



Guest Lecture Series
in conjunction with
the Second Aliceville POW Camp Reenactment

- **Guest Lecture Series will be held at the Aliceville Entertainment Complex, 210 Broad St, NE (one block North of Aliceville Museum)**
- **The POW Reenactment Compound will be directly across Memorial Parkway from the Aliceville Museum on the south side of the intersection with Broad Street.**
- **Distance from the Entertainment Complex to the Compound is about 600 feet.**

10:00 - 10:45 am *Overview of the Aliceville Prisoner of War Camp - 1942-45*
Presenter: Ruth Beaumont Cook

With facilities for 6,000 German prisoners of war, Camp Aliceville was one of the largest POW camps in the United States during WWII. The camp transformed a small Pickens County town and intertwined the lives of local Americans, newly trained MPEG guards, and German soldiers captured in North Africa as well as northern France. This is the story of how the Geneva Convention was implemented and of the ongoing relationship between these groups.

*Ruth Beaumont Cook is a graduate of The Ohio State University. She has lived and worked in Alabama since 1970. Each of her three books of narrative non-fiction highlights lesser-known aspects of larger historical events—the Civil War, World War II, and the development of the marble industry. Her second book, *Guests Behind the Barbed Wire*, was awarded a bronze medal for outstanding historical writing by the Independent Publishers Group in 2008. Ruth has served on the Board of Directors of the Alabama Writers' Forum and the executive planning committee of the Writing Today conference at Birmingham-Southern College.*

10:45 - 11:15 am Break

Round Table Discussion - Ruth Cook

Activity - Walk to the POW Reenactment Compound to view the scheduled event.

11:15 am - Noon *Essential Work: The German POW Labor Program in WWII*
Presenter: Ann Shields

This discussion addresses the role of German POWs in meeting US wartime labor shortages. Topics include Geneva Convention POW labor restrictions, International Red Cross oversight, on- and off-base work experiences, POW security measures/escapes, local administration and economics, and relationships between locals and the POWs. The ambiguous status of Italian Service Units and the rocky European repatriation of POWs are explained. Topics are illustrated with photos, maps, interviews, and a display of POW items.

Ann Shields retired from the Department of Defense as a nurse in 2020 and continues as a research assistant for WWII author Danny S. Parker. Her interest in German POWs began in 2005, culminating in a five-year oral history project documenting POW labor in her Indiana hometown area. Over the years, she has conducted over 70 interviews with German ex-POWs, guards, U.S. veterans, and civilians in the U.S. and Germany, where she lived for two decades.



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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
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Noon - 1:00 pm **Lunch on your own (a guide to local eateries will be provided)**

Activity - Walk to the POW Reenactment Compound to view the scheduled event.

1 - 1:45 pm ***My Father's Life as a POW in Camp Aliceville***

Presenter: Helga Warren

Author Helga Warren will speak about unexpectedly finding her father's World War II memoirs in an old suitcase and the book she wrote about this adventure, *The Enchanted Suitcase: A Window Onto My German Father's World War II Life*. Her father, Karlheinz Stoess, wrote one of the only known first-person accounts of life for the German POWs at Camp Aliceville. She will read several excerpts from his recollections and lead a discussion about his experiences.

Helga Warren is a Washington, DC, tour guide specializing in German and French tours of the city and a former public school German Immersion teacher. She lives with her husband in the Virginia suburbs of the nation's capital. During the pandemic, she wrote a book about her father's World War II memoirs, including the two years he spent as a German POW at Camp Aliceville.

1:45 - 2:15 pm **Break**

Round Table Discussion - Ann Shields and Helga Warren

Activity - Walk to the POW Reenactment Compound to view the scheduled event.

2:15 - 3:00 pm ***Historiography and Leadership: Honoring WWII American
Combat Soldiers from West Alabama***

Presenter: Monty J. Thornburg

This presentation will highlight American Combat Soldiers from the Western Black Belt and the Aliceville, AL region. The course will include Black and White American Combat soldiers' contributions, honor those who contributed, and highlight their leadership contributions in civilian life after WWII.

Monty J. Thornburg, Ph.D., Professor: Executive Leadership Program, Holy Cross University, New Orleans, LA. He has conducted extensive research connecting some of WWII's impressive African American combat units and contributions by White and Black WWII Alabama veterans and their contributions toward positive postwar change.