



The 1990 Pioneer Picnic held on the grounds of Buckingham School, had all the ingredients needed for a perfect day: good weather, good food, and plenty of talk about the "good old days." The Class of 1940, celebrating their fifty year reunion, was honored. Lloyd Hendry (plaid shirt) and Audrey Sander Bell (in white) were co-chairpersons for the reunion weekend. The Pioneer Picnic is held annually and is open to anyone who has lived in Lee County fifty or more years.

Photo by E. B. Colcord



Ambrose McGregor and his wife Tootie came to Fort Myers in 1891 when they were advised that their chronically ill son, Bradford, needed a warmer climate. Ambrose and Tootie both liked to fish so they spent two winters at the Tarpon House before settling on a house. McGregor, a thrifty Scotsman and keen businessman, invested heavily in property in the Fort Myers area and in Alva. When he died, at fifty-eight, he was reported to be one of the ten richest men in America. The Bradford Hotel was built by Harvie E. Heitman and financed by Tootie McGregor, widow of Ambrose. It was named Bradford after her son who had died two years before. In 1912, Mrs. Tootie McGregor Terry (she had married Dr. M.O. Terry after McGregor's death) offered to construct a fifty-foot boulevard to Punta Rassa beginning at Whiskey Creek if the city would build a similar road from the creek to Monroe Street. She also offered to pay \$500 a year for maintenance. Her only stipulation was that the road should be called McGregor Boulevard in memory of her late husband. Tootie died before this was done, but Dr. Terry notified the city that it should still be done. It was completed at a cost of \$105,000 and officially named McGregor Boulevard on July 14, 1915.

Courtesy P. T. Board

This picture of the English family was taken in 1949. Dan English (second from left) was the grandson of the first English who settled down by the river in Alva. With him is his wife, Alice, and their four sons, James, Hugh, Edwin, and Joseph. To this day, the English family is prominent in Alva. The Alva Museum is the "brainchild" of Mrs. English and depicts life since the earliest beginnings of Alva. Near the entrance is a photograph of Grandma English (Margaret McDougald English), a Civil War widow who first came by wagon to the Alva community in 1875 with her seven children. The Alva Methodist Church is the outgrowth of a Sunday school class that was held in the home of Margaret English. The church was organized in 1886. When it was remodeled in 1976 a plaque was found between the walls with the routed words, "July 10, 1903 - Builders Of This House - A. J. English, W. C. Bonniwell, B. P. Elmer." The plaque is now in the museum.

Courtesy Alice English

