

WPA Alabama Writers Project  
Short Stories/Sketches by:  
Ila B. Prine, Mobile Co

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-1-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent Street, Mobile, Ala.  
Housewife and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLEY'S HOME.

"Lawsy a-mercy, Miss 'Lizabeth, what you doing here? Here I been sick going on nine weeks, and dis is de fust time you'se been here to see me."

"Well, 'Lizzie", replied Miss Elizabeth, "how could I come to see you when I didn't know you were sick, you didn't send me any word about being sick,"

"Jes' to tell you de truth, I wuz too sick to think about any-<sup>o</sup> thing much, I wuz blind in my right eye, and deaf in my right ear and my hands felt plumb gumb, but thank God, I'se about all right now. You and de lady set right down. You take dis rocker and gib her dat one, and I'll set here in dis straight chair."

When we were all three seated, Miss Elizabeth said:

"Lizzie where's Jim?"

"Hab mercy, Lord, you mean Mr. Finley? I couldn't jes' exactly tell you where he is. Dat nigger don't do nuthin' much but stay in de street huntin' old rot got. He jes' worries me to death, 'cause he all de time wantin' Jim T., our boy, to gib him a nickel or dime to buy de stuff wid. 'Course he won't say dat's what he want de money fer, he tries to fool Jim T. by sayin' he want some tobacco, but Jim T. knows him. I'se allus tellin' Mr. Finley dat he's big enough, old enough and black enough and ugly enough to git his own tobacco. But it don't do no good. I'se never seen sich niggers as dey are dis day and time, dese triflin' hyena street flinkers are all up and wown de streets tryin' to git all de men's money, an' dat is one thing I can say for Mr. Finley, he sho' usta work, but dem triflin' women done got his head turned completely around. He aint got no sense.

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-2-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
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Mr. Finley is a fool, anyhow. You know, dat nigger will be standin' in de yard and I'll call him Jim, jes' fer devilment, and I can keep callin' him Jim but he wont part his lips, den I call 'Mr. Finley' and he'll say, 'what do you want?' Lordy, Miss 'Lizabeth, I'se had a time in dese later years, as I said awhile ago, Mr. Finley usta work good, and be right kind to me, but now dat I'se gittin' old, he don't pay me much 'tention. Dere ain't no use me quittin' tho' fer all of de men's jes alike, and Mr. Finley is de third debil I has married. De fust one was too jealous to live, and de second one was de same way, and Mr. Finley done gone runnin' around atter dese old heifers on de street, so what's de use ob gittin' rid ob him an' tryin' anudder."

I remarked: "Aunt Lizzie, you must be getting along in years?" and she replied:

"Lawsy, Miss, I is. My white folks tole me I was born de second year atter de surrender. You see, my mamma wuz brought from North Ca'lina by de nigger traders to Baldwin County, and den come from Baldwin to Mobile on de Bay boats. Mamma had a sister named Millie who wuz brought wid her, but dey wuz separated atter dey come to Mobile. Aunt Millie and Mamma neber seed each other atter dat, fer Mr. Patrich McAndrew bought Mamma, and she neber did know who bought Aunt Millie. Mr. Mc Andrew lived out on de left ob St. Stephen's Road, in de place dey called Irish Town den. It is part ob Toulminville now, but in dem times dey didn't call it dat den. I wuz born right out dere on de old Mc Andrew's place. My Mamma wuz free den, but she didn't hab no sense, she hadn't ever left dem. 'Course, dey left her dat privilege to go if she wanted to, but her husband had been killed so she jes'

Week ending April 14, 1939.

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LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

stayed on dere wid de McAndrews. You see, I don't know who my Pa wuz, but I heard Mamma say a many a time when we'd be going thro' St. Austins Cemetery, there's where your pa's buried. I wuz de only child Ma had, and she'd work her fingernails off to git me anything I wanted, and I didn't 'preciate it den. She'd fix me up an' send me to school, and I'd go 'long wid de odder chillun til I'd git nearly to de school, den I'd goto somebody's house and stay all day. I'd watch fer de odder chilluh to come along from school and if de teacher had gib dem a note to take home to Mamma, I'd take it away from dem and tear it up, and dare 'em to tell her. I tole 'em I'd beat 'em if dey tole mamma. You know I done dat de mos' ob de first year till finally it come to closin' time. So Billie Gleason, de teacher wanted me to be in de plays, 'cause I wuz allus good at rememberin' pieces and doing my part good, so he asked a boy by de name of Mason Epps to take him to mamma's house. When Mason tole me dat de teacher wanted to go to see mamma I knowed de jig wuz up, I wuz plumb scared. I got in behind de door an' listen to what Billie Gleason tell mamma. I heard him say, 'Sister Williams, how come you ain't send Sarah to school?' She said, 'Man, I send dat little heifer to school ebery day'. Lawsy I got scarer and scarer de longer dey talk, I eben got under de bed, fer I knowed I wuz goin' to ketch it when he left. She promised him I'd be dere de res' ob de year an' she'd see to it. Mamma den asked de odder chillun' whar I'd go, but dey didn't tell her 'cause I had warned dem if dey tole on me I'd beat de tar out ob dem. But jes' de same, eben tho dey didn't tell on me, I got one ob de wurst beatin's I eber got in my life, an' you may be sho' I went de res' bb dat year to school. But dat finished my

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-4-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent Street, Mobile, Ala.  
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#### A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

schoolin'. Mamma said, 'You little heifer, you wont go to school, strollin' 'round de streets wid all dis tom foolishness, I'll teach you somethin'. So she put me in de wash tub washin' clothes. If dere eber wuz a piece didn't look to suit her, she'd snatch it down and make me wash it over. Den many's de time I've seed her take up a piece ob clothes atter I had ironed it and if it had a smeared place on it, she'd put it on de floor and rub her foot all on it and den tell me to wash it and iron it right. Den she'd make me cook, and it had to be done right, too. If I burnt anything she make me eat every bit ob it. I remembers one day I burnt a whole pone ob bread, and she made me eat de whole thing and it nearly killed me. I swelled up fit to burst, but mamma said, 'de next time you'll watch dat bread, and not burn it up.' She sho' wuz hard on me atter I wouldn't take de schoolin' she tried to gib me. On Fridays and Sat'days wuz clean up days. Fridays I'd sweep de yards and den Sat'day mornings I'd start in de kitchen cupboard, take everything out scrub and clean it, den I'd polish every thing in it. Den I'd hab to polish de stove and stove pipe. Now, mind you I wozn't but about seven years old, but she meant to make something out ob me, eben tho' I wouldn't go to school. I'se glad she did make me learn to do things right, 'cause I'se had to earn my livin' most ob de time 'eben tho I has had three debils fer husbands."

I asked Lizzie if she lived with the Mc Andrews family until she married the first time.

"She replied:

"No, Miss, mamma left de McAndrews when I got up some size and worked for Miss Mary Emma Cox, who lived over de place where de People's

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-5-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent Street, Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

Bank wuz, down town in Mobile. But b'fore we left de McAndrews, we helped dem in dere store dey had on St. Michael street. Dere wuz Miss Sissy and Mr. Johnnie who wuz de oldest boy and den dere wuz Miss Hanora who wuz de baby child. Mrs. McAndrews wuz carryin' her when one day she wuz in de store settin' around when a cow come in de store and scared her bad, and you know when Miss Hanora wuz born she wuzn't right. It wuzn't so terribly long attter Miss Hanora wuz born dat mamma left dem and went to work fer Miss Cox. I wuz a gittin' a good size gal and wuz going around wid de boys and I wanted to git married, but mamma said I wuz too young. So I went over to see Miss McAndrews and asked her how old I was, and she counted it up and said I wuz about fourteen years old. Den she wanted to know why I wanted to know? So I told her I wuz thinkin' ob gittin' married. She wuz jes' like mamma she said, 'You'se too young to git married; but dat didn't stop me, fer I slipped away and married dat first debil. I didn't let mamma know it fer a week or more, 'cause I tole her I had got a job nursing fer some white folks. Atter we wuz married he carried me over in de grove to his mamma's house, and bless God, his mamma only had a room and a kitchen; and de fust night we wuz married she made us a pallet on the floor out ob some quilts. De next day she saw de woman next door what had a bed settin' out in de yard, so she asked her to rent her de bed and a room, so dat wuz our furst home. Jes' to think I left a good home dere at Miss Cox's house, where I had a room to myself and plenty good bed clothes, to marry dis triflin' nigger what didn't eben hab no bed. We lives an' learns tho'. But it took some hard times to learn me anything. I didn't hab nothin' wid me but one

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent Street, Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prince, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

changin' ob clothes I'd slipped out ob de house, But I wuz afraid to go home to git any more, so I tole him he'd have to go wid me, Finally we got up enough nerve to go, and I vowed we wuzn't married, but dat he jes walked home wid me to git some clean clothes, as I wuz wurkin'. So mamma said, 'Well, if you'se workin' allright git some clean chothes.' All de time I wuz in my room I wuz a tryin' up what I could and a droppin' it out ob de window, but I only brought a small bundle wid me when I come out, so mamma wouldn't suspicion nuthing. Course atter we wuz gone she found out I wuz really married.

"But I couldn't stay wid dat nigger long, he wuz de meanest thing and de most jealous person dat eber lived. So I left him and come home. I never will forgit one evening atter I went back home, 'course I wuz in de family way and I thought I wuz as grown as de other women what come to see mamma. I had been outside somewhere and come into de room where dey wuz all settin' so I gits a chair and sets down, too. Mamma rolled her eyes at me, but I didn't move, and in a few minutes she got up and tuk de broom and bop me over de head and tole me to go on about my business.

