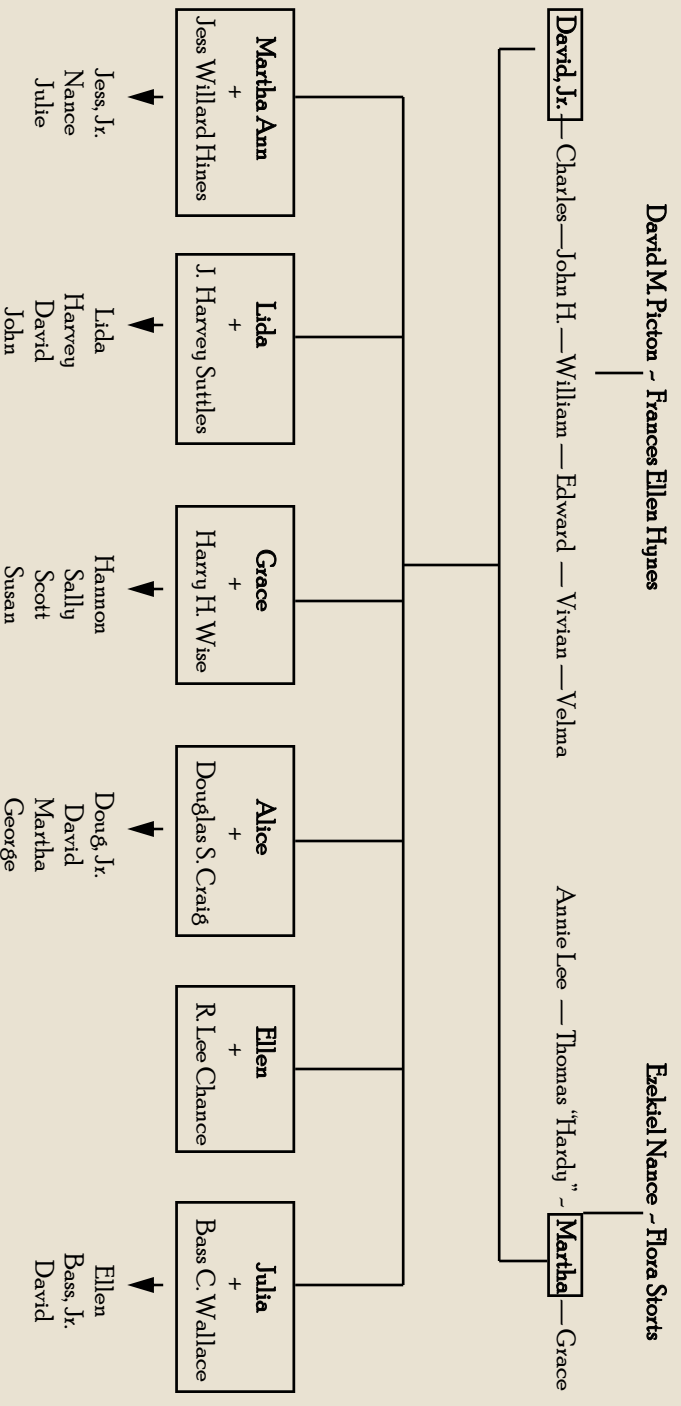




Picton Family Favorites

Picton Family Tree



BASIC RECIPE - TOMATO ASPIC

(FOUR LARGE SERVINGS)
Mrs. Lida Suttles
3978 Del Monte Drive, Houston, Texas 77019

- 2 CUPS TOMATO JUICE
- 1 ENVELOPE GELATIN (KNOX)
- 1 3 OZ. PKG. CREAM CHEESE (?)
(MASHED OR CUT INTO SMALL BITS)
- 1 STICK OF CELERY (MINCED)
- 1/2 LEMON (JUICED)
- 1/2 TS. SALT (TO TASTE)
- 2 TS. (OR MORE) LEA + PERRIN W.S.
- 2 T. GRATED ONION
- 1/4 TS. CAYENNE OR RED PEPPER
- 4 ARTICHOKE HEARTS (LINE BOTTOM OF MOLD)
- AVACADO SLICES (OILED OR PAM)

