

WPA Alabama Writers Project
Short Stories by:
Helen S Hartley, Mobile

187

~~Week ending December 9, 1938~~

FOLKLORE

Helen S. Hartley

~~Identification No. 0149-5147~~

~~Federal Writers' Project Dist. 2~~

~~WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.~~

THE DIS'N'FECTED BRIDE

~~Collected by Helen S. Hartley.~~

I'se jest fum Alabama

Fur's I'se a happy Coon-

Caze mah sugar she am wid me

An' us on our honey-moon,

I'se a newly married nigger

An' I state dis fac' wid pride

I'se de fus' an' de only groom

Wid a dis'n'fected bride.

Tell de old folks dat us ar' comin'

Fum de fields of livin' green

Fum de state of Alabama

Whar de houses ar' quar'n'tine,

Hab de weddin' supper ready

Op'n all de gate ways wide

Fur de fumigated groom

An' de dis'n'fected bride.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: This ~~folklore~~ ~~negro dialect~~ poem was given me by Mrs. Samuel B. Browne (née Annie Boice) widow of the late circuit Judge Samuel B. Browne of Mobile.

NOTE: This poem was written for the Mobile Register when the last yellow fever epidemic was in Mobile; during the late summer and

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Helen S. Hartley
Identification No. 0149-5147
Federal Writers' Project Dist. 2
WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

THE DIS'N'FECTED BRIDE

Collected by Helen S. Hartley.

Note: Continued:--

fall of 1897. During this epidemic according to Mrs. Browne, the streets of Mobile were sprinkled with a mixture of Carbolic Acid and water, while a wagon containing quick lime followed behind and the lime was thrown on the streets after they were watered with the mixture.

It was also sung by the negroes of Mobile to a ^{solo} ~~spell~~ tune ⁽¹⁾ and the word Alabama was substituted for Mississippi. H.S.H.

THE DIS'N'FECTED BRIDE

New.

I'se jest f'um Alabama
 Fur's I's a happy Coon-
 Caze mah sugar she an wid me
 An' us on our honey-moon,
 I'se a newly married nigger
 An' I state dis fac' wid pride
 I's de fus' an' de only groom
 Wid a dis'n fected bride.

Tell de old folks us are comin'
 Fun de fields of livin' green
 F'um de state of Alabama
 Whar de houses ar' quar'n'tine,
 Hab de weddin' supper ready
 Op'n all de gateways wide
 Fur de fumigated groom
 An' de dis'n fected bride.

Bibliography: This poem was given me by Mrs. ² Samuel B. Browne
 (nee Annie Boice) widow of the late circuit Judge Samuel B. Browne
 of Mobile.

NOTE: This poem was written for the Mobile Register when the last
 yellow fever epidemic was in Mobile; during the lat summer and fall
 of 1897. During this epidemic according to Mrs. Browne, the
 streets of Mobile were sprinkled with a mixture of Carbolic Acid
 and water, while a wagon containing quick lime followed behind and
 the lime was thrown on the streets after they were watered with the
 mixture.

It was also sung by the Negroes of Mobile to a solemn tune.

FOLK SONG OF SOUTH ALABAMA.

LITTLE GEORGIA NIGGER.

Hush-a-bye my little Georgia Nigger,

Lay your kinky head on Mamma's arm;

Don't you dare to wink, or blink or snigger,

If you do its a gwine to do you harm.

Andrew Jackson's right,

Shut your eyes up tight;

Daddy's in the hen house

Catching out the chickens;

Buddy's on the outside

Waiting for the pickin';

Sister's in the kitchen

Cooking up the corn pone;-

Mamma's goin' to cook you a

chicken pie.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Personal interview with Mrs. Lillie Easley,
Eslava Street, Mobile, Alabama.

12/13/38
L.H.

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WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

THE DIS'N'FECTED BRIDE

Collected by Helen S. Hartley.

I'se jest fum Alabamy

Fur's I'se a happy Coon-
Caze mah sugar she an wid me

An' us on our honey-moon,

I'se a newly married digger

An' I state dis fac' mid pride

I'se de fus' an' de only groom

Wid a dis'n'fected bride.

-

Tell de old folks dat us ar' comin'

Fum de fields of livin' green

Fum de state of Alabamy

Whar de houses ar' quar'n'tine,

Hab de weddin' supper re'dy

Op'n all de gate ways wide

Fur de fumegated groom

An' de dis'n'fected bride.

-

BIBLIOGRAPHY: This folklore negro dialect poem was given me by Mrs. Samuel B. Browne (née Annie Boice) widow of the late circuit Judge Samuel B. Browne of Mobile.

NOTE: This poem was written for the Mobile Register when the last yellow fever epidemic was in Mobile; during the late summer and

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THE DIS'N'FECTED BRIDE

Collected by Helen S. Hartley.

Note: Continued:--

fall of 1897. During this epidemic according to Mrs. Browne, the streets of Mobile were sprinkled with a mixture of Carbolic Acid and water, while a wagon containing quick lime followed behind and the lime was thrown on the streets after they were watered with the mixture.

It was also sung by the negroes of Mobile to a drollsome tune and the word Alabamy was substituted for Mississippi. H.S.H.

Week ending October 7, 1938

SOCIOLOGICAL SERIES

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Helen S. Hartley
Identification No. 0149-5147
Federal Writers' Project Dist. 2
WPA Project 4454, Mobile, Ala.

Mr. Peter Mc Donald's story
So. Conception Street, Mobile, Ala.

"PETER MC DONALD",

A TRUE STORY OF TO-DAY.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

Up to the curb a large black bread truck was driven, and from it jumped a tall handsome young man of twenty-four years, a bright, smiling boy, who seemed to be with no cares in the world, whose name was Peter Mc. Donald.

He had a very fine education, having finished Spring Hill College, and afterwards went to another college in Louisiana, which he had to leave about five years ago. Peter had been motherless since he was a very small child, and during his last college year his father died, and so he returned to Mobile, equipped for a good position with one of the large firms of the City or elsewhere. Three long and bitter years of job hunting, hoping that luck was somewhere around the corner, he found that jobs were scarce, wages small and competition appalling. Weary of the incessant round of refusals, he finally accepted the job of selling and delivering bread from house to house, with no wages, and only a commission, which usually amounted to twelve dollars a week.

He was engaged to a lovely sweet girl, who had waited these many years for him, and his hopes are that she would continue to do so, until he was able to marry her.

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SOCIOLOGICAL SERIES.

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Mr. Peter Mc Donald's story,
So. Conception Street, Mobile, Ala.

"PETER MC. DONALD",

A TRUE STORY OF TO-DAY.

Written by Helen S . Hartley.

Together with his aunt, whom he lived with on South Conception Street, he was able to get along on his small income, while his aunt had a little herself, from some old property, that was hardly paying for itself, as it the case with all old property, to-day; but as long as they could meet their obligations "all was well", he said.

When asked how he liked his job, Peter's answer so symbolic of the person he seemed to be, countered back: "Why of course, its fun. What else can I get to do?"

Each week day morning, he left the house at five A.M. going quietly so he would not awaken his aunt, whom he loved very much, for she had cared for him since he was a child and now that his father was dead, the two were alone. They were a very religious family, Catholics for generations; his forebears having come to Mobile one hundred and two years ago from Ireland.

He was off the wagon at about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. It all depended upon the business he had, and home for a rest, a bath and off again for the evening's pleasure, which con-

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SOCIOLOGICAL SERIES.

Mr. Peter Mc. Donald's story,
So. Conception St. Mobile, Ala.

"PETER MC. DONALD",

A TRUE STORY OF TO-DAY.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

sisted of riding in his girl's car, as he did not have one, and going to the evening games of base ball and foot ball, as the case may be, both of which he was fond, having played on the teams during his school years. It seemed the sports had helped during those terrible years of job hunting, because he picked up small jobs playing on the small teams, helping at the fields where the games were held. He once held a job as life-saver at one of our swimming pools, and taught the amateur swimmers to swim. His enthusiasm was so pronounced when he was talking of baseball, proved to me that he was indulging in a secret passion for professional baseball.

The time had come, that he must go, so on his truck he hopped again. with confidence that youth gives a happy nature.

Week ending December 2, 1938

LIFE STORIES SERIES.

Helen S. Hartley
Identification No. 0149-5147
Federal Writers' Project Dist. 2
WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

Mr. W. MacDonnell
Mobile, Alabama.

WILLIAM MACDONNELL, EX-SCHOLASTIC.

Written by Helen S. Hartley

going down St. Charles Drive and out into the road, which lead toward her Mobile home, a drive of about fourteen hours.

The MacDonnell family had located in Mobile direct from Dublin Ireland, one hundred and three years ago, and the keen Irish sense of humor is very evident even to the present generation. These two boys' father, it is said, had been one of the most successful salesmen in Mobile. He was one of the most popular and handsomest men of his time, and although the ladies had sought after him, he never remarried but placed his entire love in his two motherless boys, (his wife having died when William had reached his fifth year and his brother three years older), and his only sister to whose home he brought the two little fellows. Mr. MacDonnell, their father, while he was living, often said that their aunt at once took the two boys to her heart and began to shower them with the unselfish maternal love that later inspired them to enter Grand Coteau for the priesthood.

The family had their horse and carriage, several servants and everything their hearts could wish for, but while the boys were within the cloistered walls of Grand Coteau, Mr. MacDonnell died, leaving the aunt alone in the home that had once been so happy.

All went well with these happy youngsters at Grand Coteau until one day, a short time after the death of his father, William began to

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WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

Mr. W. MacDonnell
101 N. Claiborne St. Mobile.

The subject of this sketch wishes
his name changed, if story is used.

WILLIAM MACDONNELL, EX- SCHOLASTIC.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

Lying in the lovely part of southern Louisiana and situated on Bayou Teche almost mid-way between Lafayette and Opelousas, is the well known little village of Grand Coteau, where the Jesuits had chosen to be the site for their Seminary and erected the building, which like a fortress, commands the large tract of land surrounding it. The grey tile roofs seem to peep between the boughs of the large age-old oaks and beacon to those in the distance that welcome awaits their coming.

On one side of this building, which is but a single edifice, is the Juniorate, where the intended spends his first two years in preparation for the work that lies ahead of him. In the central/^{part} of the building is the chapel and the administration offices, while the Novitiate takes up the entire other side. It is within this building that we find two brothers striving to learn the secret of eternal happiness amid these inspired surroundings.

