast Line called the Sprague Junction-Luverne spur. Many of the members who went to the conference may have ridden the train to Lapine, boarding at Sellers Station. This railroad spur started at Sprague Junction with a triangle switch and the line meandered and passed through Ada, Sellers,

Strata, Naftel, Lapine, Bradleyton, Petrey, Patsberg and then up the hill to Luverne where there was a turntable for the engine to be turned around to make the return trip. This turntable was, according to some information I heard one time, located somewhere near and slightly southwest where the present location of the Luverne Police department building is now. There is one of the last station buildings, if not the last one, still standing at Naftel just off U.S. Highway 331 and it was used as a polling or voting station until the early to mid 1980's. Another bit of information was that Lapine was a thriving town with many businesses including a bank that was across the street from where the present community center is now. There was also a row of businesses beside the old bank but they were destroyed by fire many years ago. Mrs. Ann Davis used to have a beauty shop in the old bank before it was torn down with the rest of the damaged buildings in the late 1980's. There was a college in Highland Home, which had closed down by 1916, and there were several boarding houses in Lapine for the students. Most of those buildings are now gone too.

Lodge meetings back in those days usually met at mid morning on Saturday, once a month, and depending upon how much business there was to be discussed and how much Degree work needed to be performed, the meeting could last the rest of the day depending upon the stamina of the members present as was recorded on the same minutes of Jan 15. That meeting was called to refreshment sometime in mid-afternoon and labor was to resume at 6:30 p.m. because Bro. A. B. Dillard was examined on the Fellowcraft Degree after which he and Bro. Thomas Duncan, who earlier that day was examined in the Fellowcraft Degree as well, were raised to the Master Mason Degree which would take about an hour and a half each and that would have put them well into the night. I would venture to say that there were a few of the new-fangled automobiles or "horseless carriages" around in South Montgomery County at that time and more than likely they were Model T's. It was not an uncommon sight to still see horse or mule and wagons traveling around the south part of Montgomery County as late as the 1940's. There were still a couple of residents of the Ada community one being Mr. Jessie Sellers who used a mule and wagon as late as the early 1970's as his main source of transportation. Mr. Jessie lived to be over 100 years old and the mule was supposed to have been over 25 years old or older as I remember being told.

To continue with Fleta Lodge history: On Friday December 2, 1921 the Lodge held a Called or Special Communication, (all Masonic Funerals are Special Communications) *"for the burial of our much beloved Bro. Charles Emmett Stanford who departed this life on the morning of December 1st 1921. The Lodge was held in the School building near the home of the deceased Brother. The Brethren marched from the there to the residence in a Body to attend the funeral and from there to the cemetery a distance of about two miles where the deceased Brother was buried with Masonic Honors. Bro. Charles E. Stanford lived near Snowden and was the Lodge's first applicant for the Masonic Home but unfortunately he died before he could go in. During the meeting of February 18, 1922, "Bros. Gerson, Thigpen, Broadway and O'neal from the city of Montgomery representing the Masonic Home, who are making a drive to raise the sum of Five hundred thousand dollars for the benefit of the Grand Lodge and Masonic home were with us and made elegant appeals to the membership to contribute individually to raise said amount". There was an appeal from Newton Lodge No. 224 to help pay the expenses for the family of Bro L. A. Mullins, who according to the letter:*

"...took tuberculosis, and had to go west. He had to borrow \$500.00 on his little home, and soon after reaching Colorado he took the "flu" and died. The expense of bringing the body back, and burial, amounted to about \$450.00. He left a wife and one child. They have no means of support, outside the little home. The \$950.00 still hangs over it. We are asking that your Lodge make a contribution. This is a worthy cause. The mother is in very poor health. The child is a small girl. We want to save this little home for them".

Hopefully that family was helped. Masonry then and now is always willing to extend a willing and helping hand to the relief of distressed brother Masons, their families and other just causes. There were other letters read that meeting night in July of 1922 asking for assistance and action on them was tabled and no further mention of them were recorded. There were always letters of that nature read just about every meeting and whether the Lodge acted on them depended upon how much was in the treasury. A committee was appointed on November 4th 1922 to confer with the Modern Woodmen in purchasing lamps to light up the Lodge hall. The secretary was instructed to ascertain from Bro. S. M. Mitchell, agent for the Insurance Co., if it would be

necessary to get permission from the insurance company to place gasoline lamps in the building. There was electricity in Montgomery but electricity had not come that far out in the county until the late 1920's and the 1930's and depending upon how far you lived off a main road you did not get electricity until the 1940's.

