

Life Histories

Holloway
Survey { Life Histories
Es Slave Narratives
Bird Sketches

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Alabama

THE TENANT FAMILY
Mr. & Mrs. "Bull" Elliott
and family.
Address: Lowndesboro, Ala.
Main Street.
The ante-bellum couple
Mr. & Mrs. Holly (deceased)

"HOLLY HOUSE."



New Copy

The Holly House is one of the earliest evidences of civilization in the rim of Lowndesboro, Alabama. Its simple yet austere architecture and the dimming effect of the passing years make it look as old as Plymouth Rock. The house is a cottage, two large rooms forming the main part, a "lean to" (which comprises shed rooms) to the rear and a hall running through the house with a "doubtful" porch forming the frontage to comprise the entire unit.

Nature has beautified the background of the small cottage but of late years, residents have neglected it. It is approached by a trodden footpath which passes between many crepe myrtle bushes. One or two old trees that waved as saplings over the heads of the Indians, are near the approach.

The time-worn cottage recalls many interesting memories. In pre-war history it was the "nest" built for a bonny bride of 1860. Today history opens at another page. It houses a tenant farmer family, who in interesting, deserving and pleasant, but are a different class of people to those who reside in the proud old town, and like to recall that their forbears originated the old schools and churches whose mouldering structures still stand and the cultural atmosphere that nothing can



banish. The tenant farmers are a "misfit" in Lowndes County and are limited in number. This household has a personnel of eight, including father, mother and six girls. The oldest is sixteen--the age to be woman-ish and think she "knows all the answers." Then there are the "lap baby," an infant and three other little girls between. The husband is the local garage man and is also a tenant farmer. In addition his income is increased by a world war pension received monthly. He is hard working, respected and is known as a good provider. By trade he is a mechanic but since moving to the community a few years ago, he has and made contacts with a large local planter who has long since had a foothold in local agricultural so they operate farms together. The tenant farmer being familiar with machinery, is the tractor man. By this partnership he is enabled to get his land free and his crop carried on at a small cost and also to work in the garage.

The wife is a small woman in the early forties and on account of the many home duties and the excellent care she takes of the six little girls, she is for it indeed a near miracle how she turns out the amount of work she does. Small and light in stature she does all her work--cooking, sewing, washing, cleaning, with no assistance. In addition she 'tends a good garden, and takes care of a cow and chickens. Her little girls are pretty, always neat and clean, wearing attractive little dresses, and being always as well dressed and shod as the children of a well-to-do planter. Their appearance is



proof of a capable mother. She gives herself to work of caring for her husband her home and her children, and practices self denial. Pleasure except in the performance of duty or recreation are to her an unknown quantity. Day in and day out she is busy from early morn till during eve.

Her Sunday program does not vary from that of a weekday with exception of the extra work in consequence of an elaborate Sunday dinner sometimes with guests. She has no time to attend church and is too busy for the blues and small social activities that offer the town's only recreation. Her opinion is that a woman with responsibilities and tasks as heavy as her own has no time for recreation.

To some extent she is discontented. On the rare occasions when she visits she first bathes, and dresses the two babies, then the same preparation is gone through for herself. She goes then spend a part of an afternoon with three old ladies who cannot get out much and are glad to have some one coming in from the outside world. She must carry a child in either arm and during the visit they fret. The conversation is pursued between cries and complaints of the babies is discontinued long enough to pacify them and rummage the house to find something to suit their fancy, home made cat; a metal door stop, a pipe with which to blow soapbubbles; a wooden darning egg.

As sunset nears she thinks of the late household; her husband's evening meal, the chickens to be put away so she rises to go home with promises to come again, then rushes



home more worn out than refreshed, the pleasure of the evening based on exchange of ideas about the last sermon, how to exterminate insects from the garden, and a new pattern for a quilt. Everything seemingly went wrong during her absence, filling the lamp was forgotten and similar oversights, occasion supper to be very late. The head of the home has had an exceedingly hard day and is hungry.

The small children who were not permitted to accompany her are quarrelsome and difficult and a domestic storm follows. Thereby she pays for her outing and mentally resolves never to go anywhere again.

She does not take her position in life cheerfully. She resents the fact that she is on the outside although ladylike in manner, neat and deserving. There are only a very few families of this farm tenant type and these are so scattered and must work so hard they have no time for social intercourse.

Resentful of the conditions surrounding her shrinks from meeting her neighbors and never goes any where except to see the three old ladies, whose habit is to lend a helping hand and extend a welcome to those whose pathway in life is rougher than theirs.

Oldest of the six little girls is MAXINE who attends high school and is an unusually attractive sixteen-year old girl. She is a near-modern girl and gives a good time precedence over all else, boasting of eight "sweeties."

She accepts some of the heavy work responsibilities as her part, although larger and heavier than her mother and



more able to carry on some of the farm work than her mother, the latter having been reduced in strength by hard work and child-bearing.

Maxine was given free piano lessons by the kindly music teacher in the community and plays nicely. She was leader of the Four H. Girls' Club in the county and was making good grades in Hayneville High School when some of the "sweeties" crossed her path. Proud of her beauty her mother toiled a little more and made her dresses attractive. Beaux were no item, attending the High School, she met them "county wide." There are the games--ball and football, affording lovely and wholesome recreation for the younger set, so appealed to the tenant farmer's daughter that school was shelved as are important interest.

There were dates and dates and more dates until she decided not to even take the closing tests, which sent most of her class into a higher grade.

The dates are rides at night mostly in cabs or trucks with boys who haul or drive for some large planter. Joy riding up and down the highway they stop here and there for a cocoa-cola. Later hours are kept and next day the school hours are long and irksome, the lessons are unprepared, this interest in school is lost. Next three little girls filling the gap between Maxine and the two babies (one the "lap" boy and the other about the walking age) go to school.

The eldest girls are given sufficient money by the father to allow them to catch the through county passenger bus and go into the city on Saturdays, to see a picture, visit a



beauty shop for a hair cut or, in the case of the two oldest, a wave; when needed. The social line with children in school is not so decidedly drawn so they have about a nice time as the children who represent another station in life. The home consists of four rooms with no conveniences whatever, no bathroom and heated with the large and ancient fireplace in which wood is burnt. It is dilapidated in every way, and the dreaded leaks from the more than a century old roof must be endured. A passerby would not doubt the traditional age of the cottage from its appearance, but is sure to be attracted to it for the reason that it does bespeak the type of home and the life of a long gone day.

When the rent date arrives there is a dramatic performance on the village green. Neighbors expect to witness a pugilistic scene. The landlord is unwelcome. The tenant claims its openness has caused sickness in his family, that the promised repairs have failed to materialize. Also he will not vacate.

Houses are difficult to find but tenants are scarce so the outraged landlord hesitates to resort to extreme measures, and walks away hoping for better luck next time with collections.

In entering the house one is impressed with the age of the home as it is emphasized everywhere, nor has an attempt been made by its occupants to brighten it. Everything is spotless and in order, but no time is devoted to making it attractive.

Its furnishings are the mere necessities. The family



does "not go" in for anything else. The mother could not since her life is full, caring for the little "Half Dozen" whose appearance and personalities reflect credited to any mother.

After the shadows have fallen, the husband and wife rest from their days toil, he with his pipe and she with a darning basket in front of a cheery open fire. The days incidents are exchanged and sometimes they talk of "handed over traditions" (by neighbors) of another couple who in the long ago enjoyed lifes joys and sorrows as one. Who fought the battle of life together on the same scene. Sometimes was passed in chatting over the interesting history of this lovely old couple.

"MUGGIE and FRANK" were the bridal couple who made the home that now is a mere shell and almost just a memory of the lost century, but memories cling and linger. Muggie was a belle in 1860. Frank was called to do his bit in settling the conflict soon to follow.

There were parental objection, and separation was threatened by the war clouds, so they eloped in a hack to Benton and were married. She wore a red calico "Mother Hubbard." This shapeless and unlovely was all she could find in a house hostile to her lover and suspicions of their plans.

Life was not kind to them and their trials were many but they continuously performed small deeds of kindness. No call for aid at their door was in vain, and the sunshine they gave others reflected happiness over them. No distance

too far or weather too bad for Muggie in case of illness and trouble. No needy Negro in sickness was forgotten. In case of death she was the first arrival if not already at the bedside. It is legendary that in event of a death her brother-in-law the resident physician had ministered to the deceased she shrouded them and Frank drove them to the cemetery, making the exit a "family affair."

This of course is a local tale, but for perhaps half a century Frank did drive the dead in this family to the cemetery, using a wagon drawn by the family horse or mule; and he always drove with his pipe lit and coat sleeves rolled to the elbow.

Their home was the home of the local telephone office and Frank was in charge. In his later years his hearing became defective and during his evening "nap" he would tie a string connecting the telephone bell to his toes, so the ringing would awaken him. He is remembered now delivering his death messages. The older element of the village dreaded his approach lest the message contain bad news. The young people anticipated date-making and hailed him with joy.

The grand old couple looked out of the west window together. On a beautiful Easter morn she passed out. The time was fitting. He soon joined her.

Washington Copy

10/11/38

L.H.



Lorenzo Dow (white)
From History of Methodism in Alabama
by Rev. Anson West, D.D.
Chapter 2, pages 27-28-29-30-31-32-
33-34

Marie Redse
Lowndes County, Alabama



REV LORENZO DOW

Rev. Lorenzo Dow was the first Protestant preacher to preach in any part of the territory that is now Alabama. He claimed to be a Methodist and affiliated with that denomination, but they would not be responsible for him in anything he did. In May, 1803, Rev. Mr. Dow preached to the settlers in the Tombigbee and Tensaw settlements.

This was the first preaching ever done in Alabama except by Romish priests. However, when these settlements along the Tombigbee were developed, and became safe from the Indians and their claims were ceded to the U. S., heralds of the cross found its people and the voice of the messengers of peace was heard in the wilderness.

Rev. Dow described in some of his writings the inhabitants as mostly English, but were like "Sheep without a shepherd," and while it was under Spanish government it was a refuge for bad men.

Lorenzo Dow was born October 16, 1777, in Coventry, Tolland County, Connecticut. He was descended from English ancestors. He was the subject of early religious impressions. Before he was four years old he expressed himself as "Mused upon God, Heaven and Hell."

He was united with a society of Methodists being received into it by Rev. G. Roberts. He claimed Hope Hull as his spiritual advisor. Rev. Mr. Dow made a long and hard struggle against the conviction that 'it was his duty to preach, but at last yielded to the conviction that God had called him to the ministry.