"De old run ob people had a different race frum dese young niggers now. Dese young 'uns think they's as grown as you is b'fore dey are any size. But mamma sho' learnt me different, 'cause atter de wemens left I said, 'mamma, looks like I'se old enough to sit wid de married women now. She said, 'You'se older dan you is good.'

"I stayed at home til de baby wuz born, and den dat debil come a beggin' me to go back to him. He tried to fool me back, by saying his Maw wuz about to go crazy to see me. I tole him, I wuzn't going

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-7-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile,

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

back wid his Maw, but if he'd rent me a room I'd go wid him. Bless God, when he got me back wid him, den he started runnin' around wid a Triflin' woman what lived on Spring Hill Avenue, so I made up my mind I wuzn't going to put up wid it. So ebery time I'd ketch her on de street I'd beat her, so she got so she wouldn't come out in de day time. So finally one night I laid fer her and beat her good, and den he jumped on me and beat me. Dat wuz when I left him fer good and went over Three Mile Creek to Irish Town and stayed at Miss Kate Carson's place, that wuz in front of Mr. Dick Finche's place. I stayed out dere a week b'fore he found me. Den he come out dere and come in and laughed and talked like he wuzn't mad. He said his Maw wuz down sick and wanted to see de baby, and he wanted me to dress it up nice and let him carry de baby to see his maw. But I said no you ain't taking' my baby nowhere. Den he said, well you come and go wid me and carry de baby. I tole him no I wuzn't going, so den he asked me to walk down de long lane to de gate wid him as he left, so I did, and wuz carrying de baby in my right arm. Jes' as we stopped at de gate he shot me thro' de right shoulder and said, now you'll come. But all de folks come a-runnin' de white as well as de black. Mr. Dick Finch come wid his shot gun and jes' b'fore he got to me dat nigger broke and run. But Mr. Dick called to him to stop, but he lit a rag and made fer Hooper's Creek and when he got dere, he swum it and left here. I ain't neber seed dat nigger again.

"Mr. Dick sent me in an old buggy and horse to Dr. Goode in Mobile to take dat ball out ob my arm but I wouldn't let him. He tole me dat it wouldn't bother me den while I wuz young, but jes wait 'til you get old. But you know dat ball is still in dere, but if it

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-8-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro.)  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

ever bothers me I don't know it. Guess dat's de reason I had dat funny feeling on my right side during dis last sickness, I hadn't tho't about it 'til jes' now.

Atter I got better from dat shootin' Miss Emma said, "Lizzie a come on back to my place and jes' set in the yard and watch the children while they play, I'll give you five dollars a month and all your clothes and food. So I went back and lived in her yard ten years. Den I acted de fool again and marry anudder debil. He wuzn't no better dan de fust one. I kept on workin' fer white folks atter I married de second time and dat debil would bring womens right in my house while I wuz gone. I wuz makin' good money too, and he wuz workin' at de Alabama, but he lay off on Fridays and Sat'days and come set in de yard at Miss Ella Payne's where I wuz workin, and whittle trash all over de place. I'd tell him he'd hab to pick de trash up and he said I ain't a going to pick up a d - n thing. So one day Miss Ella heard him and she come out and tole him to pick it up and it made him mad. Atter a while Miss Payne moved into Adam Glass's house dat wuz two doors off of Royal on Church street, it wuz next door to Bishop Liberty Stables where dey kept horses. Dat nigger would slip around and try to git into see me, but Miss Ella had done tole him to stay away atter he acted so ugly, so one day he tho't he'd be smart and he come up on de back porch and said to me, 'Lizzie your mamma said come home at once, your boy is bad sick.' I knew dat wuz a lie 'cause my boy had jes left me where he had been stayin' all night wid me. Jes' about dat time Miss Ella walk out on de porch and say, 'What you want Absolom'. and he started backing back, but b'fore he got to de yard gate de police come in and took him. Miss Ella said she was sitting where she could

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-9-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLEY'S HOME.

see him when he came in and saw he had a pistol so she called the police, and then come out to talk to him until the police came. So you see when I say I married three debils I ain't tellin' no lie. Dey sent dat nigger off fer six months so I neber went back to him atter dat, 'cause I knew I'd go to torment fussing and fighting wid him.

"I jes' kept on a workin' and on June de ninth, eighteen ninety eight I married Mr. Finley. Dat's been nearly forty one years age, and dat's too long to be with one man aint it? and if I lives to see it dis comin' Sunday our boy Jim T. will be thirty nine years old, and we will be living on dis same place fer thirty six years. Now dat's a long time, 'cause when we fust come out here it wuzn't nothin' but woods, but you see how it's built up now? We own our place and just last year we got a loan on it to do some repairs. When I gits out ob debt to dese white men, I sho' ain't goin' to git in any more. I'se gettin' too old to be worried dis way. We've struggled too hard and me especially, course I hate to say it but Mr. Finley don't act like he's in his right mind. We've bought five horses since we's been livin' here, and ebery time he gits one he don't know how to treat it and kills it. We has farmed our little patch around here, and den I'se taken in washin' to help. De las' horse I help Mr. Finley buy, wuz one from Miss Addie Earl. Mr. Finley go over and tell her I want de horse, so she said, 'Well, if Lizzie wants the horse I'll let her have it, because I know she will take care of it.' But I tole Mr. Finley he ought to be'shamed to tell Miss Addie Earl dat lie. 'Cause I didn't need it, but I wouldn't go tell her myself, 'cause I hated to make him out a lie to her, So I went ahead and gib him de seventy five dollars fer de horse, and you know dat nigger wouldn't walk no place

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-10-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLEY'S HOME.

atter gittin' dat horse and he jes' killed it too. So I aint helping him no more to buy any horses. I remembers one time he bought a horse from Mr. Cieutat and promise to pay four dollars a week, den work got slack and he couldn't pay one week. I kept atter him to go see Mr. Cieutat and tell him he couldn't pay him. 'Cause I'm like dis, my word is my bond, and when I tells anybody anything or promises to pay dem and I find I can't do it, I goes to dem and sees dere face and tells dem I ain't got de money, but I'll pay when I git it. Dat's all I can do, but I sho' am going to live up to my word.

Since we've been livin' out here I'se worked fer Miss Ella Cunningham, and she sho' wuz a fine woman. She paid me four dollars a week, and gib me all ob my clothes. Many's de time Miss Ella would put a dress on and it didn't look jes to suit her, and she'd kick it off right up into my hands and say, 'You can have that Lizzie.' I'se allus been full ob devilment and I'd tell her sometime dat her dress wouldn't look jes right so I'd git it. Lawsy, all my white folks were good folks, why dere's Frank Smith, Frank Cox, Edward Terrill, Henry Fonde, all ob dem I'se nussed. About two years ago Mr. Frank Smith come here to see me, and I wuz ready to go down to Mr. Charles Smith's office to see about using some ob his land to plant on, and Mr. Frank said, 'Where you're going Lizzie?' When I tole him he said, 'get right in my car, I'll tqke you there, and you know he carried me right to Mr. Charles's office and left me, and tole me he'd come back by and bring me back home. Sho' enough he come, but instead ob bringing me straight home he carried me all out around de Poor Farm and all over what used to be Irish Town, from St. Charles Avenue clear up to Cedar Grove. He said to me, 'Lizzie do you know where you are?

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-14-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Frine, Writer. Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

I said, 'Lawsy, yes, Mister Frank, you can't lose me out in dis part ob de country. I reckon folks wuz a wonderin' what dat old nigger woman wuz doing ridin' around wid dat white man, But you know, Mr. Frank is jes like my own, I tole him I had spanked him a many a time. I tole him eben if I wuz black on de outside, I wuz white inside. 'Cause I had allus lived and wuz raised wid de white folks. I remembers when I wuz a little bitty thing I wuz lyin' up in de bed wid de little white chillun and I stuck my hand out from under de cover along side ob deres, and asked, 'Why is my hand black and you all's is white? dey tole me 'cause my mamma whipped me wid a smutty dish rag, and I believed dem fer a long time. Sut praise God! I'se black, 'cause I don't want none ob dis mixed up business in mine. You know, I wuz taught dat way and it has stuck wid me all my life. I remembers one time when I wuz workin' fer Miss Ella, and she wanted anudder woman to help wid de work, dere wuz a bright colored woman come to de door, and I went upstairs and tole Miss Ella dere's a lady at de door. Miss Ella looked down de stairs and ~~saw~~ saw who it wuz, and she said to me, 'Don't never come up here and tell me there's a lady at the door unless she gives you a card'. I tole her I wuz sorry I made de mistake, but she looked like white folks. Miss Ella said, 'Yes, Lizzie, I know they look like white, but they aren't. You're black, but you'se got a race and they haven't, and I ain't neber forgot dat.

"Mr. Frank ain't de only one ob my white folks that has been good to me, 'cause Mr. Fred and George Cox, that runs de Cox Electric Shop, and whose father wuz at one time de editor ob de Daily News, usta to send me de paper ebery day fer months atter I moved out here.

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer' Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLAY'S HOME.

Dey wanted to wire my house fer me, but I didn't let dem do it, 'cause dere wives is funny and I didn't want dem to be having funny ideas about me. But Lawsy, a mercy'. I'se spanked dem boys a many a time, dey's jes' like my own.

