



Photo courtesy of Howard Bochiardy

PRESERVING THE PAST

by Peggy Lantz

The remnant of an important turn-of-the-century Florida horticultural activity is prized and preserved in the Central Florida area. The location continues to hold interest for both botanical and architectural reasons.

This is the home and gardens of Dr. Henry Nehrling — a pioneer Florida horticulturist. The origins of the house and gardens are described in the accompanying article about Dr. Nehrling.

From 1933 until 1977, the house and property in Gotha was owned and lived on by Julian E. Nally. During this time Lake Audubon's name was changed to Lake Nally.

The house is still there, though much of the acreage has been divided up and sold off. It is now owned by Howard and Barbara Bochiardy, along with six acres of the original 40-some acres.

Howard Bochiardy is an Orlando architect, and is remodeling and living in the house. Barbara Bochiardy graciously showed me the beautiful home. The drive as I entered is shrouded with bamboo — Nehrling cultivated 150 varieties of palms and bamboo. The original pine floors and cypress walls of the

house have been refinished, and the kitchen has been remodeled and the wiring brought up-to-date. But the old tin shingles are still on the roof, and the back porch and upstairs sleeping porch have the charm of lovely old Florida houses.

We walked through a tangle of bamboo and palm to the lake edge, which has been nearly dried up by the drought. Bromeliads covered the ground under the cedar, red bay, and live oaks. Barbara pointed out and named the many native plants growing there, as well as many of the imported tropical plants still surviving.

But the caladiums and amaryllis for which Nehrling is famous are gone — sold off or stolen by vandals. Barbara can find not a single specimen. She has bought copies of Nehrling's books (**My Garden in Florida**, Vol. I and II, by Dr. Henry Nehrling. Edit. by A.H. Andrews. Publ. in Estero, Florida, 1944 and 1946.) and is trying to locate the native trees and plants Nehrling describes. The magnolias and cedars that he carried on his shoulders from the woods five miles away nearly 100 years ago appear to be the ones we see there now.

She says, "My husband loves the house, and I love the grounds."