He met with strong opposition from his father as to this move and still stronger from the members of the church and when he sought to obtain a license to preach he was discouraged and at first was rejected and sent

away. He continued to press his claim and finally admitted on trial September 18, 1898. Ill health prompted him to come South. He was lured by the warm mild climate, and with his wife Peggy, made the long tiresome hazardous trip. The journey was both dangerous and difficult, but to Dow perils were a fascination. In his journals which have been sacredly kept, he tells of these many perils and adventures among the wild tribes he encountered.

Any feature of the uncivilized and the wilderness appealed to him. On the stages of the long journey Southward he preferred camping out at night, especially in the piney woods country. Huge piles of straw was raked up which served as the bed and he would be lulled to sleep by the soothing monotone of the sighing pines. There was also a hope entertained that the resinous regions possessed a curative power for his malady. A singular chapter in his life was a great desire and fancy to preach to the Roman Catholics and hearing Ireland was their greatest stronghold, he would thither, but his pathway was not strewn with roses by any means. He requested a leave of absence from the Conference in order to make the trip abroad, but the request was not granted and he took the leave of absence anyway against their advice and entreaties. He consumed about twenty months on this trip, preaching the gospel incessantly and attending camp meetings.

Notwithstanding he had made the European tour against the authority of the Conference, he resumed preaching on his return and remained on "trial." However, he could not stand the test and his name was soon dropped from the minutes.

He was not careful to maintain the relationship with the Conference which he had so eagerly sought. He was sent out on circuit assignments but this did not correspond with the expansive fields of his dreams. He was discontented. In a word he did not consider a circuit his right sphere, and claimed that his connection with the conference was severed. He was



never really ordained to the ministry and was without authority to administer sacrament or organize societies. In doctrinal principles he was Methodist, But was without any church influence or allegiance. He was irregular and uncertain. He was a force, but uncertain, unreliable and inefficient.

He was restless and he was a dreamer. He was contradictory and never happier than when engaged in a wordy war. He possessed scant learning, but was a very close observer of mankind. The very face of Lorenzo Dow indicated his character. His features were both rough and delicate. It was rough and effeminate but in that face there was every mark of indomitable energy.

He parted his hair in the middle and wore it hanging down his neck and shoulders and his face was radiant with kindness. His wife, Peggy, whom he married before coming South, in her writings, "Vicissitudes" gives an account of their first trip coming South and also gives an account of a trip which she made with him passing through the Bigbee settlements in Nov., 1811, from Natchez, Mississippi to Milledgeville, Ga., in the wilderness some forty miles. She says "At night we camped out in lonely deserts, uninhabited by any being except wild beasts and savages."

"I was much alarmed and uneasy, but my husband was content and slept sweetly." In giving an account of her first meeting with him she says, "He is a most singular character, and admits himself that he was known by the name of 'Crazy Dow' and called himself 'Son of Thunder.'"

Despite his ill health he boasted that he held off death. He refused to die and said he must live to fight for the Kingdom. He did not believe in founding churches but preferred to preach and praise God in the wilds and in the open. However, a prominent jurist of Alabama, who is closely connected with Lowndes County, claims to have the historical facts that Dow preached from the altar one time if no more. The small church



known as "Union" which is nestled in a grove between the small settle-
ments of Burkeville and Manack, Lowndes County, calims the distinction
of having him preach there in its early history.

The tradition, in part, is that Sam Manac, the half-breed, who founded
the latter place and for whom it was named, met Dow during his wanderings
through the wilds and led him to that altar. Union Church, now obscure,
holds an interesting part in the early history of Lowndes. Dow, the first
man who passed the holy words around and around in Alabama, preached there.
The Graves family, ancestors of Alabama's ex-governor, worshipped at that
altar. Some of which sleep in the nearby churchyard, and it is built in
the road that was the route of the through county stage coach line, 'most
a hundred years ago.

Rev. Dow died February 2, 1834, in Georgetown, D.C., was buried near
Washington, but remains were removed and re-buried in Oakhill Cemetery, near
Georgetown.

He had one son, Neal, who was Brigadier in Union Army and author of
"Main Law."



2/20/39

S.J.

Marie Reese
Lowndesboro



A FUNERAL---IN THE HEART OF THE BLACK BELT. (Col.)

Jim Bradley was the victim of a shot intended for another and fell dead instantly surrounded by a large crowd of colored revelers at a Saturday night Negro supper at Goat Bottom on ^{The} Hayneville highway a mile South of road #30. Jim was a "high roller" in the colored gang and was always in "readiness" with his dice, "bottle on the hip" and a good disposition. Extra cash.

The carousal suppers frequented by the "rough crowd" always found him there, ready for any touch of high life. These occasions were always marked with an accident. Shooting affair or fight. Mostly some one "snuffed out" from the no.

He went once too many. That night he was carried home. On the dance floor he was standing by a young Negro man who was teaching his gal to do the "Big Apple." The gal was "toting" double. "Moochie" over other admirer, "on the outside looking in" shot at the Big Apple teacher through the mind. He hit Jim instead who paid the bill for that occasion.

MONDAY-the day appointed for the last sad rites to take place, dawned bright and clear in answer to the prayers of the colored element living on the large plantations within a radius of twenty miles. The "oration" spread like wild fire! A man had been shot! The funeral was to be an EVENT. Jim was considered according to their estimate a "Big Shot". He owned a real live automobile, an antiquated Whippet.

He operated a farm and also a nice dairy from which he shipped cream, giving him a neat ^check bi-monthly. His "jeans" always were a-jingle with some cash. Hope Well, a nice well kept little church situated in a shaded and almost sequestered woodland, was the scene

of what proved to be the most sensational funeral in the memory of its earliest history.

Hours in advance crowds were pouring in from all sides. Friends, relatives, associate members of his "city." (Home Mission Society) But the greater number were curiosity bent. Member of his Society had to pay \$1.00 if they failed to attend. The many, with the curious motive were in no wise disappointed, as they got an ear full. From a sensational angle. The second hand cars, wagons, buggies and the pioneer oxcart drove up to the small church door and emptied their occupants till every seat and almost standing room was appropriated.

Finally the "cession" was coming and arrived at the door. Jim was in "Caskum" which was a "beneciary" (?) of the same Home Mission, he having paid a small monthly due 25¢ for a year or more. Thereby in the accidental "close up" he made a paying proposition, but he had to "pass on" to make a scare.

The "Caskum" in which his remains rested was in his wagon used on the farm and was drawn by two stout mules. The approach to the humble shrine of worship inspired many by-gone memories. Memories of days when the departed Bro. had hauled material with the same beast of burden to construct the church, of when he had been "ring leader" in the game of "Seten come below" in a nearby thicket of pine, the barbecued pigs when they had all day meeting and "dinner on the ground." But these were but memories and Jim's days in the realms of carp-shooting were air and he was meeting his maker to give a final settlement charged against all crap-shooting, hog lifting, etc., etc.

Rev. Whitt with three other Reverend colored Brothers arrived from Selma to officiate and as soon as the body rested in front of the altar Rev. Whitt requested the casket, to be opened, giving a free to all invitation to come up and take a last look at the departing. And to see how fine sister Bradley was "putting him away" and adding

that it was a great pity that so much moneys worth had to be hidden under the ground to rot.

The assemblage en masse moved in procession, filing around the Casum to get one last peep, with much weeping and wailing and exclamations Goodbye Brer Jim. I'se gwin ter meet you in Helen, God bless de soul of us depart in brethern, etc., etc., when sufficient enthusiasm had been worked up and pandemonium was at its peak Rev. Whitt called the excitement to order and gave out the beautiful song "Swing Chariot Low." The colored voices are good and most musical and as the tune sounded out through the church, out into the woodland and afar down the highway the congregation become unruly again and there was a renewal of the weeping and wailing.

The minister having aroused as much excitement as possible, cleared his throat and as he viewed the remains said, "Poor Jim all dressed up and no where to go." (meaning his life did not merit an entrance into the Golden Gate while the accompanying ministers grunted A*men, Amen, A-men. The congregation thinking he intended it as a form of blessing, ~~xxx~~ took up the a-men and it was repeated several minuted till order was restored again. The listeners were now all attention, as it was time the Eulogy was to begin and as the "deceased" was a "Big Shot" they thought he would be transported into the Kingdom but a sensational surprise was awaiting, a sensation of all sensations! Rev. Whitt again clearing his throat said my text is.--"And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments"--found in St. Luke chap XVI verse 23 - in part of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

Furthermore he said, "brethern and sister n' I come not here to preach this brethern to heaven or to hell you-all know him bettern' I do, he is now in torment, tormented by de flame and is hollerin' Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus with de tdp of de finger



in water, to cool my tongue. If I was to speak till this time to morrow, it would do no good. Brer. Jim is now in torment begging for de water."

Wild shrieks and cries "Lord have mercy on his soul and give him de water echoed throughout the church, and when a voice could be heard, the Rev. continued. I say I can't preach you into Heben, but its my bounden duty to speak de truth and till disband de hospel so they won't fall in de pitfalls of torment. I ain't gwine to stand on dis holy spot and lie for you because you lef' a lot of cows. I gwine to tell de gospel You lived a life of sin and was not cut down like de flower, but was cut down at a rough crowd supper on de ballroom flo' and you is in torment De debbel stirring chunks 'round you now."

"When de last meeting was, at cotton pickin' time, I begged you to part from de ways of sin, gits on my old knees fill pints got all of pain and begged you to throw away de dice, de bottle and stay home from de suppers. De cars ride you straight to de black pits of hell.

I asked old marster to help me work on you and send 'ligion down to you and save you from the everlasting fire and brimstone. I told you it was impossible for the rich man to get in to de Kingdom of Heben. But you laughed at me so you laying there now knows de truth is the light But too late for you Crer. Jim. Too late, too late. The gospel says as you make your bed you will have to lie and what you sow you are sho' to reap. You made your bed in torment and you will sho' lay there till Gabriel blows his trumpet, and you sowed sin and will reap red hot coals. Too late, too late, Brer. Jim. I can't preach you out of torment.

"And in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments" this was said amid screams and mourns and the minister to make sure he was heard descended from the pulpit and "ranted" up and down the floor by the "Caskum," pointing at the remains and reminding him of this or that sin in his life, cut down not like a flower, but on the ballroom flo'.