On June 15th 1923 a communication from the Grand Master Julian F. Spearman was in reference to petitioning the Legislature, to make Montevallo School for Girls a grade "A" school. On motion the Lodge concurred in the resolution passed by the Grand Lodge at its last session. Later that year on September 15th, an invitation from the Grand Master to attend the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Memorial Association at Alexandria, Virginia was extended to the Lodge. Membership of the Lodge increased by 32 members between 1921 and 1928 with Bro. Charles L. Mullican being raised to the Degree of Master Mason on February 25, 1928, he was the last. During this time there was mostly Degree work done in the Lodge and there were always two or three letters from other Lodges asking for assistance to help rebuild their lodge after it was destroyed by fire. In October of 1926 the Lodge used the Schoolhouse in Fleta for the purpose of entertainment and to serve the meal for the Conference and as the minutes states on motion of Bro. J. B. Sansom, *"the members of the Lodge were requested to invite their wives and daughters to prepare a dinner to be spread at the School House at Fleta on Wednesday next for the entertainment of the Brethren of this Masonic Conference District, who will attend this conference at this place on said Wednesday next."* In December of 1926 there was an appeal from the Grand Master Asking for help to the Bro. Masons their widows and orphans who were victims of the recent storm in the State of Florida. It was motioned by Bro. Thomas Duncan that individual members donate any amount that they could. In 1927 was the first mention of membership transfer up to this time a member requested a "Demit" a document which stated the Brother's whose name appears on it was a member in good standing at the time the document was issued. In June of 1927 there was an other appeal from the Grand master asking for relief to the Brother Masons who lived in the flooded districts on the Mississippi River. On motion \$10.00 was sent to their relief.

There was an unusual communication from the Grand Master recorded in the minutes of August 6, 1927 in reference to "Mobs and Floggings" there were no discussions held on that

matter or no other comments in the minutes. What the letter was about, in my opinion was the rise of such lascivious conduct in Alabama during the 1920's by the Ku Klux Klan that climaxed in 1927. There were several high profile floggings in the Birmingham and Mobile areas that culminated in a kidnapping and flogging of a 19-year old orphan named Jeff Calloway by three white robed men who had just departed from speaking at the pulpit of Antioch Baptist Church near Oneonta, Alabama. It was reported that young Mr. Calloway had a bottle of liquor on him and had been drinking. Membership of the Klan in Alabama was up to 115,000 members in 1925 but that high profile incident plus others caused the decline of the Klan due to its own excesses to shrink to less than 10,00 by 1930. History is full of events that could not have been controlled in the past and cannot be controlled in the future but happened or will happen again. We must always study our history to prevent the same mistakes twice and more times than often that we will admit, we still make the same ignorant mistakes but with different cast of characters.

In 1928 the Brethren assembled along with a great many friends for the funeral of Bro. Anderson William Moseley who died on August 3, 1928. The funeral was on the 5th of August at 9:30 o'clock a.m. in the auditorium at the School House in Pintlala. The minutes recorded the proceedings as follows:

"The Worshipful master explained that the object of the meeting was called for the purpose of the meeting was to pay the last sad rites to the memory of Bro. A. W. Moseley after which the corpse was brought in the auditorium where a large concourse of people gathered to listen to the funeral sermon delivered by Bro. Williams. Bro. Henderson H. Norman held an appropriate eulogy on the death of the deceased Brother. The corpse was then taken to the Bonham Cemetery and there buried by the fraternity with Bro. George A. Beauchamp, Grand Secretary, conducting the graveside service. The Brethren then returned to the School building." In April of 1929 the Lodge contributed \$10.00 again to the relief of the Brotherhood of Masons who had suffered from the recent flooding of the Mississippi River. The lodge received a letter in August of 1929, discussing the formation of the "University Masonic Club" of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa.