"Dese young folks is funny anyhow, you take dese niggers around here, think I'm an old fogey. One day I was sewing making Dorothy, my little grand child, a dress, and a young flip ob a gal said, 'Mrs. Finley, I didn't know you could sew.' I tole her 'yes, I could sew and I'se been sewing eber since I wuz seven years old.' I can make anything I want to without a pattern, and right now I does all my sewing by hand, 'cause my machine's been broke and I hasn't been able to have it fixed. Jes' like de Postman said to me one day, 'Lizzie, who writes and backs these letters to George Coleman?' I tole him I did dat I couldn't write much but I can scratch good enough so it will get through Uncle Sam's hands. 'Dese letters you'se talkin' about goes to my boy who lives in Endora, Kansas.' I sho' wish I could go see him, but don't look like I'se eber going to git able. He's got a nice farm up dere."

Lizzie had a far away look in her eyes as she talked about George, and she said:

"Dis old world aint nothin' but trouble and sorrow. Here I is now in my old age and aint able to work much, and Mr. Finley actin like he does and poor Jim T. who lives here in de house wid us, wuz in a automobile accident and ain't able to do much heavy work. Too, he's got dese here four little chillun and his wife to take care ob. I seed you lookin' at dat paddle wid a string in it, and I guess

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-13-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro.  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer. Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLEY'S HOME.

you'se wonderin' what I does wid it? Well I paddle dese chillun wid it when dey don't mind. Chillun is so different now, dey makes you scratch your haid when dey ain't no lice in dere to bite.

"Guess I shouldn't complain tho' fer we gits along pretty well. Atter Jim T. got hurt, he built three rooms on dat side-ob our house and its jes' like a double tenement now. He pays de water bill one month and we pay it de next, den he pays de County and State taxes and we pays de city taxes. So you see it helps us to git along. 'Course, Mr. Finley gets pretty regular work sometimes. One time he worked wid Henry Thomas seven years in de landscaping business, 'til Henry went crazy. He got good experience in dat work and he does some jobs hisself now."

As Aunt Lizzie paused she was looking out of the window to the front of the house. In a few minutes Dorothy, the small grandchild, said:

"Grandmaw, heres a man dat wants to see you."

"Lizzie didn't reply immediatly, then she got up slowly and went to her door, and said:

"Mister if you'se selling something, tain't no use to stop 'cause I ain't got no money, but if you'se givin' something away you can come again."

With that she turned and sat down near the small table in the center of her room. She began fingering her bible, so I asked her what church she belonged to, and she said:

"I'se a member of The Big Zion Methodist Church, but I don't get to go much now, since Jim T. wrecked de automobile. You see, I wuz christened in Miss Payne's house down on Canal street, and I had

Week ending April 14, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-14-

Lizzie Finley, (Negro)  
155 Ghent St. Mobile, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer. Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO LIZZIE FINLEY'S HOME.

two godmothers. Miss Elizabeth wuz my white godmother and Caroline Carson wuz my colored one. Dey had me christened Sarah Elizabeth, but everybody allus called me Lizzie. I loves to go to church and my society meetings, but I can't do it any mo' unless somebody comes atter me. I belongs to the Daughters of Honor, a Benevolent Association, and nothin' made me any happier than when I wuz able to carry on de juvenile work, but I guess my workin' days is most over. But I ought not to be sorry fer I'se been here a long time. Dere's one thing tho' dat I wants when I die, and dat is to be buried out at St. Austins Cemetery, where my mamma and Papa is buried."

I.B.P.

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-1-

Rosie Brown, (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman, farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE. PRICHARD.

It was early one morning in April and the weather was much colder than usual for April in the deep South. Rosie had risen early and had finished her mornings work at home and had started to Prichard on business when she stopped at 'Liza's house a few minutes to talk. When I approached 'Liza's, she and Rosie were standing in the back yard engaged in earnest conversation.

Rosie was dressed in a dark bluish purple dress with a three quarter white waffle weave coat, and had on a black straw hat. In her hand she carried a small coin purse and a flat piece of newspaper, that looked like it was wrapped around a letter.

When I called to them, they both looked around and began to shout, "Bless God, if it ain't 'Miss' Prine. We aint seed you in sich a long time, you sho' looks well."

'Liza insisted on my coming in to see her baby chickens and her place which is well kept.

'Liza's house sits on a hill facing the hollow where Rosie's house is situated, and is a small four-room green house, trimmed in white. She owns two lots, with a garden on one which was growing collards and Irish potatoes. There are two large pecan trees, several plum trees and a large grape vine, and a small chicken yard in which she had eight or ten hens and rooster as well as twelve baby chickens.

The entire place was spotlessly clean, and had the appearance of a real home. At the front of the house was an immense oak tree that shades the house and makes it extremely comfortable in the summer time, even though the house faces the west. After I had visited with them a few minutes I told them I wanted to get some information as

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-2-

Rosie Brown (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

I wanted to write their life histories. 'Liza said, "I'se jes' about forgotten all of my life;" but Rosie said, "Well, I sho' can tell you about mine and dere's plenty to tell, but I can't tell you dis mawnin' but I'll be home dis afternoon."

When I returned that afternoon I found Rosie on her front porch picking turnip greens for supper. She was still wearing her bluish-purple dress, but had on a man's white coat that was too small for her. She also had on her husband's tan oxford shoes, and grey cotton stockings. She said:

"I gues you had a time gittin' down in dis hollow, as dere ain't much of a road from de highway. But praise God! dis place is mine once more, eben if it is down in dis hollow, and dat ditch does run right thro' my patch."

I asked Rosie why she bought her place here, and she said:

"Well, to tell you de truf my father picked dis spot out fer me, and I'se sho' glad now dat he did, fer I never have to fertilizer my patch to raise stuff, fer all de fertilizer is washed down de hill right onto my land. Do come in, fer I'se finished wid pickin' de greens."

As we entered the house, Rosie started in the front room but I told her not to stop her work, that I had rather sit in her kitchen while she prepared her supper. This seemed to please her, for she said, "I does have to have John's supper ready when he git in. I'se already got beans cookin', but I don't like dem dry beans, so I got me some greens fer myself. I got to have my greens regardless, I eben like dem fer breakfast."

Rosie gave me a straight chair in the doorway between her

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-3-

Rosie Brown (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
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A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

kitchen and bed room, while she went about fixing John's supper. Her house is a four room house that has a porch on both front and back. It differs from Liza's house, in that 'Liza's is square or more box-like, while Rosie's two side rooms extend out even with the front and back porch. The roof has four gables. It is painted a light blue, trimmed in a darker blue, and sits at the end of her lot that is triangle shape. Her patch as she calls it, is at the other end of the lot that comes to a point towards the highway. There is a wide ditch in which runs water from Toulmin's branch, that runs through the center of her place dividing her house from the patch.

"Blessed Jesus!.it will take me a time to tell you all about my life, fer I'se seen a heap a trouble in my day, and I'se kinda gettin' along dere now. I'm a hittin' fifty and my husband will be fifty-five this comin' September, if he lives to see it. You know, I warn't born here. I wuz born at Brown Station, Ala., a place up dere between Selma and Union Town, in 1889. We lived on a farm and I sho' knows how to do anything on the farm. Believe me dats de only life, is farm life. Folks is crazy to leave dere farms and come live cooped up in any town. But of course, I didn't have no sense den, fer I left home in 1911 and come here to Mobile to work. My mother died on April 6, 1909 and I promised her I'd look after my two sisters an' three brothers. You know dat crazy sister of mine wuz mother's heart and I promised I'd take special care of her. She wuz lustrous big when we buried mother, and de Friday afterwards she went in and had de finest baby you ever did see. So I had to scratch hard to do what I promised mother on her death bed. Jes' like you see me now, I mean I ain't been nothin' but a slave fer my

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-4-

Rosie Brown (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

family, even up to where I is now. Well, Jesus, it wuzn't yesterday dat I'm talkin' about.

"I hit Mobile on a Sat'day night, and Monday mawnin' in November, 1911, I went to work housecleanin' in a big boardin' house on Royal street, between Conti and Dauphin streets. You hear me! I hadn't ever worked in nobody's house befo' in my life. But I soon caught on to everything and got to be a good housegirl. Course, those folks didn't stay dere so terribly long, so I got jobs washin' and ironin' fer other people. About a year later I went back to de same place, but different peoples wuz runnin' it, but I got work jes' de same and stayed in de yard in room seventeen fer a year. De Madame had high blood pressure and I had to keep de rooms clean. Nobody's ever had any trouble wid me on my job. I does what I'se told to do and I expect my pay like dey say dey will give me when I gits thro' and nothin' else ain't mine and I don't want it.

"Lordy, I thought Mobile wuz de grandest place on earth, I didn't want to go back to de country, so in 1913, I went back atter my folks. Po' fool dat I wuz, fer farm life is de bes' on earth, de bes' livin' dere is. I knowed I had to look atter dat crazy sister Rhett, her name is raily Henrietta, but we calls her Rhett fer short. She ain't responsible fer what she does and I knowed I'se a gona have to take care of her and all her chilluns, fer she had six, all by different mens. If I hadn't stood at de feet of Jesus, an' trusted Him, I don't know what I'd a done. I didn't stand on de corners, and run on de streets, I jes' laid at de feet of Jesus and worked hard. First one thing and then another, cookin' washin' ironin' and house cleanin'.

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

-5-

Rosie Brown (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
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Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

"On March de 12th, 1918, John and I wuz married, but he knowed what he wuz doin' when he got me, cause I tole him dat I had to take care of my folks. He's been mighty nice to me. 'Course, sometimes he gits fractious wid de chillun, and when my father wuz livin' he'd get cross at him. We've been together twenty-one years, an' I has been up and down wid dat man. We never have had but one child and it wuz born dead, but I guess it's a good thing, fer I've had to raise all six of Rhetts's chillun and now I'se got two of her grand chillun here wid me now. Dey are Nancy's girls. Nancy is Rhetts youngest child, and I brought her here to dis place when she waz jes' toddlin' around. Now, I got Vera T. and Clemintine, her chillun. Clemintine is her baby an' she's nine years old. I raised Nancy to work and she can cook heaps better dan me. She can go in anybody's kitchen and cook a fine meal. I'se raisin' dese girls of her to work, too, Jes' like mother raised us."