SOFTEN GELATIN IN 1/4 C. OF COLD WATER. ADD HOT TOMATO JUICE INTO WHICH HAS BEEN ADDED ONION (GRATED) AND LEMON JUICE, SALT, LEA + PERRIN, CAYENNE, GRADUALLY DISSOLVE IN PREPARED MOLD BOTTOM. PLACE SLICES OF AVACADO + PARTS OF ARTICHOKE HEARTS, CREAM CHEESE COOL A BIT OF HOT LIQUID AND COVER GEL SLIGHTLY IN REF. TO MAKE IT STAY IN BOTTOM, THEN POUR REST TO MOLD FOR AT LEAST THREE HOURS. CELERY CAN BE COMBINED IN FINAL STEP OR WITH MAYONNAISE FOR LETTUCE.

Rum Pudding

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 C sugar
- 1/2 pint whip cream -
- 4 lbs. rum
- 1 1/2 doz lady fingers

Beat yolks well add sugar mix thoroughly, gradually add rum & set aside. Whip cream beat egg whites ^{first} stiffly with pinch salt add whites to yolk mixture. Fold in whip cream put in mould line with lady fingers refrigerate. Garnish with strawberries & whip cream.

Picton Family Favorites

Recipe Reminiscences



*In Memory of
Ellen Picton Chance*

December, 2008
2nd edition



Martha Washington Nance Picton & David Means Picton, Jr.
"Mama Pic & Papa Pic"

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to everyone who submitted recipes for this cookbook. Extra thanks go to Alice Craig, Martha Ann Hines, Lida Suttles, Julia Wallace and Grace Wise for their recipes and support.

Lida Suttles deserves special recognition for sharing her wonderful paintings of our family homes, and Grace Wise for writing her reminiscences of their childhood.

-Sally Wise Hilliard, editor

Since the first printing of the cookbook we are saddened by the death of two more of the sisters.

Julia Picton Wallace October 2003

Lida Picton Suttles November 2007

1st Printing
December 2002

Introduction



The Picton family traditions began in Houston when David Means Picton, Jr. and his wife Martha Nance Picton brought their family from Corpus Christi in 1919. They had one daughter then, Martha Ann, and in subsequent years added five more, Lida, Grace, Alice, Ellen and Julia.

David Picton was raised in Rockport, Texas, where many of his brothers, sisters and mother and father still lived. Martha Picton's family was in Kyle, Texas, south of Austin. Family holidays often took the Picton family back to Rockport and Kyle as the family also developed new traditions and celebrations in Houston.

The following is a collection of recipes that over the years became family favorites. Some recipes have roots in Kyle, others in Rockport, and others are from good friends. Certainly a love of seafood was imbued in a family brought up on the Gulf Coast. As you look through the recipes there is also, just through sheer numbers, an evidence of a love of sweets!

We hope that this book captures a bit of family history and reflects the love of food, family and celebration that has so enriched our lives.

Painting by Lida Picton Suttles



Houston



At the Picton house in Houston in the 1920s and 1930s, Mama Pic had servants, and they did most of the cooking under her direction. Thursday afternoons were “maids night out,” as were Sunday nights, and leftovers were served then. However, Sunday dinner was an important event that featured fried chicken and, in later years, the famous whole rib eye roast. Sunday dinners started at 12:30 pm or 1:00 pm and might not end until 3:00 pm or later. By the time the daughters were in high school and college many of their friends would drop by and spend the afternoon.

When the daughters had grown and had children of their own, the Sunday ritual was still in place. Sunday roast beef dinners were regular features of every week. Mama Pic never knew whom to expect but there was always a table-full. The roast beef was put in the oven as Mama Pic left for church and was ready when she returned. Uncle Doug Craig was the chief carver. Consommé rice, scalloped potatoes, or macaroni and cheese were the usual starches; vegetables such as okra and tomatoes or green beans were favorites. A tossed green salad and French bread accompanied the main meal. Dessert was usually Blue Bell ice cream in a variety of flavors; peppermint was one of Mama Pic’s favorites. In later years, without servants in the kitchen, all the younger generation knew it was expected of them to help with serving the meal and with the kitchen clean-up. It became a family tradition.

