

BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

February 2004

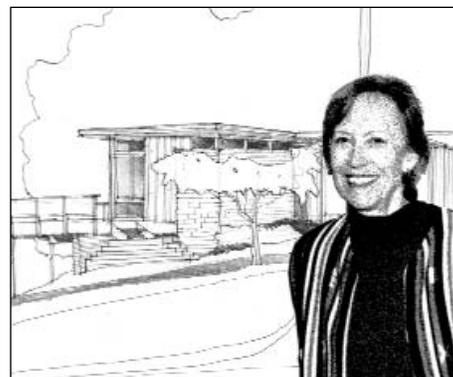
The Houses We Live In

Please join us for the Annual Meeting of the Society. Frances Robb will challenge us to think about our homes as reflections of our tastes and values. Her talk will be illustrated by slides of homes through the ages. Robb encourages us to bring photographs of the homes in which we have lived.

While architectural historians study the styles and features of the many American house types, social historians, including Robb, reflect on the practices and emotional feelings of those who have and do live within various types of houses. They believe each inhabitant shapes a house, and in turn is shaped by the house. Most often the result is a "home," a term that evokes rich and emotional ideas of privacy, activity, comfort, and social status.

Robb, a Birmingham native, has long been interested in architectural and photographic history. A visit to the Belview Heights home in which she grew up inspired her talk. Contemplating how her family and the current owner use the 1930s Tudor styled Bungalow led her to thinking about concepts of "home" and how they and the places we call home have changed over the decades.

"Since frontier times, owning a house, she comments, "has been one of the most powerful American dreams. After we have it, most of us plan, daydream, and fantasize about remodeling it, changing our kitchens or bathrooms, adding storage, or altering the use or look of our front or back yards. And many of us bring our daydreams to fruition."



Frances Robb attended Birmingham-Southern College, the University of North Carolina, the University of Wisconsin and Yale University, from which she received an M. A. in Art History. She served as a curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington and as an art historian at the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Christian University, the University of North Texas, and the University of the South. She now works as a museum and art consultant and as a consultant on historic photographs to individuals and institutions.

Let's Hear for "the Ladies"

The Ladies of the Art Club, that is. What a crew of early professional women! And what lives these gallant gals born shortly following the Civil War lived in Birmingham, New York, Boston, Paris, Spain, Morocco, and Indochine. Passionate to tell their stories is Vicki Ingham, Editor, Home Decorating and Design Books, at Meredith in Iowa. Ingham is a former Birmingham resident and editor for *Southern Living* and *Oxmoor House*.



Julius Linn and Vicki Ingham with Carrie Hill landscape

Ingham's 1994 UAB Masters' thesis includes a chapter on the ladies who formed the Art Club in 1908 to market their work. Later they helped found "The Museum" and inspired and educated generations of local artists.

Ingham will get her opportunity, thanks to Dr. Julius Linn, nephew, admirer and collector of the work of his aunt Carrie Hill. Linn is making possible research and publication of this year's members' book and an exhibit of original art work at the Birmingham Public Library in November. The Committee for "The Ladies" currently includes: Regina Ammon, Pat Camp, Vicki Ingham, Julius Linn, and Marjorie White.

"The Ladies" include Lucille Douglass, Della Dryer, Hannah Elliott, Carrie Hill, Caroline Lovell, Willie McLaughlin, Caroline Montgomery, and Alice Rumph. Please contact Marjorie White, 251-1880, if you have information or art works by these Ladies.