The young scholastics with their breviaries in their hands, while garbed in their long black cassocks, which fall to the ground in graceful folds while their prayer beads glitter in the sunlight, as they walk without speaking, slowly up and down the Seminary walks, awaiting the sound of the little bell to ring out calling them back into the study halls, reading rooms, or to the chapel, as the case may be.

It was noon on a certain Spring day during the year of 1932. The

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EPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

Mr. W. MacDonnell
101 N. Claiborne, Mobile, Ala.

WILLIAM MACDONNELL, EX-SCHOLASTIC.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

little bell rang dolefully out, calling them all in to their dinner. In the midst of those who were slowly advancing to the dining hall were the two Mobile boys, who paired off to themselves to discuss their aunt's expected visit as she had written to them to expect her this particular Sunday afternoon. Upon entering the large room, (which served as their regular dining hall, and also as an assembly room for different occasions) William MacDonnell, for that is the name of one of the young Mobile boys, stepped up on the rostrum which was in the center of the hall and cleared his throat in preparation for the lecture he was about to give while the other scholastics ate their dinner. The other brother went straight to his chair behind which he stood waiting until after the Grace was given. There was not a sound in the large hall. The only greeting the boys gave those in the near proximity, was a slight smile or a hasty nod of the head.

William MacDonnell standing so noiselessly in the rostrum was waiting also until the Grace was given to start his sermon. His heavy black hair was always so carefully groomed and his fine regular features and large black eyes all serve to lend an air to show that he was no ordinary young man. His voice, although not raised, could be heard in every corner of that silent hall, where the only noise that served to break the silence was the click of table silver as it touched the china, as the young scholastics dined and listened to the discourse.

After the dinner was finished and as soon as they could conveniently do so, the two MacDonnell brothers were out to look for their beloved

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Mr. W. MacDonnell
Mobile, Alabama.

WILLIAM MACDONNELL, EX-SCHOLASTIC.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

aunt, whom they knew had arrived. They found her in the midst of a crowd of their friends and ^{class} ~~room~~mates, who had grown to love her as one of their own, even to calling or addressing her as "Aunt Minnie".

After the first excitement of her arrival had passed, the three slowly strolled away to walk up and down Rodrigues Walk, one of the many Seminary walks around the grounds. Looking over across the cultivated fields, that are on either side of the walks, they saw the modern barns (as this is one of the most equipped farms in that section) and they could see the Seminary's electrified dairy that supplies all the milk and fresh butter that is used.

One of the aunt's favorite spots within these inspired surroundings is the large Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, which is bordered on both sides with evergreens, flowering orleanders and other leafy trees, while the small waterfall with its clear and transparent water, that flows along the canal on its way to the Bayou, passes the kneeling figure of Bernadette.

The three as they stood gazing upon the beauties of nature surrounding them had so many interesting things to talk about, that the whole afternoon sped by with such rapidity that the two boys found themselves standing under the statue of St. Charles Barromeo. St. Charles Driveway starts at the entrance to the grounds, making a circle around the statue which stands in front of the main doorway to the building. The boys was bidding goodbye to their parting aunt as she was slowly

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WILLIAM MACDONNELL, EX-SCHOLASTIC.

Written by Helen S. Hartley

realize that he was almost a grown man, and he gradually allowed his mind to wander from his ecclesiastical studies and to follow his dearly beloved aunt in her daily routine of life in Mobile. The day came that William became possessed with the idea that he ought to take care of his foster mother.

It was within the week that followed his aunt's visit that the Superior of Grand Coteau called William to his study. After the confidential talk with his Superior, William found himself bidding farewell to those peaceful surroundings that he had grown so accustomed to, little dreaming of the disappointments that lay ahead of him. His arrival in Mobile was unheralded and came as a surprise to his aunt.

Although he had finished at Spring Hill College and spent one full year at Grand Coteau preparing himself for something better, he became bewildered through the disappointments when seeking employment. William's brother whom he had left so happy and satisfied in Grand Coteau, returned home soon after he left, having grown lonesome without his brother.

So it was, that the two young brothers joined the ranks of the unemployed, and they soon realized the mistake that they had made in turning away from the Divine Call, and to prefer to listen to the world and follow its dictates.

Four long and bitter years had passed and at first William was particular in his choice of positions he sought, but finding the depression had settled its terrible fangs upon all industries, he gradually realized

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Mobile, Alabama.

WILLIAM MACDONNELL, EX- SCHOLASTIC.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

that finding a good position was hopeless, so in that frame of mind he began to accept anything that he chanced to come across. Sometimes it was a week's work, at other times it was for only a day or so. He was successful in getting on one summer as assistant of sports at the Country Club, situated at Spring Hill, Alabama., where he spent an ideally happy summer.

William's aunt is still cheerfully sharing her small income with the two boys, for their father's money had long since been used. She had plenty of city property, but was unsuccessful in deriving any revenue from it. Her houses were filled with tenants, but none of them were prompt in paying their monthly rent and when legal proceedings were used to collect the large unpaid balance the tenants calmly moved elsewhere. All the property, not so valuable, she sold in order to be able to keep up the repairs, pay taxes and insurance on the balance, and her property had grown less and less as the years moved in their relentless way.

His aunt's home, their residence, although one of the old Southern homes is large in the exterior view, but on the inside there are only a few very large rooms. There are two large rooms making one drawing room downstairs, with breakfast room, which was formerly used for a butler's pantry and a large kitchen. Upstairs there are two bedrooms, bath and a small hall room, which was formerly their aunt's private dressing room, but it is too small to be used as a bedroom. As William upon being asked why they did not rent out part of their house, answered:

"There's more than enough room for us, but not rooms enough in

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LIFE STORIES SERIES.

Mr. W. MacDonnell
Mobile, Alabama.

WILLIAM MACDONNELL, EX- SCHOLASTIC.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

this large house to rent out."

About two years ago, William accept an offer of partnership with a friend, who furnished the money, a car and all that such a venture would demand, to sell and deliver bread on a daily retail route. Naturally he has no drawing account or salary, but their profits are divided between them, and some weeks it generally amounts to \$15.00

William is very amiable and affectionate with his aunt. His older brother who is now a married man, has a permanent job. William has a host of friends that in all respects find him an ideal companion, but when they in their merry-making become boisterous, their mirth wearies him and if possible he slips away on some pretext or another. It would be most unfortunate if anyone would be indiscreet enough to argue the point with him.

In conclusion; This is a very religious family, but the two boys who were once striving to reach the real goal, that they may be "alter Christus" or "other Christs" will never hear the glorious words:

"Thou art priests forever, go forth and preach all things in My Name."

BIBLIOGRAPHY: I have only written what was told me from interviews made on the 20 and 21 inst., with William MacDonnell, his brother, aunt and another relative of the family.

Week ending Nov. 4, 1938

SOCIOLOGICAL SERIES.

Helen S. Hartley
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Jim Lewis
Padgett's Switch, Ala.

JIM LEWIS, TURPENTINE WORKER.

Written by Helen S. Hartley

While driving on Highway 90 and nearing Padgett's Switch, which is located just sixteen miles south of Mobile; and called so, for in the past Padgett's Switch was a flag station on the L & N. R. R. I suddenly discerned in the distance across the fields a negro man pouring turpentine into a barrel. Leaving the car on the Highway, I proceeded to cross the fields, but found it a hard matter because the ground was thickly covered with underbrush, and together with briars and the dampness (for it had just rained a few minutes before) made walking rather unpleasant.

When I had finally gotten close to the darkey he had finished the pine tree he was working on and was slowly moving a small barrel to another tree. He greeted me with a rather surprised expression upon his face and with "goodmorning, Mum," waited for me to speak. He was a tall man, slightly stooped, although he is only thirty-eight years of age. He spoke quickly in the true Negro dialect and often showed a good set of teeth in a friendly smile. When asked what his name was his reply came quickly:

"Jim Lewis, Mum," and then he stated that he lived back in the woods, and at the same time pointed toward the south. He continued:

"I got de bestest wife an' fou' chilluns, an' three of dese are all young 'uns an' have tuh go tuh school, an' de older one gits work

Jim Lewis
Padgett's Switch, Ala.

JIM LEWIS, TURPENTINE WORKER.

Written by Helen S. Hartley

on de farms here 'bout, but makes powerful little money, as de white folks 'round here are all po' and can't pay nobody nothin' no mo'.

Answering my question as to his health and the health of his family, Lewis said:

"Thank God, I got mah health. 'Fore God health is de bestest thing in dis world, I jest wouldn't take anythin' for mah health. No mum mah family dey ain't sick neither."

Lewis also said, "Where I'se came f'm jest north of Mobile, I used to git a dollar and a quarter a day workin' as a yard man in de stills, but as I'm livin' 'round here now ah hires out to what eber job I can git, sometimes hits chippin', dippin' or haulin', I tries tuh make 'bout a dollar and a half a day, but some days I sure do hafter hurry tuh git that much, but I sure 'nough needs all de money I'se can git a-hold of tuh git along on".

When asked if he was a church member, his answer came quickly: "I

"I was raised up a God fearin' man, but don't git me wrong lady, 'cause I don't 'zackly goes 'round praying like my old woman an' makin' a show of myself by gettin' down on my knees, but I sure tries tuh do right by de Lawd, 'cause hit sure looks like de debil got the whip hand over the world".

As Lewis was talking, he hesitated and slowly looked around, then

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Jim Lewis
Padgett's Switch, Ala.

JIM LEWIS, TURPENTINE WORKER.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

suddenly he exclaimed:

"My God, I do declare, look at dat" and without moving I looked on the ground and saw as large a moccasin as I have ever seen, slowly crawling along just a little to the south of where I was standing. Lewis picking up a good size limb, which was lying on the ground he began to strike at the snake. His hair becoming damp clung to his head from perspiration, the sparkling of his eyes and the force of his breath was like whistling through his teeth, showed the exertion he was under while killing the moccasin. When the snake was killed, Lewis straightened up, and said:

"Well, dat ain't right, here us is, two grown-up people quiet-like talkin' an' that thing comes along. You know I was downright skeered for a minute 'cause he was sure close tuh you, lady."

