

WPA Alabama Writers Project  
LIFE HISTORIES/STORIES  
Autauga County

Livingston, Mary E. (Writer)

Autauga County, Ala

Life history of Mrs. Stella Alexander, Prattville, Alabama.

Having been reared as one of the wealthiest families in Dallas County, Stella came up with luxuries and plenty; she was the daughter of John and Mary <sup>Canter</sup> who was reputed to be among the wealthiest farmers in this section of the State. She married early in life to Robert M. Alexander, <sup>of Autauga County, Ala.,</sup> who was also a very prosperous farmer; before the depression Stella and her husband lived on their plantation and in connection with this large plantation they operated a dairy, which was stocked with large herds of Jersey cows; they had five children, consisting of three boys and two girls, after the children become school age, Stella and family moved to town to educate their children; after a few years the oldest boy was sent to Gulfport, Mississippi to school, the other children in Prattville schools; the activities of this family were rated as leaders in their town, good church workers, all of the family being members of the Methodist church in Prattville; the income was very substantial to take care of the luxuries and needs of the family, and they lived in one of the nicest houses in town, having bought it during the high costs after the war between the States; the ancestors on both sides of this family were very influential people; the children were practically through high school when the depression came; it was then necessary to move back to the farm, the farm products, including cotton, corn and various other produce, having gone down in price until the farm was not paying for itself; stocks, bonds and other securities held by the Alexander family dropped and were worthless; the dairy products were so low in price that they could not afford to feed the cows for the profits made; all of this did not make this Christian family lose their faith in God, but they packed up and moved back to the farm, taking the little money left and restocking the dairy with more thorough-bred Jersey cows and putting every effort

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forth to come out of the depression; the oldest boy had married and the other two boys, the two girls and mother and father tried hard to make a comfortable living, when their plans were changed by the misfortune of the husband, Robert M. Alexander falling from the barn loft and breaking his hip; he was brought immediately to the Prattville Hospital where he stayed for several weeks and finally was removed to another hospital for an operation, dying the following day; Stella took every cent of cash and other securities and paid the hospital bills and the burial expense and then braced up and tried to make a going concern with the farm and dairy, taking up where the husband left off; it was a hard life, another son married and left only the youngest son and the two girls at home; then becoming dissatisfied, the oldest girl, Martha married; it was her plans to go to college and she could not understand the misfortune of her parents in not being able to educate her, so she ran away from home and married, living with her husband only two years, she returned to her mother with a baby girl to be cared for; Stella sold the farm and dairy and moved back into Prattville in their home; gave the oldest girl, Martha a beauty culture course, the younger son being able to secure a very small job from the government and then with good management on Stella's part put the youngest girl in business college; the church activities of this family were kept up, the mother and children going to church; Martha opened up a Beauty Shop in Prattville; Nellie, on account of the very influential family backing, obtained a job in the State Highway Office in Montgomery, where she was employed until the change in administration in January of this year; the younger boy, who was forced to leave high school on account of helping support his mother and other members of his family, returned to high school last year and if he is able to go this year will receive his diploma from Prattville High School. Nellie is now working on NYA at the High School lunch room,

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this of course is a very small salary, but this family having gone through so much, Stella says that they are more than glad to get the amount of Twelve dollars per month that Nellie is making and which is practically all the income this family has at this time, Martha having remarried and does not contribute to the family support and the younger boy helps on a dairy for a very moderate amount and board and is working to the end of going to Auburn College when out of high school; the mother, Stella Alexander is very hopeful of better days for her family and keeps up her spirit and remains the same christain woman in spite of her misfortunes, but at times becomes very discouraged. During the flood in August of this year, the home of Stella Alexander and family was surrounded by water and damage was done to her property and lots, but Stella's remarks were "We are so thankful that our home did not wash away, that we really do not feel like we have been in the flood". The outlooks and prospects for this family at the present do not look very bright, but Stella says: we will go forward and our financial circumstances will turn, if we keep trying.

(interview of Mrs. Stella Alexander, widow)  
October 25th, 1939.

Autauga Co.

NOV 27 1933 (1)

Mary E. Livingston  
Writer.