Just then she called Vera T. and said:

"Here monkey take a job and finish washing dese greens out at de pump. Den bring me a bucket a water here so I can clean up de mess I'se made."

While she was talking, the younger girl Clemintine laid down on the floor and was asleep when Rosie noticed her.

I remarked that she must be feeling bad, but Rosie said:

"No, I think she's just sleepy, fer last night dey had dere closin' exercise of her school. They sho' did nice, too, wid dere speakin' and truckin'. It's a shame de way dey is teachin' de young-uns to dance. But I couldn't help but laugh last night, fer dey wuz truckin' on down de Avenue. I didn't 'low Nancy and de older ones to

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE HISTORY SERIES.

Rosie Brown (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

dance, 'but dese chillun' of hers can sho' dance, and dey did plenty of it at de Benevolent Hall in Cedar Grove last night. Here, Boo, wake up and git on de bed, you'll take cold on dat floor."

The child got up and started to climb onto the bed, when Rosie said. "Wait a minute," while she got a spread off of the trunk and put it on the bed for her to lie on. Then she covered her as tenderly as if she was her own:

The older girl Vera T. who is ten years old came in with the pan of turnip greens and Rosie started washing them again and putting them in a large old black deep iron pot that was sitting next to the fire on her wood range. Before placing the greens in the pot, she took a large paper sack out of a small wooden keg that was sitting at the end of the table, and sliced large pieces of fat meat and put them into the pot to fry out the grease to cook her greens in. After putting the greens on, she begun to mix her cornbread. She used only salt and water and a small amount of grease that she fried out of some meat. She took the brown meat and placed it in the warmer of the stove to eat later. The kitchen was small but very clean. The stove was a large wood range, that heated the back part of her house. Rosie said it took so much money to keep in wood when she had to buy it by the nickel bundles. She said:

"I hopes when I get straight to git more wood at a time, where it won't cost so much, but right now I'se havin' to do the bes' I can, fer I'm tryin' to keep right up wid de notes when de come due on dis place. You know I lost dis place, about two years ago, and Blessed Jesus, I nearly lost my mind. It wuz jes' a foolish stunt of mine that caused

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

-7-

Rosie Brown (Negro.  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

#### A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

me to lose it. You see, as long as my father lived, I stayed so close, only taking in washings dat I could do here. When he died in 1929, I begun to go out and do day's work. Several years after his death, John started workin' at Navco saw mill, an' he kept worryin' me to come on dere an' stay. So fool like I listened to him an' went, den de mill shut down an' work got slack an' me got behind on our payments an' de first thing I knowed dey done took my place. Course, John needed me to cook fer him, because he wuz eatin' cheese and crackers and sich trash and it wuz about to kill him. But when I did go and cook him a good meal he got better right away, but dat didn't save my place. Finally we had to leave Navco and come back to try and git work. Dere wuz a whole year we lived cooped up in one room over at my nieces house, across de street dere. Lord have mercy! me and John has gone hongry a many a time. He would set and cry when he tried so hard to git work and couldn't. I tole him, 'Stop dat foolishness, I ain't pushin' you fer no money, I ain't a pushin' you for no shoes or clothes, and we's both hungry together, so jes' stop dat.' I jes' went to de Lord, and said, 'Now God, dey say you is de bread of life, now I'se hongry, you'se jes' got to help.' I tole John dat de truth makes a way, and God could make bread when dere ain't no bread. I guess he'd give up sho' if it hadn't been fer me. I stood in de fields workin' an' prayin' to God, dat if He wanted me to git my place back, He'd have to help me do it. For I've sweated and toiled and it looks like I can't do it alone, it's up to Him, Lord Jesus, when I'd look over here and see all dem signs on my place, and see folks come by and laugh, it nearly killed me, but I knowed God was a just God, and if He intended fer me to git it back,

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

Rosie Brown (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and fermerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

dere would be a way made.

"Do you know a heap a peoples who pretended to be my friends wuz all de time tryin' to undermine me an' git my place all de time deys wuz a-tellin' me how sorry dey wuz dat I lost it. Listen to me, a heap of folks is like wolves in sheep's clothing, and another thing, hit's a ring in everything going on. If you don't git in dat ring wid dem, you don't git nowhere. But I'se going to stay in de ring of my own makin'. Dat's God's ring, de one dat's a pure ring, a solid ring and a just ring. But He's de only one dat can help you. I remembers when my husband wuzn't able to walk around not a soul come an' say, here's something to help you out. Not even de church members. Folks is got so selfish, dey don't think of nobody nowadays. De churches don't do nothin' but gamble nowadays to make money. I don't believes in it and dese mock weddings dey's all de time a havin' in de churches. De Bible says 'worship Him in Spirit and Truth'; but when you goes to church now, de mos' you hear is foolishness and money. I gits my Bible and reads here at home, den when I does go to de church, de preacher read de same passage and he reads it so indifferent from what de Bible say, you can't recognize it at-tall. Den dere some of dese folks going 'round here saying dey lives above sin. You know dat is de biggest lie dey ever tole. But Blessed Jesus, I has trusted You all de way, an' You ara see me right back here in my own home. Course I had to do my part, but God expects dat of us. We had to plank down seventy-five dollars to git back here, but you see dey painted my house, screened it, and put me in a sanitary privy, before I come back. De best part of all dey lowered my payments down to five dollars a month, and I'se got a long time to

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

-9-

Rosie Brown, (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

pay off de debt. See, dat's what you git by trustin' in de Lord.

Child, dat ain't all dat I gone through wid, and some out all right by trustin' Him.

"You remembers hearin' me talk about dat big old boy of mine what kilt dat woman. He ain't rilly my boy, but he's Rhett's, which is about de same as mine, 'cause all her chillun come to me jes like I wuz dey mamma instead of her. I'se made every stitch of clothes for dem. I washed, ironed and fed dem, til they got big enough to work fer dem-selves. Well, dis boy allus wuz bad about runnin' around, and I wuz allus after him. Every time I'd tell him ef he didn't stop sich and sich a thing hed git in trouble, and he would. He still loves his liquor and women, even after I'se got him out of de pententiary dis time. I 'spent no tellin' how much on dat boy gittin' him out. I tell him I'll kill him if he gits in any mo' trouble, especially when he comes in and I smells dat mess on his breath. I tells him he never seed me take a drink in his life and he ain't never smelled none on my breath. Den he gets to talkin' rail pitiful, saying 'You puttin' bad mouf on me', But he has been right sharp help to me since he's got back. He works on de waterfront when he can git it and when he gits a little change he brings it to me. I'se allus kept all of dem afraid of me, 'cause I know dat if dey ain't afraid dey won't mind. Excusin' dat boy I'se raised de best chillun in de neighborhood, an' dey all minds an' respects me. Dey's got to help me 'cause I'se got to pull dem notes. Lord, I'se been punched, jugged and pulled from side to side tryin' to raise dem, but dere ain't nothin' else but serwing de Lord. De Lord done brung me through so many things, 'Course I'se gona serve Him, - He's got everything. Folks can

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

Rosie Brown, (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

tell me what dey will or may, but I'se livin' fer de Lord. Have I crossed de line in any dirt? He's head of everything and you's got to honor Him. Some folks think dat's crazy talk, but dat's stuff. Now, don't mis-understan' me what I said about de church, 'cause de church ain't had no trouble wid me, but I don't go a whole lot, an' I hasn't had much money to give dem, but I loves de Lord. It ain't de church its de people dats in it, dey pass you by in a very short while when dey sees you tryin' to live in his commandments. Dat don't bother me tho' fer I expects to be here when some of dem is gone. I expects to live to be eighty years old. I'se healthy in every way, 'ceptin' I'se a little ailly from workin' and walkin' so much. I never goes to de doctor, 'fact I'se scared of dem. De Lord is de best doctor dere is. I'se had a hard time, but I guess de Lord let me have it to teach me some sense. Dat's what I tell John sometimes when he gits contrary: 'Now, John, you found me in dis and I didn't let you come in crazy, now if you loves me, you loves my folks, but when my daddy wuz sick befo' he died, my cup run over sometimes just like I tole you tho' John's been good to me. Christmas he give me ten pretty chickens fer a present. Nine pullets and a rooster, de pullets is layin' now, come on out here I wants you to see dem."

As we walked in the yard she pointed with pride to the chickens, and said:

"I'se got a pig too, but she ain't nothin' but a hog. Jes look at dat mud in her pen."

Across the ditch in her patch as she called it, Rosie had peas, beans and corn planted. She said, "You'll have to come back when de corn

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

Rosie Brown, (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

gits ripe, 'cause de policy man say I raise de best corn aroun here any-where. I sells beans and peas, too, most every year."

I asked Rosie weren't the mosquitoes bad living on the ditch? but she said not, she said the people up on the hill were bothered with them more than she was. "Dere is only one thing I'se bothered wid is dese little old dig-a-longes, a kind of small roach in de house, but I'se gwine to git somethin' to get rid of dem, and de only other thing is dese two legged rascals what tries to steal my chickens. Course I keeps dem locked at night time, but some times dey tear boards off of de hen house."

As the sun was getting low in the west, I said: "

"I wonder what time it is?

