

Thursday Afternoon Club Celebrates 73rd Anniversary

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Mrs. Logan read the nostalgic "Christmas Rose", using Italian expressions, a reading that she gave as a child for her mother's December program at the Thursday Book Club meetings. Mrs. McGinnis sang several old favorites which she had also sang as a youngster at Book Club meetings hosted by Mrs. Clarence Cornwell.

Daughters of charter members recalled special memories of earlier club meetings for a green and pink history book prepared for each member.

Janet Falls, retired teacher and club member for several years, recalled to the group how she and another KM student, Nick Moss, looked out the Central School window during school in the early 20s and observed all the "dressed up ladies" walking and getting out of carriages and entering the D.C. Mauney home, now the George Houser home across the street from Central School.

"We thought a wedding was going on because all the ladies were so dressed up. I wondered at the time if I would ever be able to be a part of such a group," she said.

Mrs. Houser said that one of her early remembrances of club meetings at her house was that she had to hold the can of Wesson Oil for her mother to make a special salad; lettuce for which had to be ordered from Gastonia. "We kept the refreshments cool in a big screened cage (dry well) that we lowered to keep cool on the back porch," she said.

Several members, including Helen Logan and Sarah Kate Ormand Lewis, recalled that a number of children of club members "took expression" from Laura and Lillian Plonk, and then later from Mrs. E.W. Neal, and all provided programs for meetings twice monthly of the Thursday Book Club. Marion Patterson recalled that weight concern was a minor consideration in those days and that she recalled at her mother's house there were always two plates, one for the main course, and the smaller one for dessert. After the book club meeting, there was pleasant anticipation of eating the leftovers, she said.

Several of the daughters said they learned about housekeeping, due to the programs and the hostessing of their mothers. Maude Plonk Patterson and Mary Foust Plonk Weaver told how their mother, the late Mrs. J.O. Plonk, and the late Mrs. E.W. Griffin were involved in a debate on the subject, "Housekeeping is more important than homemaking". Mrs. Griffin won out when she said that "the bowl of flowers would be erroneous on a table that was not dusted and a good meal would not be so tempting if the tablecloth was not clean."

It was only in recent years that the club voted to serve "lighter" refreshments, instead of full course meals, and started meeting once a month instead of twice.

Present as visitors were Sarlee Harrill Horton of Norcross, Ga., Polly Goforth Pharr of Concord and Mary

Frances Hord Cothran of Shelby, daughters of members from 1913.

Charlene Padgett and Lib Arthur recalled that when they moved to town in the early 40s the Book Club entertained at a tea, introducing them to the community and Mrs. Padgett said she was asked to join the club in 1940 and has been active since. Mrs. Arthur recalled that her first home in Kings Mountain was an apartment at the home of Mrs. Mike Plonk, a member of the Book Club who initiated her. "You can believe that apartment was spotless when the book club members came to call," she said.

Mrs. George Houser's mother, Mrs. D.C. Mauney, was the club's first president in 1913, and, according to minutes, Mrs. Mauney and Mrs. C.Q. Rhyne, who was a former principal of West School, organized the club because of the "lack of cultural influences in Kings Mountain." Twenty-two ladies attended the first meeting and the dues were 25 cents a year. Seventy-three years later, the dues are only \$4 a year by 22 members. Club members take turns hosting and arranging monthly programs and also present books for participation of all members. Mrs. W. Lawrence Logan wrote the club collect in 1985 and members use it at every meeting.

Members seldom missed a meeting in the early years, even though they walked to

most, and today the club members continue the tradition of good attendance. "We don't have many members who walk to meetings but they have retained the same enthusiasm of our organizers," said Mrs. Houser.

Quoting the late Mrs. J.O. Plonk, Mrs. Houser said, "New folks have been added and new friends we have made. In our time we've seen changes from buggies to space. In all of our lives and our thoughts made revision; as we embraced computers,

the Beatles and television. Now we move on to another milestone from here and we charted ones say to you, softly, but clear, times keep changing and there's much not the same. The Thursday Afternoon Book Club stands proud to her name."



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Handel's music adds to joy

The music of Christmas is part of the season's charm, and of all the musical works associated with Christmas, perhaps none is as beloved as George Frederic Handel's masterpiece, *Messiah*.

As a young man, Handel was appointed conductor to the Elector of Hanover, in his native country. During the autumn of 1710, he visited London, where he met with great success. A year later, Handel returned to London and after being presented with a pension by the reigning Queen Anne, he decided not to return to his homeland. However, Anne died and in a unique turn of events, Handel's old master, the Elector of Hanover, now George I, ascended the throne of England.

Fortunately, the new king was a true music lover, and he restored Handel to favor. Handel soon occupied a key position in the artistic life of England, writing, producing and directing operas.

Eventually he turned from opera to the oratorio form, reaching the mass audience of his day. His oratorios were choral dramas of great vitality and grandeur, ideally suited to the middle class of England.

Messiah is the crowning work of Handel. Written in just 24 days, it was performed for the first time in 1742. It expressed the faith of the man who was Handel, the man who exclaimed to his servant, upon completing the oratorio, "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God Himself!"

The libretto is a compilation of verses from the Bible. Although the libretto is generally attributed to Charles Jennens, a wealthy patron of the arts, there is reason to believe that Jennens' chaplain was more than partially responsible for it.

In the first part of the oratorio, the prophecies of the coming of Christ and His birth are treated; this is the portion most frequently performed at



Christmas time. The verses are drawn from the prophets of the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Evangelists and the letters of St. Paul.

The second part of the oratorio concludes with the famed Hallelujah Chorus. So moved was King George upon hearing this chorus, tradition says, he spontaneously rose to his feet. Today, audiences still stand during the Hallelujah Chorus in tribute to this great work.

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