About this time the family had enough and held a caucus. Should they leave the church or throw the Rev. out. There was a tie as to opinions, the consequence being that some went out of the church while others were not quite satisfied with the excitement and sobstuff. Those having gone out sat in the wagons and screamed to their hearts content and probably to drown out the barking accusations of the Rev. on the inside, who continued the sad reminder. Too late, too late, you closed your eyes on the ballroom flo', but will open them in hell" and I am not gwine to blaspheme myself by trying to ask God to let you out.

Walking to and fro by the corpse he grew still louder. "Your car sent you to torment, you had too many cows. I told you a rich man could not enter de Kingdom, you pressed de poor nigger and never give a 1st penny to your preacher (himself) De truth is de light and I will own before you and God. I hopefully (spected a scrap of de milk check you got every two weeks.

You never once put a chicken, a sack of 'taters or a parcel of anything in dis old niggers hand, who was preaching the gospel and had to live. No good is coming to you, and as the man of God I won't try to help you, and the man of God won't try to help you, in your life of sin I warned you and you turned a "deef" ear, and in hell he lifted up his eyes. being in torments. Too late, too late.

All things has to come to an end and a violent electrical storm ended this (shameful harangue). It was terrific and fear prevailed. Many thought maybe the storm would hurt them in some place where eyes would be lifted sooner than it was expected. The "show" was broken up. In a short while the rain passed and as the sun shine poured into the small house of God the pall bearers got ready to "plant" Jim.

The members of the Home Mission took charge and the body was carried to the church yard on the hill side. There followed a long ceremony to the accompaniment of louder weeping and wailing. Every member



was clad in white marching around the grave and throwing into it a piece of cedar symbolizing life everlasting. Thus ended the career of the victim of the stray bullet, while true enough his life was that of a high roller, but not as black as painted by the Parson who did not get as big a slice in the check as he wanted, the dead man, while having a dark skin did not merit the outrageous and unrepresented tributes? he got, and on the "other side," when he does lift up his eyes there will be many recognitions.



Given by Bettie who claims to have attended the funeral lasting three or four hours. Bettie--cook in the home of Tax Collector E. L. James. Church at Scott Hill plantation H.R. McCurdy.

Marie Reese
Lowndes County, Ala.

LIFE ROMANCE OF WILLIS BREWER



With heavy hearts they were coming back! The long dusty road seemed endless to the tired and worn out feet who had the tramp tramp of war for four years. This endless road was strewn with many returning soldiers who were but ghostly shadows of those who rode away in pride and in hope.

The trail in places was marked with bloody footprints. They were hungry, disheartened and naked. Among these was one just on the verge of young manhood was putting out his utmost best to reach home. Pale and tattered so that he was but a wreck of the handsome lad who rode away. He was trudging along the Mississippi highway which lead to Livingston, Alabama (his home).

Would the road never end! He was almost given out, but a hope gave him heart to try on. At the end of the journey was Mother, home and sweetest of all there waiting for him would be Rosalie! Sumter had called every available man when those dark war clouds of '61 overhung the South. Old men, young men, stepping in line in defense of their country, in defense of their home and loved ones and was there not "Rosalie." And now they were returning in the black days of '65.

As weakness was about to overcome this struggling home coming soldier. An old rattletrap of a vehicle driven by an aged Darkie came along and offered a "lift". After an exchange of a few words the ex-slave slowly rubbed his head and said "Bless Lord dis is Mars Willis!" The returning soldier weary and faint fell into the arms of "Ole Abe."

From his worn and tattered apparel two books dropped that had been cherished and guarded through the four years struggle. To the literate observer the fine station handwriting of Jane Hadden Brewer could be seen

in the bible she had given him as a talisman against evil. The other, a copy of Byrons Poems, on the fly leaf of this was written, from R. to W. As time passed Sumter rallied and turned their faces to the future. The boys who had defended them so valiantly should have some happiness.

Festivities were proposed. Among them the gallant Willis was happiest of all with his Rosalie, the fragile orchid beauty. A wedding was planned. During the beautiful twilight strolls, his flute like voice was heard singing "Rosalie The Prairie Flower."

Alas! a few days later she lay on a bed of flowers cold in death and clad in the "made over" satin gown that was to have been her wedding dres. Forcibly they had to take her cold stiff body from his arms. He left the state, which was in a reconstruction confusion. Carpet baggers and injustices were imposing on the South/ The cry from worthwhile parties was Brewer come back! Lowndes needs you. Your fiery press articles will restore faith in the people and will be a powerful instrument in exposing the corruption and in reconstruction. He came back and was a power in this section of the state till his death.

He sleeps in a granite house seven miles west of Montgomery. A gentle swishing is heard overhead. Is it the sighing Pines overhead or is it the rustling of an ivory satin gown whose folds drop the orchid like beauty that was to have been his bride?

2/20/39
MS



Marie Reese
Lowndes County, Ala.



(The Clifford Hawkins Family.) Scene at the Reese ante-bellum plantation mansion on Southwest outskirts of Lowndesboro. From interview with Mrs. Hawkins and her daughter, Mrs. Cecil Bozeman, Hawkins family moving, address Hope Hull, Ala. Bozeman address Lowndesboro, Alabama.

SALLIE BROWN

In the environments of the small village of Lowndesboro is the remains of an ante-bellum plantation mansion which was built in the early part of the 1800 century, by a pioneer for his family. On down through the years, the pioneer has passed on, the children, nine in number, left the home nest. The beautiful daughters graced the homes of prominence in different towns of Alabama, while the sons who were victims of the civil strife, are sleeping in a graveyard nearby.

After the family circle was broken, the old mansion was unoccupied, save by the memories and ghosts of other days. It passed with the surrounding plantations, into other hands and was used to house the tenant farmer. Its beautiful architectural attractiveness, the memories of its former grandeur and cultural atmosphere were forgotten. Sentiment was a thing of the past. It was purchased by one who chose to register the dollars instead of sentimental memories. The tenant family moved into what was a mere "shell" of what was once a most interesting specimen of the plantation mansion of the wealthy farmer.

Sallie and her family, consisting of her husband, herself and 13 children were moved in. Sallie was mentioned first due to fact that she was the "bread winner" and the responsibility fell on her shoulders. From the "concrete ribbon" which is the southern bounds of this small village the top of the old house can be seen at a distance surrounded by a grove of giant oaks which no doubt sheltered the "Red Sticks" when they held dominion over these environs.

The approach is made to the home by a road which winds around and about through a cotton field until the oak lawn is reached. Several centuries old trees stand to guard the old mansion, which had it not been for the wonderful durability of the material used in its construction, would have years ago decayed and been but a memory. The outlook was one of bleakness and desolation. No yard, no fence or flowers. The tenant family were too busy fighting for the necessities of life to adorn their surroundings.

The beautiful porticoes that were supported by massive colonial columns, the lovely shuttered blinds were all gone, destroying the type and outlines of the once handsome house. Glasses that were once charming, and rare sidelights and fanlights were broken out and replaced with boards and a pillow stuffed in to keep out the wind and cold.

Instead of steps, the entrance into the house was made by use of a box, which did not look that it would stand one's weight. The interior was far from being pleasant, but was corresponding in appearance with the external. Gloomy, empty and most uninviting, the windows all out, walls dingy and all smoked up, caused from cooking just anywhere with unsuitable conveniences.



Plaster falling in most places, causing an uneasiness that a piece might fall any minute and your head might be reminded of how heavy it was made in that period.

The large rooms and hallways were not suited to the furniture and household goods of this tenant farmer family. The beds and trunks and a few other necessary pieces were virtually lost in the spacious apartments. The family had increased so rapidly, and the income had failed to make same record, so they had no funds to invest in furniture and scarcely comforts.



There were 13 children, whose birthdays ranged from high school girls to babies, the oldest of list being girls which made the pathway to a livelihood harder and more difficult. When the visit was made she was called from the "washtub" and seemed pleased to talk and no doubt needed the rest from her laborious task. She entered with a baby swinging on either side of her dress, and as a matter there were so many they were in evidence everywhere, and what was said had to be "sandwiched" in.

It seemed that necessarily she was at the head of the family. She had to take the initiative. The old song "Everybody Works at my House but my old Man" was the "motto". He had a weak (?) heart, the doctors said (?) and could not. Sallie endorsed him and excused him on all sides, doing double duty and working her poor fingers to the bone for him and his. While he sat with the weak (?) heart in the shade of the nearby stores, exchanging gossip and jokes with those who chanced to linger with him.

On Saturday, the week-end and marketing day, it was he who went into the city to trade and spend the money she had earned by hard toil. She and the oldest children which were mostly girls,

tilled the land and did their utmost best to "wrest" a scant living from it. They had a small cotton acreage, some corn, potatoes, etc. In addition a nice small bunch of cows which gave milk enough for the home use and a small daily shipment. Also she raised chickens, eggs and an excellent vegetable garden, these helping out the family living expenses.



Sallie was strong, healthy and most cheerful. But despite her willing mind and willing hand her expenses could not be met and she was compelled to "take in washing," at a few dollars a month. Finally seeing this was not sufficient, she appealed to the charity people of the village and they gladly and generously went to her assistance.

The members of Home Missionary Society took up her case and gave them continued aid, however a humorous coincidence occurred during the period of time that she and her cause were "under their wings". Sallie was in need of clothing for the anticipated addition to the family. The ladies of the Home Mission responded to the call with a suitable layette, but when the "event" came about there were two additions made instead of one, and the little outfit had an encore! It had to be duplicated, as there were two most adorable little girls. Little Ellen and Helen.

History repeats itself, and believe it or not, ere many summers passed she made the same appeal to the good ladies and they prepared a second layette and little Herbert and Hubert arrived! Two most precious little boys. Both sets of twins are identical and most attractive. About this time the ladies were "outdone" and determined to give her a "call." Were willing to assist in reason, but called a halt, as to "duplicating."

Sally and family were Mormons or latter day Saints and the belief in large families were one of the most devout characteristics. They never attended Sunday School and the attendance of services at a church other than their own was strictly against their faith. Occasionally, but very rarely, they went into Montgomery to worship and sometimes an intinerant Mormon visited their home. All of the children who were the school age were sent, via the bus that passed within sight of their home. With all the hardships and handicaps in their pathways they reached out for an education and went to school as best they could.

On an average about six went at a time and it was an uphill attempt to equip them with wearing apparel, food for lunches and books but where the will is the way comes. Daily there was a mad rush to get breakfast, fix lunches and catch the bus down at the Big gate on the highway.