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William Alexander.

At the age of 31 years, and with a wife and one child, I assumed the role of William Alexander Jan. 1, 1905, in the employ of a small manufacturing company, on a salary of \$50.00 per month. At that time the corporation was rather seriously embarrassed, notwithstanding the fact that the controlling interest was owned and managed by otherwise prominently successful and prominent financiers. Fortunately, the balmy breezes of prosperity began to blow, and even through occasional panics threatened, the company continued to scale the hill of success. For 20 successive years, the stockholders and directors authorized a raise of \$5.00 per month, per year in my salary. Then, by reason of a death, I was raised to the office management and my salary increased \$25.00 per month, for 4 years. In 1929, the "flay of Hoover prosperity" was unfurled. I was not only superseded, but my services were discontinued. Within 36 months, the corporation was sold on the block. Utilizing all available capital, insurance policies etc., I embarked in the business with which I was familiar, and for two years was fairly successful, but with unprecedented depression, its bank failures, deflations etc., I was overwhelmed - compelled to close my doors, owing accounts and with considerable owed to me. For 2 1/2 years I walked the streets of several large cities, begging, not for a position, but for work. I expressed a preference for clerical work, but what I wanted, and what I <sup>needed</sup> for

Quitman County

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Mary E. Livingston, writer.

was, work. Too many saw gray hairs about my temples and referred me to a "friend just around the corner." Happily, in 1934 I secured an humble position, on a meager salary. Then, in 1936, a little political bee flew by my ear and I heard the buzzing. With no money and no conveyance, I turned double summer-saults into the arena. Friends and foe were kind enough to have reposed confidence in me. With the happy privileges of home and friends and loved ones, life is still beautiful and worthwhile. I am standing now in the radiance of life's sunset. As individuals and as a nation we are now scanning the dawn of a brighter horizon.

Mary E. Livingston writer.

Interview Nov. 20. 1939.

NOV 13 1935

Life History of Mrs. Louise Shine Dozier

Mary E. Livingston, writer  
depression will ever feel entirely secure; will be able to shake off the

memories and habits of the depression.  
LIFE HISTORY OF Mrs. Louise Shine Dozier

I was in the sixth grade when it happened--the teachers  
locked very grave and worried, the entire town buzzed with excitement  
and anger--the largest bank in Leadbria had failed--thousands of  
dollars gone, thousands of dreams vanished, thousands of hopes crushed  
and countless hearts sad and crying "What now". An honest Cashier,  
Mr. Barna Pope left town, his own town because he could not  
face the accusing stares of his friends--his little child cried with a  
child's keen hurt "They say my daddy stole the money". I walked home  
from school very slowly thinking of this and trying to understand the  
grief of my little school mate. When I arrived home my mother looked  
tired and worried "Mother", I remember asking is all our money gone? "No,  
not yet", she answered. But soon all of our money was gone, too. And  
with it went the dreams of a home and farm for my tired sick father who  
had left the city for a country life for his health's sake, and for my  
dear broke mother. This was my first experience with "The Depression".  
I think that it must have taken lots of courage and many hours of  
disappointments and despair to put five children through school, as did  
my parents, with only a support ~~and~~ from a rented farm and prices  
scraping the bottom. I think the pilgrim fathers' and mothers' are due  
no more credit than are the fathers and mothers of this generation.  
How many have deprived themselves of the supposedly necessaries of life  
that their children might have more--I know of two who did--they are  
my parents, Mr. J. Shine and Mrs. J. Shine. We children didn't  
know of the hardships of course--we went to school and led an almost  
normal happy life--but I feel sure that the suffering and tragedy  
of the depression has left deep marks on all of us. I wonder if we

who have been reared either in the midst of or in the foreground of the depression will ever feel entirely secure; will be able to shake off the memories and habits of the depression.

