

A VISIT TO MY UNCLE AND AUNT'S FARM ON CEMETERY ROAD

By Marshel Roy Cunningham, GoneToAlabama@aol.com

My mother's sister, Nora Belle Barnett, married my uncle "Check" Carlee. They lived on a farm a few miles southeast of Montevallo in Chilton County. I grew up on a dairy farm that is now Orr Park, but my Uncle Check's farm was an entirely different matter. There were no boring fenced in fields on his farm for herds of milk cows to graze; on the contrary, my uncle's farm consisted of acres and acres of all sorts of vegetable rows, and not a barb wire fence in sight.

My mother and I would visit for the day back in the 1960's. I remember picking huge strawberries and field peas (shelling a bushel was guaranteed to turn your thumb purple!), and seeing the endless rows of corn. If you don't know, the taste of hot strawberries in the field is just as good if not better than the cold ones in the refrigerator. We also would eat an ear of corn raw, and ended each day with watermelon in the back yard. We only ate the heart of the melon; the part with seeds was given to the pigs.



Check and Nora Belle Carlee in front of Wilson House which once stood on Island Street near the library



Joe Arledge, husband of Lena Lucas



Check Carlee during World War II



Nora Belle Barnett Carlee during the war.

On this farm, I experienced my one and only hog killing day. The sight of a half dozen hog heads with their long tongues hanging out on a harvest table is one I shall never forget. At dusk, the chitterlings (we said chit-lins) were cooked in large pots over an open fire. (I always shared with Dr. Mahan the love of oak or hickory burning with that unforgettable smell of the smoke all day in the air.)

I remember playing games with my two cousins on the red banks of the road, and walking to the lonely little cemetery on the hill where Joe Arledge, my great grandmother's brother-in-law, was buried. My grandmother told me there used to be a church there called Free Springs Baptist. My mother's cousin, Mr. Willie Arledge, would come over so often and tend to the grave.

that I could not eat anything that was RAW. She called my mother who told her, "Just boil it in some water for 10 minutes and he will eat it." That solved the problem, but I think my cousin must have thought me to be quite a spoiled and bothersome child.

My Aunt Nora Belle also crocheted, and quilted, and canned and froze about 200 quarts of food every summer. The best of the best had to be her tomato chow chow. I think she and my uncle knew everyone in Chilton County south of Montevallo and he could tell some amazing stories of his growing up in and around the county, digging wells for people at a cost of 50 cents per well. She had the habit of rearranging her furniture often, and liked to place beds catty-cornered, which perturbed my mother to no end.

My Aunt and Uncle are gone now, but the many memories I have of driving down past Lucas Valley to visit them and my cousins will always be a special memory.



540 Shelby Street
Montevallo, AL 35115
www.historicmontevallo.org