Almira Saunders (1921 - 2007)

A Life of Change

Almira Sauder’s life was one that required adaptation. Born in Halifax County, North Carolina, Almira was raised by her grandfather on his farm. At sixteen she moved to Washington, DC where she cared for her sister’s children, worked as a waitress and attended night school. Her adult life was spent working for elite families who traveled between homes in the Mid-Atlantic and summer homes on Martha’s Vineyard, a lifestyle she and her husband Russell enjoyed. Almira’s work at Cliveden focused on cooking, housekeeping and caring for the children. On weekends the couple would visit family and friends in Germantown, Washington DC and New Jersey. After Cliveden opened as a museum in 1973, Almira and Russell continued to work on site as caretakers until 1981. Her later years were spent in Rocky Mount, North Carolina until her death in 2007.