Christmas Eve

Christmas in Houston was also another time of celebration. On Christmas Eve Mama Pic had an open house for family and friends. She served eggnog – the kind that is eaten with a spoon – pure eggs, Bourbon, and whipped cream. A pick-up buffet dinner was also spread, always with smoked ham and biscuits, maybe a smoked turkey, and all kinds of dips and mousses and canapés.



Christmas Day, Mid-1950s

Christmas Day

Christmas Day all the family gathered for a big lunch at Mama Pic's. We had roast turkey with cornbread dressing (NEVER with sage), rice and giblet gravy, vegetables, cranberry jelly and dessert. Luscious desserts might have been an eggnog ring, rum pudding, chocolate icebox pudding, and strawberry or orange meringue. Now and then, we had fresh fruit and coconut. Nellie, Noni and Lillie, the kitchen help over the years, made delicious, never-to-be-forgotten homemade butter rolls, tea cakes and cookies. The children ate so much of Nelly's cookie dough it was a wonder that there were any cooked cookies. It was truly a feast!

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Early waders, in Rockport. From left, Grace, Lida, and Martha Ann Picton.



The Picton Family in Rockport. The elder Papa Pic is 4th from left on the top row, and his wife, Frances Hynes Picton, is on his left. Mama Pic is on the far left, holding her youngest daughter, Julia. On her left is David Picton, "Papa Pic" of the Houston family.

Painting by Lida Picton Suttles



Rockport



Christmas

Our earliest recollections of going to Rockport are from the 1920s when we spent Christmas at Grandma Pic's, where our father grew up. Papa Pic, our grandfather, was a rotund type- cigar smoking- and loved to eat. There would be two long tables for all of us and Uncle Charlie's family. Two turkeys would be served (or perhaps one turkey and a wild goose or wild duck). One would have cornbread dressing and the other a bread and oyster dressing. Along with the birds we also had rice and gravy, cushaw (a large yellow crooked-neck squash), other vegetables and desserts. The cushaw was cut into pieces, parboiled and then cooked in the oven, basted with lots of butter, brown sugar, and Karo syrup. Aunt Hon, one of our father's sisters, was usually in charge of the kitchen staff. Nellie Bedford was the name of one helper who we remember fondly.

For Christmas gifts, Papa Pic would line up all his grandsons and pass out \$10 gold pieces, then do the same with his granddaughters. The girls received \$5 gold pieces. Of course, when the country went off the gold standard we had to turn them all in.

July 5

The 5th of July was Papa Pic's birthday, so for a number of years our family would travel to Rockport for a reunion picnic in the side yard. Some of the Port Arthur relatives would come, too.

A big pit was dug in the ground and a wood fire started and kept going through the night. On the morning of the 5th, 26 chickens were barbecued. (The heads and feet were saved to make a stew that the men of the group ate for supper that night.) We also had corn on the cob and potato salad. Freezers of ice cream or sherbet were served for dessert along with transparent and chess pies, family specialties. Papa Pic liked vanilla ice cream (the kind made with a custard sauce), soft and very sweet. It is said that he might even add extra sugar if he wanted to.

