

from: Gay Finney JEMANKO

ALICE BAKER

1. Alice was my neighbor for as long as I can remember. I was born in 1951, and she and her younger sister, Aurel lived in the big house on the hill next to our house. She was old enough to be my grandmother, but she was more of a mentor and a teacher to me.
2. She was a very intelligent person who loved to share her knowledge of science and nature with others. Her enthusiasm was contagious. She enjoyed learning new things, too. If she was alive today, she'd be on the Internet!
3. +Alice loved to wear bright colors—pink, purple, orange, red—I found out that she had had red hair when she was young (she'd had white hair as long as I know her), and fashion at the time dictated that those colors were "off-limits" for red heads!
+I believe she spent some time in China when she was young. She and her sister, Aurel supplied my brother and me with wonderful show and tell items that no one else could match. I remember a cricket box from China. Perhaps crickets were kept as pets? I remember it was a beautiful container.
+She loved science and nature. She taught me about leaves and trees, plants and berries, butterflies, moths and insects. Once she let me take a special cocoon to school, and when it emerged, it escaped from the classroom. I felt badly, but I don't think she minded much.
+When "new math" was introduced at Eagle Grade School, I was in 8th Grade. It was a combination of new ways to do computations and algebra. I had a hard time, but she wasn't fazed at all, explained it to me until I understood. She was very patient, and I was ahead of the game when I went to the big Mukwonago Union High School.
+Alice and Aurel didn't "watch" television; they "looked" at it (their word). Gunsmoke was their favorite and they watched it with all the lights off—something that was not permitted in my home.
+They had a cat. Alice named it Sputnik for the first Russian satellite. Come to think of it, that was probably controversial during the Cold War days!
+When I was in college, my courses required that I administer practice tests to "volunteers". Both Alice and Aurel were willing to be my "guinea pigs" for tests designed for older adults. My peers had to practice on fellow students, which did not allow them the same experience.
+Alice's library was a wonderful collection of books in built-in glass cases in the parlor. I borrowed many books from her over the years. The one I remember most is "A Girl of the Limberlost" by Gene Stratton Porter (1909). I still remember the olive green cover.
4. Smart patient kind generous
5. I believe Alice promoted a library for Eagle because she believed that no matter where one lives, everything in the world should be available to all through the knowledge contained in books.

Finally, my daughter's name is Alissa Beth. She was named for my grandmother and Alice Baker. She had a HUGE influence on my life.