It was at this point in October of 1929 that the Great Depression began with the Wall Street Stock Market crash. The Lodge had begun discussing installation of electric lights in the

Lodge and apparently the lights were installed sometime late in 1930 because they had to talk to William Norman, owner of the store below to go halves in the installation. I remember reading the minutes of Ramer Lodge No. 243 that they installed their electric lights in October of 1929 costing \$15.00 prior to the Crash of Wall Street. There was a plan to invite all members present and the Brethren who were not present that there will be a Homecoming Day at our next regular communication on Saturday before the 3rd Sunday in November and bring a basket of food and spend the day as there may be important business to attend that day. The 1930's were a very lean time for the Lodge and everyone else. They even voted to suspend all contributions to distressed sister Lodges due to a depleted treasury. The Grand Lodge passed a Resolution in 1930 *"that suspended members could be reinstated for paying up the amount they were due at the time of suspension"*. At the end of the membership boom of the 1920's, as I mentioned before, about 35 members joined the Lodge during that decade. That came to a screeching halt with the advent of the Depression of the 1930's. Bro. Charles Lee Mullican was the last member recorded being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on February 25, 1928 and Bro. W. W. Sellers on August 17, 1929 was the last member to affiliate until 1943. The Lodge did not meet regularly during the 1930's except to elect officers in June. Between 1930 and 1940 the Lodge met 23 times with 20 being Regular meetings and 3 Special meetings. The Lodge started meeting more often in the beginning of the 1940's. In March of 1943 Bros. Clarence C. and Waverly Browder transferred their membership from Pleasant Home Lodge No, 357 to Fleta. Bro. Thomas Alton Hall was the first man to be initiated an Entered Apprentice in 12 years on August 14, 1943. During World War II many men joined the Fraternity all over the United States before they went overseas to fight. There was also a rise in membership after the war when Masonry in Alabama reached its highest membership during the mid-1950's with over 85,000 members.

After the war the Lodge got back to meeting at their regular schedule every month and twice a month sometimes to perform the Degree work. The end of the war brought an influx of membership which peak in the mid 1950's. It was in 1946 in the November 16th meeting when W. L. Skinner was appointed to see Mr. W. C. Norman or Mr. Fred Sellers about making arrangements to tie lighting wires on their meters. Bro. Skinner reported at the next meeting that Mr. Sellers had agreed to let the lights remain on his meter. The Original Charter of the Lodge

must have been damaged or went missing because Bro. Willie Lassiter was reimbursed \$3.00 for a replacement copy in 1946. That copy, along with the original charter, still hangs in the Lodge hall behind the Worshipful Master's Station or podium.

The Minutes of the Lodge from April 1947 to February 1958 are currently missing to include any information during this time period.

By 1960 the Lodge room above Fred Sellers store was starting to show signs of aging. A committee was appointed on February 20, 1960, consisting of Bro.'s George Dansby, Oscar W. Holmberg, and Hardie M. Owens, to explore the possibility of building a new Lodge building in the Fleta area. It was also discussed to see if the residents of Fleta would be interested in building a joint community center and Lodge hall. When the Committee reported in April they reported that the residents showed little interest in building such a building. In June of 1963 there was a notice in the Alabama Mason, a newsletter, concerning a loan fund for students at Emory University for children of Masons who are Southerners of the third or later generations from the states of Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. Again discussions were held on constructing a new building for the Lodge in December of 1966. In April 1967 the Lodge looked at five acres of land belonging to the Montgomery County School Board located in Pintlala beside the Elementary school. In May the Committee was authorized by the consent of the Lodge, to negotiate to purchase two to five acres of land and to pay as much as "\$50.00" per acre. Evidently the Lodge was considering to purchase that property because they had written to the Grand Lodge in June of 1967 to ask permission to move the Lodge to Pintlala. The Grand Secretary responded later in June in regards to a clause in the deed to the lot offered to the Lodge, which was contrary to the policy of the Grand Lodge. The Committee was approved to continue negotiations for the lot and to see if that particular clause could be removed from the deed. There must have been a stalemate between the two parties because it was voted in the Lodge to wait on that property to see what develops. In December the members held more discussions on moving the lodge and the seriousness of building a new building. They also held a lengthy discussion on the condition of the present building. It was reported in later years that the floor sagged a good

bit. In October of 1968 the Lodge voted in favor of moving the meeting place to land that was donated by Zelda and Willie Lassiter at its present location today. Work began in November of 1968 on the site for the new Lodge building, a fence was erected. In December of 1968 the Lodge voted to accept the deed for the property offered by the Lassiters and Bro. Willie Lassiter offered to draw up some floor plans for the new structure. Bros. George E. Dansby, William Lassiter and Hardie M. Owen, Sr. were on the Building Committee for the new Lodge building. On the meeting night of June 28, 1969 Bro. Lassiter announced that work on the new building will begin on Wednesday July 2. The building was constructed of concrete blocks and has a meeting room, dinning area, bathrooms and storage areas. On September 6, 1969 the Trustees authorized Bro. Robert Woodard to go ahead and borrow \$2500.00 to make the building suitable for the Lodge meetings. Evidently the building was completed that Fall. There was no mention in the minutes of the Lodge meeting in the new building during this time. The Lodge received a letter from the Grand Master giving Fleta permission and dispensation to relocate the Charter and meeting place to the new location two and one half miles west of the old Lodge on County Road No. 14 one half mile east of U.S. Highway No. 31 and to become effective on February 23, 1970.

