

Felmus Chapman

Felmus Chapman was the cook at the Phi Psi house. She was an African-American woman. I worked in the Phi Psi kitchen for 4 years. One either served and cleared the tables or washed things. When I was on pots and pans (washing them, that is), an additional part of that job was peeling potatoes (check that spelling, Dan Quayle).

We all ate together in the kitchen; Felmus, plus those of us who served and washed—kind of a little Downton Abbey kitchen there.

The potatoes came in 25 pound bags, which was also the requisite amount to be consumed by the brothers at dinner. I came to the kitchen in the late afternoon and peeled them. Only the two of us were there. Felmus would cook and I would peel and we would talk. Our talks were not short because it takes a while to hand peel and eye out 25 pounds. I wish that I could remember what we talked about, but I don't.

Sometimes, but not often, she would go away for a few days to visit her family. We had a substitute cook.

On those occasions Felmus would give me a key to her house, and ask me to water her plants while she was gone, which I did. She lived in a bungalow near Robe-Ann Park. She had a lot of plants.

She had a habit of always addressing me by my full name, as in, "Rick Ferrell, we're gonna need potatoes tonight."

Later I learned that she had died shortly after we graduated.

She was a nice lady.