Has the depression made criminals and thieves of honest men or has it merely brought out that which was just hidden beneath the surface? One example is that of my dearest friend's father,

Mr. Rob. Free. He was a leading, respected citizen and if there was any dishonest hidden surely none suspected it--he had a job working as clerk in a grocery store, at which he made a very bare living for his wife and four children--but money was very scarce and not so many clerks needed so--he was fired. How many jobs he tried to get I do not know and doubt that he remembers, but there was no work to be had, no money to be made--honestly I do not know the exact details of what followed but he landed in the insane azylum to keep from going to the penitentiary; left behind was his wife with four children--

Our activities in the community have been extended to the church activities mostly as the shock and disappointment received a week, the mother goes from house to house selling or trying to sell cosmetics--was it dishonesty or desperation? who can say?

I've seen countless incidents similar to this--we've all seen them. Most of us have felt the effects of the depression. I have seen my mother suffer for weeks when an operation would have cured her but operations are expensive you know, which we did not have after the bank failure. We have all seen hungry, scantily clothed children and once ambitious young men now accepting charity or unearned government funds without resentment--their spirits and ideals shattered.

I married in 1938, in spite of the reports that the Nation is on the road to recovery there are still plain signs of poverty.

During the fourteen months in which I have been married my husband,

Mary E. Livingston  
#3. writes.

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Life History of Mrs. Luce Shine Dozier  
Autauga County

Life History of Selma Foster her Studying Music  
Mr. B. E. Dozier has been without work four. I think we are

an average couple, many have more and many have less than we--we are  
now twenty-one and twenty-five years of age, respectively. What does  
the future hold for us? For the millions of others like us? Will these  
first years of our married lives be helpful to us? Teaching us to  
save and the meaning of need--for there will always be needy ones.

Or will it leave it's marks of cynicism and bitterness that can never  
be erased? Not bitterness for ourselves for we have life and the  
world ahead of us to make into something better. We have hope and a  
shining goal ahead--but for those we love who have worked, suffered  
and failed. Perhaps the best we can do is to hope and strive that our  
little children of today and our little unborn children of tomorrow  
may never know the touch of depression.

Our activities in the community have been extended to the  
church activities mostly as the shock and disappointment received by  
our parents has not and cannot be overcome.

she graduated with high honors. Like her mother she  
chose as her life work. Music as a profession. She  
opened a large class. Prattville, Ala.

Interview of Nov. 1st 1939 Continuing her study at  
Eilenburg's Conservatory in Montgomery Ala. she completed  
the course. went to Berlin to study to fit her self for  
her life work. After studying abroad for a year when  
war was declared in 1914. she with many other Ameri-  
ican citizens was ordered back to America. Upon  
reaching the United States. She immediately came  
to her home town Prattville, Ala. where she resumed  
her study of music. her friends were delighted to

Mary E. Livingston  
writer.

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Autauga County.

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Life History of Delma Foster Her Studying Music.

Delma Foster was born in Prattville Alabama, a few weeks after the death of her father. Her mother a very brilliant woman, and also a finished musician, when left a young widow with 2 little boys and infant daughter took up music as a profession. She made quite a success, having a large class. But when Delma was four years old - married Coln. Mae A. Smith, one of the outstanding Lawyers of the State, and went to live on his Country Estate, about four miles from Prattville. So there was born two children a little girl who died in infancy and a son Mae A. Smith Jr. who is now Vice President of Birmingham Trust & Savings Bank of Birmingham, Ala. Delma attended Gramma School in Prattville after finishing entered Cox's College near Atlanta where she graduated with high honors. Like her mother she chose as her life work, music as a profession. She opened a Studio in her home town, Prattville, Ala. and worked up a large class. Continuing her study at Eilenburg's Conservatory in Montgomery Ala. she completed the course - went to Berlin to study to fit her self for her life work. After studying abroad for a year. When war was declared in 1914. she with many other American Citizens was ordered back to America. Upon reaching the United States. She immediately came to her home town Prattville, Ala. where she reopened her Studio of Music, her friends were delighted, to

How to reach  
How to reach home

Mary E. Livingston  
writer.

