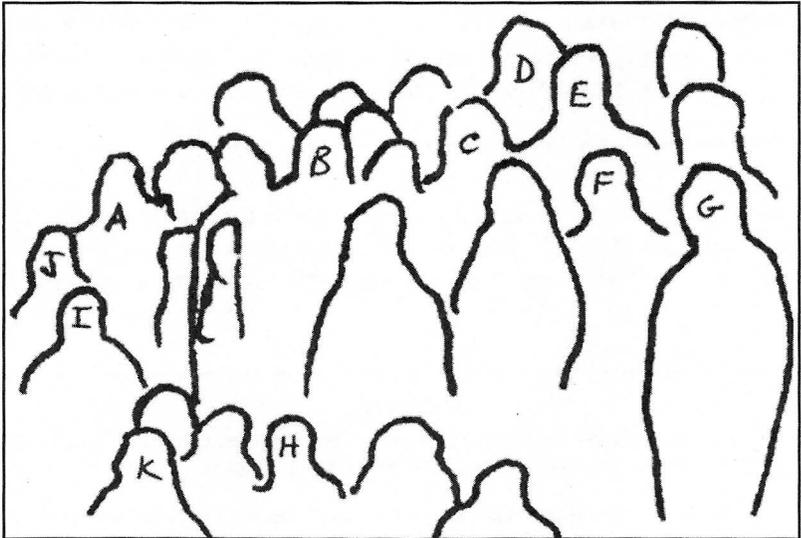




Courtesy of Vivian Ford



Vivian Ford kindly provided the above photograph, which appeared on page 67 of the October 2003 *Arlington Historical Magazine*. Now she has given us the names of some of the people in the picture. A: Miss Hancock; B: Ethel Kidwell; C and D: Children of Mr. Kemp, the school janitor; E: Elsie Wood; F: Freddie Allwine (Vivian's brother); G: Acton Kidwell; H: Florence Sealar; I: Harold Kidwell; J: Mary Sealar; K: Vivian Allwine.

Vivian Allwine Ford

BY SARA J. COLLINS

The following is an amendment and update to the article titled, "Vivian Thomas Ford; Abingdon's Last Living Resident," on pages 65-71 in the October 2003 issue of the *Arlington Historical Magazine* (Volume 12, Number 3). This article is excerpted from and based on an oral history interview with Mrs. Ford in March, 2005 for the Oral History Collections of the Virginia Room, Arlington Central Library, where the entire interview may be read.

Vivian Allwine (not Thomas) was born at Abingdon in 1912 and lived there until 1922. Her parents were Daniel Thomas Allwine, who died in 1942, and Jeanette Janusky (Mudd) Allwine, who died in 1972. Her father was the son of Jacob Allwine, who died in 1895, and Katherine (Watkin) Allwine, who died in 1915. Her mother was a grandniece of Dr. Samuel Mudd, who treated John Wilkes Booth's injury after the latter shot President Lincoln in Ford's Theater in 1865.

The Allwine family had come to live at Abingdon before she was born, as her father was superintendent of the New Washington Brick Company, which relocated from Washington to Alexandria County at the site of the former Alfred Richards Brick Company. The brick company was on the Abingdon property and the family was able to live in the historic mansion on the grounds there. Her father did not work for a "feed company," nor was he connected to the California Coal Company as stated in the earlier article. Vivian states that he was a deputy sheriff at some period.

Vivian was the youngest child in her family and had four brothers: the oldest was George Franklin, known as Frank; William Lee, called Lee; Robert Edward; Alfred Frederick, also known as Freddie. A sister and another brother had died before she was born.

Vivian's interview is replete with descriptions of family life at Abingdon, the layout of the Abingdon farm including an outhouse called "Mexico," swims in the Potomac, her brothers' walking to D.C. on the frozen river, sledding on 20th Street, trainloads of soldiers in World War I that crossed Abingdon, the flu epidemic, nearby neighborhoods, marketing, farm animals, play activities, visitors who came to see "Nellie's house," family gatherings, treasure hunters who dug on the property, Easter activities where people and eggs rolled down the hills, school days at Hume School, teachers at Hume and at Mt. Vernon schools, trolleys and buses and later cars, shopping, medical treatment, etc.

Vivian tells about her mother, Jeanette (Mudd) Allwine, and grandmother, Emma Virginia (Grinder) Mudd, living in the toll house on the Columbia Turnpike near Jefferson Davis Highway, where they collected tolls from travelers

on the turnpike and whence they rode boats on the Alexandria Canal to deliver mail to the brickyards and sell lunches they had prepared to the workers there. Her mother also at one time operated a grocery/general store in the old trolley station on 23rd Street where the fire house was later located.

Vivian describes in the interview various houses or neighborhoods she could visit by crossing corn and other farm fields, including a row of houses where a "Stokes" family lived and where her grandmother also lived in another. Vivian remembers visiting Norton's farm and remembers a very nice frame house on the north end of the property and a meat plant where dead animals were processed, perhaps for soap, in a building near the river. She describes several African-American communities near Abingdon. She reports that Abington had been used as an African-American church before the Allwines moved there. A special friend during her days at Abingdon was Old Ed West, an African-American who had a club foot and worked regularly on the Abingdon farm, cooked the feed for the pigs, and took care of the horses.

The Allwines left Abington in 1922 when Vivian was 10 years old because the property was to be acquired by the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad (RFPR) for new tracks. They "camped out" for a year or more in an old feed store on Route 1 that was converted to a temporary home. Then the family bought lots on 20th Street, and had a Sears & Roebuck house erected at #708. Vivian recalls that as they were leaving Abingdon, she remembers her father burning excess possessions in a square depression in the land toward the river that may once have been a root cellar for an earlier structure. Family possessions were given away, including an organ that went to the local Catholic church her father attended. That instrument may have later been given to the Fort Myer Chapel. After the Allwines left Abingdon, the family of retired butcher Edward W. Beckwith lived there for a few years until relocating to 21st Street, in the nearby Virginia Highlands neighborhood.

While her father was Catholic, her mother was Episcopalian, and Vivian remembers that she attended a church in southeast Washington via trolley until becoming a charter member of the local Calvary Methodist Church. Vivian herself joined this church in 1928 at the time Calvary was rebuilt.

Vivian Allwine met John Ford when he was a volunteer at the local firehouse. They were married in 1939 in Snow Hill, Maryland by the former minister of Calvary who had moved there. John Ford, who died in 2003, had lived with an aunt and uncle in Colonial Beach and moved with them to the 1000 block of 20th Street, South. He worked with his uncle Watt Lee building houses in the Virginia Highlands area. They built the house to which Vivian and John Ford later moved and in which she was still living when interviewed. John became superintendent for the Corning Construction Company.