Sallie speaks of preparations to this and the preceding night. After the little ones are fed and tucked in bed and she begins and as many children as she has to attend school she collects their clothing and makes as many piles, consisting of clothes, caps, books, etc., etc, so as to facilitate matters next morning, when during the cold winter morning the Benton School Bus blows all too soon. The older children assist with the smaller ones and while the mother prepares the early meal and the lunch boxes which are most often filled with a large baked yam, they get in line and in readiness.

She lines them up in a row and the little faces are scrubbed and heads brushed. Nature has been most generous to them in regard to health and appearance. Each and every one



is pretty and to an extent attractive and will "get by".

As time passed two of the girls married. Two others got too "grownish" to work in the field barefooted as they were accustomed to do. Edna, the oldest girl married and passed out of the picture and as her family increased so rapidly she most naturally had her own responsibilities. Fannie May married at fifteen and also passed from the household picture. Three babies in less than that many years was her "allotment". Her health gave way and she had to be sent to the Sanatorium for a while (thereby giving the hard working husband who had gotten a good start) a set-back. Grace and Gene who were "near-twins" and very pretty, got "boy-struck" and threw all attention to "good-timing".

The weak (?) hearted father still spent his time at the crossroads stores and continued to discuss the crops, weather, etc., etc, stimulated by an occasional "dope." Thus it is seen that the ranks of Sallie's force are thinned out, which at best were too feeble.

Grace ran away and married, but stayed married only a short time. She returned and by intercession of kind friends was put on the N. Y. A., a sewing project for young women. She puts in two weeks at \$6.50 per week and is taught to sew. Also a certain amount of material is given her free each month for her personal use and she is taught to make it up on the project. Gene is still "courting" and Sallie working by day and worrying by night and begins to see the "handwriting on the wall." Her help is inadequate, she can't "make the grade." By the hardest toil she has raised a nice little drove of cows through the years. Many little mouths have yet to be fed and little bodies covered.



She thinks of the "mortgage now." Necessity forces her to "contact" him. He is hard. He entices the needy prospect and after he or she is "tied" hard fast, he says his dollar has two eagles on it, meaning he lends dollar for dollar. The farmer "in tough" can't meet this, but too late he is "tied". The victims have to get someone else to pay him out, thereby getting deeper in the mire or he is closed out and has to begin all over.

Also the landlord sees that the house room is wasted. Sallie's small face is too weak to produce. She is given notice! The house and land will "cash in" more being occupied by larger family and she and the flock is adrift. As a consolation she is conceded a milk cow, etc., and for potatoes and her small amount of furniture. On moving she will have to make a bottom start, and in time her life's program will be doubtless a repetition. She is bright and cheerful, still "loves her man" and seemingly willing to meet life and its hardships with a smile.



Sept. 27, 1938.

Copied Oct. 3, 1938.

S.B.J.

Marie Reese
Lowndesboro, Ala.

Story of Mrs. Abbie Grumbles and
Family, given by her during inter-
view 11-7-38
Address: Hayneville, Alabama.

THE FOUR GENERATIONS.



On the outskirts of Hayneville, along the thoroughfare and almost under the shadows of the historical Court House is a small white cottage which shelters four generations. The great-grand-mother heads the list which is ended with a most adorable baby girl whom they have named Ernestine.

A bright warm spring-like afternoon was chosen for my visit to the cottage, the weather was so warm and every where so delightful outdoors and the tiny girl was out on the green playing with a little Pickaniny who had her in charge or rather the colored girl was playing with her. As I made my approach the picture even though in a mist desolate setting was pretty and appealing.

Nine months old Ernestine was exceedingly pretty and attractive was trying to toddle around clinging on to the skirts of the pickaniny. I later learned that the grown ups in the household were trying to teach her to nurse herself, as they were not able to hire a nurse and none of them had time, but the baby girl seemed to be learning the importance of self reliance and was "getting by" all right, as she was unusually bright and independent. The colored girl, it was explained would come over evenings and take charge of Ernestine for the cold "left overs" from the noon meal.

Little Ernestine adored her outlet into the warm and glorious sunshine and she adored her black playmate. At any rate it was a great improvement on the rest of her hours which were passed shut in with the grown people and hemmed in a corner with an old trunk or chair arranged across the corner to prevent her from getting out.

2 The Four Generations

Passing on and traversing a footpath worn through the grass and weeds, I reached the porch where the grandmother was sitting in the swing resting after having washed dishes, cooking things, etc., etc., from dinner. She greeted me most pleasantly, but when I asked how she was and how they all were getting on, she told me her story which consisting of endless complaints and into which not a word of hope or pleasantness entered except she was glad to see me, as no one come to seem them or was willing to help them in any way and she was getting on by the hardest and her rheumatic lanes (?) were getting worse every day.

I'm in a position to know that two out of the four draw Government checks regularly. However, small, they are a big help.

The personnel of the cottage consists of four generations--great-grand mother, grandmother, the daughter just over the borderland of High school age and the little Fairy playing on the green who was a most unwelcome addition in the home. The two "grands" had "rheumatics" in their "jints" and had served their time "nussing too" and the young mother had to work out as the "bread winner."

She said Mrs. K---who came first on the list of quartettes--and who was her mother and the great-grand mother, was "there on her." At her age of eighty-one years she too had served her days of usefulness and was not fit to do anything but eat. She was old, decrepid, had misery some where all the time and a "powerful" bad heart, so of course she had to be "nussed" part time also. This was hard on them as the old lady was fractious and hard to please. There was a son some place "gitting good money," but had a young wife to support and would not send the aged mother any, and put her off on poor me."

Mrs. K--- was off on a visit so I missed talking with her. Just previous to my arrival friends from out of town went to see her and

3 The Four Generations

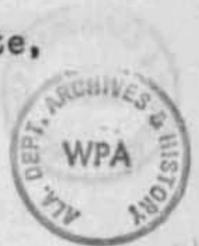
carried her in a car to their home for a "change," lifted her into the car and wrapped her snugly and drove away to the delight of the aged woman.

Her daughter, the lady from whom I was getting details said her mother "got spry" over the anticipated visit and forget how much misery she had in her back and "jints." Also said she knew the aged visitor was going to have a good time as the friends were "powerful good livers and there would be big doin's" and good eatins." Said she was glad for herself as she would have to "rub her ma" at night on account of her misery, etc., and sitting up half of the night made her "rest broken" the next day, and added she hoped her ma would git home before the next check day, as they owed out the mainest part of it.

and Mrs. K---it seems "cashes in" on her age as she is getting some kind of pension, payable monthly and amounting to ten or twelve dollars, she disremembered which, but was informed that it was far from being adequate, and none was left to buy rations and she had to eat to live.

Furthermore stated that the aged parent had "the fluttering of the heart (a bad heart) and had to pay out lots for medicine as no body was giving away anything and she couldn't do without it. Dr. told her she had to take Digotolis the rest of her life. So many drops of the mean nasty stuff three times a day or her heart would "flutter" and she would "sho" die and that costs good money too. And another thing, she had to make a monthly payment of \$2.50 for burial insurance, to come, but the discouraging feature of that was you have to die to get anything. So you see after the Digotalis and insurance bill the small pension check soon vanishes. Every now and then she would express a hope that the pensioner would return before check day, and on the sly take a dip of snuff.

Mrs. G.--the grandmother and second to oldest of the four was telling me she owned the home and there was "nary" scratch on it, but they were getting along by the very "hardest," and she didn't have the first penny to



call her own, but was scratching along and trusting in God. The house was a very nice four-room cottage set in an acreage of excellent land, which was adaptable to raising corn, vegetables or any reasonable food products.

There was also sufficient room for a cow and poultry run, but none of this was taken advantage of. The contents of the house was in keeping with that type of people and met their accustomed needs but the exterior surroundings were bleak and bare and they threw away the opportunity of making or raising a near living around them. But as she went on to excuse, they were a bunch of "poor wimmen folks" and couldn't do that kind of work, but she tried to raise a vegetable garden. ~~could not attend to both jobs.~~

"Nary a chicken on the yard. Colera and sorehead got among my chicken and turkeys and every one died. The draught parched my garden up as dry as if biting water was poured on it, and the long hard winter coming on."

"I have to buy every stick of wood I use and pay to have my water hauled. The place is dry as a bone, no water or wood. Probate Judge Leatherwood who dropped dead with fluttering of his heart last year had all my water to drink, cook with and wash with, hauled to me and never charged me on red penny. I know he is settin' in Heaven 'cause he helped poor folks and he sho will speak to you every time he sees you. One good man she gave to Glory! God bless him, we all poor "widow wimmen," no man folks to help (more generous dips on the sly) Mrs. G---is a large "stoutish" woman of fifty-eight, able to handle most any working situation. Has a pepper and salt "bob" with some kind of permanent. ~~WPA. They look her in~~

She can neither read or write and was reared in the vicinity of free education. She claims that early field work wore her out and was not able to do anything. "Down in the back" and rheumatism in her links. "I never see a well day" she says and an all rest broken all the time from rubbing Ma's "jints."

Going down her list of complaints, she comes to her daughter, the



mother of pretty little Ernestine, whom we shall call Mary in this story, Mary as mentioned above has just entered into young womanhood, and has a bad luck story also. She is a tall handsome and attractive girl. She unlike her ancestors had a high school education. During vacation she was giving a job by WPA cutting out garments for sewing project at seven dollars per week, no expense as the center was located near. The work her mother said was too hard (she was young, healthy and weighed about one hundred and fifty)

The usual vacation pleasures were on in the small village in full force. "Sweeties" swarmed the little cottage by the wayside. There were rides and parties and more trips, etc., etc., and she could not attend to both jobs. Late hours missed days cut the paycheck. Friends told her she was working for nothing, cut it out, she could git by."

At home she was encouraged in good "timing." Young people are different from what we were." They will have their fling." One of the sweeties, showed her the beautiful world before them together sets snatch our happiness! An elopment followed and the happiness of their world as "one" lasted but a few weeks. She traversed the same disappointed path of disillusionment trod by many before her. The sweetie proved to be a never-do-well drunkard and she had to return to the home shelter. Little Ernestine made her advent into the home and was number four, as to generations. The husband accepted no responsibility in supporting Mary or the baby, but spent his money on drink.

Another little mouth had to be fed, body to be clad so Mary had to retrace her steps to the friendly doors of the self same WPA. They took her in on the N.Y.A. Project working two weeks in the month. Her mothers still says there is no money in it. That it does not take care of the shoes and hose bill worn out on the work. That is that. The more done for that type, the more they require. The house with three widows "nary" man and baby Ernestine.

11/16/38

L.H.