Rosie said: "I'se got an old clock in dere but it ain't right, it runs too fast, Dat old clock outruns de Pan-American, and, Lordy! you know how fast dat thing runs. I spec' it's gittin' pas' five 'cause it wont be long befo' John comes in from Oak Grove where he works at dat saw mill. But before you go I promised you I'd sing some of my good old hymns fer you. I belongs to de Missionary Baptist Church and when you gets to messin' around wid dem good old songs and de Lord touches you. He's gona bring tears, or you's gona holler and shout. Dere's dis good hymn.

'Must I be to judgment brought

To answer in dat day,

Every vain and idle thought

And every word I say?

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

-12-

Rosie Brown, (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Fine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

" And dis is anodder one:

'Lord in de mornin'  
Thous shalt hear  
My voice ascendin' high;  
Father, remove this bitter cup,  
If such Thy secret will,  
If not content,  
To drink it up,  
Thou pleasure I shalt fulfil'.

"And dis one goes like dis:

'Father, I stretch  
My hands to Thee,  
No other help I know;  
If Thou withdraw  
Thouself from me,  
Oh'. whither shall I go?  
What did Thou only Son endure,  
Before I drew my breath,  
What pain, what labor to secure  
My soul from endless death.!

Week ending April 21, 1939.

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

-13-

Rosie Brown, (Negro)  
155 Graham St. Prichard, Ala.  
Washwoman and farmerette.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer, Mobile, Ala.

A VISIT TO ROSIE BROWN'S HOUSE.

"And I'll sing dis old time song by note like my father used to sing it. It went in dis direction:

' Sol, Si, La, La, Mi,

Da La, Mi.

Fa, sol, La, mi, mi, do.

Thou comfort wuz mine in the peace divine

He has laid up His treasures;

Tongue cannot express that sweet comfort of me,

He has laid up his treasures above'. "

I.B.P.

Kosaku Sawada, Nurseryman,  
Hoffatt Road,  
Mobile, Alabama.

Ila B. Prine  
Mobile County.

#### KOSAKU SAWADA, NURSERYMAN

On the Hoffatt Road in Mobile County, seven miles from Mobile, Alabama, is the Overlook Nursery, partly owned and operated by Kosaku Sawada, a Japanese.

The Overlook Nursery is located on low ground on a gravel road leading from the paved highway. The entrance is by a driveway on the east side, through a gate covered by an orange and black pagoda. The driveway winds among plant beds and hothouses up to Mr. Sawada's home, which is separated from the nursery by a hedge of many different types of shrubs. Most spectacular of these is the *pyracantha formosana*, which strikingly suggests Japanese origin. Taller than a man of average height, it is a solid mass of bright red berries, almost as large as marbles, on boughs which droop like those of the Japanese weeping cherry. The office of the Overlook Nursery is a plain, square, white building in front of the Sawada house.

Mr. Sawada, himself, is a short, stout man, whose skin is more brown than yellow. His hair is short, straight and black and his bright black slanting eyes sparkle when he talks.

He has been in America since 1906 and he never expects to go back to Japan; he has no desire to. The years have changed his country so that it no longer seems familiar - and they have also changed Mr. Sawada so that his countrymen no longer recognize him.

More than three decades of outdoor work under the hot Southern sun have burned his skin from yellow to brown. "When I went back to Japan fifteen years ago," he said, "people thought I was a Filipino. One day I was standing on a street corner scanning a newspaper. Some children passed by and said, 'Look at that Filipino reading a Japanese paper'."

"I have no desire to go back to Japan to live. It's a strange country to me, for I left when a very young boy and everything has changed so. I have been back only once since leaving - so long time from home I have strange country. If my father and mother had lived it would be different. Even all my school friends are gone or dead. If I go back, nobody knows me - strange people to me." Only a trace of the Japanese speech is noticeable as Mr. Sawada tells his own story.

"Now, I only have two brothers and one sister in Japan and they are strange to me. Their religion is different. So you see I no longer belong in Japan. I am American. I have never taught my children to speak the Japanese language.

"I am contented in this country. The government protects my people here, but, if I were in South America or Mexico, and someone wanted my property, they could take it."

Mr. Sawada's specialty is propagating plants. "I sell them to other nurserymen," he explains. "That is called 'lining out'.

"Lining out is much more profitable than just raising stock, because you sell quicker. So many of the nurserymen quit propagating, because everybody can't propagate successfully. If you get the plant a little too warm, or too dry, too wet, too cold - no good. Just a little carelessness will kill many thousands of plants overnight.

"Many years of experience taught me to grow many millions of azaleas, small trees, camellia japonicas and evergreens. My business is one of a kind that cannot use machines. Most of the work is done by hand. I now have nineteen men employed; they are all Americans. Later on in the winter months I will employ from twenty to twenty-five men. With my years of experience with propagating plants, I get ninety-five out of every hundred to grow. At that rate it pays. But so many growers cannot get that proportion and that is one of the reasons I started in the lining out business. I am connected with all nurserymen and florists

in the United States. I have membership with the Associated American Nurserymen."

Mr. Sawada was born in Asaka in central Japan in 1887, one of a family of six.

"I was so full of ambition," he says, "and wanted a change, after graduating in agriculture from Osaka University. Having heard that America was a land of plenty, I came to America. I thought I could pick up gold along the highways. But you may be sure I have found that you get hold of money only by hard work.

"I left Japan when I was twenty-one years old and came to Texas to work in the rice fields. That was in 1906 and I stayed there until 1910.

That was hard work in the rice fields, no tractor, no machinery of any kind, just four or six mules to a plow. Plow all winter long; then, in February and March, disc and harrow. In April, sow and drill. Then, when rice come up about six inches high, start irrigation.

"Every section of the field had to be surveyed carefully, sometimes square, sometimes circular, so that no one section will be over three inches high. Let water stand until July or August on the rice, stop irrigation, then it is ready for threshing."

But Mr. Sawada was not satisfied in the rice fields. "I see I get nowhere there," he says. "I see people make good selling orange and pecan trees. So I leave Texas in 1910 and come to Grand Bay, Alabama. I thought when I come to America you could make five dollars picking strawberries and grapes. But I soon learn better.

"I believe in human luck. There are smart people, poor luck. They work hard, but still have poor luck. Then there are some people not smart, but have good luck.

"When I first came to <sup>Alabama</sup> ~~Alabama~~, it was when the orange tree boom

was on. So I start an orchard and sell trees in Bayou la Batre and all around. Then I bought thirty acres here on Moffatt Road, good sandy land to plant orange and pecan trees. This land is good to dig up big roots of trees. But, soon after I buy here in 1923, big freeze come and kill all the orange trees. Then I had to start something else. This land here is not so good for shrubbery, but I have bought eighty acres more on the Howells Ferry Road - such better land.

"After I come here to this country, I go back to San Francisco in 1916 and marry my wife, who come from Japan. I never see her before I marry her but she make me a good wife. We had four children and nine years ago she die, leaving a three-weeks old baby. Nobody wants to take the responsibility of my children, so I do the best I can.

"All my children in school. One of my boys is in Auburn, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, studying landscaping and horticulture. This is his second year. The other boy is studying business administration and commerce at Spring Hill College. I do not try to persuade their character - everybody different character - but I hope they will make good business men. I tell them they can see what I need here is business education, or the ability to sell after I raise my nursery stock. Infact the whole country needs more commercial knowledge. The farmer today cannot sell his products at a fair price after he raises them. I tell my boys, if I was smart enough and had commercial knowledge, how much better I could do. I don't want to impress them for had. I tell them give good things, reasonable price. I don't make much money, but I have established good reputation.

"My third child is a girl in the seventh grade at Crichton school. My baby is in the fourth grade."

America's most important problem, Mr. Sawada thinks, is reforestation. "We have much more extreme weather now than we once did," he says. "People

cut down so many forests. People no longer care for the trees given them.

"I believe in higher control. Thoughtless people destroy recklessly and the One who controls all things tries to replenish where man destroys.

"I believe that, in our own lives, we must look to a higher control. We must be contented today and work hard tomorrow. We must cooperate and have forgiveness to each other. The trouble today: everybody wants their own way, nobody give in. We should have community spirit, be good neighbors. Peacefulness and happiness should govern all our lives.

"I do not go to church myself, but I send my children to church and Sunday school. We have a church building in Orchard, Alabama, and my children went as long as a minister came to teach them. Sometimes the Baptist come, then the Methodist, and last the Presbyterian had charge of it. But, for the past year, nobody come, so my children have not gone anywhere. But, just the same, I believe in a higher control.

"I think people in this country are getting too far from this control and it will take a conflagration like Noah's flood to bring them back."

1/20/1939

S.J.

HOSAKU SAWADA (short version)

Mr. Sawada  
Was born in Oosada  
His shrubs bring him rent-money,  
Clothing and fodder.

He gives all his thought to  
The things he ought to;  
His plants and his trees  
And his sons and his daughter.

As a nurseryman,  
He does what he can.  
He has no desire  
To go back to Japan.

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

Clad in blue overalls and a faded blue shirt, was a small man, who was one of the many men who were working on the Tanner Ferry Road, in the western part of Mobile County. In passing the men at work, this man did not attract attention, but when I stopped and asked the foreman if Mr. Charles Young was working with him, this man stopped work and looked at me with a quizzical expression.

The foreman said:

"Yes, that's him over yonder in the wheelbarrow gang. What can I do for you?"

I then told the foreman I wanted to talk to Mr. Young about old-time-fiddling tunes and songs, as I had been told he was one of the best fiddlers in this section of the county.

The foreman looking at his watch, said:

"In about ten minutes the men will knock off. You just pull over to one side of the road near that box, and I'll send him right over to you."