When Lewis quieted down I asked him about the turpentine business, he told me that rosin was a gum that is obtained from the pine tree, by chipping at the base of the tree and if "a fellow's a old hand at turpentinin'", he knows the cut should not exceed one-third the diameter of the tree at any point, and additional "streaks" are chipped higher and higher and the sap then drains into the "cup" which is at the base of the tree. The "cup" is made of galvanized iron, zinc, or aluminum. I noticed that all the trees in the immediate section we were standing in had only one "cup", but Lewis said that trees up to fourteen inches

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Jim Lewis
Padgett's Switch, Ala.

JIM LEWIS, TURPENTINE WORKER.

Written by Helen S. Hartley

in diameter generally has two cups, while on larger trees three cups are frequently used. The gum or rosin in these cups are "dipped" or collected at regular intervals and hauled to the stills, and Lewis' job at the present time is dipping.

Louis would not tell me where the still was situated, for when asked he just answered:

"When I'se through fillin' this-one I jest leaves hit along de road a piece and the other fellow gits hit."

Seeing that my visit was interrupting the negroes' work, I left him with the question unanswered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Personal interview, and experiences.

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SOCIOLOGICAL SERIES.

Helen S. Hartley
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Federal Writers' Project Dist. 2
WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

Mr. Charles A. Sturtevant,
Chunchula, Alabama.

A VISIT TO A FARMING DAIRY AT CHUNCHULA, ALA.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

As I parked my car in front of the delightfully comfortable cottage of the farming dairy of the Sturtevant brothers, at Chunchula, in Mobile County, on the Citronelle Road (U. S. Highway 45) about twenty-one miles north of the city of Mobile. Mr. Charles Sturtevant, one of the two brothers who own the dairy, arose from his seat on the front porch where he was reading, and came down the steps to greet me. He did not ask me in, but took a seat in the car so that I could interview him, and where a wonderful view of the whole farm and dairy could be seen. This was my first visit to their farm and well equipped dairy, which is one of the largest in Mobile County. I found Mr. Charles Sturtevant to be a most delightful person to talk to and I soon saw why he was so popular with all his friends, some of which I had talked to previously about getting this interview. He is a tall, broad shouldered, healthy looking man, of the blonde type, with a broad but kindly smile, which assured me my visit was welcome.

While dairying is Mr. Sturtevant's hobby, hunting fox is the sport he enjoys and indulges in most. Forty years ago fox were very numerous, he says, even to catching them two hundred yards from his front gate; but now, although not so numerous, they are still plentiful. Mr. Sturtevant said that he and his friends hunted

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Mr. Charles A. Sturtevant
Churchula, Alabama.

A VISIT TO A FARMING DAIRY AT CHUNCHULA, ALA.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

and obtain a job. Mr. Sturtevant at once gave his consent and them on horse back on his lands first, then returned to the house and proceeded to get into their cars, and after turning the hounds loose, the hunt was on. Mr. Sturtevant owns eight hounds which together with his neighbors, make up a good size pack of between twenty to twenty-five hounds. He says that hunting in cars is very thrilling, for they all know the roads well enough that they easily follow the cry of the hounds and always arrive in time for the kill. When asked if the wolves and foxes were imported, his answer was no, there were plenty of them as it was. There was also plenty of "coon" (raccoon) and "possum" (opossum) to be had, but personally, he did not care for the sport of hunting the latter as he could never forget the last night he was out in the woods hunting "possum" and found they had trapped one in a carcass of a dead animal lying in a mud hole.

Mrs. Charles Sturtevant and daughter are not living on the farm with Mr. Sturtevant at present, but are living in their city residence in Mobile, on Old Government Street, as his daughter has a position in Mobile. His son finished at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute at Auburn, and after returning to the farm, decided that he did not like farming and dairying and could never find any interest in it, so one day while he and his father were working in the dairy, he told his father something about his ambition to go out

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Mr. Charles A. Sturtevant
Chunchula, Alabama.

A VISIT TO A FARMING DAIRY AT CHUNCHULA, ALA.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

West and obtain a job. Mr. Sturtevant at once gave his consent and his son left the farm, but as things have turned out as they have, the father is confident that his son has made no mistake in his decision, for his son finally located in Toledo, Ohio, and now has a very responsible position, and likes that part of the country very much. So Mr. Charles lives on the old place with his brother and his family and says he also is very contented, as he spends his spare time in Mobile, but says that the noise of the neighbors radios and loud voices annoy him and make him feel lost, so his home in Mobile on Old Government Street seldom sees him.

The dairy and farm consists of two hundred and sixty-four acres of land, one hundred of which is under cultivation, forty in pasture and the balance is covered with oak trees. To the right of the house stands two silos, next to which are the barns and the milk house, and around which are to be seen the most beautiful white Leghorn chickens. Mr. Sturtevant says that the Leghorns proved to be the best breed of chickens for his place, because they can fly into the trees at night, where they are safe from marauders, as there is no other shelter provided for them.

At the present time they are milking thirty-three head of milk cows, seventy-five percent of his dairy stock being Jerseys, because of the high butterfat test of the milk, and the other twenty-

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Mr. Charles A. Sturtevant
Chunchula, Alabama.

A VISIT TO A FARMING DAIRY AT CHUNCHULA, ALA.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

five percent being Holsteins. The milk is sold in bulk wholesale now, as it is more convenient than the house to house delivery as they have been doing in the past. The price they receive is not high, the profit coming from the high production per cow, as each cow is kept up to an average of three gallons. The farm furnishes an abundance of roughage for the dairy herd. In the summer there is an abundance of pasture, and as our summers in Alabama are long, the feed bill is not so high, as it is necessary to give dairy cows a certain amount of grain feed also with the pasturage.

Mr. Sturtevant explained they had divided the land into two to three permanent pastures, which are planted in lespedeza and carpet grass and rotates the stock from one to the other, thereby having fresh pastures always at hand. He said that there was a waste place across the creek, which they planted in Kudzu, which is a very heavy vine that grows fast (it is reputed to grow eighteen inches a night in good weather). Mr. Sturtevant said he has found that if carefully pastured it makes a wonderful pasture, but on the particular piece of ground he has planted it in, he says, that it has smothered everything that was growing on it. One can easily understand why Kudzu stifles the life out of the smaller trees it enfolds, as the writer saw the trees completely covered with it, and the vine is so heavy that it bears them down with the weight of its heavy stems.

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The two silos hold roughage enough for eight months feeding and is at present filled. He says that all good dairymen devote their attention to raising feed for their stock, and raise oats and vetch for hay, which is stored in two barns, one holding forty tons, the other twenty tons. Corn is the most important crop that is raised on the Sturtevant farm. The heifers from their best cows are kept and raised on the Purina method of feeding, or feeding milk to the calf sixty days, gradually increasing the amount of grain mixture.

Mr. Sturtevant also told the writer the stable manure is saved in a liquid form, by washing down the barn floors after the mornings milking, the water running into vats which are hauled out to the fields.

As twilight was falling and the air began to get cool, the writer took leave of her host bidding him goodbye after a most pleasant visit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Interview with Mr. Charles A. Sturtevant personally, address given above.

Alabama

Helen S. Hartley, Mobile, Ala.

Captain O. T. Melvin,
Bayou la Batre, Ala.

MULLET FISHING FOR A LIVING.

The auxiliary fishing schooner Clyde was running under moderate speed as she came up the calm waters of the Bayou on her way to the small fishing village of Bayou la Batre, Alabama. Her crew of nine men were all standing on deck. In the bow stood a young man with a rope held loosely in his hands. This rope he threw as one would throw a lasso, and it caught over one of the near pilings that the ice house wharf was built upon. As the loop held, the slack fell into the water with a splash and the young man began to shorten it, until suddenly for a fraction of a second, one saw the water line as the Clyde was abruptly brought to a stop, and slowly she began to tack to toward the wharf. A man standing in the stern heaved a line to the dock and caught it over another piling, and soon the Clyde was snug in her berth.

Captain Melvin, a man about 45 years of age, left his station at the wheel and slowly stepped ashore and proceeded to walk into the ice house. He at once made himself comfortable by lounging against an ice chest, which was fixed to the wall just inside the door, and he stood there abiding his time until someone in authority could attend to his wishes.

One could tell at a glance that Captain Melvin was a sea captain by the clothes he wore, the way he wore them, and the master's cap upon his head, hiding his light blue eyes and his face which was tanned by the wind and sun.

It was there in that comfortable position he quietly told the following story:

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"I have been fishing all my life, or rather for thirty years. First on one boat then on another, until January 17th, 1917, when I was master of a ten thousand dollar boat named the 'Ann and Jennie', for twins. It was freezing weather during a storm, that the Ann and Jennie grounded in the night off the Saint Andrew bar and slowly was dashed to pieces. Four of my men perished. A man by the name of Bishop and myself drifted to the safety of the beach while clinging to pieces of drift-wood that we had caught as it floated by us. That is how we were saved, but I can never forget the loss of my men and the horrors of the experience.

"Three weeks ago I sold the Gertrude H. She was thirteen years old when I sold her, and had been a mighty lucky boat for me. One of my largest trips last year was forty-two thousand pounds of fish. Not long ago we ran into a very large school of fish and found our boat too small to handle the entire catch. In the distance we saw another boat that had not been so lucky. We called them to us, and gave them fifteen thousand pounds from that one catch. Now please do not think that all the trips that we make are like that, for they are not; but I still say that we count ourselves among the lucky ones. The very last trip I made on the Gertrude H., we brought into the Bayou la Batre twenty-five thousand pounds of roe mullet. My men do not get paid by the day or week but are paid in shares after the trip's expenses are taken out. One share to each man and five shares for myself and boat, as I furnished the nets, boat and equipment.

After the Captain had talked to one of the men in charge of the ice house, he swung around and with a vigorous and active stride

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started back to the boat. His square shoulders and tall height gave him a bearing full of energy and decision, and one could see why he had long since been considered among the successful maritime men of Gulf waters.

Captain Melvin has served as skipper on one of the boats belonging to the Star Fish & Oyster Company of Mobile several years ago.

Four of the Clyde's crew were standing beside the schooner when Captain Melvin joined them and quietly made some remarks, after which he turned and gave the size of his schooner.

"The Clyde", he said, "is a fifty-five foot schooner, with an eighteen foot beam. She has, as one can see a bow'sprit projecting over the stem of the boat. Her two high slim masts carry a jib, staysail, foresail and mainsail. On her decks, about mid-ship, are lashed four extra fuel barrels containing paraffin for the auxiliary engine which is a twenty-four horsepower Lathrop. The boat has a large fore'castle, while aft is the cabin."

