

Houston Hemerocallis Society (Since 1953)

Part IV Highlights “In the Beginning”

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The 1963-64 President of Houston Hemerocallis Society (HHS) was the former Miss Neva Waller, born in Magnolia, Arkansas, June 6, 1894. At 17, she moved to Frederick Oklahoma, where she met and married J. W. Alexander. We find from the pages of Region 6 History written by Lula Mae Purnell the following report: It tells of a gathering of 5,000 flower lovers on July 13, 1946, at the Henry Field Seed Company and the result was the forming of the Midwest Hemerocallis Society. Neva (Waller) Alexander (Mrs. J. W.) was one of five from Texas to become a Charter Member of the Midwest Hemerocallis Society.

At the Convention in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, May 16-19, the Society changed its name to the American Hemerocallis Society.

Neva Alexander was a hard working person and around 1947 decided she wanted to hybridize daylilies. The Alexanders bought a farm at Alta Loma and called it Woodlawn Acres. Neva had five acres in daylilies. Linda Alexander's Aunt has a picture she took of Neva from the second story of the house that shows her watering with a bucket.

Neva hybridized daylilies and registered 55 varieties. Granddaughter Linda said she named many of her daylilies after her daylily friends from that period of time. Mr. Klinger was the bus driver at the Orlando Convention in the 1950s and she named *Hemerocallis* '**Louis Klinger**' (Alexander, 1955) for him.

AHS awards are as follows:

- *H.* '**Southern Pride**' (Alexander, 1953)
1955 Junior Citation
1956 Honorable Mention
- *H.* '**Rosie Meyer**' (Alexander, 1957)
1967 Honorable Mention
- *H.* '**Lady Neva**' (Alexander-Moody, 1970)
2003 Honorable Mention
2006 Award of Merit
'**Lady Neva**' was hybridized by Neva

Alexander, but registered by Neva's friend, Rowena Moody.

Neva and her husband had five children all born in Galveston, Texas. Mr. J. W. Alexander died in the 1950s. Neva continued living on the farm until 1965, when she moved to Harlingen, Texas. Today there are no daylilies at the farm. Much of the land has been turned into an apartment complex. Alta Loma has been annexed by Santa Fe, Texas.

The Alexanders had two daughters, three sons, and 13 grandchildren at the time of Neva's death, January 25, 1969.

Neva Alexander was the Grandmother of HHS member Linda Alexander. Linda's mother was Grace Alexander, a member of Houston Area Daylily Society (HADS) until her passing. Linda has collected a number of her Grandmother Neva's registered daylilies. Her mother, Grace, had collected a number of her mother-in-law's registered daylilies and always looked for more when at the Conventions in the different parts of the USA. Grace was married to Josh Alexander. Grace and Josh Alexander's children are Robert, Steve, and Linda.

It is Linda's desire to have an official AHS Display Garden someday.

Linda brought pictures of her Grandparents to share with those in attendance at the HHS meeting. She was at the display table to answer questions anyone might have about her Grandmother Neva and her daylily farm.

If you have information about Neva Alexander or her registered daylilies you wish to share with Linda, please contact her at the email address. alexintexas@comcast.net

Sources used to write this article: Region 6 web site; Ray Houston, Region 6 Archivist/Historian; AHS Cumulative Awards list for Neva Alexander; and Linda Alexander.

Note: In 1946, Neva Alexander was 52 when she became a Charter Member of AHS, and 53 years of age when she started hybridizing daylilies.