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Antaigua County.

have her with them. and for quite a while things went well. having all she could do, and making money. Then in 1929 we all had a taste of Hoover's prosperity. It was just around the corner. but out of sight. and as times grew worse her class glided down to a very few pupils. Music was a luxury. they had to economize. so it seemed out of the question to make the grade. But Delma did not give up. her heart was in her work. she struggled on. continued to hold on to the few pupils often discouraged. but hoping for better times. Then her mother passed away. leaving her all alone. She took an old Aunt to live with her. which of course was an added responsibility. as year after year she gradually grew more feeble. she too has passed on. Did Delma give up. Such women as she no no such word as failure. She has succeeded. and made the best of life. With a cheerful disposition, her music. books and flowers. and ever ready to do a kind deed to those in distress she has many loyal friends who are glad that times are much improved and are almost back to normal.

Mary E. Livingston, Writer  
Autauga County, Ala.

#### LIFE HISTORY OF MRS. FRANKIE JOHNSON GANDY

It is with profound reverence that we bow before the shadows of pioneer wives and Mothers. Their history and traditions are sacred. Happily, life has its heroines today and future centuries will honor them. The interview with Mrs. Frankie Gandy on yesterday was most touching-brave little frail person who is very stern in all her dealings is more than most citizens. She is not only the Mother of four children, but is now undertaking the responsibility of their father. Mrs. Gandy was the daughter of Terrell and Emma Johnson and was born in Prattville, Autauga County, Alabama; received her education at the old Prattville Academy. In the year of 1915 she was married to Francis Gandy. Francis was engaged in the grocery business in Prattville and in addition to her household duties Frankie was a very valued asset in his business and with their continued generosity they were among the leading business people here, and success was reached with such a degree until it was amazing. Naturally with such a large business a certain amount of credit had to be extended to friends and those who were thought trust-worthy, and when discussing the depression with Mrs. Gandy she said, "I do not believe the people really meant to mistreat us by neglecting their debts, but it has put us on sufferance and my husband in his grave." In 1929 Mr. Gandy was forced to close his doors and walk out of his store taking what he had left to be used by the family for their livelihood. He walked the streets, went far and near trying to obtain employment but the answer was never satisfactory. The banks were all then closed in Prattville and the very small amount left was gone, Frankie said, "Francis would not give up-I was sick and

not able to help him very much, but we were at our rows end. No food, very little clothing and finally obtained work on W.P.A. This inspired Francis so that he tried to kill himself doing the road work and resulted in a complete collapse. Then finally they were able to open up a small hot-dog and hamberger stand and he and Frankie both confined themselves right to their business and made a fair success. Then Frankie was taken sick and a serious operation was necessary to be performed on Christmas day 1936. Francis continued to fight the winds of Adversity concentrating all the energy of his being on the job, day and night until his health declined in 1937. Frankie said, "I administered day and night to Francis, doing everything within my power to make him comfortable and prolong his life, but he left us on September 17, 1939." Now in widowhood, with a Mothers love and devotion, Frankie is putting forth every effort to educate her children, who have been handicapped with their misfortune of poverty, and the honorable and straight forward character that both father and mother have, is being instilled in these children. Once a nice comfortable home, now very much run down and badly in need of repairs, is their humble place of abode. The house is very dingy from the outside, needing a coat of paint very badly and the walls inside are even worse. But the churches and different christian organizations have been wonderful to assist this family. They are members of the Methodist Church and although the Mother has not been able to continue her interests in the church, she has sent the children and tried to keep their spirits up. The oldest boy is now employed by a

drug store here and also acts as usher at the picture show, making enough to help out. It is a well known fact that some of the citizens in Prattville riding around in automobiles and enjoying health and life are still owing the Gandy family for food eaten long ago and who are responsible for the poverty and also the death in this family. The two boys are nice looking boys, very neat and have shown their actual characters by their good nice quiet behavior in this town. The girl has married and lives in another town. One of the boys several years ago. The house of this family is located one block from the court house and one half block from the Methodist Church.

Interview of Mrs. Frankie Gandy.

12/19/39  
V.W.