"Upon leaving here we will cruise along keeping a sharp lookout for fish," said Captain Melvin, "for one never knows when we might see or hear a school of them. The men soon get to know what kind of fish are running by the sound; it is really very easy when once you hear them. The mullet when they are traveling skip out of the water. Now, sometimes there are one to two million fish traveling together, and the noise they make while running in that number is more-like a roar. Imagine that number of fish flipping out of the water and each making a little splash when they drop back into it. It is a pretty sight when at night the lights are played on the water

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and you can see the silvery things glistening against the light.

"Spanish mackerel also travels as thick as can be and sometimes in immense numbers, breaking the water by striking continually with an occasional jump out of the water when they are running. They travel at a great speed, so when we are fishing for mackerel we figure our speed in order to get ahead of the school and then we instantly let down our nets. Mackerel is found all together in the Gulf. The school swims at the surface, or near it, and in a rather compact body. They are the color of steel blue and have sharp, knife-like teeth.

"During the roe season, or rather when the mullet spawns from October first for about thirty days, the fish do not go out into the Gulf, but leave the deep water going into shallow water to spawn. They go up into Lake Pontchartrain, and on their way back through Lake Borgne, at the west end of Mississippi Sound we catch them. So we head for Lake Borgne when we leave here during that season, making a trip of about one hundred miles in five days and returning with anywhere from five thousand to sixty-five thousand fish.

"At night when the day's work is finished and the men are ready to drop on their feet we anchor where we are, but when there is a heavy sea we have to use two anchors to hold the boat. During hurricane weather we stay inside as we never take that kind of risk. At night our riding light is lit as soon as it grows dark, and it is not long after the men have had their supper that you can hear only the sound of heavy breathing of the sleeping men on board, as the men haven't a care in the world and are too tired to hang around

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and talk. We never take off our clothes except to make a change and clean up and then we get back into them as fast as possible. Of course we have to change into dry clothes several times a day. That is a fisherman's life, for at any minute fish may be sighted. The men sleep heavily on, with the wind blowing and the waves splashing against the sides of the boat, until the cry of fish is raised as it was one particular morning that I am thinking of, when the cook who was up called out in a loud voice:

" 'Captain! Captain! I hear a school of mullet ahead'.

"Out we piled. Now, do you see why we don't take our clothes off. All hands were on deck immediately. The lamp by which the decks were lighted burned dimly, for it was just before day. There was scarcely any wind, for the wind seems to still just before the break of day, although it was very cold, which went right through our clothes as we all get into one of the seine boats."

As the Captain spoke he pointed to the three long narrow open launches that lay behind and beside the schooner. He continued: "As you see, they are all propelled by motors, we have engines to-day and do not have to pull oars any more. The longest boat is thirty-six feet and has a Chevrolet in her, she draws about two and one half feet of water. While the other two boats have a Studebaker in one and a Peerless in the other, both boats are of more shallow draft for shoal places. These boats we call our seine boats, because the nets or seines are kept in them when we are fishing.

"That particular night when we got into the thirty-six foot seine boat and started the motor and soon we were away to get ahead

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of the mullet. The nets lay heaped in the bottom of the boat. The men have a special way of arranging the nets by folding them in and out until the end of the net is on top. As soon as we were ahead of the fish, I gave the command 'men overboard', and four of my men jumped over the side. One man carried the fifty fathoms of warp line in his hand. Then the four men disappeared under the water. Now sometimes when we are after mackerel in the Gulf, its two or three fathoms of water that we are fishing in. Imagine those men jumping overboard in winter time, and when they come to the surface they are gasping and spluttering from the shock of being in the cold freezing water, yet it is the wind that affects them more. It takes from one to two hours to make a hit, or put our net out, and one man stands and holds the net down with his foot, if the water is shallow enough, to keep the fish from getting out from under the net. But we go in after the fish when we see them regardless of temperature or depth of the water."

One of his crew spoke up at this moment, and said:

"The Captain takes his turn at jumping over, too, same as the men."

Captain Melvin continued:

"While the men were steadily going toward shore, the others remained silent in the boat. Slowly as the boat pulled out into the open the men begin to play out the seine carefully, watching the great grey mass of net crawl from the stern of the boat and over the side into the water, for it must not tangle or get any knots into it, or it will not fish. The seine boat makes a circle and turning its

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bow towards the land it is not long before it reached the shore. The four men that I had sent over-board had all scrambled upon the beach, and there they stood slowly pulling in the lines that was attached to their end of the net, although they always start pulling as soon as their feet hit bottom. Upon my signal "heave up men!", they pull with a will that long supple rope that stretches from the water to their hands.

"The other end of the net was being drawn ashore by the boat that I was in, which glided through the water slowly. When the seine boat got to the beach all of us leaped out on the sand. One man dropped the anchor over while the others began pulling on their end of the net, and the two groups were gradually merged one into the other, while the cork floats were bobbing up on the water, showing the outline of the net.

"When we get the net up on the beach it looks like a long bag or pocket. All hands go to work on it, opening it, bailing it out and filling the seine boat with the fish to take out to the large boat and unload. When they reach the schooner one man goes into the hatch to ice the fish, while another stands on deck shoveling them into the hatch. All bad fish, sharks, crabs and catfish, etc., must be thrown away. The choice fish is gutted and washed before they are iced. Then the seine boat returns to the beach for more. When all the fish are out of the net, the men pick it up, wash it and re-arrange it in the seine boat to take up the work again. For we may put out the net several times before moving on to other fishing grounds."

"And" another of the crew, who had been listening said: "the

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Captain never leaves a spot until the last fish is caught, then he turns the wheel over to someone else and turns in."

"Upon their return to the schooner," Captain Melvin continued, "the men all get cups of hot coffee which warms them up and is always acceptable. The fish are iced away in the hatches and the decks washed. As soon as possible the men stop for a smoke of that good old Prince Albert, for that is the only tobacco that we consider a fisherman's friend. You can drop the package in water and all a fellow has to do is to shake the wet tobacco out and the rest in the package is as fresh and good as it ever was.

"The galley is in the cabin aft. The provisions we carry are just the everyday ordinary kind that any home stocks up with. Eggs, sausage, bacon, fresh and salt meats, all kinds of beans and plenty of canned goods and fresh vegetables for the first few days. In fact, just a full line of general provisions. For a trip of five days the groceries cost from fifty to seventy-five dollars. The average weekly expenses the year round can be estimated at a cost of about one hundred and fifty dollars. The sails alone are a costly item and the seine that we use is a two hundred and fifty fathom net and costs us five hundred dollar s.

Our cook bakes all the bread that we use. The meals on a fishing boat are always eaten quickly and immediately when the men are through eating, they throw everything that is left on their plates overboard into the water and their plates are handed back into the galley.

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"In heavy, blusterous or bad weather the fellows just sit around playing dominoes, cards and making coarse jokes, or some get into a heated argument of some kind, as for an example, anything from a political problem to the cost of a beef steak is thrashed out. No hard feeling remains after these discussions, although the language runs high during them. That is how they pass the hours that often grow so tedious and monotonous. The men who live on a fishing boat soon loose the habit of working on land, yet the work is hard and has to do done rapidly and with a lot of energy. Often the men swear they will never make another trip, but when the boat is ready to leave the crew will be waiting to sail with her.

"In the summer we see quite a number of sharks. Once I remember the cook and I stood watching a shark. It seemed to be the largest one that I had ever seen. Our men were swimming to the beach with that thing after them. As we watched our foreheads were bathed in sweat. It is a terrible thing to realize how helpless you are at such a time, although you would think we should be kinder used to such things happening. I am afraid that when the men are overboard and there's a man-eater around the experience will always be the same. After the men were back on deck the cook gave a full account of the whole incident, and then sat back waiting the reaction that he hoped would soon set in, when the realization of their late peril had penetrated into their minds. Old hands take it quietly as part of a day's work, while green or new and inexperienced hands feel a spark of terror come over them that is sometimes pitiful to see.

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"There are several varieties of other fish that we catch in our nets when we are also fishing for mackerel, such as red fish, trout, sheephead, and the choicest of all fish, the pompano, which skips over the water for five or six yards at a time. It is not often that we see pompano because they are so scarce. The blue fish, that is also caught only at night is a devilish fellow, because it can riddle a net by just eating through it. Another fish that we sometimes catch in late spring is the skip-jack. This is sold for bait for snapper fishing."

"I have seen as many as a hundred thousand ship-jacks in a strike" said another of the crew, who was standing by.

Also another man, who up to now had remained silent, spoke up, and said:

"Once I was out fishing for mackerel and a three pound pompano knocked a man down, who was standing by holding the net the fish was in. They can jump right out of a net while you are dragging them in to shore."

Captain Melvin said he was counting the time that would lapse before he would see his wife and daughter. He said that as soon as he reaches port he puts in a call to them and they immediately start out driving to the port he is in, that they may see him before he sails again. "We return at the end of five days," the Captain added, "to unload our trip of fish and to stock up with more provisions."

Captain Melvin says that his legal residence is in Destin Florida, but he is making Bayou la Batre his headquarters at the present time.

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The people around the Bayou say that he has a home there.

Captain Melvin concluded his story with a smile. "I have a home in every port that I make" he said, "for my wife meets me wherever I happen to be and when-ever I get there."

As he spoke of his family his face brightened up with such gladness and anticipation that one could easily see why his wife speeds to join her waiting spouse.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY: Story told by Captain O. T. Melvin, Bayou la Batre, Ala. Verified by the Star Fish & Oyster Co., Mobile. Also by Captain Johnston of the Southern Fish & Oyster Co., Mobile, who said that Captain Melvin was only the master of the Clyde which was owned by the Dorgan McPhillips Packing Company of Bayou la Batre.

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Mr. L. W. Rabbie
Bayou la Batre, Alabama.

SHRIMPING ON THE SCHOONER BERNEY GENEVA.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

The Berney Geneva as she lay tied to the Bayou la Batre ice-house wharf made a pretty picture, with the sun shining so brightly down upon her freshly painted sides and deck. Bayou la Batre is a small picturesque fishing village on the Mississippi Sound and is thirty odd miles from Mobile by road. The Berney Geneva is a thirty-six foot, eleven and half foot beam, Shrimp lugger, but a stauncher worker no man ever owned. Her cabin was aft and a large hatch forward, while in the extreme bow two gasoline drums were lashed. On a over-head rack extending from midway the cabin aft over the stern, the shrimp nets or trawls were hanging that they might dry out in the breeze.