The men apparently tried not to appear interested in my presence, but when they thought I was not looking, they cast furtive glances in my direction. In a short while, when the foreman gave a loud shout for the men to stop work, they came to the box bringing their tools with them, and openly looked with suspicion.

It has always been a custom of this settlement to look with suspicion upon any one strange to the place, for they believe it might be "the law", or an investigator come to take them off their job?

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

As the men all crowded around a truck to be carried home, the foreman called Claude Young, and told him "that this here lady wants to see you about some old-time fiddling songs.

"His face lighted up as he walked towards me.

"Well, lady," he said, "I reckon you've found the right man, if youse a-lookin' for a fiddler, fer me and my wife Lora can really play some old-time-tunes. I play the fiddle and Lora play the guitar, an' can she knock that guitar? Me and her always plays the old straight time fast beat music, but when I plays for a dance I got another pardner who plays the guitar, 'cause Lora can't play this here dance music.

Mr. Young is a small man with greyish blue eyes, and light brown hair, that has a slight tinge of red in it. His face had a growth of beard, as though he had not shaved for several days. He was chewing tobacco as he stood talking, with one foot propped up on the running board of the car, and he would spit vigorously on the ground. The longer he talked, the more often he would spit, as if to emphasize what he was saying.

"I'll tell you, lady, I was born right over there, where you see them old pecan trees. That was Papa's place, and it was a plain twelve inch board house; but it was home because Papa owned it. I remember the first time I tried to whistle in that old home. I had on a little red dress, and my older brother came in a-whistlin' and stood before the fire. I tried and tried, but I couldn't make a sound, and I know it warn't long after that

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

Mamma made me my first pair of breeches. I didn't like them breeches either, I cried for my little red dress. You see, I had two sisters and three brothers, and I'm the baby. My Papa was always crazy about me, he'd pick me up and say 'Daddys got one man'.

"I remember one time when I warn't more than five years old, when Mamma let me ride one of the horses to a neighbor's house, x that lived about a mile down the road, to git my hair cut. Instid of me going where Mamma sent me, I rode all around the fields, called myself gatherin' up cattle like Papa did. I was big man. Bless God, when I got home mamma was a-standin' out waitin' for me. Before I got to her I started pulling off the bridle and sheep skin that I was a-using for a saddle, and broke for the cane patch. There I stayed 'til I heard Papa callin' the hogs to feed them, then I went to him, and he took me up in his arms and every time Mamma tried to whip me, he would turn around and take the lick, to keep me from gettin' it. Well, that's been a long time ago, for I'm fortytwo years old now, and just to think of all that's happened since them days.

"I started in school at what is the Baker school, that had just one room then, but I didn't go but three years, when Papa got killed at eight mile creek on Tanner Ferry Road. Papa always farmed, and got out cross-ties and juniper poles, and sometimes hauled wood. He had been to Mobile, and was on his way home with two cases of bottled beer, beef steak, some bananas and

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

and peaches, and the first school book I ever had, when he was shot by somebody. That little book was a blue back primer.

"After Papa was gone, Mamma moved to town, but I didn't like it there, so I come back to the country and lived with my sister. I have had to work hard all my life, haulin' wood and a-burnin' charcoal. But I've always managed to get by somehow. I married April 14, 1921 the girl that I usta go to school with. I remember how I would go to sleep in school and she'd pinch me and wake me up."

"Lora's been a good wife, and we have three fine boys. Course the oldest boy is kinda sickly since he had pneumonia two years ago. If it hadn't a been for Dr. Cowden he'd be dead right now. The night the boy was at his worst, I went up to Tanner's store and rung Dr. Cowden up, and I come on home and waited, and waited. As my boy looked like he would die, I went back to the store and called again and I got Dr. Cowden right now. When he come in he, jes shook his head, but went ahead and give him a shot and a half of that medicine that's so good for pneumonia. You know that night was the first time I ever prayed in my life, when that boy of mine lay there with his eyes rolled back in his head, and makin' that terrible gurglin' sound in his throat. Next morning he come back, and you know that boy's heart was jes a tickin' away as natural, and from then on he begun to git better."

"Now, there's my middle kid, he's a solid kid, he's more

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG LABORER.

like a man than a boy. He's smart, quiet and easy going, he'd make a good doctor. I sure hopes I can send him on through high school. You know it takes a heap of money to send a kid to college, but I wished I could send him, to make a doctor. He's got bad tonsils, and he wont miss school now, if he can help it.

"I want to tell you something, those kids gets up on a morning in the spring and early fall, and goes in the fields to hoe before goin' to school". Course, my oldest boy quit school before finishing, because he was so puny. I tried this spring to git him in the C.C.C. Camp, but he didn't make it."

Mr. Young said that he was now working on a W.P.A. job, but he was afraid he would be laid off later on, because he had a small farm. I asked him how large a place he had, and he said:

"I've got twenty-three anda half acres all together, but I'm jes a-farmin sixteen acres. The rest of the land is only fitten for hog pasture. They ain't but one way to make a livin' farmin', git in a good range, where it ain't thickly settled and ain't got no stock law; git forty or fifty acres farmin' land and raise feed, corn, peanuts, chuffers, sweet potatoes, hay and velvet beans for your stock. Then let your stock run on the range, and in the fall of the year turn them in on chufers and beans to fatten. Let the brood sows run the range all the time. Then you can raise a few chickens, some sugar cane for molasses, and carry your corn to the mill to grind into meal. See you have your horse to feed, because you have to feed six months of time without

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

doin' nuthin'. You don't raise nothin' through the winter but greens, and who can make a livin' offen greens? I tried it. Time you raise them and gather them and carry to the Creek to wash them, bundle and put rubbers around them and haul to town, you git about fifteen cents a dozen for them. That won't pay fer the rubbers to go around them, and the gas and oil to haul them to town.

"I tell you my whole family has gone without clothes or enough to eat when I was livin' on the farm entirely. Even then I would cut wood and put in bundles, and got one and one half cent a bundle for it. Now lady, don't you see no man can live on that?

"I tell you poverty makes a heap of folks go wrong, there's men around here who have had to serve time on account of violating the prohibition law, and their wives because of actual need, went wrong, then when the husbands come home, it was wrecked.

"One time when I did move into town and got work for the city, makin' three dollars a day, and my wife was a workin' in the Mobile Cotton Mills, I got hold of enough money to git two lots and a little house. But I was scared to death about the children gittin' run over by the street cars, and gettin' into devilment with bad boys. So we sold the place for three-hundred and twenty-five dollars and come back to the country and bought this place out here, and built a three room house on it. I jes lately built me a little barn out of poles to keep my cows and horse in. Of-course I had to buy tin and some lumber, and to buy that I had to sell a good milk cow fer forty dollars. I don't care what anybody

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

says, you've got to have some money to live. You jes can't farm and live without it. Every year for the past five years I've borrowed from the Federal Emergency Crop Loan; and take this past year, I borrowed sixty-five dollars, and <sup>made</sup> only three bales of cotton. One bale I sold for seven cents a pound, other two I got eight and eight and seventy-five hundredths a pound. So you see after I paid back that loan, I don't have but about fifty dollars to live the rest of the year on, feed my horse and cows. I don't try to raise no hogs although I got a good range, but people are so poor that they can't keep up good fences, and if I had hogs they's be a-breakin' into other folks' fields and would cause trouble.

"Lord have mercy! what you get out of cotton ain't much. My whole family helped make them three bales; the boys workin' before goin' to school. Pickin' it is jes as bad. My back nearly broke stoopin' over, and the gnats a-flyin' in my face, while the sweat jes poured off. Sweatin' like that in the summer time jes rots your clothes out. This here road work in the winter is not near so hard on your clothes. I've got a good name though as a farmer, because just this summer the county agent wrote a piece in the paper, tellin' how I had borrowed money from the Federal emergency crop loan for five years, and had always paid up by sellin' my crop. The agent knowed I didn't git no paper, so he cut the price out and sent it to me in a long envelope.

"Its this here way with me, I've always tried to do right and now I am up against it because my oldest boy is botherin' me

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

for a suit of clothes, and I'm goin' to git it if it takes every cent I got, for he can't git nothin' to do.

He's ashamed when he goes anywhere, and all the other boys are dressed nice.

"A man with a family has a heap more to worry about than them without any. There's my wife sufferin' with heart trouble. She got a 'scription from Dr. McCrary before he died, that he said was good for heart ailment. That medicine costs one dollar and two cents a bottle, and when she gits without it, there's a great pone swells up in the hollow of her neck on the left side. The left breast swells, too. I guess its because the heart is on that side.

"Listen, lady, I have tried to make some extra money with my fiddlin'. Why, here last year me and my pardner went every week to the Broadcastin' station in Mobile, but they wanted us to play for nothin'. I jes couldn't buy gas and oil and stop my work early of them evenings to go play for nuthin'. What they needs down there is organization; and if they had it things would be different. You'd see, if another station opened up in Mobile. It's jes like if a man had a store that overcharges fer his stuff and somebody would come along and put another across the street, you'd get better organization out of that first feller, he'd sell a heap cheaper.

"There's one more thing I want to tell you before I go, that's when I was workin' in town fer the city, I paid sixteen dollars on my back poll taxes, so I could vote. What do you

## CLAUDE VINCENT YOUNG, LABORER.

think of Roosevelt, lady?

"When I replied I thought he was one of the greatest President we had ever had, Mr. Young's face fairly beamed.

"I'm goin' to tell you if he don't run again I don't know what's to become of us poor people. I think he's the grandest man I ever heard of. I'm a-gonna send him a card fer Christmas, or rather I'm gonna get Lora to write it fer me, because I cant read nor write.