NOV 27 1939

Livingston, Mary E. Prattville, Autauga County, Alabama

LIFE HISTORY OF MRS. FRANK GILBERT

The first year of the century--I was born which was just in time to have survived two depressions, said Mrs. Frank Gilbert. When a very small child Mrs. Gilbert was called "Happy" because of her wit and intelligence; she is the daughter of a farmer who had two other children and when the three children were old enough to enter school the family moved from the farm to "town". Happy's father was in the live stock and farming business and they considered themselves just the average poor farmers, but now Happy said "since going through with what I have, I think my daddy must have been wealthy instead of poor". Happy's father had a good garden and field crops, but did not try raising cotton; he also raised hogs and always had plenty of fresh meat and when the hams gave out---"we thought it was just awful and we were poverty stricken". We had trophies, ribbons and all kinds of prizes around the house which were won by the fine chickens, hogs and live stock raised by Dad at County, State and other fairs and exhibitions. Happy finished high school at the age of sixteen years and her dad having had several bad crop years, was not able to send her to college and she decided to try for a job, looking around she finally decided that she would like to study telegraphy and soon got a job, hoping to work one year and then enter college--well after working five months--what happened, Happy married a man who had just been turned down by Uncle Sam's Navy for being underweight--this was in 1918--it was now time to draft the boys for the army--three week after marrying, Frank left for the United States Army and camp on the East Coast. Happy was very lucky, being able to obtain a transfer from Alabama to the same town Frank was encamped, where she followed her work as telegraph operator; then the message came to leave for

Livingston, Mary E.  
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Prattville,

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oversea service; the parting was sad, but like all others leaving  
 for oversea service, we hoped for the best and parted---a little  
 over a year and Frank was sailing back to me and the United States.  
 Frank obtained a job as manager of a store and we bought a little  
 home, furniture and tried to begin life on what the old darkey calls,  
 "the extortion plan". Things went on beautifully for a few years,  
 we had our lovely little daughter and almost had our home paid for  
 when the bottom fell out--in 1929 I was making a hundred twenty five  
 dollars a month and the following January 1930, was drawing sixty  
 dollars a month; Frank was cut considerable and finally cut entirely  
 off, my job was abandoned and we were left without jobs or income;  
 then the bank ~~wammame~~ using crashed--~~wammame~~ left "flat"; we dragged  
 along another year barely making ends meet--then the other bank  
 failed where my husband banked--which was our savings account for the  
 education of our daughter; the store where my husband worked went in-  
 to bankruptcy and the following day our home burned--fortunately  
 there was enough insurance to rebuild the house, but for three years  
 we did not have one penny income and a child ready to enter school--  
~~and~~ nothing in sight to do--"If Sherman thought War was Hell, he  
 should have occupied my shoes just then' I could have been arrested  
 anytime the past ten years for what I was thinking regarding depressions  
 and people responsible for them". I am like to old negro when he was  
 told that his mother-in-law had been killed--"Well it could have been  
 worse". We all kept our health, our credit was injured, however, we  
 have managed to keep credit at the grocery stores. The soldiers'  
 bonus came in the nick of time and then a little job that was a living.  
 "When I hear people bemoaning the fact they have to drive their old  
 car another year my sense of humor deserts me and I viciously wish  
 barred to a certain extent.

Livingston, Mary E.  
Livingston, Mary E.

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Autauga County, Ala.

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Happy and family live on the same street with the best what hard luck and they could foot it job hunting a few years and see what hard luck and really is. The daughter is now in high school and is very intelligent and musical and also has been able to take up dancing without any expense to her parents and now the worry is--will she get to go to college. Happy and Frank with their daughter live in a very nice house, Interview of Mrs. Frank (Happy) Gilbert, but the insight of the mother nice furniture and nicely kept grounds, but the insight of the mother regarding the depression is not very favorable, she takes everything the hard way and has almost gotten disgusted with life. I would not say that she has lost all respect for humanity--but she has really lost quite a bit and does not try to make herself see the bright side of things; Happy is a very likable person, but having had an income of her own and always being used to having her own way about finances--the depression has really soured her. Her whole life is completely wrapped in her daughter--she talks of nothing else and occupies all the time of the child and she has no time for other children. Frank is driving an oil truck and tries to make the very best he can out of their situation, but their social activities have ceased; also church and other activities and their lives are lived practically alone. Happy is above the average for intelligence, but it looks like she cannot take defeat--she thinks once defeated--always defeated and she said: I do not want anybody coming around giving me advice about how to take my troubles and the mental attitude to adopt toward things in general, or I might let go the last shred of sense of humor, likewise my temper and what ever I may have in my hand at the time". Happy is not neat in her dress anymore, nor does she care very much about her general appearance; however, the daughter always looks very nice, clean and modest and Frank tries to look his best, but their pride has been marred to a certain extent.

