

Alderman Historical Association

First Reunion Held in 1928
Patricia Crosby Leonard - President

APRIL, 2015

[HTTP://ALDERMANHISTORICALASSOCIATION.ORG](http://ALDERMANHISTORICALASSOCIATION.ORG)

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*****AHA Mission Statement*****

To honor our ancestral lineage and foster the continued efforts of John Thomas Alderman in compiling and recording the history of the Southern Branch of the Alderman family. We will do this by honoring Alderman descendants with an annual reunion to allow sharing of genealogical information, maintaining relationships with other Alderman family groups, the care and maintenance of the John Alderman, Sr. cemetery and other sites as may be deemed needed by the Association Board of Directors.

**2015 REUNION WILL BE ON 27 JUNE
RESERVATION FORM IS ENCLOSED**

Reunion Agenda:

- **Guest Speaker** – Mr. Joel Rose of the Sampson County Historical Society.
- **Election of Officers** – President Patricia Crosby Leonard has indicated her desire to relinquish the presidency and it is also time to revisit our other officer positions.
- **Sharing of Historical documents and other items.**

Feature Articles -

Bound Together by Family

A submission to the Women's Issues Committee Essay Contest for Family

I am frequently digging thru family history stories and asking for descriptions of people. I want to know the people behind the dates. But I often just keep it to myself rather than boring my children with it. Until I read a recent article. In the article "The Stories that Bind Us"¹ Bruce Feiler stated "The single most important thing you can do for your family may be the simplest of all: develop a strong family narrative."² The article goes on to cite a study done at Emory University that showed that children that could answer simple questions about their family history were better at facing challenges. So using the questions listed in the article I set out to find teachable moments and be sure to pass on the stories of the heroes of the family. I wanted to be sure they knew about the young couple that came to Jamestown and fought off Indians. I wanted them to know about the elder soldier that rounded up his drinking buddies and went from Vermont to Boston to 'show those Tories a thing or two'. I wanted them to feel the excitement of their great-great grandmother as a little girl crouched down in the back of the wagon and watching civilization disappear. I wanted to share the story of how poor she was when first married and how they made it thru. I wanted them to be sure to remember the story of how that great woman at the end of her life sat beside my crib and prayed while a tornado lifted our trailer up off the ground, turned it around and sat it back down. I wanted them to know the story of their great grandmother (the story teller for her generation) who told a tornado to go away, *and it did!* I wanted them to know the story of their grandfather who was a pilot for the wing-walker with a traveling group of barnstormers and later taught bombers to fly in wingtip formation; the one that made 19 dead stick landings and lived to tell the tale. I wanted them to know the story of their grandmother who was so sick when she was carrying me that she kept passing out at work, yet had to get back up and keep going because the money was needed. And I began to recite the wonderful quirky, sad, funny, memorable stories of US; those things that bind us together as a family and make us unique.

¹ "The Stories that Bind Us", *Readers Digest*, September 2013:32-34.

² *Ibid*, pg 33

I wanted them to also have stories of their dad's family as well, and that was easy since his father loved to tell stories. Like the one about the family hiding the food from the marauding soldiers and how they lifted a young slave girl up on the top of a huge wardrobe where she lay, so scared she could hardly breathe while they searched the house; or how during the days of segregation their water jug had only one ladle for *all* workers to share. How thru days of plenty and lean the family has stayed connected to this farmland for over 250 years. He would never brag about himself, but I tell them about how he rigged up a step stool so that he could climb up on the tractor, for you see he had cerebral palsy and every day was a challenge to keep farming. Their grandmother went back to school as an adult and got her nursing degree so that she could help out and earn a steady income for the family that wasn't dependent on the weather or crop prices and paid for the house that we now live in.

Throughout the wonderful tapestry of history there were some common threads-determined people with a sense of adventure; people that got knocked down, but never gave up. Hoping to teach them that success isn't final and that failure isn't fatal, I give them a story to go along with it. If being conscious of their story was a key predictor of future success, I dove in. But you know, amidst the eye rolling and sighed "I've heard this one before" it was sometimes hard for me to remember why I bothered. But this past December when I picked up my daughter for her college break, and was also bringing my 25 year old son home for a weekend, I listened to the excited chatter in the backseat. "Do you remember the time"....."I remember when you"....."Mom, tell them the story about..." I realized that it might not be the older stories that I cherished, but they were telling and loving the stories that they were a part of. They did love family and the crazy stories that define us.

