

Sallie Thompson King
By Sally T. Aycock

I just feel so indebted to her [Sallie Thompson King] and my Uncle Arthur (Arthur G. King) who was Easley postmaster under two different Democratic presidents beginning with horse and buggy mail delivery (a 1920 picture of that is in Pickens County Museum).

SALLIE THOMPSON: b. 1886 (Oct. 5) d. 1976 (Jan. 12 at age 89). Her husband had died in 1957. Graduate of Winthrop College in 1910. The only *Tatler* I have is 1907, and she is listed as a sophomore. She may have taught at one or two country schools near her home (pictures from Neals Creek and Lebanon Schools are being sent along with a graduating picture and the *Tatler*) in order to earn enough to finish her college education. Sallie Thompson was born and grew up in the Lebanon community of Anderson County, South Carolina. Sallie was one of 10 children (8 of whom grew to adulthood) born to James Robert and Florence Magnolia Williams Thompson. Even as a young girl she wanted an education and longed to become a teacher. Her mother said she would go out to the hen house and pretend she was teaching the chickens. She attended and graduated from Lebanon School (one room), about a mile's walk from her home. I'm not sure when she entered Winthrop, but I know that her father borrowed money to send her on the train and that she stayed the entire year, not coming home for Christmas vacation.



Sometime after graduating from Winthrop, Allie took a teaching position in Easley, S.C. There she met and, in August or 1914, married Arthur G. King. At that time the superintendent of schools did not want to hire a married teacher because they [might] soon get pregnant. (Teaching and nursing were about the only professions women could enter.) However, childless married women could teach. For 35+ years Sallie was employed in the Easley schools, for some time as principal of Northside Elementary School, then as a 7th grade math teacher in the Easley High School (7th - 11th grades until early 1950s). Many second and a few third generation family members came through her classroom. She was one of the first women in Easley to "bob" her hair, wear dresses above the ankles and have a car, a 1929 Chevrolet she named "Becky". During World War II she would get letters from former students serving overseas, asking her about Becky. She drove this car for 20 years until it finally just would not run and bought a new 1949 Chevrolet (just before I graduated from Agnes Scott College and no more bills were due for my education). Those are the only two cars she and Uncle Arthur ever owned. ·

To back up to 1918: Mr. and Mrs. A.G. King had moved into their lovely new two story home on North B. Street. I was told that the builder (a Mr. Hembry of Anderson, S.C.) told them he could put a 4 bedroom second story on the house for just \$300.00 more so that the total cost came to \$3000.00! They did that as they wanted a large family; unfortunately they remained childless. But the rooms were not vacant very long at a time as different family members came to stay sometimes to teach in Easley or a doctor and wife to practice medicine in Easley before WWI, and later gentlemen teachers boarded there in the '30s and '40s.

In about 1931 my father had a job as a policeman in Easley, and the family of seven was able to move about a block away into a rented house. The last child of my family was born 1934, making 3 girls and 3 boys and 8 mouths to feed. Dad had a cow to milk twice a day and raised rabbits for their meat and also sold their pelts, shipping them to N.Y. to make coats. I continued to be the "pet" of Aunt Sallie and Uncle Arthur and visited often. They wanted me to stay with them after my baby sister was born until mother could get a little stringer to take care of such a large family. Finally they

begged and cried (I was told) to keep me as their own and educate me since there were 5 others left; it was agreed - no adoption, just let me live with them. I feel very privileged (and spoiled) to have had music lessons, dancing lessons, and a B.A. degree from Agnes Scott College and an M.A. degree from Furman University and a career in teaching at various levels.

My Aunt Sallie talked often of her Winthrop education which included homemaking skills: nutrition, cooking, housekeeping; even table setting for formal dinners. She made sure that I used correct manners as well as meal planning, budgeting, and stewardship to church as well as helping others. She practiced what she preached, being very frugal all her life. She was ahead of her time in many ways, especially in women's rights. She was early to "bob" her hair, quit wearing buckle-up shoes, take an active part in civic life being president of the Easley Civic League, a distant forerunner of League of Women Voters which I later joined in Winston-Salem, N.C. and driving a car.

Mrs. A.G. King was voted Easley's Citizen of the year in the early 1950s, the first woman to receive that honor. She was an active member of First Baptist Church since 1914 and taught a Sunday school adult class for about 25 years and taught a two week summer Vacation Bible School for several years. She was active in church circles, while taking meals to sick church members, neighbors and those in need. She was a gracious hostess and was known as an excellent cook, continuing to enjoy new recipes all her life.

One final note: The 210 North B. Street house that had been a home for so many people over the years was used as a missionary home for Easley First Baptist Church a few years after her death. I then sold it to the daughter of my dearest life-long friend who had spent many nights in that house with me. The daughter had married a young man named King so the second family to own and enjoy that home has the same last name as the original owners and is only the second family to live in it. They raised three children in the home, making good use of those four upstairs rooms.