Livingston, Mary E.

Autauga County, Ala.

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Happy and family live on the same street with the Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches, but this does not have any bearing on them.

Interview of Mrs. Frank (Happy) Gilbert, Prattville, Alabama.

*Interview of Mrs. Frank (Happy) Gilbert, Prattville, Alabama.*

Livingston, Mary E.

writer

Prattville,

Autauga County, Ala.

LIFE HISTORY OF GERTRUDE BROOKS MILFORD

DEC 11 1939

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Born in Oakman, Walker County, Alabama, where the hills completely surround the town and where every hill is filled with the best coal in the State of Alabama; it was in this little town where my father made his fortune and also where he lost it; immediately after finishing college, where he studied engineering and commercial work, my father was employed as a timekeeper for one of the largest coal companies<sup>ie</sup> in the State, then Gaslite Coal & Coke Company; this I think was in 1902; in 1908 he was made Superintendent of this Company and bought stock in the mine; on account of the death of one of the largest stockholders he was able to obtain additional stock, which made his interest the controlling one in the company; then later he purchased the other interests making him sole owner of this large company. The coal business was then one of the best and most substantial incomes in the industrial world; the company progressed with the times and when it was necessary to mine better coal for market he installed the necessary machinery; then along came the coal washer--a coal washer is a large building housing machinery and equipment for washing the coal and also for grading it according to the orders received, such as fancy lump, lump, egg, nut and run a mine, etc; this was a huge expenditure and I can remember my mother saying, "do you really think it will pay for itself?" O yes, there is no doubt about it, was my father's reply. With this washer electricity was installed in the mine and coal cutting machines taking the place of mules and wagons; this left about sixteen thousand dollars worth of mules, wagons and equipment on hand that could not be used; later a buyer for this at eleven thousand dollars, five hundred cash and balance on mortgage; then the real day for the coal operators came--during the World War and immediately thereafter, my father increased his output to sell thousands of tons of coal each day at a very fancy price, this was kept up for sometime and a very nice income accumulated, making my father rich.

Livingston, Mary E. writer,

Prattville,

Autauga County, Ala.

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He expanded according to the times and spent considerable sums for luxuries and also necessities as everything was high; my oldest sister was going to school and also attending Birmingham Conservatory of Music ~~xxx~~ and after she finished high school she was sent to the Boston Conservatory of Music where she graduated; there were five other children in the family at this time and when we grew older our careers were being planned for us; I was to go to College and make a teacher, this was all I could hear out of my parents but it was my contention from a very small child that I wanted to work in an office; then the final showing came--in 1927 when I finished high school, against the bitterest opposition, I entered a business college in Birmingham; my father would say, I want you and Happy, who was my sister just younger than I, to go to college, then if you still want to be a Secretary in an office, you can as you will be older and able to decide for yourself. In December 1927, I was employed as Secretary to Chas. R. Wiggins, one of Alabama's leading attorneys, in Jasper, Alabama. The coal business was beginning to slump and the coal miners were causing lots of worry and expense with their continuous strikes; then one morning about three o'clock we were waked by a friend who told my father that his coal washer and entire mine had been blown up with dynamite by the striking miners, this was just too much for my father to stand as it was his entire life's work gone into Adams--with this followed our disaster--everything we had was turned into money, including insurance policies being surrendered, stocks and even a mortgage put on our new home and a farm which we owned, to try to replace the loss and start operation of the mine once again; finally a portion of the mine was reopened, however the coal washer and grader was a total loss and could not be used, this of course is the most essential part in governing the coal prices, so my father had to sell the coal for what he could get for it, not making a decent living for his family, which at this time included eight children; then while I was fast at work in my office, where