Mr. L. W. Rabbie, the master and owner, lounging on the top of the cabin, and supervising a job of cutting a piece off a large roll of wire netting, which was being done by two young men, was slowly shaking tobacco from its package into a cigarette paper, when his boat suddenly bumped against the wharf as the back-wash caught it from a large boat as it passed. Mr. Rabbie, idly raising his eyes from his self imposed task to see what was passing, hailed it, for the Doris White (a large pleasure boat) was passing and a friend of his was at the wheel; then dropping his eyes to the two young men gave some directions about wrapping friction tape over the raw ends of the wire that they had just cut off, for more important than all else, the netting must not be left

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with raw edges to cut the trawl, for that was its purpose to be used on the tail of the shrimp trawl as a protection against sharks.

Mr. Rabbie was a tall, heavy set young man of about thirty-eight years of age, of a serious nature, but one that could enjoy a good joke at any time. His blue eyes looking straight at one, giving the impression that here was a honest, likable chap, who could be a real friend if he so wished, and with the clasp of the hand he made a stranger feel welcome and instantly at home.

The Berney Geneva would be ready to shove off when the work on the netting was finished, and Mr. Rabbie was letting his mind wander over the list of supplies for the trip, wondering if he had gotten everything that was needed. The general kind of provisions in the grocery line had been delivered on board (the groceries costing on the average anywhere from four to seven dollars a trip), the gas drums and large oil can had been checked and filled and the small incidentals had been bought and stored away. It was a wonderful day, the warmth of the sun was making the day warm and summery, but the wind outside he knew was whipping up a swell, but all together he decided to shove off for good shrimping grounds and anchor over night, ready for the next day's work when the Berney Geneva would be out hunting for signs of a days run.

As the Berney Geneva chugged her way along, Mr. Rabbie's assistant began coiling the ropes and getting all in readiness for the first sign

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of a run of shrimp. The shrimpers have a special way of arranging their nets, and the young man set about doing it. First the two trawl-boards are laid on each side of the trawling platform. All shrimping boats have this platform built over the stern about four feet, protecting the nets from getting caught on the exhaust pipe or on the edges of the hull of the boat. These trawl-boards are attached on each of the entrance to the net (which is between thirty or forty feet long at an average cost price of seventy-five cents a foot, for they are made of pure linen thread) by two ropes tied in such a manner that the boards stand upright on the bottom when the boat is in motion, thereby keeping the trawls wide open. The next step was taking the nets down from the back-rack. They were laid on these two trawl-boards and the wire netting the two young men were working on in the earlier part of the day attached to the tail of the trawl, which is laying on the top.

The ropes or lines leading from this trawl are lead through a single-tree which is hitched about six feet up on the mast, forward in the bow, then run to a wooden, hand-powered windlass or winder, which is built over the cabin on the uprights forming the overhead rack, and are slowly wound on, the breaks are applied and everything is in readiness for the first signal. Finishing this part of the work the young man flung himself upon the cabin and proceeded to take it easy. The twenty horse-power Bridgeport marine engine was making good time, about seven miles per hour, and was pulling the Berney Geneva along at such a rate that there was a

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slight chance of one drag before dark. She was headed south in the Mississippi Sound, and there was not a boat in sight except the small launches or pleasure boats that did not count.

Mr. Rabbie turning the wheel over to his assistant, took up a small miniature trawl, which is called a try net, and like the trawl had its own small windlass attached to the side of the cabin, and began casting it over the side. Mr. Rabbie was an old hand at shrimping, so he had learned long ago when shrimp hit the small net or flip against the ropes, it is like holding a flour sack open and pebbles are thrown into it; in other words, his touch was so light on the small line holding this net, that he could immediately tell when the shrimp are hit and draw it up, other-wise he would wind it up anywhere from fifteen to twenty minutes to one or two times an hour. But as yet nothing had been found, so the journey was continued and nothing was lost if he could not find signs today, for they were only on their way so they would be handy for an early morning's start and word had been received that there were signs of shrimp in the Mobile Bay.

By now they were reaching Pass aux Herons, a narrow "inland" channel, which has a depth of nine feet. The beacons were all lighted up as they made the turn into the Pass. It was very rough, for the tidal currents which run through this pass, travel at considerable velocity, but well marked, for on the north side are lights on the black beacons and on the south side are spar bouys. Mr. Rabbie nosed the Berney Geneva north, for he had decided to anchor off Cedar Point

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the extreme south eastern point of Mon Louis Island, for the night as the wind was coming from the north.

Long before day the two men were up, getting breakfast, which consisted of bacon, eggs, baker's bread, and good strong coffee, and the two sat down to enjoy a good, quiet meal, for breakfast on a shrimp-boat is usually the only meal that is really enjoyed. After breakfast, the anchor was raised and the Berney Geneva was out in earnest now to get her day's quota of shrimp. There was a stiff breeze that was kicking up a choppy sea, but the brave little Berney Geneva plowed right along. The small drag-net was again brought into use, but this time Mr. Rabbie felt the strike. Winding up the drag-net took only a minute, and stepping out on the rear platform, he threw the trawl overboard with one flip of the wrist. The trawl-boards followed, then he began to let the lines out slowly, for if the lines were played out too fast, the boards would drop to the bottom and get fouled or bog on the bottom, and the work would have to be done all over again, as a seasoned shrimper can easily tell when to stop playing out the line, as they run almost horizontal with the winder when enough line is out.

They had dragged about an hour when suddenly the speed of the boat was cut down, Mr. Rabbie reached over and gives the throttle a yank, the motor stops and the Berney Geneva drifts along to the end of the lines. The crank of the windlass is attached and they wind the ropes up slowly until the trawl-boards are up to the platform, the

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break is put on, and the trawl-boards are lifted by hand to the deck. The next step on the program, is to catch the tail of the trawl, which has a float attached with enough line so as to let it float on the top of the water when the net ceases to be pulled forward. The tail is then brought to about the center of the boat to be tied, and then the real work begins, and the shrimp is brailed out by the means of a scoop net, which looks like a tight made crab net, with a long handle.

When the net is emptied and thrown over for another drag, they start in working on the shrimp which is laying on the deck, and first all the trash-fish or scrubbage is thrown over-board. It is fun to the looker on to see the Sea Gulls now dive for this refuse, squawking and crying as they fly around and around the boat, swooping down, whirling up, and again circling the boat. After picking out all the scrubbage, the shrimp is washed and shoveled into the hatch and iced down. The Berney Geneva carries one to one and one half tons of ice a trip. They had had a lucky drag, for that catch had netted them fifteen barrels of shrimp in less than one hours time.

Mr. Rabbie was able to get in another drag before the other shrimpers saw him, for a boat has not much chance of trawling alone in these waters for any length of time, for the men on the other boats carry binoculars and as soon as they see a boat make a turn for a round trip, the others race toward the lucky one and before he realizes it, the fleet as assembled and are trawling along besides and around the

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first boat. Mr. Rabbie had been lucky in getting such good catches, for the average catch is one barrel an hour if a fellow is playing in luck, for there are times when he could run whole days and only get a few pounds of shrimp. But when a man gets over a school of shrimp the net soon is filled, but it takes good linen nets for shrimping, because the weight of the shrimp that bulges out the tail, when it is being lifted up from the bottom, puts quite a strain on the net.

It takes an average of twenty gallons of gas a day for dragging and running from day break till the night falls and it is time to anchor, and when the lights are lit, the last drag gone over, cleaned, washed and iced down, the decks washed clean, supper cooked and eaten, it is time to get a wink of sleep for it is sometimes nearly midnight.

On this particular night, long before the lights were lit, the Berney Geneva was heading toward Bayou la Batre to unload. Her hatch was filled, and her decks overflowing with the small, slender, long-tailed and nearly transparent crustacea or shrimp, which were flipping around hunting a means of escape.

Mr. Rabbie, the owner, had not anticipated such a lucky day, for it is, indeed, seldom that anyone is so fortunate, and although nearer the Mobile market, he seldom goes there to dispose of his fish, as he prefers to return and unload them right at the Bayou, then going on to his home and family with the wonderful news of the days achievement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Personal interview with Mr. L. W. Rabbie, and a trip out on the lugger Eloise.

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"There were eight of us, eight living machines fighting for life in a battle against the Gulf of Mexico, which is one of the most treacherous bodies of water. It was during one of those terrible storms that frequently sweep the Gulf, while we were out on a trip fishing the latter part of November 1938."

The speaker is a young man in his early twenties, who gave his name as Reuben Williams. He had just returned from the fishing trip that he was telling about to the crowd that was clustered about him. Williams is a member of the crew of the Nelo G., which was laying alongside the docks of the Star Fish & Oyster Company, which company own her. Of all the Star's fishing fleet that was caught in that awful storm, the Nelo G. was the only boat to arrive at her home port unscratched.

"I was the cook on this trip", continued Reuben Williams. "The sea swelled and foamed and beat upon the Nelo G., as she tossed and pitched about. The seas were so high that as the Nelo G. rode in the hollows between the waves, it felt the wind abate in it's fury, but as she was swept up on the crest of another wave, we felt the wind's full cruel force.

"The thunderous noise was violent, the sea seemed as if it wanted to destroy us. The sky was dark with black clouds. The wind moaned and howled, then shrieked and whistled through the masts. The booms creaked as they were swung by the wind.

"The Nelo G. was under water most of the time as the sea was constantly breaking over her from stem to stern. We had batted

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down the hatches and were all on deck. When the waves hit us we rocked on our feet, while our hands clung to anything that was within reach. Standing on deck was almost impossible."

The crews of the Company's various boats were standing around in groups of three or more, quietly talking. They had many things in common to talk over as they all had fought through those infuriated waves on one boat or the other. Reuben in his slow drawl continued:

"The Nelo G's skipper, Cap'n Rice, is the best of all the Star's skippers. He knows the secrets of navigation, the wind and the weather, and he can read the signs of the next day's weather from the skies at twilight. Cap'n Rice does not take any chances in a storm. He anchored far enough off shore to be on the safe side, so that the Nelo G. could swing around and in case something happened, we were in deep enough water so when we lost our two anchors we did not pile up on the shoals as the Leo G. did."