SOCIETY CALENDAR

The Houses We Live In
Annual Meeting
February 16, 2004, 7:00 p.m.
Birmingham Botanical Gardens

House Types 101
Birmingham Area Board of Realtors
March 25, 9:00 a.m.-Noon

Downtown Discovery Tours
For School Groups
April & May 2004

Heritage Society Party
April 25, 2004, Noon
Kaul-Stephens House, Redmont

Preservation Awards
May 13, 2004, 5:00 p.m.
Jemison Flats

Ladies of the Art Club
Publication Celebration
Exhibit Opening
November 7, 2004, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Library Gallery
Birmingham Public Library

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Endowment to perpetuate the Society Created

Led by longtime supporters Steve Williams, Richard Bowron and Charles Caldwell III, who serve on the Society's Investment Committee, the Trustees formally created an Endowment on January 6, 2004. According to the Investment Policy adopted at a special meeting of the Trustees, Endowment funds will be invested until the Endowment reaches \$1.2 million and thereafter a certain percent of interest may support Society needs. Thanks to the generous contributions of Society Members during 2003, the Endowment reached \$401,000 at December 31, 2003.

Trustees and Officers to be Elected

The Society's Nominating Committee —chaired by Richard Bowron— presents the following candidates to serve as Officers and Trustees for 2004. New Officers: Richard W. Sprague, President; Sara Ruiz de Molina, Past President. New Trustees for terms 2004-2006: Regina Ammon, Julius Linn, Linda Nelson, Heather Rona, Barbara Shores, and Odessa Woolfolk. Members will vote on the Nominees at the Annual Meeting on February 17, 2003. Any additional nominations must be received in the Society's offices two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

Listing of Civil Rights Resources Proceeds

Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for properties associated with the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s are proceeding. Dr. C. Van West, director of the Middle Tennessee State University Program in Historic Preservation, is writing the nominations, working with Marjorie White, Lola Hendricks, Odessa Woolfolk for the Society; Vickie Reynolds, Office of the Mayor; Christy Anderson and Trina Binkley, Alabama Historical Commission (AHC); and Carol Poe, Alabama Black Heritage Council.

To date, a context statement establishing the national significance of the Birmingham Movement and nominations for 27 churches have been prepared, submitted for AHC review, and are currently being revised for final submission.

Jan-Term intern Kate St. Clair, a journalism major at Samford, researched court cases and bombings forming the "Battle for North Smithfield," events of 1949-1951 surrounding the ending of City's residential zoning laws that led to the naming of Dynamite Hill. A nomination for National Historic Landmark status for Bethel Baptist

Church, Colledgeville, and its parsonage and guard house is currently pending before Landmarks in Washington.

With financial support from AHC, Rick Sprague AIA and the Bethel congregation are completing plans for preservation of the 100-year-old church and development of a memorial garden.

Nominations for the Birmingham Civil Rights District (the proposed listing of 29 properties downtown) and for the Center Street District on Dynamite Hill will be finished by June 30, 2004. The Society, the Alabama Historical Commission, and the City of Birmingham are sponsoring the research and nominations.

The Linn & The Henleys – the Members Publication for 2002

It does exist. Final comments from the family are awaited and we shall be at press.

Architectural Guide a Great Success

Sales of the hardback volumes have been great. Both hardbacks and soft backs remain available from Books-A-Million and the Society's offices. Marjorie White will offer a "quicky" course for area realtors on March 25. For information, call Liz Kendrick, Birmingham Area Board of Realtors, 871-1911.

Fabulous File Cabinets Given

Bouquets and garlands to Geoffrey Longenecker for the donation and delivery of enough file cabinets to efficiently house the Society's collections. Thank you. Thank you, Geoffrey.

Office Hours Established

The Society's Offices in Duncan House at Sloss Furnaces are open 1:00-4:00 p.m., Mondays-Fridays. At other times, please leave us a message and "if we have the information," we will call you back.

You Can Call Us

The Society's telephone number 205-251-1880 is not listed; the current phone book just did not include it. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Check Us Out on the Web

Thanks to Goodloe White, www.bhistorical.org, is up and running. Volunteers to help keep it updated are in high demand. We receive lots of publication orders and memberships from the web.

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One Sloss Quarters
Birmingham, Alabama 35222
Address Correction and Forwarding Requested

Join us for
The Annual Meeting
February 16, 7:00 p.m.

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Birmingham, AL