

Jeanne Susanne Johnson Yancey Remembers:

From my earliest memories our family (Dave Johnson) would travel by car from home in Hardaway to Carol Villa for Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, Easter, Papa's birthday, and the 4th of July. I was always excited because I would see Grandmother, Papa, my aunts and uncles, and my cousins. The cousins closest to my age were Walter Junior, Neva Caroline, Betty Ann, Neva Leota, Kathryn, Seth III, and Nancy.

On Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner would be served in the grand dining room. There were two buffets; one for the turkey and dressing and all the trimmings, and the other for the desserts (pies and cakes). The grandchildren could serve their plates first and eat in the kitchen around a large square table. The adults were seated at the large dining table that seated 24 people.

After dinner the cousins would play games: May I, Red Rover, Hide and Seek, and Drop the Handkerchief. Some of the more adventurous cousins would slide down the banister of the long spiral staircase -- and hope they didn't get caught by Papa.

The other holiday meals were served at large picnic tables in the grove. Upon arriving at Carol Villa, you would always find several people turning the ice cream freezers filled with homemade ice cream.

One Easter I remember six or eight cousins went down the hill to see the bee hives. Somehow a bee hive was turned over and we all went screaming back to the big house. I remember my dad, mom, and Uncle Spencer picking the bees out of my long curls, and I said, "Get these damn bees out of my hair!" Grandmother called her doctor and he made a house call. We were all put to bed in the large front bedroom and by the grace of God we all survived.

In the summer Grandmother would invite the cousins close to the same age to spend one or two weeks with her and we would attend her church Bible School. Fridays were always special because Aunt Caroline would come and take Grandmother and the cousins to Montgomery. We would eat lunch at Morrison's Cafeteria and go to the movies. It was on one such Friday that I saw my first movie, "Tom Sawyer."

Aunt Katie would always let me stay in her bedroom and that made me feel very special.

As an adult I have gotten to know and love my younger cousins and second cousins. I feel truly blessed to have been born into this family. @