Livingston, Mary E. writer

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I was so happy, came a long distance call from one of our dearest friends, telling me that my father had been stricken with paralysis while driving his car to work. This was in October 1928; The nervous strain was just too much for him to stand and he had to surrender; this left his entire right side paralyzed and he lay in a dying condition for about three months; finally after good nursing and excellent doctors' treatment, he was able to be placed in a rolling chair, but left an invalid for life; my oldest sister had married a very wealthy Bostonian and I was the only member of the family at work. With my meager one hundred dollars a month, I took the burden of the family on my hands; I went to our mortgagee, who happened to be a very close friend and ask that I be allowed to pay the sum of \$30.00 per month on the three thousand dollar mortgage; I was boarding in Jasper before this disaster, but started riding the bus too and from my home to work so I could cut out my board bill; then in a month or two, two more of my sisters married, one a day or two after finishing high school and the other not having finished; this cut the minor children in the family to three. Times were getting harder and the depression was coming on, but good luck came our way and we had an offer to sell the farm lands included in the mortgage for \$1,500.00, which was a much ~~less~~ <sup>lesser</sup> price than the farm was worth, but which was at that time, a life-saver to us, the permission of the mortgagee being granted to sell, we paid the purchase price on the mortgage indebtedness, cutting the indebtedness, including the monthly payments I had made, to a very nominal sum; then when all my friends in the business world and associates were getting salary cuts from ten to forty dollars at a whack, I was getting small raises, this of course was because I had a wonderful and most understanding employer; then the Government enacted the Home Owners' Loan Corporation Law and my employer was appointed as Attorney for the entire County of Walker and I was appointed as his assistant and with this came a very nice raise in salary and also enabled me to charge for my Notary Public

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Livingston, Mary E. writer

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work, which was necessary in closing a loan as the mortgage had to be notarized and sometimes several other papers had to be notarized in order to perfect a title before the final closing of a loan. This Notary work alone amounted to approximately \$30.00 per month, which was extra money for me. I think this was proof that those who are not selfish and try to help others are rewarded. For about three years I acted as Secretary to Woods Post No. 9 American Legion free because they were not able to pay a secretary; then another act of God: a resolution was passed to pay me \$15.00 per month for my services as Secretary--this was without my knowledge and as one of the grandest surprises I have ever received as I was beginning to see my way clear out of my financial troubles and this amount was a big help to me as that was the exact amount I had to pay for bus fare between my home and work; this made my income, not including my Notary work, \$165.00 per month; all this time my parents could not adjust themselves to their financial troubles, but worried all the time, making it doubly hard on me to have to hear their troubles. Our doctor bills were very reasonable for the services rendered were not only professional, but friendly as one of our doctors would always give a nice little stiff talk to my father about his worrying and how to keep up his spirit and forget the past and live for the future. Now along came another asset to me, I was appointed as General Guardian of Walker County; this appointment was made by the Probate Judge of Walker County, and it was quite an honor to be selected as I was the first General Guardian that had ever been appointed in the history of Walker County. This appointment was made on account of my knowledge of the Guardianship laws and the handling of the veterans' cases through the American Legion work that I did. For this compensation I was paid a percentage of the receipts and disbursements in each case; then the United States Veterans' Administration had me appointed as their Guardian in Walker County and I handled hundreds of cases for them and the County, enabling me to have a nice