A cousin at Thanksgiving asked me write down the stories of our grandfather. She said she was so young when he died she didn't have any strong memories of him. Every family needs a story keeper I guess and I am it. When I asked my children who was going to be the story keeper for their kids' kids the youngest one said "You are Mom". I told her that it was doubtful that I would be around to tell stories to her grandchildren, to which she quickly replied "you have to film it Mom". She said no one else tells it as well. She wants a video blog burned onto DVD that she can just play whenever she wants to hear the story again. Hmm, so the old, old story meets the new digital age. You know, that could work.

What about your family? Are you recording the stories of courage and determination among your own people? If you don't know the stories, ask other family members. There are heroes of the past just waiting to be uncovered and revived. Look them up, write them down, tell them again around the dinner table or record someone else telling them. Blest be the ties that bind...and the MP3, MP4, JPEG and PDF too!

Submitted by: Susan Corliss-Bland
Battle of Rockfish Chapter, NSDAR

Remembering Ancestors

How will our descendants remember their ancestors? Perhaps there will be tokens of our existence left for them to read or feel a quilt or clothing or perhaps only a photograph to look upon. Perhaps there will be letters written by a family member who was a soldier in the middle of a war. These are some of those items that will be cherished by our descendants.

As the years have pass by there have been family reunions held to remember our Alderman ancestors and with large numbers of Alderman Descendants attending those reunions. Present day reunions reveal that there seems to be less interest in these reunions as membership and attendance has fallen to an embarrassing level. The Alderman Reunion, which is held in Delway, North Carolina on the fourth Saturday of June each year, seems to be losing family members or uninterested Alderman Descendants of John, David and Daniel. What is the solution? Shall the graves of these men be forgotten in the future? There are photos of these men's graves posted on Facebook and Find-a-Grave sites that indicate there is an interest but these photos are copied from other members' family trees, which clearly states that a visit was not made to the cemetery nor has an interest been made as to a family reunion.

As president of the Alderman Historical Association I have tried to encourage all Alderman Descendants to attend our reunion. I have posted the meeting on message boards and other sites so

that many people will know about the reunion. It certainly is dishearten to know that the reunion remains in danger of disbanding with so few members attending each year. At the June, 2014 reunion there was a lengthy discussion about providing the new two volume set of Alderman books, authored by Jack Westberry, to several well known libraries, but no decision was made. Is there an archive near to you that would provide a speaker to the reunion in return for a set of these books?? I wonder how many people who receive this newsletter will respond to this question.

How will your descendants remember you????

Sincerely,
Patricia Crosby Leonard, President
A descendant of John, David and Daniel Alderman

Further Comments –

This writer visited with one of our Association members this past January, 2015 having not heard from her in a while. I speak of Mrs. Mazine Winstead who published a book on John Alderman, Sr. back in 1987. Mrs. Winstead and her husband Elmo are now 93 and 94 respectively and still live in their home in Philadelphia, MS. They have outlived both of their children and have seen the passing of most of their close friends. Both are in relatively good health but age is taking its toll. Mrs. Winstead's book was highly regarded and sits on most of our bookshelves. I offer this comment after reading the previous articles by Susan Bland and Patricia Leonard. Life is short and we need to pass on information to the younger generation and do our best to instill in them an interest in family history.

ALDERMAN FAMILY ARTICLES

If any of you have articles you feel would be of interest to our group, please send them to James Alderman at alde711@aol.com for possible use in our semi-annual newsletters. You may have something that a member would love to know about.

Alderman Family History Books Are Still Available

- Original “Aldermans in America” – contact Susan Bland - susan@intrstar.net
- **New AIA Volumes 1&2** building on the original “Aldermans in America” – contact Jack Westberry- janeandjackwestberry@live.com

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SEE YOU IN DELWAY, NC ON JUNE 27TH !!!!!