**Violet Allen Adams**

Violet Allen Adams was born into slavery in 1852 in Montgomery County. In a statement she provided in her claim for a widow’s pension, she stated that her family was owned by Sam Adams who lived “over the river in the South Side about 8 miles from Clarksville.” Her parents, not uncommonly, took the last name of their owner. Her parents, Washington and Dinah Allen, had three children: Peter, Viney, and Violet.

When she was 17 years old, she was living in the area of LaFayette, KY working for Dr. William Meese when she went to a baptism. There she met Nicholas Adams. She married him the following year 1868 and went to work for Nicholas’ employers, Tom and Cynthia Crenshaw. Shortly after she went to work for them, Cynthia told Violet about Nicholas’ previous wife, Caroline. She warned Violet that Nicholas had treated Caroline meanly and had beat her. Caroline had run away and gone back to Knoxville where she had come from. When Violet asked her husband about Caroline, he stated that he had never married her that she was just a woman who had followed him out of the Army. Unfortunately, this fact gave her trouble when she applied for the widow’s pension. On May 26, 1866 the Tennessee legislature passed a law that stated that all ex-slaves then living together as man and wife were considered married. Nicholas never divorced Caroline and evidence seems to support his living with Caroline in Clarksville, TN at that time.

Violet and Nicholas had five children: Alexander born April 25, 1869; Rosa born in 1871; Matthew born June 6, 1869; Mattie born August 24, 1874; and Washington born May 24, 1877. Nicholas died on October 11, 1893 on Poston Street in Clarksville, TN. Violet was 42 when he died. Nicholas had been almost incapacitated in the last years of his life by an inguinal hernia acquired during his time in the Army.

Violet bought a house on Marion Street in 1896 for $550 which she paid in installments. She worked variously as a cook, housekeeper, and in a tobacco factory. The 1911 Clarksville City Directory lists her as a laundress.

Violet Allen Adams died on May 31, 1917 of heart disease and was buried in Mt. Olive Cemetery on June 2, 1917. She left $25 for a burial marker, $25 to her son Mann, and the rest of her estate to her daughter Mattie.