The Harris Foursome,
A peculiar family who
fought marriage.
Told by M. S. McRee.



Marie Reese,
Lowndesboro, Ala.

[The HARRIS Family]

Passing by what is still known as the old Harris residence, located on the principal street in a small village, memories carry one back to the Harris Foresome, who were the remaining members of that family, and who had occupied the place most of the years of a century.

The home had been among the earliest built in the community, and stories have been passed down and around that the land upon which it was built was a dense forest in which the deer abounded at the time Robert Harris came with other pioneers, in quest of a homestead among richer fields.

He came in the "covered wagon era" and blazed a trail to this site where he cleared the forest and built a small cottage made of the logs he had cleared. He made friends with the Indians as well as the animals, and dwelt among them for awhile. Later, the present house was built in colonial times in a setting of giant oaks, cedars and elms. For years, some of the deer that had become friends of the family, remained in the front yard and were pets. At times they could be seen on the green in front of the home or following the children on an errand.

The parents of this family passed on-one of the daughters married and moved into a distant state and the four whom marriage did not appeal to were left. Robert, Rosa, Augusta and Geneva, and a small brindled dog that answered to the name of Toby (the abbreviation of Tobias) composed the household.

Tobias belonged to it but one would think from his attitude and the consideration he received in the household that it belonged to him. A characteristic of the family was that they were violently

The Harris Foursome

opposed to matrimony and made a sacred pact among themselves that they would never marry or permit any attentions that would lead to it. Robert would not seek any girl and the four sisters were not to encourage any attentions. They were each and all attractive, good looking, well educated and accomplished and it seems that the brother in the pact "had a way with women."

Many suitors came and went in vain, because they felt it their bounden duty to avenge a deception or misunderstanding between a much older sister who had had an unrequited love affair and which had worried her into a fever, causing her death. In consequence, they were all prejudiced against marriage.

Soon after the pact was solemnly sworn to, Mary met an "irrisistible" on a business trip into the nearby city. The temptation was too great and she fell and fell hard. On her return home she told the good tidings and asked to be released, telling them that the agreement was only a silly affair and the cost would be too high. She heaped wrath and indignation on her head. The next morning disclosed the fact that she had eloped during the night with her Coffin, the man she loved, (that was his name) and had gone to her new home in another State. That left Robert, Rosa, Augusta and Geneva, the single four to hold and they did it too.

Mary's name was erased from memory after they said she had put herself in her own coffin. She only returned after the death of the last of the four. As time passed Geneva, the youngest, attended a State Fair with Robert. He had made some kind of gate attachment and they wanted to demonstrate it to the public.

Among the visitors she, like Mary, met an irrisistible and lost her heart, but the others did not let her get away with it and her



Prince Charming rode away. She remained true to the agreement, but at the same time she remained true to Charlie. Their sincerity in the love affair has almost an unprecedented record on the pages of Romance; there were letter days and down a couple of decades he never missed sending her a letter down the years for a couple of decades. Little Tobias was trained to meet the mail on those understood letter days and the little brute would come trotting home with a precious message in his mouth.

Her sisters would ask her if she was sure that he would be true to write as he promised. Her reply always was, "Does the sun rise in the East?" There was a considerable touch of romance and sentiment in the makeup of Geneva. On the nights she dared keep company with Charlie, a flower was placed on one of the tall gateposts which stood as if on guard to the entrance of the grounds.

He was to pass on an investigation tour and if the flower was not there to not enter. It meant the domestic atmosphere would be too warm and there would be an unnecessary slamming of doors and windows hinting loudly that his suit was not sanctioned. When he was fortunate enough to get in, the couple would be soon promenading arm in arm in the moonlit flower garden with Tobias following in the romantic footsteps. He did his darndest best to act as little cupid, but only a little brindle pup and they could not put it over. The lovers missed the path.

The Harris family ^{was} were a talented one and to be musical with them was as natural as it was to breathe. "Bob" as Robert was generally called was a natural barn fiddler and could almost make a fiddle talk. His sisters all played well. Geneva played the guitar beautifully, while the other two played on the piano and with these instruments they organized a small town orchestra.

During the lean years the home was an amateur music studio where they gave music lessons on the different instruments in order to make a living. Pupils were sent to them from the village school which was but a distance of five minutes' walk. Also with the advent of their years of depression there came a desire for seclusion. They did not care to meet their old life under a financial strain. The home with its inmates, became shut-in. The giant trees aging around century marks, were allowed to spread to their utmost, while shrubs and undergrowth met and overlapped.

Not a twig or leaf was permitted to be cut away and while the lovely ante-bellum home was in a most prominent location, it was absolutely remote and shut off from the outside world except in instances of business. Many peculiar stories found their way out however. When anyone wanted to lease it, it was said "You are going to be an old maid just like the Harris'. When allusion to age was made, the expression was made "as old as Bob Harris," and "When Bob Harris was a baby." That meant the limit.

He worked in the crowded season at a local store where the postoffice was kept and it was said that any time he and the postmaster would keep people waiting who had driven for miles and miles for their mail, while they opened up raw oysters and ate as many as they care to. The impatient farmer waiting while Bob and the postmaster "nipped" and ate oysters. The young boys in fun would drop in and ask him if he kept so and so. Expecting to make a sale, he would quickly tell them yes. In reply the mischievous boys said, "Why don't you sell it then? What are you keeping it for?"

Mrs. Lucinder Harris, the mother, died and when "in state", during the period awaiting the funeral Geneva spent hours day and night sending messages to her father who had long since made his departure into the other world. She took her seat by the side of the casket in which the remains of her mother was resting and placing her mouth close to the ear of the



deceased, whispered message after message to be carried to the other side.

This continued until all was in readiness for pallbearers to carry the lady out from the home. At the last moment she requested them to wait as she had a note she wanted to send in the Great Beyond. Hastily she got it and put it in the cold stiff hands of the corpse, kissing both in a last farewell. It was addressed to Charlie within the pearly gates. As soon as she got out of earshot, it was the pallbearers' inning. One whispered "She was saving postage stamps." As the years passed, this eccentric but talented family passed one by one. Geneva was the last one to go and her last illness was spent in illusions of her love she gave up due to the pact.

Those attending her bedside claim that the white haired woman talked incessantly of him and read imaginary love letters and promising to soon join him where no one could part them. Night owls claim that the figures of a young couple can be seen strolling 'neath the shadows of the dense trees and a little dark object close at their heels. Could it be faithful little Tobias?



4/6/39

J.

Story told by a kinsman, M. S. McRee, during a conversation around the fireside. Regardless of the relationship it was told with much amusement and declaring that the "nest of old maids and a bachelor were erratic to the extent of being cranks. The author of the story was middle-aged, stoutish and blond; most pleasant and possessing a gift of gab and a man of the world.

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Not given	*Biographical Sketch (Miss Gussie Woodruff) Ribbon	2

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✓ check out LC index

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STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION
Works Projects Administration
FEDERAL WRITERS PROJECT OF ALABAMA
1938-1939

The following series of articles were misclassified and filed in the original organization of records and manuscripts by the WPA central office in the Short Story section of the Folk Lore Project. It contains life histories, ex-slave narratives and biographical sketches written by Marie Reese, Lowndes County, District #3 of Alabama.

The series has been re-classified and edited for micro-filming by the Conservator/Curator, WPA Collection Depository, Records Management Division of this Department as a security record.

January 29, 1982

Interview
Mrs. C. W. Higgins
Burkville, Ala.,
R.D.

Marie Reese
Lowndes County
December 17, 1938

SALLIE SMITH



The morning I called on Sallie I found her gathering pecans in the grove which was near the house. As she leads a lonely life she was glad to see me and have as she expressed it, a good old heart-to-heart chat. She invited me in and gave me a most cordial welcome, but as it was a glorious day we decided to set out in the open and have our visit.

Living alone, she did not have anyone to talk with every day and all one had to do was to give her a start. She began to tell me it was her day to get ready for the curb market the next day and that she was exceedingly busy but assured me she could work and talk at the same time. I asked her to tell me all about her work at the market and as it was one of the ways she had of making a living, she was very much interested and I was interested in hearing of it. She said she did not know what would have become of her if it had not been for this and the cows as they pulled her through the lean years. She explains to me that the curb market she goes to is located in Montgomery, Alabama, but the distance of seventeen miles is nothing on the paved road (#80) and when her flivver is in good running condition.

The market was organized for the purpose of helping the women on the farm and to give them an opportunity of disposing of their farm produce. It is open or in operation three days in the week. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The days are arranged in this way so the intervening days can be spent in gathering and preparing the products they wish to carry and dispose of.

She says "We get ready one day and work late into the night and often make a sunrise start. We must get there very early, so our vegetables, flowers, etc., will be fresh. Also because the shoppers come early

so as to buy something for dinner. If anyone is late someone else grabs the customers and we lose trade." The market is supervised by outstanding women of the city who with an efficient board of directors have made a big success of it.

These regulate prices which has to be sold by and regulations which has to be followed. These prices are printed on a board. However, after twelve o'clock all restrictions are lifted and the sellers can put whatever prices they choose on their articles of produce. In event any rule is broken, the one who gave the offense is either suspended or required to discontinue altogether.

One of the main requirements is that whatever is carried there for sale must be raised on their own plantation. Nothing whatever can be bought and resold there. Sallie told me a joke on some parties who sold there and who were caught buying the produce instead of raising. They were suspended from selling there three months which was a great loss as many things they intended to cash in on were out of season by the time ^{the} parties were allowed to go back.

Each seller or lady has a table for which she pays a small monthly fee and in addition 10¢ every time she uses it. "It's mighty hard work," she says, "but I want the money and have to live. It keeps me 'turning'". I plant an all year round garden. In fact I am planting seed in my garden all the year around. In my childhood, I recall my parents making and having a Spring garden, but now it's an all-year round proposition.

"Now is our busiest and best season. Christmas is just around the corner which means turkey and decoration season. I sit way into the night having dozens and dozens of turkeys dressed and some of these I have what is called 'dry pickled'. This is more work on me but the turkey is nicer fixed this way than it is dressed by the old-fashioned way, that is, pickled with hot water. Of course, I have to have help because I can't dress perhaps



twenty turkeys, some chickens and prepare many other things without help and as soon as I turn my back Mary pours boiling water over the fowls.

"This makes the feathers come off easier, less work for her and almost spoils the appearance of the turkey or chicken. Sometimes the skin peels off in places, then when I get ready to sell it I have to reduce my price and scarcely break even.