A man, who was standing by, spoke up with quiet sarcasm:

"Shucks, you all were just lucky, we had as good a skipper as any of the Star's boats have got. It was not carelessness or the lack of any knowledge of navigation that caused the Leo G. to go down. She was just unfortunate but all of her crew were saved."

Jack, another man in the group who had been silent up to now, spoke up:

"You all can talk about your skippers, but Cap'n Leiser may be called a boy skipper because he is only twenty-four years old, but

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he surely knows the language of the sea that only an experienced sailor understands. Why when the sea was acting up, it battered the Mary Carmen's rudder off. We were about three hundred and fifty miles southwest of Mobile and Cap'n Leiser rode out the storm and brought her back to port. We steered by our sails, now that takes somebody that knows what it's all about to do that. Of course we lost the fish we had. We spent five days and nights tugging and maneuvering these sails until we reached Fort Morgan where the Coast Guard picked us up and towed us in."

"You see," continued Jack, "Cap'n Leiser has been going to sea since 1933, and another thing Cap'n Jim Mikkelson, another of the Star's skippers, taught him what he knows about the sea."

"Well go on and tell us the story," said a stranger, who had been standing to the outside of the group of men, and he nodded his head as he spoke, toward Reuben.

Reuben continued his story of the Nelo G.'s fight against the storm:

"All the men stood by to keep everything under control. That means that we went day and night for forty-eight hours without sleeping or eating. The fo'c'sle was closed to keep out the sea and as I was cook I gave the men dried fruits, canned foods and bread and butter to eat.

"Forty-eight hours the storm raged. The heavy sea pounding against the boat caused the anchor cable to snap right off. We bended on another and it was lost also. The one we had left we

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couldn't use for we did not have enough cable to bend the anchor on. So we heaved-to using one sail by taking a reef in the fo'sail and Cap'n Rice put her head into the sea and let her ride it out by just jogging along."

The stranger who has been listening intently to Reuben's experiences was unfamiliar with the term "reef in the sail", and interrupted to ask it's meaning. Reuben obligingly answered:

"What is a reef in a sail? Well, we mean when we roll or fold up part of the sail and make it fast to the yard. You see, it makes it smaller."

Stopping long enough to make sure the person understood his meaning, Reuben continued his story:

"One man stood at the pumps all the time as the Nelo G. was under water much of the time. She also sprang a leak. When the storm had worn itself out we all looked like weather beaten terriers."

The crowd by now had dwindled to three people, and they moved slowly to the stairway leading to the loft over the fish-house. Reuben mounted the steps, and threw himself down in a reclining posture upon them. His friend also mounted one of the steps and was standing leaning on the banisters over Reuben's shoulder. While the stranger who had shown such great interest in the conversation, stood upon the platform which brought him level with Reuben on the steps.

When asked just how the snapper fishermen spent their time while out in the Gulf, that is, their ordinary routine of a trip, Reuben

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said:

"The Nelo G. with Cap'n Rice as master carries a crew of seven men. When we shove off from here, we chug our way out of the Industrial Canal without auxiliary engine, for which we carry between six to seven hundred gallons of oil for a trip. All the Star's boats are equipped with them.

"Yes the Star Fish & Oyster Company is situated on the Industrial Canal. You see the North end of the Canal runs into Three Mile creek. Three Mile creek takes you out into Mobile River which flows into Mobile Bay. At the Southern end of the Bay is the Gulf of Mexico where we do all our fishing. After leaving the City if there is any wind we put up our sails and jog along.

"It is while running to and from the fishing grounds, that the snapper fisherman gets the only rest that he has the whole trip through. He stands an hour and a half wheel watch, but has nine hours off to do as he likes. Reads, plays cards or just sleeps. After each man gets off watch he pumps the boat out before he can rest."

The stranger inquired what he meant by standing watch, and Reuben replied in his quiet drawl:

"When I say standing watch, I mean a man stands at the wheel and keeps the boat on her course. A heavy sea works you hard, while in calm weather if a boat is well balanced she keeps on her course without much effort on a man's part.

"We have four days steady steaming to get to the snapper fish-

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ing grounds. Then we keep sounding continually to hit the right kind of bottom that snappers live on. That is coral, shell or rock bottom. We run five minutes, then we stop and sound. Sometimes it's twenty fathoms, or rather the dept runs anywhere up to eighty fathoms. It is not the dept of the water that counts, but we must find hard bottom as that is the only place to find snappers. Once in a while fish are caught while they are traveling from one of the banks to another. As soon as we hit hard bottom we cast over our fishing lines. Now each line is one hundred fathoms long and has three hooks, and one- three pound lead to carry it down. As a man lifts the lines up out of the water he coils it at his feet all in one gesture.

"If we find only a small bunch of fish we put over a bouy to mark the spot, then we drift on, and fish while we are drifting along. When we get beyond the fish, we run back to the bouy using the engine and while we are running we work on the fish that we had caught, that is, cleaning, drawing and washing the fish. Then they are put below and iced down. You see all the blood must be washed off the fish, or they won't keep.

"When we strike a school of snapper we anchor where we find them. Then we continue fishing the spot until pretty late at night, or until they thin out and stop biting. If they stop biting in the day time we move on to hunt other banks."

Reuben Williams hesitated for a moment to ask his friend to confirm his story thus far, and his friend in a soft voice said:

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"What more can I say, you are doing all right, so go ahead."

Reuben continued:

"As cook my duties start at 4 o'clock in the morning. I first make coffee, then I call the crew at 4:30. The skipper and five of the crew sleep in the cabin, while another man and myself have the fo'c'sle.

"If the cap'n had planned to make an early start looking for new fishing grounds, I would cook breakfast while the crew is getting the anchor aboard. Our anchor cable is long enough to let the boat swing in the wind, so to heave it up we use a deck engine that winds the heavy cable while one man pulls it over the winder. Four men stand by and coils the rope as it leaves the machine. While this is being done the engine is slowly turning over in neutral and the skipper is aft with the wheel, so as to be ready to start ahead.

"All this time I have been in the galley getting breakfast so at 7 o'clock I call to mugg-up, that is, I call them all to breakfast. If we were anchored on a good fishing spot, the men fish while I cook breakfast. We have regular meal hours and if for any reason the meal is delayed the men growl and grumble; they are a grouchy lot if the meals are not on time. Then at 9 o'clock the men are privileged to come down to the galley, one at a time, for a cup of good hot steaming coffee."

"At 11 o'clock the dinner is put on the table and the crew called. They all sit around the table in the galley to eat their

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meals. The table is not set as it is in a home but each dish is put in a container large enough so that it cannot splash out in bad weather. We also brace the plates by putting large cloths or mats under them to keep them from slipping. After the galley is cleaned and supper arranged for, I go up on deck again. As 4 o'clock in the afternoon I call the crew for supper, but the men mugg-up again before going to bed for the night, by eating cake or sandwiches and drinking coffee."

One of the fish-house men came to the steps and motioned that he wished to go upstairs. Reuben's friend quickly stepped down from the place that he had been standing, leaving a passage-way for the man to climb up, which he proceeded to do, stepping over Reuben, who did not make an effort to move. There was absolute silence between the three people. Some old fishermen came up to the steps to see what was happening and then after a word or two wandered on. The man came down the steps, Reuben's friend took his place again, and Reuben continued his story:

"Yes, we carry a large supply of fresh water for drinking, cooking and for washing the dishes. The grocery bills? They run around one hundred and fifty dollars for twenty-five days. You know the men are particular on how the food is handled and cooked. The dishes must be washed with extra care to please them.

"As soon as I can clean up the dishes, pots and pans, it is time to put the dinner on to cook. While it is cooking I go up on deck and join in the work up there. It may be leaning on the rail

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while waiting for a strike or hauling in the line and bringing up what ever is caught.

"All the crew has to stop fishing and draw the fish that had been caught all through the hours of fishing. The first hand goes below and shaving the ice very fine he proceeds to ice the fish. When the decks are cleaned the crew goes back to the rail to fish."

The stranger at this point stopped Reuben with the question:

"What do you do with the fish that you catch other than snapper?"

"We catch quite a variety of fish, for instance, there is the Warsaw, which is a huge fish, ranging from fifty to five hundred pounds each. Then there are several varieties of Grouper, the black, red, and other kinds. They, too, are large fish but dangerous to handle. If a fellow's hand slips when he is removing the hook from their mouth and gills there's a chance of loosing a finger. When big fish are caught two or three men step forward to help, each man using gaff hooks to haul them over the rails and aboard.

"Occasionally a shark is caught, they also are hard to handle. We cut them up and use them for bait. Also once in a while we catch barracuda's. Their large snouts and sharp teeth seem out of line with their small bodies, for they are small fish. Another pest, are the octopuses and, too, we catch an assortment of eels. Some of the eels are large and awful looking and they can crush wood with their powerful jaws without an effort."

While Reuben Williams was speaking of these various nuisances

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of the sea, his voice grew quite animated as he continued:

"Leather jackets are another pest that a fisherman has to put up with. They are slick in getting off our hooks. They have one long straight fin which sticks straight up from their backs. Leather jackets have no scales, but have a hard leather-like-skin, hence the name, which is used for match scratchers. Another fish that is a nuisance are the porgies, but when we are lucky to land them we eat them or use them for bait."

"You said a while back that you fish quite late in the night. Well tell me just how late do you fishermen work?" said the person who was unfamiliar with a fisherman's life. Reuben answered:

"If the fish are biting good, we fish until pretty late or we begin reeling up our lines at 9 or 10 o'clock. I mean by that, that each man has his own line-tub to coil his line in, and has a special place to put it away for the night. A fisherman must always be on the safe side in case of bad weather. We leave everything in ship shape when we are ready to retire for the night.

"We are independent of catching our bait for we carry out barrels of it, which consist of skip-jacks and squibs. In order that the men can cut the bait up into small pieces for our hooks we have bait-boards. One board is used between the two men who are standing together. The cook has his own individual bait-board.

"Bothersome devils, such as sharks, barracudas and black fish, which are built something like a porpoise, swim by and catch the fish that we have hooked and are raising, by tearing them or biting

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them off our hooks. Porpoise swim all around the boat, and close to our lines as they hang over the side, but never hit or bother our catches in any way. When they are around there is no fear of sharks coming around. But if there is a school of black fish around the boat we have to move on.

