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Memories of Nana & Papa's House Sallie Ann Culver and Alyce Parmelee Smith

Miss Sally [Nana] & Mr. Tom [Papa], as they were called, were our grandparents.

Sallie Ann . . .

In the middle and late '40's, the "Little House" (house in the back yard) was home for the "Cotton Boys." These were young boys who were cotton brokers that sold cotton on West Side Square called Cotton Row. Papa played cards with them at night which would always upset Nana. There was much teasing and laughter when the "Cotton Boys" were around. Several boys were killed in the war—Nana felt like she had lost some of her own sons.

When the Arsenal was in the preliminary stages, Nana was called and asked if she would serve supper to the Generals and V.I.P.s who were here then setting everything up. That was an interesting period of time. She did this for several months until the Officers Club was constructed.

In the spring and summer after supper we would all go out on the porch and sit in chairs and swing and “watch the cars go by.” You usually knew all the people.

The late Albert Lane, noted Huntsville artist, lived at Nana’s when he first arrived in Huntsville. He painted us a picture of the house with Nana on the front porch in the swing. It has brought so many memories.

Nana (as I called my grandmother) loved people and there were always lots of people coming and going in the house. One time an upstairs bedroom caught on fire and when firemen came, Nana was on the porch serving them cake and coffee.

My aunt, Alice Freeman, left teaching at West Clinton Elementary School and West Huntsville, and opened her “1st Grade” in the former dining room of the house in September 1957. It was called School for Beginners. She enrolled students whose birthdays were after September 1 and could not enroll in public schools. She continued this until her retirement. Nana loved having the school children in the house.



ABOVE: Albert Lane’s sketch of “Aunt Alice.”
RIGHT: Albert Lane and young Alyce Parmelee Smith



Papa died in the "50's" and Nana died at home at the age of 92, March 7, 1968. She was still going to town every day and to the A&P Grocery Store. They delivered her groceries every day to the house.

The house at 205 Lincoln was a wonderful place to grow up in. A home for Cotton Boys-Generals-School Children and lots and lots of Huntsville people who were looking for a home-cooked meal and lots of fellowship.

Alyce . . .

Many of my memories of 205 Lincoln Street are of my Nana's cooking. Nana made biscuits every morning for breakfast for the family and the boys in the Little House. She made sure they ate a banana on the weekend. It would absorb the whiskey they "might" drink, she would tell them.

In the spring I helped her make chow-chow. You would chop the cabbage, tomato, onion, etc., in a good chopper that attached to the kitchen table. Then all the ingredients would be put in a flour sack and hung over a large dish pan to drain overnight. After cooking and sealing jars, they would be stored in the shelves which hung over the steps that led to the basement.

When Nana closed her kitchen to the public, my Aunt Alice, quit teaching at West Clinton School and opened a "School for Beginners" (Sept. 1957). She used the room the boarders had previously eaten many a grand meal in. Some chow-chow was always left in a bowl to put on a cracker for the school children to sample. (They had smelled it for two days!)

Every morning Nana walked to the A&P (corner of Eustis and Green streets). The stock boys would carry her groceries home for her so they could get a piece of home-made cake which she always had on hand. Once when a small fire broke out in an upstairs bedroom, Nana fed the firemen cake and coffee after they had put out the blaze. They sat on the front porch and had a wonderful treat.



THE FAMILY IN FRONT OF THE FREEMAN HOUSE



*Albert Lane, third from left, D.C. Monroe, fifth from left.
(picture courtesy of The Tennessee Valley Press, Inc.)*