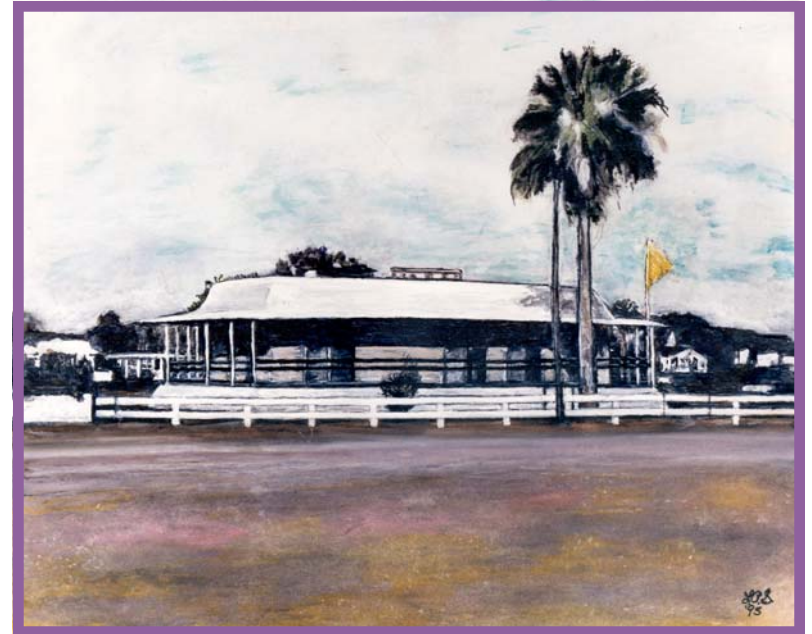
Our father had two sisters, Aunt Hon and Aunt Pumma, referred to jointly as “Aunt Hon & Pumma.” Both aunts were good cooks. Pumma especially liked to cook cakes and cookies. Aunt Hon had great recipes for pralines, divinity candy, all kinds of cookies and frozen fruit salad. Aunt Hon’s real name was Vivian and Aunt Pumma’s was Velma. We think Hon was a nickname short for “Honey,” but no one seems to know what Pumma was short for. Both aunts remained single their whole lives and lived until they died in the Picton home in Rockport.



An early photograph of the “Cook House”

In the early years when the Houston Pictons visited Rockport we would stay with Papa and Grandma Pic in their pretty old Victorian home. Later our father built a small two-story house for our family right across the street. The bottom floor was one big room that served as kitchen and dining room. Upstairs was one large bedroom and one small bath. Perhaps because it was the center of so much cooking and eating it became known as the “Cook House.” When we came from Houston we usually brought our servants, too, who slept on cots put out on the kitchen porch. Later, a second small house was moved on the property for them.

Painting by Lida Picton Suttles



Rockport—Later Years



he six Picton sisters kept up the tradition of going to Rockport for the summer even after they married and had their own families. The famous “kitty” developed in which a contribution was made on a per diem basis for every person eating meals. Seventy-five cents per person per day afforded everyone three square meals.



Lunch was the big meal of the day, served between 1:00 and 2:00 pm., always followed by a siesta. Lunch was hearty and delicious – fried chicken, pot roast, pork chops – finished off with pineapple upside-down cake or yellow cake with peaches and whipped cream. Dinner was a “pick-up” either leftovers from lunch or tortillas and beans served up from a large pot left on the stove. If it was someone’s birthday or the 4th of July you could count on some delicious homemade peach or mango ice cream.

As you might expect, Grandma Nance put up a lot of preserves, jellies and relishes she made from fruits and vegetables from her bountiful garden.

For Thanksgiving, Grandpa Nance sent two live turkeys to Houston via railway express. We would cook one for Thanksgiving and keep the other alive in the yard until time for the Christmas dinner. He also sent an enormous can of lard that was rendered from slaughtering his hogs. Mama used it for months cooking biscuits and pastries and fried chicken. Also, he sent his own cured smoked sausage. We have never ever found a sausage as good as his. It was plenty hot with pepper.

Pork Sausage

As Made by Mr. E. Nance - Kyle, Texas

- Cut up meat into small pieces - 2 to 3 inches long.
- Spread 50 pounds of this out on table, being sure to have about 1/3 of the meat fat.
- Scant 2 cups salt
- Scant 1 cup red pepper (dried chili petin) wild
- ½ to ¾ cup black pepper (best grade whole black pepper ground by self)
- Mix this seasoning well with the meat before grinding.
- Stuff and smoke 4 to 5 days with live oak, mesquite, or hickory
- Meat should be thoroughly cooled out over night before being cut up for sausage.

