

Lifestyle

Christine Nickales, was a baker in 1968. She was 40 years old, born in 1928. She came up from Georgia around 1948. Her life had not been too involved and her work was nothing exciting. Christine made cakes, pastries with the occasional loaf of bread. She never married. Her lifestyle was not accepted in 1968. She kept to herself much of the time. Christine did have a life partner that she shared her life with.

Christine lived with Linda in Wisconsin where the ladies had opened up a small bakery shop. They served the local community of Oxford with their baked goods. The town was happy to have such a tasty place to go. Christine had hoped to have a place for girls, much like her, to come and live in safety; a home for the rejected, unwanted, kids that had no family support. Christine and Linda were able to raise money to provide housing for the girls. Some of the girls found jobs in and around town.

Once it was clear who the girls were, some of the townspeople were not so inviting. Anger and fear of her and her girls were becoming a real physical symptom. Tension grew as the people wanted Christine and Linda to move her facility out of their town.

Linda was out shopping when she was stopped by several parents from the high school. They had reached a point that they now just wanted them all to leave town. After a rock came through the shop window, Linda went to the police. In 1969 the help was not so easy to find. The ladies were alone in this. Christine tried to keep up her work with helping the girls. More trouble came when the support money dried up. Local stores would no longer extend credit on things like groceries. The town didn't want them around.

Christine went to the school board looking for help. She was told by the more prominent members at the board that it would be better for everyone if she would just leave and take her strange girls with her. With no more donations coming in, she was soon out of her own money, and she could see the program failing. Linda was the first to go. She moved to Chicago where she found work in a factory. Linda's leaving the program, leaving Christine, leaving the state was too much. This was all so much emotional injury to Christine's heart that she went into a deep depression. The shop was failing. It was too difficult to keep her shop open. Without Linda, Christine couldn't see the future anymore.

In her state of mind Christine gave up and decided one night in 1970 to set fire to her shop. She had no hope to sustain her. Alone without support or friends she did her deed. Christine stayed in the shop as it burned. In her apartment they found a note to Linda; an emotional letter of goodbye. There was another letter to her parents apologizing for her death. She wanted to tell her father she was sorry for not living up to Stavrosian standards.

The S.G.L. had not been made aware of Christine's problems. If they had known, maybe they could have helped her. Unfortunately, it was not so. She was only 42 years old then.

Linda Kales sent in this story as a remembrance of her friend Christine Nickales.

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