After the new Lodge Hall was completed the members voted to change the day and time of the meetings. The Lodge had been meeting on Saturdays prior to this last change. On January 17, 1970 Bro. Richard D. Young made a motion "to change the regular meeting from first and third Saturdays to second and fourth Monday nights". The Lodge voted 14-0 to accept the motion. On February 7, 1970 the Lodge voted on the motion to change the meeting nights and the motion was carried unanimously. The lodge began meeting on Monday nights on the 23rd of February 1970 and has not changed since then and is the longest length of time the meeting nights has not been changed. The Eastern Star began meeting in Fleta Lodge in October when Bro Gaston Callis motioned that they be allowed to use the Lodge hall. Bro. John T. Huffman built and donated to the Lodge a display case for historic memorabilia that is in the dinning area of the Lodge. The Lodge building was dedicated on May 25, 1974.

The secretaries of today are not as descriptive as the secretaries of times past because they tend to keep their comments short and use no descriptive comments like their predecessors. The minutes also do not include information from letters sent to them from the Grand Lodge or from

other sources. Sometimes some events do make it into the minutes these days. In 1979, there was a letter from the grand Master requesting aide to the people who suffered from the effects of Hurricane that struck Mobile in October of that year. Masonry has been in the decline as is many organizations of this nature and there was an attempt by the Grand Lodge in 1981 to revive interest in its own membership. There were three Committees formed to help membership roles: 1. Advancement, 2. Retention, 3. Recovery. Each year many members go "*Suspended for Non-payment of Dues*". The Grand Lodge publishes a report every year and there are approximately 1200 deaths and 1200 suspensions every year. In the seventeen years I have been a Mason there were approximately 58,000 members shown in 1987 and now there are approximately 32,000 members.

One of the more interesting meetings that occurred during the 1980's was a Special communication on August 8, 1988, called for the purpose of opening an Entered Apprentice Lodge to initiate Mr. Macon Alton Brock. The minutes state the following "*Because of Bro's Brock active participation as an Ordained Deacon at Pintlala Baptist Church, the Degree Team consisted predominately of other deacons and present or former members of the church, who are Master Masons. Included were Baptist deacons Bros. James Hatch, Sam Whigham, Pat Moseley, and Jerry Maddox. Church members were Bros. Phillip Stabler, Curtis Wilson, who is a Fellowcraft, and James Reeves and former church member Bro. C.W. Walls*". The uniqueness of the above Degree Team was like none seen since the 1800's or the early 1900's. During this time two other Masonic organizations that met briefly at Fleta's Lodge hall were the Palestine Shrine No. 3, W. S. of J. and the Amarouth, Court No. 3. It was noted in the September 10, 1990 minutes that Bro. Curtis Wilson served in Desert Storm in the 1241st Adjutant General Company. There was an invitation extended to the Lodge to attend on April 13th 1991 at Pintlala Baptist Church to meet with President George H. Bush, the senior. On March 23, 1992, Bro. Tom Jones, the football coach and a member of Fleta Lodge, was inducted to the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. On March 8, 1993 the secretary reported "that tonight there is a rare natural phenomenon of a *Full Hot Moon* in where the moon is 22,000 miles closer to the Earth than usual and this event occurs once every 200 years. It is perfectly clear tonight and the full moon is astonishingly bright". In the summer of 1997 meetings were held between Fleta Lodge No. 223 and Ramer

Lodge No. 243 concerning the possibility of Ramer merging with Fleta. These meetings culminated at a Special communication on the 3rd day of July 1997 by a unanimous vote of those present, Ramer Lodge No. 243 voted to petition the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Alabama for consolidation with Fleta Lodge No. 223. Therefore Delton E. Havard, Grand Master granted this merger on August 8, 1997. Ramer added to Fleta's role some 48 members when they merged. I intend to write a history of Ramer Lodge in the future and in the next P. H. A. Newsletter I will have a list of all members who joined Sandy Ridge, Mt. Carmel and Fleta Lodge No. 223 from 1854 to 2004.

Pintlala Historical Association
c/o Pintlala Public Library
255 Federal Road
Hope Hull, AL 36043

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