"When there is time we sometimes use a fly line and catch Dolphin. We enjoy this kind of fishing, for it is sport catching them. They are very swift in the water and it gives us a thrill to land one. We use them for bait when we are lucky to catch them.

"On one trip we made," continued Reuben, "we were on our way home, but were still close to the Mississippi River, when we saw a school of nine large whales. Another time all of us saw a large cow fish or manatee, but they are harmless as far as I know.

"Yes, out in the Gulf a norther comes out of a clear sky and kicks up quite a heavy sea. One trip the Nelo G. was unlucky and lost her rudder, but our skipper did not do as Cap'n Leiser did. Cap'n Rice took a dory and sank it and towed it behind us and by shifting it from one side to the other he steered the boat. Some skippers take a barrel or a box and after putting a bridle on it so that it would not turn around, drag it after them, and to steer the boat the men would shift it from one side to the other. Anything that is put overboard to drag behind a boat, pulls it back, and it takes the full crew to stand by to shift it from one side to the other.

"The trip before last a blow came and blew the mainsail com-

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pletely off the Nelo G. One man, a kid of eighteen, got washed overboard, but he hung on to a rope that he had had a hold off, and when the sea hit the Nelo G. again, the kid was washed back on board. We were terribly worried about him, for if he had let go that rope it would have been the last of him."

The interested stranger asked how the men's shares were figured, and Reuben answered:

"The lay at the present time is that a boat takes 40% of the gross catch and out of that the company pays the Cap'n 8% as his share. The other 60% is divided in this way, the expenses come out first, and what is left is shared between eight men in this manner: The engineer, icer and cook each get one and one-half share, and the other four men and skipper get one share each. But when we make a broker the company gives us each five dollars cash. When we are lucky and have good weather we come back with a catch of from twelve to twenty-five thousand pounds of fish, so all together it is good money to go out on a fishing smack. The trouble is when we have a good trip we drink the money up or just throw it away in some way, so really it doesn't do us much good on the whole."

Reuben concluded his story with:

"I am still young and have spent many years on the water. I started on a mullet boat and spent sometime on her, but have now been several years on the Nelo G. doing snapper fishing. I swear that some day I will break away from that strong-hold that the sea

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gets over a man, and which has gotten over me, and I will find
some place on land to make my home and then I will look for a
landlubbers job."

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Identification No. 0149-5147
Federal Writers' Project Dist. 2
WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

Mr. D. J. Lewis
Magazine Point, Alabama.

THE LEWIS FAMILY AND THEIR FLOATING HOME.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

Three years ago Mr. D. J. Lewis bought a twenty-eight foot cabin launch which was driven by a four cylinder motor so that he may be able to enjoy the sport fishing that the Mobile waters abound in, as he had at that time a job with the nearby Southern Kraft Paper Mills at Sibert, a suburb of Mobile. After fixing the boat up to look like a new one, which required quite a bit of repair work, a coat of fresh paint and adding a finishing touch here and there. When the boat was thoroughly finished and glistened like new, his wife decided it would be nice to live on board and by so doing save the expense of house rent and the necessary monthly bills. Mr. Lewis acquiesced, and soon the two young people, who make an ideal couple, were comfortably arranged on board the little launch as if in a home out in the great open spaces and in God's good sunshine.

Mrs. Lewis grew to love the waves as they rippled and seemed to laugh as they passed on by their boat in the warm sunshine, and when the blue Southern sky would suddenly become dimmed and the sun seen only dully through a grey veil and the water that had been so smooth and silent was cut by large ripples caused by a wind that had sprung from nowhere, she knew by all those signs that a Higher Power was controlling it all, and was looking down especially upon them in their comfortable little floating home.

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Mr. Lewis is in his late thirties, he stands about five foot, nine and one half inches and weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds. His hair is very dark and his long heavy and dark eyelids cover his light brown eyes. He is a well educated man and an interesting and humorous talker, so that a smile seems to hover about his mouth at all times. He was born in Louisiana and lived there until ten years ago when he moved to Mobile where he has resided ever since.

Almost every Sunday the Lewis couple had some one visiting them on their little cruiser, some were just visiting sitting and chatting, while others wanted to enjoy the sport of fishing, and more than all else to eat the delightful Sunday dinners that Mrs. Lewis was proud to prepare for them, which usually consisted of heaped platters of freshly caught fish cooked in various ways and served with potato chips or the equivalent.

Often though it was money-making trips that Mr. Lewis made, taking a crowd of fishermen up the small bays and bayous north of Mobile, where they could fish to their hearts content for brim, trout, goggle-eyed perch and fresh water catfish. Once he took a crowd of sixteen men out for a days fishing, while his wife remained in the City. Another time it was a mixed crowd of fourteen boys and girls with Mrs. Lewis, who is still terribly young herself, acting as hostess and chef. It is real interesting to the observer to watch the antics of the

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various groups that are gathered for trips of a days outing. The men seem to go on a trip of this kind just for the sport of fishing and particularly for the enjoyment of the good dinners they knew they would enjoy, as one of the requirements are, that there be plenty of provisions for the trip and an early start is also another request of all sport fishermen, that is, leaving the city during the night and arriving on the fishing grounds before the dawn breaks. The mixed crowds go for a days outing and for the pleasure of being together, spending their time talking and enjoying themselves generally in their carefree way, for they usually want to go on some special holiday such as Labor Day, or when the gang gets rounded up, but their one requirement is that there would be plenty of fried chicken on hand for dinner. The particular crowd of fourteen boys and girls previously spoken of, said Mrs. Lewis, demanded seven chickens brought along among the other provisions for the trip. So fried chicken, with a side dish of fried fresh water fish, potatoes and cold slaw with good strong coffee, made up a feast that would be long remembered for a day spent outdoors in the glorious Southern sunshine always whips up a keen edge to one's appetite.

Mrs. Lewis is a wizard in the culinary art, and amid such pleasant surroundings which is indeed a fairyland, with the far stretch of clear water, which seems to be bordered by hedges of different colored foliage, from the Bay Trees and the Willows, while the thick

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underbrush and shrubbery finishes the picture.

The Lewises looked forward to the private fishing and hunting trips that they would enjoy to the fullest extent up the river into the different bays and bayous, when they, together with the family, the brindle cat and the German Police dog, are alone and loll around the boat in a truly luxurious fashion. Of course, when the fish were striking good they would put in the full day fishing and then they would always head the cruiser back to the City if they were not already to leave and had made other plans, and continuing to the market would sell the output of freshly caught fish. They were not dependent at that time on the cruiser making their livelihood by fishing, for Mr. Lewis had his job still with the Southern Paper Mills and the boat was their home and also served as a pleasure boat for them, yet it helped them earn many a dollar. So theirs was truly an independent life, where happiness, tranquility and leisure abounded.

Their private parties often included one of Mrs. Lewis' sisters, who also loved the water and the fun of fishing, but lacked the agility of getting quickly from one boat into the other. One day while she was visiting them on a trip up to Oak Bayou, which is about a fifteen mile trip, the two girls decided to go fishing alone, as Mr. Lewis had previously taken a skiff and was quietly fishing

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about two hundred yards from the cruiser. Mrs. Lewis was getting everything in readiness for the trip, the rods and reels, a water jug and the bait. The launch was drifting from the end of the anchor cable while the small skiff was pressing its side, when Mrs. Lewis' sister suddenly decided to get into the skiff, which she proceeded to do. First having caught the skiff's line she edged it in, so that she could get aboard, then she balanced herself on the cruiser's deck and climbed into the skiff. She had succeeded in planting one foot firmly in the skiff while the other foot remained on the deck of the larger boat, when to her horror the skiff darted away and she slipped overboard with a splash, screaming and crying out all the while. When she hit bottom and slowly arose to the surface and finally righted herself, much to her chagrin, she found herself in water only waist deep. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis at once set to work to lift her out of the water which ordinarily would not have taken much effort, but the muddy bottom caused the sister to have to do a lot of squirming and wiggling to free her feet from the sticky mud. This set all of them laughing so much that they were nearly in hysterics by the time they were back on the deck of the main boat, and the proposed fishing trip had been completely forgotten in the excitement.

The brindle cat, who was part of the crew on this little cruiser, was a fool about water also and when twilight was gradually falling,

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the frogs croaking in their dismal fashion, and the murmur of the waves as they gently touched the side of the boat, was fast lulling the Lewis couple to sleep, the brindle cat climbed to the top of the cabin and, curling herself in a round ball of soft fur, was soon asleep. Sometimes the cat did not awaken in the place of her choice on the top of the cabin; for in the night when the wind was blowing strongly, the boat rocked heavily and at times seemed to try to tear itself away from its anchorage in order to escape the angry waves that were splashing upon its sides, and the brindle cat would fall overboard into the water and swim to the banks beside which the boat would be lying. If a plank were out from the banks, the cat would walk up the plank to the boat and cry until someone let it into the cabin to dry, and she would feel so big and proud when she was not immediately put out again because of her wet condition.

Mr. Lewis remembers with such pleasure another paid trip that he made to Dog River on the Fourth of July, when he carried a family party of seven. Again Mrs. Lewis was called upon to assist, which she did with such evident pleasure, she and her husband soon found themselves to be accepted as part of the family. The day was spent in fishing and bathing, but mostly by just lounging around enjoying a leisure day. They did not leave Dog River until they had seen the display of fire-works at Bay View Park, which lit up the entire sky in

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gorgeous colors, so it was almost 10:30 when they finally landed back in the City.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis lived from fifteen to eighteen months on this little cruiser that they had grown to know as their home, and in all that time never did they an accident of any kind.

One day an offer was made for their boat that would net them a good profit. The thoughts of the city loomed brightly before their mind's eye, and thinking that a change might be beneficial in every way, they sold their pleasure-going craft, that had served them both as a home and as a money maker; but more than all else the little boat had stood as a symbol of the life they had both loved. But it was sold, the money collected, and the couple soon found themselves in a small rented apartment in Mobile.

Mr. Lewis remained with the Southern Kraft until one day three months ago a message came from his wife's people asking them to come and make them a visit. Before they left Mobile, Mr. Lewis was careful in getting a leave of absence from the Paper Mills for a week. The enjoyment of being united with his wife's family again made the time slip by so quickly that he awoke to the fact that he had overstayed his time and upon his return to Mobile learned that his place had been filled at the Paper Mill during his absence, by a man who needed the job more than he, so he quietly allowed him to keep his place.