"City folks have lots of airs and of course the sellers who has the nicest looking things gets the trade. But there is mighty good money in turkey business now. They are 20¢ and 25¢ on foot per pound and 35¢ per pound dressed. I sell them weighing anywhere from seven pounds to twenty and you see that counts up. It is common to have a customer march in to the market and buy a \$5 and \$6 one. They tell me they eat off of it a day then put it in the ice box and use some other meat, then use the rest after a few days change.

"I call people who come in and pay that much for one without trying to 'jew me down' real people and me real lucky. The best piece of luck I ever had on the market was a year ago, when a big lawyer in the city came to my table and said 'I want to give you an order.' To my surprise and delight he bought twenty-five turkeys dressed.

He said, 'please give me your choicest ones regardless of price as I want to send them around as Christmas presents to my friends.' I never saw him before, but trust the good Lord, I will see him again. You see from that street entrance my place comes first and he stopped. I lived with a man thirty-odd years and they are just like that. They won't do like women, run all around and price and turn the article over and over, upside and down and begin to 'jew' you, but they buy and move on.

"This reminds me of myself one day when I was trying to save a few cents on a yard of cloth. I wanted to let out a last season's dress. Like most women I went the rounds looking and pricing mind you, to save a couple



of cents on one yard. Finally the clerk where I had been to twice, said, 'Lady, you wear out more soles on your shoes than the small difference in the cloth will come to.' Of course, he was right, and as the old saying goes, 'much is lost by looking for greener pastures.' But I must finish telling you about my good luck story of the lawyer (and another saying) the 'Christmas turkey'. I was so glad and decided at once to get rid of my other produce as soon as possible and instead of standing there all day selling, I could see a picture. I could come home earlier than I had planned for Pinc, the colored boy who drives me was out with my car.

"As soon as he puts me out and unloads he is off with the car and I'm sure, is seeing the town with his colored friends to the detriment of the car." "Why will you allow it? Why not park it nearby?" I asked.

She replied that the drivers would not stand for that. It was too expensive to keep a regular boy to drive as she only went three days in the week, for which she paid him 50¢ a day. Also 50¢ a trip to drive her anywhere else. However, she said it was best to humor them as help was awful hard to get and she had to have someone to drive her about. She lives three miles from the village out on the farm and then there is the business trips into town and elsewhere. "I am compelled to have him, she said." I am too old to start driving myself now. I ought to have started when I first got a car. I know I am foolish now to manage as I do, but being alone, I can't do any other way.

"My car which is a Ford, costs me \$1.50 a trip into Montgomery (round trip) and 50¢ for a driver, then the wear and tear bill. I have also to allow for a dollar to two loss every now and then as something mysteriously disappears and the help tells me I just miscounted articles when I loaded.

"I can't help this either," she says. I can't come down too strict



she explains. I have to count an occasional loss as expenses, but after the expenses come out, I consider I clear enough to have a car and of course I am compelled to have one and call it my business car. Of course, I'm not able to have a nicer one as the up-keep is too much and besides hauling all my products in it would ruin it and it would not be a nice one very long." I was curious to know what her products were and asked.

"Oh, she said, any and everything raised to eat and used that is raised on your own land. From pork and turkey to popcorn and persimmons, but I wanted to hear in detail and she gave me a near list.

"Fresh pork, sausage, all kinds of flowers, fowls, butter, eggs, fresh meat, vegetables all year around, pot plants, preserves, beautiful home made cakes, packages of light wood and many other things. This is a turkey and decoration season. In the early Spring there is a flower season. Loads and loads of lovely flowers, trees and bulbs are sold.

"The sellers consider the planting time a lucky break for them, because most of the trees and shrubs can be gotten in forests and of course, are all profit. Many kinds of wild flowers are also sold in profusion and the only expense attached to them is the getting, which is very small. I want to tell you about a friend of mine who sells near me and the good luck she had last Spring, She said, in going over her woodland she discovered some wild blue phlox in bloom. As it was in abundance she picked quite a bit and carried it to the market.

"It took like wildfire and its popularity spread like wildfire. Worlds of it was sold in bunches and it became so popular that the customers began to order plants. Small baskets of two dozen plants each brought 50¢. A blue phlox wave spread over the city. My friend sold \$400.00 worth of those plants and blooms during the planting season.

I stood nearby, taking note of her good luck and about the time the planting season was passed, I discovered a patch in my own pasture. I am

going to sell them by the wholesale next year if I live and nothing happens." She was extremely enthusiastic about the Christmas season and asked me to go with her into a rear room and see the many decorations she was preparing to put in the market. The reason of her intense interest in these was as she explained, all profit, almost.

She had gone into the woods and gathered an abundance of evergreens. Lovely leaves, pine cones, berries and holly. These she was to sell some in their natural state, some she was making into graceful garlands and pretty wreaths.

Having bought bright colored paints from the 5¢ and 10¢ store and with gold and silver paints she was working it all into some kinds of ornamental decorations. The large room was literally full of it. She prided herself on the graceful smilax and vines she had silvered. She told me she bought a gallon of the silver paint for \$2.70 and poured it in a basin and simply dipped the vines in and she said she said she would "mop up" on that alone. "It is mighty messy", she said, "but I am going to gather it by day and work it up by night and on Christmas Eve night I expect to set up and paint and fix all night."

"I can't do this and get free money but once a year! "How on earth are you going to do all this?" I asked. She told me she had made a good trade with Mary, the cook woman. She had a nice crepe dress she had bought on special sale for \$5.00 "but it is too loud for me."

She only wore it once and the cook woman traded to work every night next week and help me paint, etc. for the dress. "I'll be all right as to help and it won't cost me one penny unless she gets drunk. She gets gutter drunk every Christmas and lays up on me for the week, but I am trusting to providence she will wait till she pays for the crepe or finishes my things. We start a big roaring fire and I want you to know I work. While Hube lived (her husband) he made hot coffee and passed it around once or twice during the nights.



She told me she had been going to the curb market six years and had made good at it, but she could not do and stand work like she once did, but was going as long as she could hold out.

Her children did not want her to work, but come and live with them but she was not content to sit idle and thought older people could not be transplanted. One of her son-in-laws especially, did not want her to work and considered her type of work not in keeping with their station in life, and offered her a nice monthly check to retire. This did not appeal to her at all. Said it was all airs and false pride, and besides she wanted independence and intended to work for it but none of us were growing any younger. When she had about given me all the information on her plans for the Christmas work she told me her life story.

Sallie was 60-odd, she laughed and told me after she had celebrated her 60th she did not intend to have any more birthdays. She lost her husband two years ago with heart trouble. Thought a widow woman had a hard struggle, but did not want to try the matrimonial venture again.

Her girls sent her attractive colored dresses and discouraged her mourning garments in the early days of bereavement, but she had the old ideas of respecting the dead deeply instilled in her and kept repeating that the dresses were too gay, too short and too tight and the idea seemed to worry her that by wearing them some man might think she was after him. She is nice looking, medium size, has pretty pepper and salt hair and attractive face, but has worn herself to a great extent by hard work.

She was the granddaughter of a rather large pioneer planter. Her mother married during the depression years of the late 60's and began her married life in the plantation home which was homesteaded by the pioneer father and of course the grandfather of Sallie.

There were four children born of this union. Sallie was the youngest. Soon after her birth the young mother passed on. The father proudly boasted

that he would not farm out and separate his children, but would show that he could rear them as well as any woman could, so he hired an old colored woman who had been a family slave and a mammy in the house. The young widower and the faithful old negro began the task of rearing the three little girls and small boy. Sallie said, "He was mighty strict on us, but guess he had to be and people said he had made a good job of it."

"I remember papa stepping out lots, but I guess there were too many young ones to raise and no lady wanted such a large ready-made family, so he never made another marriage. Let me tell you a funny thing about his affairs with the fair sex and I'm sure the joke which spread everywhere broke him up from courtin'.

"He was smitten with a young widow in an adjoining village and on occasion when he was in the city, he decided to send her a box of flowers. The same day he purchased for himself a suit of underwear. By chance both purchases were put in boxes about the same size and wrapped. On reaching home he did not take time to open them, but sent one to the widow and wrote on it "Wear these and think of me."

"On opening the box she found the undies instead of flowers. The mistake ended their affair and he never tried again. Two things in particular he was strict about, our table manners and going out with boys. He never allowed one of us to go alone with a boy, but he would have to carry my sister and I together and when we came into the village to dances he would not allow us to come in a top buggy. Yes, about the time I was dating, it was the buggy and horse period or as I hear the "put ons" say, it was in the "gay nineties". But a top buggy better not be hooked at our gate. It had to be 'open' if we went in it. Another funny thing I recall", she said, "most of us had sweethearts off at college and my sister and I would make up and save our fresh dresses till the boys came in. We did not care if the other girls did joke us about it.



"I don't think it pays for parents to be too strict with children. Both of my sisters planned runaway marriages as means of escape. Papa believed in education but would not put a dime on a college education, unless you would follow a profession. I wanted to go to college as all my classmates were going, but he wanted me to be a M. D. and as I refused, he would not pay my way. I went anyway to a normal school and paid my expenses by teaching in the under classes.

"Soon after I finished I escaped it all by getting married. Papa was pleased as Hube was the son of one of his old war cronies and they attended all the Confederate reunions together. I went to the city and remained there five years when my father died.

I decided to come back and reclaim the old home where I was born and the farms that my pioneer grandfather had bought almost 100 years ago. But in reality I came back to work and drudge. My husband was a town man, and knew nothing on earth about a farm. To succeed on a farm you must know the 'ology' of the nigger and the mule, else they will eat you up. We decided to go into it in a big way, so I bought up the interests in the land of my sister and brother and bought a nice herd of cows and started a dairy.

"We had four little girls to raise and educate and I went over to Georgia and got my brother's two small children to raise. He had died out West and they were left alone. About this time my husband lost his health and I knew the load would be mine. Milk was a good price then and giving it personal attention, I realized a good monthly check.

Operating a dairy is hard work and it is confining as a prison sentence, but it brings in ready money, where the money from the farm does not come in till Fall. I helped to milk and saw to it that it got off (by wagon to meet a daylight train at a distance of six miles). To do this I had to get up at three and four A. M. During the hard winter months I caught



'fits' in the cold, rain and sleet, but I will tell you how I managed to hold out and it is a big help.

"I make it a rule and it is a good rule too, I take care to eat a plenty and to wear a plenty when it is cold and this keeps you going, but I see now it does not pay to work too hard, that is, 'drive yourself'. One pays for it in the long run.