"Well, here 'tis most night and I've been jes a-talkin' and ain't told you much about fiddlin', but I don't know the words to many songs, but if I had my fiddle, I could sure play them fer you. But, here's an old sayin' we use when we want to make things lively at a dance. Sometimes we sing it:

"You swing Sal and I'll swing Sue,  
That's the way us Hoosiers do.  
Swing pretty breeches!  
Hold your taters, Sal,  
While I dance with this man  
With these who brought breeches on --  
Whoopee, -----

I.B.P  
12/13/1938.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Personal interview with Mr. Claude Vincent Young,  
Tanner Ferry Road, Mobile County Ala.  
December 13, 1938.

January 20, 1939.

-1-

John L. Burnette, (White).  
Storekeeper, (Mobile)  
Stone Street, Toulminville, Ala.  

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Ila B. Prine, Writers.  
F.L. Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

Standing in the doorway of a small grocery store was John L. Burnette, its owner and operator. Although seventy-three years of age, he did not look over sixty-five. When approached about his life story he said:

"I'll be glad to tell you about it, but there isn't anything much to it. I was born right after the close of the Civil War, on November 9, 1866, in Bartow County, Georgia, sixteen miles from Cartersville. I come up in hard times, and didn't know much, and had very little to live on. Papa and Mamma had seven children, and during those times things were scarce, because the Yankees killed and took everything on the place that was usable. If you had a cow, or a hog, that they wanted, they would butcher it right before your eyes, so only the poor, sickly stock was left to raise from when I was born, all the people of Georgia were having a struggle to get started again. Many's the morning we would have cornbread and molasses for breakfast, with coffee made of parched wheat or rye. Even though we were poor, we children had our fun. We used to play marbles, hide and seek and town ball. That is a game something like the present day baseball.

"Of course, we lived in the mountain country, where there wasn't anything but mountains and valleys, and farming was hard. There was very little level ground, and families lived miles apart. The Churches were four miles from us, and many times we would walk it, because we didn't have anything but horses or mules to ride. Sometimes Papa would hitch a pair of mules to the wagon and take

January 30, 1939.

-2-

John L. Burnette (White.)  
Storekeeper, Stone Street,  
Toulminville, Ala. (Mobile)  

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Ila B. Prine, Writers.  
François Ludgère Diard, Reviser

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

us.

"In them days there wware no public schools, The way we got our schoolin' was, several families would come together and hire the teacher, each family paying so much. When I first started to school, I had to go four miles through the woods. Papa took my sister and me and blazed a trail with an ax so we could find our way home that first evening. He also had an agreement with the teacher, if it was bad weather, that we would spend the night with her.

"I remember one evening a terrible storm came up just before closing time, so my sister and me and two nearly grown girls who lived a long way from the school had to stay all night with the teacher. My! that was heaps of fun, but we were glad, too, when the next evening came and we would go home. Children, this day and time don't know any of the hardships like we had to go through. But, you know, I don't believe they are as happy now as we were then.

"I grew up there in Bartow County and married there. In fact I lived there until two of my oldest children were born. Then I come to Alabama and stayed two years and then moved back to Georgia. We moved into my wife's Grandfather's old home, near Cartersville, and my other children were born in that old home. It was a beautiful place and one of my daughters says that scenes of the book "Gone with the Wind" was laid around this part of Georgia. When she read that book, she said it was just like home

January 20, 1939.

-3-

John L. Burnette (White).  
Storekeeper. Stone Street.  
Toulminville, (Mobile) Ala.  

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Ila B. Prine, Writer  
François Ludgère Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

it was so true. There's plenty of history in connection with that section. I know after I was born signs of where both armies went through from Chickamagua to Atlanta were still seen. There was hard times after that war.

"My wife's grandmother told of the time she come face to face with Sherman, when he was marching through Georgia. She said that all the men of her family had gone to the war, and the Yankees had taken all the live stock off the place when they were out foraging. The only animal her family had left was a small donkey. So this day she had to take some corn to the mill to be ground into meal, and you know there weren't any bridges much then. As she was going down a hill to ford a stream on her donkey, she said, she looked across to the opposite hill, and here come all this great army with Sherman leadin't it. She said shw was scared to death, because she had heard such terrible things about him, but she said she knew there was no need to try and hide for they had seen her, so she pulled her donkey over to one side and stood still as they came up the hill towards her. As Sherman drew opposite her, he took off his hat and bowed low and passed on. Each man did likewise, as they rode past, but she said you may be sure she never forgot that feeling she had as all that great army rode by. It sure was interesting to hear her tell about it.

"I went back to that old home, about two years ago, and that house is still standing and is in almost as good condition

January 20, 1939.

-4-  
John L. Burnette, Storekeeper, White  
Stone Street, Toulminville, Ala.  
(Mobile)

Ila B. Prine, Writer.  
François Ludgère Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

as it was when we lived there, and I am seventy-three now.

"When I first married I farmed, but I never made much at it. I could raise the stuff, but I couldn't sell it. I remember one year I had raised a heap of pumpkins on some new ground where corn had been raised, so I decided to carry a load to Rome to sell. I loaded a wagon that had two yoke of oxens hitched to it, and drove twenty miles there, taking one whole day to go. I only sold about four pumpkins, so next day it took me all day to get home and I promised myself I'd never try to sell anything else, But I did try it one time more, but that time I didn't carry pumpkins. I carried potatoes, and I didn't have a team of my own, so I hired a negro to go haul them for me, and I didn't sell but one bushel of the potatoes. I really didn't sell them, for the man at the boarding house where I stayed that night in Rome took them for pay. I had to even pay the negro, who hauled for me, in potatoes, so I quit even trying to sell any more.

"A few years later I moved to Mississippi to follow the timber and turpentine business. I first moved to what was called Grison. The place got its name from John Grison who had a turpentine business. I worked for him until 1899. Then I went to Old Denny, Mississippi, that is now Lucedale, Mississippi. You know, when I first went there, there wasn't a public road, nor a tree cut, and only two two-room houses. One of those houses had a little commissary in it. The other was a man's home. Of course, you remember the big mill that Mr. Luce built? Well, I helped

January 20, 1939.

-5-  
John L. Burnette, Storekeeper, White  
Stone Street, Toulminville, Ala. Mob  
Ila B. Prine, Writer.  
François Ludgère Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

Build that mill, and I built that spur track of railroad out from the main line. It was the old Mobile, Jackson and Kansas City Railroad then. I hauled the machinery and all the steel with ox teams. The main line of the railroad run only from Mobile to Merrill, Mississippi, then, a distance of fifty miles. I remember Billy Crawford the first engineer on that road. You know, they didn't have but one engine for years, until they built more mills at Eubanks, Leaf and Merrill, Mississippi.

"After finishing this job I worked for Wilson White and Vaughn, who had a mill at Spring Hill, Ala. I was in charge of the logging department for them for years. There I went into the timber business for myself in Baldwin County, Alabama. I had a mill of my own when that big September 1906 storm came, and of course it blew down all the timber and ruined us all.

"You asked me about superstitions, and such like? I don't remember much about things like that, it's been so long ago. But I remember people did like to tell ghost stories, and they honestly believed them too. One time when I was little, mamma took us children with her to spend the night with a lawyer's wife in town, and they sat up until midnight telling ghost stories, and I was scared to turn my head, because I knew something would grab me every minute.

"But we had good times, too, for Papa played a violin, he was a good citizen, and a good musician. When I was a good size boy I used to go with him, and I have been to as many as

January 20, 1939.

-6-

John L. Burnette, Storekeeper.  
White. Stone Street, Touhminville  
(Mobile) Ala.

Ila B. Prine, Writers  
François Ludgère Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

five parties in one week. Papa was a great hand to play for square dances, and if he didn't go, people would come after him, and I'd go along. Some of the so-called new songs aren't new at all. Most of them are based on old ballads, just changed around some. You take that song, 'It Ain't gonna Rain no more', I heard Papa sing that many a time. I can remember only part of it, but it went something like this;

'I set my table high

I set my table low,

I set my table in the hotel floor,

It ain't gona rain no more,

It ain't gona rain no more.'

"And here's another one Papa used to sing;

'I went upon the mountain and gave

my horn a blow,

I think I heard my Cindy say,

Oh! yonder comes my beau!

Hop along home Cindy,

Hop along Cindy, I say!

Oh! hop along Cindy, along the rugged way.

"There were lots of others, but I just can't think of them.

So much has happened, since them days.

"But I do want to tell you of one experience I had when I was a young man. My throat got sore, and Mamma doctored on it,

January 20, 1939.

-7-

John L. Burnette, Storekeeper.  
(White) Stone Street.  
Toulminville, (Mobile) Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer.  
Francois Ludgere Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

BUT it kept getting worse, so there was an old Indian woman who lived near us, and Mamma sent for her. When she came, and looked in my throat, grunted and said 'diphtheria', then went into the woods and got some roots and made a tea out of it. She made me gargle and bathe my throat with it, and I soon got well. That old woman wouldn't tell what kind of roots she used, and she never let anybody go with her to look for them. Them old-time remedies were better than a lot of this patent medicine you get now. There's mullen leaves, they are good to make a poultice of for a common sprain. It's true also of dyes, and every thing else, the old ones are best. They used to use green and black walnuts to dye things dark brown. Most of our clothes were made of wool, and then dyed at home. Mamma and the women made not only their clothes, but made cotton counterpanes with coverlids of wool.

"Well, here I've jumped all around in my talk, and am talking of when I was a child, and I haven't told you anything about my business. There ain't much to tell, for after I got too old to follow the timber and turpentine business, I had to do something, so I rented this little building, and keep a few groceries. Course, I can't do much, because I haven't much stock; but the trade keeps me pretty busy up until ten o'clock in the morning. From then on 'til three in the afternoon, there ain't much doing. Nearly all my trade is nickel and dime stuff, for you know, there's so many big chain stores around Mobile, that people buy most all their things from them, because they can sell cheaper than I can."