When the lard was all used up, Mama Pic would use the can to steam her fruitcakes on the stove at Christmas time – stacking two or three with bricks to separate them in the big can.

While the sisters and their children spent most of the summer in Rockport, the sisters' husbands commuted from Houston on the weekends. A favorite Saturday activity was crabbing in Little Bay right in front of the house. Tub-fulls of beautiful blue crabs were caught and later boiled or put into a delicious crab gumbo. It was a congenial group—everyone enjoyed each others' company—luckily, because it was pretty tight quarters in the Cook House and the “New House” wasn't built until the 1960s. Perhaps it was the delicious gumbo that made up for the discomfort!



The Cook House with visitors posing. In the background you can see the “Mole Hole.” In its early years it was the servants' quarters. In later years, when the sisters went to Rockport with all of their children, it was where the boys slept.

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Painting by Lida Picton Suttles

Kyle, Texas



While we spent the greater part of every summer at Rockport, we usually spent a week up a Grandma Nance's (our mother's family home) in the early summer. June was the time we went, as we always had early June corn right from the field. Eating six ears at a time was easy!

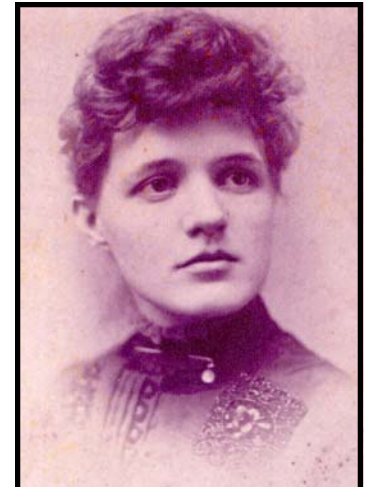
Aunt Grace, Mama's youngest sister, lived there, too, before she married Laverne Allen. There was no electricity in the old home in the early days, and we remember when the first telephone was installed. You had to crank it up by hand to reach an operator to place a call. The phone was on a party line; each "party" had a different number of rings for incoming calls.

Grandpa Nance rose about 5:00 am, made fires in the fireplaces and a fire in the wood-burning stove before going out to milk the cows. A little later, grandma would get up to cook breakfast, and she always had hot biscuits — with honey. Cornbread was served with lunch and "light bread" for supper — plus leftovers from the earlier meals. A special treat, sometimes Aunt Grace would fry us homemade doughnuts.

Aunt Grace organized many picnics down at the big Cyprus tree on the Blanco River. She was a wonderful cook. Her oatmeal cookies and layer cakes, and delicious chocolate and coconut pies are legendary. Fried chicken was a staple. The chickens were caught the night before, after they roosted in the hen house. We have memories of Aunt Grace wringing their necks out in the yard.



*Ezekiel Nance,
"Grandpa Nance"*



*Flora Storts Nance,
"Grandma Nance"*



Flora Storts Nance in Kyle



*Aunt Grace Nance with her husband,
Laverne Allen*



January 1



he first day of the year was cause for special celebration because it was mother's birthday. Martha Washington Nance Picton was born in Kyle, Texas on January 1, 1894.

Her birthday was celebrated along with the football bowl games at the Craig's home. Family members would wait all year in great anticipation for Uncle Doug's barbecued venison roast and chicken. Eager participants would arrive throughout the afternoon to snack on appetizers and watch football games; Aunt Alice held a true "open house." Ellen Chance provided the traditional cheese ball and Alice Craig made cheese straws or cookies. George Craig's guacamole was delicious! The sliced venison was served as an appetizer. Part of the fun was betting on the games; we would put money into "pots," betting on football final scores. Dinner was usually whole rib eye roast, consommé rice, French bread, black-eyed peas, and tossed green salad. Dessert was more than one cake – Aunt Martha Ann's Coconut White Cake with lemon filling or Aunt Alice's Blackberry Jam Cake were favorites.

What a wonderful way to begin the new year!