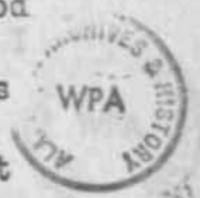
When I was young it seemed 'Putonish' to hear people saying they were tired. I did not know the meaning of the word until the past year or two, and never had a sickly day. My children were never sick. I began to think of their education which I strongly believed in, I sent them for three to six at a time into the village school. At night I would take them in my lap one at a time, and teach them and next morning while I was cooking breakfast I 'heard their lessons.'

"They were all bright and I sent them to college two at a time and my goodness it was a drain on my pocketbook. I had taught them to stand on their own and when they finished that they would have to make their own way.

"I could not tell you how many thousand dollars their schooling cost me, but I had a wonderful herd of dairy cows and pulled them all the harder, but I got good results from the pile I spent on my girls. All made good and taught a few years and married. The best idea to raise children is to make them as self-reliant as possible. No petting and pampering, but at the start make them help themselves. It is handed to me that I raised an unusually nice set of girls, five in all. (She did)

My dairy increased, but farm profits began to fall off. I backed it up with my dairy money, but year after year I lost by doing so. The cash I made on my cows was eaten up by crop failure and nigger. Never put out a good dollar after a bad one. I made this terrible mistake which cost me my farm. Always let each business keep account of itself and take care of itself. Not make one carry the other.

I fell way behind. The hands were getting lazier day by day. My



husband who never understood the farm was rapidly falling in health. We really put too much in the college fund. The girls were teaching but spent it on handsome dressing and did not want to save the land. They said they were through with the farm. The last depression almost finished us up, but work commenced improving road #80 one mile below my house.

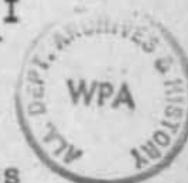
"We sold plenty of gravel to use in its construction, hundreds of dollars worth. I hired me an extra cook, got some cheap beds and bedding and I took in boarders, ten at \$25.00 a month.

"I felt that I was in luck. The gravel and boarders tidied the farm trouble over, but interest works while you sleep and is evergreen. Road #80 was completed, but the next year my debt faced me again and the gravel and boarders' money could not come again. I am sixty years old going on higher and after a life of hard work and sacrifice I lost my home and land, the place where I was born and my mother before me. Then I lost my husband. But conditions were not as bad for me as they might have been.

"My oldest daughter's husband stepped in and bought it and gave me a life-time home, so I hardly realize the difference, in fact I don't have to scratch up tax, interest and insurance every year. He is a State official and a fine man. He wants me to retire on a monthly check from him but I won't lay up on anyone.

Sallie, however, is slipping. She has high blood pressure and does not feel that she can lead an active life many more years. She lives in the old home which is built on a log foundation and framed on the exterior. The 100-year old house has nondescript furnishings. Some exquisite antique pieces and filled in with modern furniture. The half story room is a real curiosity. It is filled with old letters, documents, etc, dating over a hundred years back. She says she does not appreciate these, but the stamps are valuable.

She lives a life of work, but prefers it. Has a cook who assists her



in preparing her produce for the market. Then two old colored men carry on the dairy. She still operates this on a small scale. Milk is very cheap now, as so many have gone in the business.

One of her great interests is her immense flower and bulb plot which she cultivates right on with the vegetable garden. She claims to have thousands of bulbs and told me she usually made a neat sum on Daffodils and narcissus blooms and bulbs. She does not believe in any social activity, and says her cows and the curb market are her interest in life. She votes, but not especially interested in politics. A member of the Baptist church and her husband was a Catholic. She says she is called the "outworkingest" women anyone ever saw.

(Note - But in the end does it pay to lead a hard life of work and lost all her property in her old age.)



12/2-38

S.J. wedding day. She had been the only girl and her parents insisted

in settling the old house on the girl and let the same rest for

However, Mrs. Edwards who was called "Miss Finkle" by

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patience, etc., and that is something not many mothers can say, and I've

Mr. & Mrs. John Huffman, (white),
Landowners and Truck Farmers,
* Davenport, Alabama.
Interview with them Jan. 7, 1939.

Marie Reese,
Lowndes County, Ala.

* DEVENPORT - near Letohatchee



THE EDWARDS FAMILY

There were eight in the Edwards family, and when I met them the sic^x children were grown and contributed their parts respectively to the support of the household. Leo, the oldest son and eldest child was "pushing thirty" as his mother expressed it and had married and settled on a corner of the farm.

He built a very small cottage, but thought it best to get out from under the paternal roof when the babies began to come and all thought, no matter how pleasantly they all got on together, every man with a family should have his own home.

And too, he was fair enough to recognize the fact that the four brothers would in time want to marry and would have the same right to bring their families there as he, then wondered if any home was large enough to hold seven families, in peace, so he got out and started out in one corner of the old farm that was handed down to his mother on her wedding day. She had been the only girl and her parents believed in settling the old house on the girl and let the sons root for themselves.

However, Mrs. Edwards who was called "Miss Timmie" by everyone, boasted of the fact that her son, Leo, even though he was man enough to have a home, wife and two young ones - had not gotten loose from her apron strings and was still her boy.

"My five sons still work with us and we all cooperate and make a living together, not a one of them have gotten 'too big for their britches' nor given me a minutes' trouble, in their lives. Now, not that nursing and bringing up a pack of children ain't a lot of trouble. I don't mean that way. But I mean the kind of trouble that comes from wildness, dissipation, etc. , and that is something not many mothers can say, and I've

raised five and one girl."

I met different members of the Edwards family from time to time in the City of the Curb Market, where they have been disposing of their many different farm products for the past ten or twelve years. Sara, the girl of the family, gave me some very interesting information recently how this institution was begun, its progress, its great improvement and what a help it has been to that class..

"I have been coming here with mama ever since I was twelve years old", she told me, between customers. She explained that it started right out on the street. Each seller had his or her table arranged all in a row along the curb and purchasers bought it curb service like, which gave it its name. I asked her if they had no shelter, no overhead protection and what they did in case of rain.

"Oh, no," she said, "they only had rough tables in the open and we just had to take the sun and rain as it came. Usually we bought coverings to protect the produce in case of rain and as for the sun most of the sellers there personally raised the things we brought and were used to the broiling sun.

"I want you to know," continued Sara, "that this place has been a godsend to us as most of us have been "hard run". It has given a living to many a hard working woman and brought a many one out. First they came bringing their produce in trucks and those who did not live so very far from the city made the trip by wagon. Some now come sixty and seventy miles which means that they have to start long before day so as to get vegetables, fruit and fresh things in time for the early shoppers.

"Some of these people," she said, "have nice cars and trucks and are in comfortable circumstances because, regardless of what they grow or raise, they can bring it in here and cash in on it. People have to live and the city people have to buy everything they use.



"I know women who sell on this market who were in most desperate circumstances when they first came here. They could scarcely get by and now are making regular appointments at beauty parlors and have permanents, manicures, etc. The market has made strides as to improvements and these women who bring things here to sell have "kept step" with the improvement. But we do not believe in that beauty parlor stuff. I am glad when I look nice, but it takes money to go there and we would have to strike many a hard lick to pay the bill.

"We get a ten cent box of powder and spend another dime for a box of theater rouge which lasts a long time, and do the best we can with the looks God gave us. I am most thankful when I can get neat slippers, a little hat and three yards of cloth.

"I say three yards of dress goods because I can get a nice dress out of that. I make my own clothes and in that way they don't cost much. When I come into town I always attend the sales and often pick up a pretty remnant for a small sum. As you know, sometimes it's hard to find a piece with three yards in it, as that is a small dress pattern instead of a reduced remnant. Sometimes I have to get two pieces and make a combination dress. I think if one knows how to combine the two materials, this makes the most attractive dress.

"The idea is never make the entire skirt out of one piece and waist out of the other, but put some of the skirt material on the waist too, and it turns out smart. I find that if a girl can sew, she can have twice as many dresses.

"Anyway, in picking up bargains one has to be careful or it will be a loss instead of a saving. For instance, at times a shorter length is bought because it is pretty and reduced and the intention is to match it out of stock. The match is expensive and in the long run the material comes high. Always keep your eye open at a sale. Last week when I was



in one of the stores, I was attracted by a counter piled high with various articles, and the counters were marked 1¢ , 2¢, and so on. I have to count my pennies and make them count.

"I at once got busy and feeling that I had found luck I hastily picked out several articles. I was so sure I was getting an extra bargain I cinched them before the other fellow saw the good luck and beat me to it.

"The home people" said, 'Sara, "had a picnic laughing at me because when I got home and began to display my good luck package, I found that there was a defect in most every article that made it impossible to use, so instead of saving my pennies, I threw away most of my change.

"The thing I hated most was my aluminum ware proving no good. We do our own cooking and all our own work as for that matter, and nothing is more upsetting to the cook than to have not enough vessels to cook in and when I came home Christmas it seemed to me that every pot, pan and boiler leaked."

During the years Sara had grown up from the little twelve-year old girl who came to market with Miss Timmie and she had married and lived with her husband in Nashville, and while at home for the holidays she was again at the market to help out.

"I was telling you", she said, "about the kitchen utensils leaking. After I married and left home all Mama's girls were boys and they helped her do the household work and I just know ruined up all the cooking things.

"I made up my mind if I had to help I would fix something to cook in. So I went into the woods and gathered lovely evergreens and red berries and make them into Christmas wreaths to sell. I also made some "plantation mammy door-steps to sell. Look," she said, pointing to the mammys standing about on her mother's table.

They really were cute and unique and she gave me directions how to make one which cost practically nothing. A milk bottle was used for the foundation. This was filled with sand to make it heavy. It stands straight up as the



bottle does. The top and neck of the bottle is stuffed with cotton and covered with black material (cloth)

This is shaped into a head and shoulders and small black arms are sewed on. White buttons sewed on make the eyes and the mouth is outlined with turkey red thread. Any golden colored wire is bent into small loops and placed to each side to represent earrings. Mammy is dressed in ante-bellum slavery time style, a wide, bright colored cotton, a shawl, white apron and a fancy head handkerchief.

The weighted down bottle enables her to stand along, and making a rather attractive, unique and heavy doorstep. Sara said "They took like wildlife in Nashville." I wanted to know where she got the idea. She said, "I saw it in some little books with Christmas suggestions and it would retail at \$1.00."