January 20, 1939.

-8-  
John L. Burnette, Storekeeper,  
(White) Stone Street.  
Toulminville, (Mobile) Ala.  

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Ila B. Prine, Writer.  
François Ludgère Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

While we were sitting and talking, an old negro man, who was very feeble came in and asked for a can of tobacco, which Mr. Burnette gave to him, and he shuffled slowly out. As he left without saying a word, Mr. Burnette reached under the single counter and pulled out a ledger and entered the price of the tobacco in it. There seemed to be a mutual understanding between them what the negro wanted, for neither man spoke.

A short while later our conversation was interrupted again by the entrance of a nurse girl with a small three year-old white boy. The girl was a mixed blooded "Cajan," who had come to buy a dime loaf of bread and an nickel's worth of meal. The small boy was asking numerous questions without waiting for a reply to any of them. Mr. Burnette without any comment waited on them. There were several customers in and out for groceries during the interview, but none bought over twenty-five cents worth at a time. Mr. Burnette seemed very matter of fact in his dealings with all the customers, only asking the necessary questions of each buyer. He said as one left, "You see, I only sell in such small quantities, that I barely make enough to keep going. But you know how convenient these little neighborhood groceries are, and, too, it gives me something to do. A man at my age can't do much these days.

"Well, I hope I have helped you, but I can't see anything much to my life story, but I'll have to be going home now, as

January 20, 1939.

-9-

John L. Burnette, Storekeeper,  
(White) Stone Street,  
Toulminville, (Mobile) Ala.  
Ila B. Prine, Writer.  
François Ludgère Diard, Reviser.

JOHN L. BURNETTE, STOREKEEPER.

it is twelve o'clock, and I always close for one hour every  
day to get my dinner."

I.B.P.  
1/20/39.

Week ending November 4, 1938.

Sidney Williams.  
Bay Front Road, Mobile, Ala.

-1-

SOCIAL-ETHNIC SERIES.

Ila B. Prine,  
Identification No. 0149-5302  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 2  
WPA Project 4454, Mobile, Ala.

A STORY OF A FISHERMANS LIFE.

Written by Ila B. Prine.

Standing under a china berry tree near the edge of the water of Mobile Bay, were three men. One was low and stout, dressed in dark blue flannel shirt, and blue serge trousers. He was very dark and his hair was slightly grey, and he wore tortoise rimmed spectacles. The other men were of different builds and types all-together. One was tall and rather slim, and was dressed in khaki clothes and cap, while the third man was very small, but had the appearance of being extremely strong. He had on a black felt hat, a white shirt, or, at least, it had once been white, and blue denim pants, that were rolled half way up his legs, and he was barefooted. His arms and legs were hard and brawny looking and his right arm bore tattoo marks. He looked like he had had a hard life and was of the type to get into a fight with the least provocation. His face was extremely wrinkled, although he did not seem to be very old. He made one think, however, he had just landed off Captain Kid's ship.

The three men were heading or picking shrimp on a makeshift table that was built of old pieces of lumber and a piece of tin.

This table was on the remaining wharf, where formerly stood the old Arlington Docks.

When the men saw they had a visitor, the elder man

Week ending Nov.4, 1938.

Sidney Williams,  
Bay Front Road, Mobile, Ala.

SOCIAL-ETHNIC SERIES.

Ila B. Prine,  
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A STORY OF A FISHERMANS LIFE

Written by Ila B. Prine,

came forward to speak for them. He replied when the visitor asked if she could interview them about their life's work, and he said:

"Yes, ma'm, I'll can tell you all about mine, and hit will make a good story."

"To begin with, I wuz born at Cedar Point (at the extreme southwest end of Mobile County), fifty-two years ago, and my name is Sidney Williams. I now lives on Charleston and Marine streets, but I am moving tomorrow down here on the Bay Front Road, jist at the head of this here road that leads into Arlington. I ain't got much of a livin because I got heart trouble, and kidney stones, an' I can't do much heavy work now. But I have been a fisherman all my life, jes like I tells you I was born on Cedar Points, then my Pa moved to Bon Secour across the bay, in fact, I've lived all over these here waters hereabout.

"I've been on my own since I was fifteen years old, because Pa got drowned. He and Ma and us chillun was going on a boat between Cat Island and Deer Island in Mississippi Sound, and one of my little sisters fell overboard, and he dove overboard to try to save her and they both got drowned.

"My Ma wuz a full blooded Spanish woman, and her name was Tillaboas' before she married Pa. Now, lady, I reckons that the way you spell her name, I can't read nor write a-tall.

Week ending Nov.4, 1938.

-3-

Sidney Williams,  
Bay Front Road, Mobile, Ala.

SOCIAL-ETHNIC SERIES.

Ila B. Prine,  
Identification No. 0149-5302  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 2.  
WPA Project #454, Mobile, Ala.

A STORY OF A FISHERMANS LIFE.

Written by Ila B. Prine.

My Pa had some French blood in him.

"As for my own life, I've been all over Florida, Texas and Louisiana and I can go back any time I want to, 'cause I ain't never done no harm, nor been in jail in my life.

"I've been married twice, and I had six boys by my first wife, and you can put it down there, that nary one of them has helped make a livin' fishin'. They all grown now and gone to they selves.

"This wife I've got now had three girls when I married her, and they helps me with the fish and crabs and shrimp, and they would be here right now, but my wife is ailin'. She's got high blood pressure, according to the doctor.

"You see, lady, this half barrel of shrimp here well, when I git them headed and sell them, it will bring only enough to buy something for supper. You see, since I have been sick I can't go out on the boats no more, so I has to buy the shrimp and pay six or seven dollars a barrel for them, and sell them after I heads them, so you see I don't make much profit out of them.

"Have you ever seen a thing like this? It is known as a sea-lice, or sea-bob. It resembles a shrimp in coloring, but its shape is different. Here's a squid, too. Guess you knew

Week ending Nov.4, 1938.

-4-  
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it had a feather in it? Here Frank, you get the feather out of this squid, so the lady can see it."

When the man named Frank, took the squid on his hand, it looked like a small octopus. Its body was soft and jelly-like with long feelers on the head. The feather is the backbone, and is clear as a crystal and shaped like a feather with the fine tracings on it.

When I asked Mr. Williams about the superstitions in regard to fishing and shrimping, he said he did not know any. He said the best time to go out is early in the morning, and the best way to find the shrimp was to watch for porpoise diving up and down, and also by the sea gulls following the boat.

"Lordy, I has been fishin' so long 'til it jes comes natural wid me. I even fished out bayous when they was all froze over, and I'd jes have a piece o' canvas thrown around me. Then I've seen the time when the nets would be so heavy that the could hardly be pulled up. One time near Dauphin Island the tail line broke and I was afraid we would tear holes in the net, so I told the men I was goin' to dive and get that tail line, and they said, 'no, don't you know that there are sharks in the water?' But jes the same I dove off the side of the boat and tied the rope onto to the net, and when they pulled the net in, it had

Week ending Nov.4, 1938.

-5-

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ten barrels of shrimp in it.

"Has you ever seen a shark? They are a long black fish with a snout like a piney woods hog. I tell you fishing is a hard life, and not much money in it. Time I pay for a little gasoline for my model T. Ford, to come down here, and buy the shrimp, and pay for a license to peddle, and when I was able to go on a boat and shrimp, I also had to pay a license to go to shrimp. They jes bleed a man to death tryin' to make a livin'. You know, we can't shrimp in the waters above Dog River, for it is against the law, and you better not get caught at it, because they have a fish warden who patrols the bay and if he catches you, they surely fines you heavy.

"I tell you many times when I lived near Bayou La Batre, my chillun ~~has~~ gone to school on the school buses, without any lunches. Course, there weretimes times when we made plenty.

"Now you asked about churches, and good times or recreation as you calls it, Now, listen, lady, I believe in church and they does lots a good, but wouldn't I be pretty sittin' up in church with sich clothes as these on? and these is all I got. Its true that there are lots of good falks in the church, but let me tell you something, plenty folks go to church to hide their rascality, and devilment.

"I guess I need to do better, 'cause one time I was

Week ending Nov.4, 1938.

-6-

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runnin' a little oyster shop an' a lady came in to nuy some oysters, and she said to me: 'Do you talk like that all the time?' and I told her 'Yes,' and you know that woman never come back again. When she was gone, my wife told me I ought not to talk so rough, and since then I've tried to do better.

"As for good times, they's done gone, but I have had some good times in my day. I can play a violene, and lawsy, I'se won some contests. I don't know any of the words to the songs, but if I had a violene I'd play you some tunes. Here a few years ago they had a fiddlin' contest here at Arlington and I played then."

"You've saw them American flags on a little stick? Well, the night of that contest I got one of them flags and slipped out back of the stand and resined up that stick, and when it come my time to play, I played first with my bow, and then I pulled out this flag and played Dixie with it. The crowd nearly went wild, and there was an old blind man who had played jes before me and he strained his neck and looked like he tried to see what was happening. So when the judges gave me first prize, which was fifteen dollars, I went over to the old man and gave him five dollars of it. Yes, sir, I can do funny things with a 'violene."

Mr. Williams said some of the tunes he could play on

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the 'violene' were the Mississippi-Sawyer, Arkansas Traveller,  
Sweet bunch of Daises, and turkey in the straw.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Personal interview with Mr. Sidney Williams,  
Bay Front Road, Mobile, Ala.