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SOCIOLOGICAL SERIES.

Helen S. Hartley
Identification No. 0149-5147
Federal Writers' Project Dist. 2
WPA Project #4454, Mobile, Ala.

Mr. D. J. Lewis
Magazine Point, Alabama.

THE LEWIS FAMILY AND THEIR FLOATING HOME.

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

Mr. Lewis counted up his savings, although they had been very frugal with their expenditures, yet after paying all their obligations and thoroughly cleaning the slate, as it were, he found that they had very little left to provide them with the necessities of life until he could get other work. Mr. Lewis is an extraordinary man in some respects, for he has the manners of the Southern chivalrous gentleman of olden days, for he refuses flatly to allow his wife to find work of any kind out in the business world as long as he is able to care for her, as he thinks it is a man's duty to care for the woman he married.

He found to his amazement that he could not find work at all in any line, and when he had counted their savings, he knew that steps must be taken to provide for his dearly beloved wife, and that if they continued to rent an apartment and eat only the necessities of life, the little money they had left would soon be consumed. So he decided to look around them in a serious and careful manner in order to find a place that they might call their home, which would be free of rent and the monthly bills of light, water, etc, and if possible save enough money, or work for it in some way, maybe a day's work, to pay up his Poll Tax that he had been so unfortunate enough to fall behind on and at the same time have his wife register in order to vote, as she had not done so far. They are both strong Democrats

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and admires Mr. Roosevelt as the greatest man the country has ever known.

They were fortunate in finding a barge that could be bought cheaply with a newly built house on it. The size of the barge is 12 x 24 and the size of the house itself is 10 x 20 and about 8 feet high. Feeling that they could not let the chance slip they bought the barge, as they had not seen anything else that would do. The house is built as one room with a door leading out on a deck or porch at either end, with two good size windows on either side. The barge is lying besides the banks on the north side of the first span of Cochrane Bridge from the Mobile side.

A large Red Star Range stands in one corner of the room, while in the other is a double bed which is covered with an embroidered spread, and reclining in the exact center of which is Dollie, a darling little kitten that has taken the place of Mrs. Lewis' brindle cat. Dollie is a year old kitten, and is covered with a thick coat of glistening black fur without one white hair anywhere to be found, except her whiskers are now turning a lighter shade but are still far from white. Mrs. Lewis takes great pride in Dollie, who showed utter indifference to her surroundings in a kitten's imprudent way by gazing in the distance, while all the time she seems to be looking up at the ceiling at a sun-beam.

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A round dinner table, covered with a clean white table cloth which hung almost to the floor, occupies one side of the cabin while attached to the wall and under the table are stationary seats. There is a water cooler at one end of the dining table, the water used on the house-boat is carried from Magazine Point, a distance of about one half mile. Also ceiling-high cabinets, built in to the wall which contain their dishes, condiments etc., and their pots and pans, making them handy to the stove. These are all in one end of the cabin. On the same side of the room stands a dressing table and the bed, while on the other side a comfortable studio couch is up against the wall along side a small table and dresser. A rocking chair is in the center of the floor. Each article of furniture is covered with a fancy piece of some kind and all so very clean, while the floor gleams in its whiteness and the furniture blends together, proclaiming to the world that an ideally happy couple are its occupants.

Buster, a young collie puppy six months old, arrived from some unknown journey which had taken up all of his time for the past few hours. His long light colored hair is sprinkled with tar, but the pleasure he evinced by whining and wagging his tail vigorously and in every way tried in his canine way ^{to show} that he was very happy to be home with those he loved. Buster seemed to try and tell his master that the tar had gotten on his coat without his knowing it, and was

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begging Mr. Lewis to wash him all over again carefully so that he would be thoroughly dry before night-time.

The sheep-skin rug that has served as Buster's bed since his birth was hanging on the outside of the cabin, where Mrs. Lewis had hung it after carefully brushing and shaking it well. When it was time for the family to retire, the sheep-skin was laid carefully on the floor for Buster to retire on, but in the night he often awoke to find that he has a bedfellow, for Dollie had eased herself along beside him on his sheep-skin bed sometime during the night. He has long since, however, ceased to remonstrate with her, so he turns over and yawns and again drops off to sleep. If for any reason Mrs. Lewis has not put his bed down in the special place that Buster has long since recognized, he whines and begs until it is placed, then he immediately lays down upon it.

On the over-head timbers of the room are a single shot gun, the life belts and other sundry articles, while in a corner are resting the rods and reels.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis as yet have no launch with which to move the house-boat around, but have acquired an engine, so as to be ready for the day when there is money enough to buy a boat to put it in, so that once again they may move up to the fishing grounds, taking their

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home with them, where they can enjoy the great open spaces away from the noise of the City, and where once again that feeling of a strange sentiment seems to take possession of them, which makes them feel that they are amongst the favored and that the Eternal Father is near and watching over them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Lewis in their house-boat, Monday afternoon, November 21st, 1938.

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SOCIOLOGICAL SERIES.

Jim Davis
563 Short Cedar St.,
Mobile, Ala.

THE LIFE OF JIM DAVIS

Written by Helen S. Hartley.

Jim Davis was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, British West Indies, in the year 1878. He was a happy youngster having everything that any child could wish for, a good home, fine mother and father, and two brothers. He began to mingle with older boys when he was eleven years of age, and soon began to hear the wonderful stories of other countries. One day while loitering on the street, he was approached by a Sea Captain, who asked him if he would not like to take a job as cabin boy on his sailing ship "Red Jacket". Miraculously the opportunity that he was longing for had come, and he could now go out into the world and seek his fortune. So it was, that as a boy of eleven, he started on a journey that led him to foreign shores, never more to return to his native land.

One whole year or more he was on the Red Jacket as a cabin boy, and enjoying the thrill of handling the sails with the crew when he was off duty. He saw much of the world during those years, the ship having touched England; Cardiff, Wales; Buenos Ayres, Argentine; Russia; Germany and many other sea-ports of the world, not to mention the different ports in the United States that his ship touched. Again the wanderlust seized him and the desire to see more of those foreign ports was strong within him, so one bright Friday morning, while the Red Jacket was in Mobile, tied up at the foot of Lipscomb Street, Jim with several others of the crew, jumped the ship. It was not long before the little twelve year old West Indian boy found himself alone. For one week he lived as he could, getting

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odd jobs for food; sleeping where he could, he did not care if he suffered a little from hunger and cold, for his whole future lay ahead of him; but at the end of that first week, the law, in the person of deputy sheriff Brown, arrested him for "loafing", and when he appeared before the Judge, the sentence was that he should be returned to the Red Jacket.

While Mr. Brown, with Jim in tow, was walking back to the ship, he found himself talking frankly to this little quiet boy. They had now gotten very near the Red Jacket, when Mr. Brown stopped, and said:

"Get going! and don't let me catch you again".

Jim took to his heels, he flew, as if he had wings to his feet, but never forgot those words. His regard for Mr. Brown (long since passed away) is still very deep.

He ran until he found himself in that part of the northern section of Mobile known as "the grove", and soon he was met by an old colored man by the name of John McMillan, whose voice was low and pleasant, and whose eyes held warmth and kindness. The old man asked a few questions and Jim poured out his story into his sympathetic ears. The old colored man, sitting himself down on the curbstone of the sidewalk listened, and when Jim had finished his story, he found that he had won for himself a home, for old John McMillan, who had so little for himself, made a place for the little boy and kept him as he would have a son.

As Jim grew older, again the wanderlust and desire to see the world got the better of him, so he left his adopted home and after wandering

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around from town to town and station to station, he got a job as water boy at Lock I, on the Tombigee River, where he worked for about six months.

Forty years ago, in 1898, he started working at the Alabama Corn Mills Company^{of Mobile} as a porter drawing a salary of fifteen dollars a week, gradually working up to be a teamster of a meal truck at eighteen dollars a week. He remained with that firm until the company closed its doors, December, 1931, throwing Jim out of work.

He had been married since 1914 to Lizzie - , a native of Mobile, and is still living with her to-day, although she is now a large (corpulent) woman. During those years when Jim was out of work, and there was none to be had, Lizzie aided him by taking in washing. Their little home of three rooms, is the fifth in a row of ten houses all just alike in the front, but his home has a vine growing over the porch, which is freshly swept each day, although now Lizzie is far from well, suffering from rheumatism which seems to have settled in her feet causing them to swell. In spite of her sickness, however, she is able only to keep the house almost immaculate, do the little household washing for the two of them (for they have no children), and in her spare time, quilts up all the pieces of material that she can get her hands on. I could not keep count of the quilts she showed me, that she had put away, but there were at least two dozen or more, some finished, others partly finished.

After the Alabama Corn Mills closed out of business, Jim could only

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get odd jobs to do, painting, gardening, housecleaning and such like jobs until 1932, when he was lucky in getting a job as helper on one of the Taylor Lowenstein trucks at fifteen dollars a week, and is still with this firm, and says that they are the finest people to work for, as the firm aids its employees in every way that it can. Jim's duty now is to travel on a truck, leaving at around five in the morning, going up the State and returning from six to nine in the evening. He had just returned from a trip, when the writer called for this interview, which took him through - Bay Minette, Evergreen, Peterman, Brewton, etc. He enjoys truck work, for each day carries its own experiences and he enjoys every one of them. Each evening when he gets home he is too tired for anything but supper, a minute to relax, and to bed.

Saturdays, Jim, upon his arrival home, gives Lizzie her share of the pay check; hers to pay the bills and expenses and keep the house, his share, as Jim told the writer, to spend as he sees fit, which usually means joining "the boys" and gambling.

On Sunday Jim is a gadabout, never going to Church, as he is indifferent to all religions, although at some past day he was baptized. Lizzie is just the opposite, and is very religious, but has had to forego Church meetings because she does not get out any more on account of her rheumatic condition.

He is a thorough American, remembering the land of his birth but dimly, and is perfectly satisfied to be in America although now Jim is no longer young. He is in very good health, weighing about 160 pounds,

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and is of medium height. He reads and writes, although his eye sight is not so good for reading at night. Lizzie and Jim enjoy life in their own simple way, in their modest little home and are happy and congenial.

H. S. H.