In reply to my saying at that price she would do well, she said, "Oh! I am not asking that for mine. I will be glad to get 50¢.apiece for one. I'm afraid to ask more. It might scare possible buyers away." She laughed and added, "I don't think we get what we should have, but I need the little money so bad that I cannot risk losing a sale. When I came home I intended making my little Christmas money this way. When we were married Bill was making a good salary at the shops, but he was cut and now has work only a couple of days in the week.

But I never finished telling you how I got stung on the 1, 2, 3, and 4¢ bargain table. I was powerfully proud of my brand new aluminum cooking things. I carried them home and gathered the ones up that had worried me so leaking and threw them over in the dump pile.

We were going to have camping the next day which was Sunday, and as there would be several added to our own crowd, some turning about had to be done. See, when you do your own work the dinner has to be fixed early, that day in advance so while I was dusting the spare room I kept thinking



over and over how good it would be to cook in my new things. Time came to put dinner on. I washed my rice and put it on, next came the macaroni to parboil.

"About this time I heard a drip, drip. I investigated and my brand new boiler was leaking and had put out my fire and about that time the water in the macaroni had oozed out from three holes. Another new pan was as bad. What was I to do? I did not have time to go to the dump pile for the old things.

After dinner when we were talking, one of my neighbors said I ought to have bought a ten cent package of mendits which are grand to mend holes with. They come six in a dime package and come in different sizes to cover a small or large hole. They work something on the principle of dress snaps. My friend reminded me that there were no refunds or exchanges on the bargain counter. I thought of how hard I had worked on the doorsteps and stuck my hands making the wreaths, but we all joked it off.

"I remembered an old, old lady once I went to see, or rather went to hear her talk because she always gave me something to eat. She always sat in a chair by a table which had a drawer in it. She would pull out the drawer and give me some soft gingerbread, a piece of molasses custard or home made candy.

"I ate and she talked between dips of snuff which she had in her apron pocket. One morning I remembered in particular my visit to her. As I went in she was stringing ears of popcorn. She put her work down and told me to go look in the shed room and get the popper and we would pop some of the corn. Soon the fluffy white pieces or grains were popping and popping out all over the hearth and that end of the room.

"She was all upset that morning and in her nervousness she took frequent dips from the snuff box. I had heard that a neighbor, as my dad expressed it, 'had thrown dust in her eyes' and in a trade had beat her out of her best yoke of steers. She told me that experience was the best teacher, it was good

to learn a few lessons and even though you had to pay, it was worth it in the long run.

"I remember best of all (after the cakes and custard) a ^{slat} sunbonnet she wore, and in cold weather she wore it in the house. 'You never saw one?' she asked, addressing me. "Why, they are mostly like any other sunbonnet, except the front part comes out far and has slats, which are made very thin out of some kind of wood or maybe cane. They were about one inch wide and eight inches long. They slip in and out of the cases stitched for them in the cloth. They are taken out to 'do up' the bonnet."

During one of my talks with the Edwards family, they urged me and my friend, who was their next neighbor at the curb market, to visit them in their home which was just over the countyline. We decided to go and went down road #31 or the Mobile highway.

The route was very pretty and interesting and it was rather well settled with small modern homes and up-to-date dairies and poultry farms. Those two enterprises with the extensive level hay farms, seemed to have been the main occupation along the way. Of course there were numbers of small stores and filling stations, but it was evident that there were too many of these, for the doors of many had been closed. When we reached Sunset Poultry Farm, eighteen miles south of Montgomery, we left road #31 turning into an ordinary plantation road.

This road was very good due to the fact that we have had a very little rain this winter. We traveled through the narrow, picturesque road for a couple of miles when we arrived at the end which lead us to the gate of a large enclosure.

"The enclosure was the setting of the Edwards home which was our destination. We opened the gate and entered, but we did not have to close it as a sweep and part of an iron wagon axle was tied to the gate, and the weight carried it back shut in place. In Mr. Edwards' directions as to

how to locate them, he said "you can't miss us." As soon as you come near the place, there will be such a noise you'll know you are in the right place. and you'll see a big apple orchard.

"Four dogs will meet you and announce you." He was right as far as he went. There were dogs, cows, geese, turkeys, ducks and other things almost enough to remind one of being in a small zoo.

There was no yard, only a winding road to the steps of the home which could boast of no attractions as to appearance, but we were not in the least disappointed because we had been forewarned. The gentlemen of the house in urging us to make the visit, said "We are just poor working people and have a plain house." To begin with it was just a shotgun cottage and as the children came we tried to add a room every time a baby was added to our family, but gee! that didn't work long.

"The children came faster than I made money and I had to fall down on that." I insisted on knowing why he called it a shotgun cottage, but he laughed and told me that was common name down in his country and also told me to wait till I saw it and I would know.

To one side of the grounds was a large apple orchard which must have been most beautiful in "apple blossom time" and more interesting when the fruit was in season. In telling me of it he told with much pride how many uses he put the apples to. "As you may notice they are of different varieties. Some come real early. Then some last till late fall so we have a crop all along. That is the way to plant a fruit orchard, so as not to have them come in excess and long for them when they have all gone.

"My Timmie" (Mrs. Edwards, his wife) "is mighty smart and thrifty and puts the fruit up in several ways. There are apple preserves and jellies. If she has to try to make jelly out of the variety, that sometimes is too sweet, she puts a bit of acid in it and it "jells" all right.

"Then she makes apple butter and we make apple cider. Oh!" he exclaimed,



smacking his mouth, that cider is even good to think about and I'm going to prove it to you when we go in the house. There is nothing better than a tall glass of it and some ginger bread when you come in hot and tired. We also dry lots and lots of our fruit to use in winter months. Let me tell you about this. We peel the fruit and cut it in slices and spread it out in sunny places for several days, to dry.

"If you'd visit us at that time you would think most of our house was covered with dried fruit as we spread all over the lower roof and porches to catch the hot sun and so our chickens can't catch it.

"We also carry bushels of fresh fruit into market. We fertilize our fruit trees, prune away the dead limbs and very often have to spray them against insects. A preparation is used that was advised by the State extension department.

"Well, I guess my old lady has about had time enough to straighten up the front of the house, so we will go in. When we saw you all coming, she told me to show you all the chickens or something while she put up some new room fixins and Christmas presents. But for goodness sakes don't let on that I told you."

There were no flowers around the cottage. Two large oaks stood guard in front and to one side was an immense block sawed from a large tree trunk. "This is a horse mount. In by-gone years this was always a part of the entrance to a plantation home for the convenience of the women who rode."

Entering we noticed a horse shoe nailed over the doorway which was a constant wisher of good luck. We were met by the always smiling "Miss Timmie" who gave us a warm welcome and seats in the spare room. She said that they did not have a parlor or living room, as the family was too large to spare a room and Sara had married and moved away. The boys, of course, went elsewhere to court in other parlors. She gave us all rocking chairs, saying she could never get right for a good "mess of gossip" unless she was rocking and guess we were the same way.



"But" she added, "my mother used to say it took energy to rock." However, we all got busy and her husband moved his chair near the fireside so he could light and relight his pipe. He puffed away and joined her in the entertaining.



He said he was not going to let her out talk him and together they gave an interesting account of their lives.

The place had 160 acres of land and was not "tied up" as they expressed it and they were grain farmers. Most of the land was adaptable to grain raising, and they did not think there was any money in cotton crops. The coming of the weevil and the A.A.A. program permitted only a small acreage of cotton land to be planted, so the little fellow or farmer was out of luck.

He continued puff, puff, puff "I think when a man works and makes stuff he ought to be allowed to sell it, so we decided to raise something we could control. We do not hire any help, but my boys and myself work and raise all that we have.

"It does not take but one or two stock. The corn I raise feeds these, the pigs, my poultry, and meal for our use. When we have very early corn, we can sell the roasting ears in the city at 5¢ per ear. Even a small early patch 'mops up' at that. We raise all our meat and sell a lot of pork, but to sell it in the city, you have to have it butchered there at a cost of \$2.50 a hog. We have nice milk cows, a grand vegetable garden and poultry and eggs.

"Of course we raise these for our own home use and for sale." Mr. Edwards said "Live at home is our motto. If you raise such as we have at home, there is not much to buy. But the 'old stickman' like us catches it this way.

"The days we carry our produce in to market the prices are down, but that very day prices on flour, sugar, lard and coffee are always upward. They know darn well we have got to have groceries and are not going to carry our products way back home twenty-odd miles. And fowls have been dressed and vegetables gathered, so there you are! I call it a "poor man's break."

Miss Timmie was coming out behind in the conversation so she interrupted and told us she wanted to show us some presents her son's best girls had sent them.

She went in to one of the shed or back rooms bringing back an arm full of bright ties, boxes of handkerchiefs with cards dropping everywhere, and on which were written "With love from Mary", "Merry Christmas and love" from Bessie" and so on.

She said her sons - four of whom were single - were mighty good boys and were very popular. "They work with us hard all the week and are entitled to some pleasure at the week-end. They enjoy most of all the dances every Saturday night in the near-by small town. Three go nearly every Saturday night. They come in from work earlier than P. M. and there is a rush, shaving, bathing and dressing to get off. You know we have a car and truck both and sometimes they go in one and sometimes they use the other."

"How about your other son?" I asked. "I thought you had four sons single."

"I have" she replied, "but my youngest one is in C.C.C. camp, and that is a big help too, for you know we get \$25.00 a month from him. We manage to keep a son there and have been drawing that amount a long time.

"As soon as one outgrows the age limit, the next son comes in. We were not able to give them college advantages and they had to work so could not get much 'book learning' at home schools. We believe in it though. However, I have tried to teach them to work and live right."

"The rest of the family are Baptists but I am a member of the seven days Adventist Church and I attend services in the city. You know, what you all call Saturday is our Sunday, holy day. She showed us around the home which was a typical farm house. It was built with two large rooms in front and several are an L to the rear.

"It was furnished in a comfortable, neat manner and was well kept. Mrs. Edwards invited us to remain and have "soup" with them and said that on special days in the week they served only that for dinner, but assured



me it was rich and thick. However, we declined and left without learning why it was called a shot gun cottage.

1/24/39



S.J.

Another place of the name is the "shot gun cottage" sometimes referred to as "shot gun" however, this name is applied mostly to houses. In the story I am telling you there taking part are people which represent the various elements of London.

About ten o'clock on a beautiful and gorgeous day I went to the post and comfortable quarters of Mr. ... for an interview with Mrs. ... I was ... and the ... I ... and ... I ... and ...

... was in ... and ... He is ... and ... and I am sure ... This girl was happily ... was ... had fallen across the ... at the ... spoke ...

She said she had no one to ... and ...