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income on the side. I am proud of the work I have been able to do for the veterans and their dependents and also for the widows and orphans of the veterans and for this work I was chosen as an Honorary Member of the American Legion at the National Convention held in Washington in 1935. This work, together with other honorary jobs I held kept me busy all the time, but after office hours I never allowed myself to stop--but for recreation I attended picture shows, dances at the Club, foot ball games and parties and any other sports that came along. I was often told by one of our leading physicians in Jasper, that I could not keep up all that work and hold my health, but as said before "When you work for love ones and for congenial people and get so much pleasure out of helping others and make your work as pleasant as play, God will take care of you". So He did. All this work did not keep me from thinking of my friends and one especially and finally after seven years, we married in July 1937, <sup>and I</sup> turned my business affairs, including my Secretarial position over to a first cousin who had just finished college. My family was in fairly good financial shape then and had no debts to worry them. My oldest brother was working and now my baby brother has finished high school and my husband is sending him to college. I paid the mortgage off our home in full in 1936 and presented it to my parents on Mother's Day. They were so happy as they seem to love their home more since their disaster than before; new furniture, including a Hot Point Stove, Water heater and General Electric Refrigerator was installed the same day. My youngest sister being through high school, I obtained a job for her in the Unemployment office at Jasper and she worked for several months and married and her husband will complete his pharmaceutical course this year at Howard College. Through our friendship to Hon. Wm. B. Bankhead we were able to get compensation for my father, ~~he~~ <sup>who</sup> served in the Spanish American War. This was not obtained until sometime in 1936, after my financial struggle was practically over, however, it was a real blessing.

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My oldest sister, who thought it such a disgrace to be poor and who tried so hard to keep our misfortune from her husband, never donated a penny toward the support of her parents nor did she even offer to help on the indebtedness, however her musical education cost approximately five thousand dollars and my business education cost approximately two hundred dollars. Had I not acted on my own impulse and entered college instead of a business college, I would have been just as helpless as to earning a livelihood when my father's health was impaired as when I finished high school. My courage never died, I realized all the time that I was still young and enjoyed my friends, belonged to several Clubs, including the Musgrove Country Club, which initiation fee and dues were awarded to me for acting as Secretary of the Club over a period of six years, ~~Miss~~ I also acted as Secretary and Treasurer of the American Red Cross Chapter in Walker County for two years, which was just part of my duty toward charity. Our family <sup>position</sup> ~~standing~~ had to be kept up and after Daddy's financial and physical troubles I had to carry on. We kept up our activities which included leaders in the St. Mark's Episcopal Church; however my mother dropped all her Club work, except the PTA and Guild; my father was incapacitated until his Masonic, Grotto and Shrine work had to be dropped. My younger sisters and brothers were not <sup>deprived</sup> ~~disfurnished~~ of any of their social life as I strained a point to give them as much as I had at their ages. ~~My~~ After all this career, I am now a "Globe Trotter" my husband being a Superintendent for a Construction Company. We are now living in Prattville, Autauga County, Alabama, where we are building the new University Highway through that County. Our home in Oakman is well kept; the yards have been selected by a Culture Club for the past three years as being the best kept and having more blooming flowers than any other in town; the house is situated on a large parcel of ground containing about ten or twelve lots and to the left of the house is a small hill which has been cut down to make a beautiful sunken garden; the lawn

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furniture was modeled by Gertrude Brooks Milford, our subject, and consists of a half circle seat with three sections, which she says is a chair for all the "Brooks Sisters", then a very cozy "love seat" just barely room for two--for her brothers. It seems that the two boys have always been very close and dear to each other and she says she wants them to stay that way by sitting close together in their specially modeled seat. She tells this one on her oldest brother--he and his girl friend, having been sweethearts since their entry into grammar school, had quarreled, the younger brother having known of the quarrel called upon the girl and was sitting on the divan with her when the older brother entered and he immediately said: Bud you might as well be going as I have a date tonight. This making his brother jealous he left without a word and after this the younger boy could never find out anything more about his brother's love affairs. But they have remained close to each other, even though one is now working in Birmingham and one in College. The only members of the family now remaining at home are the parents and they look forward to each holiday or occasion when their children gather in. They still keep all the beds up and in readiness as if their eight children were at home and say this is done so they will be expecting them home to use their beds.

Interview of Gertrude Brooks Milford Dec. 5th, 1939.

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Autauga County, Ala

LIFE HISTORY OF JOHN W. RICE

Before the depression I was engaged in industry and agriculture business. My father was a country school teacher, and was blessed with a full measure of hard "horse-sense" and seldom missed an opportunity to give us children the benefit of it. His father was a local Methodist Preacher, and many of the old man's rugged characteristics are clearly noticeable in his descendants. My mother was truly a daughter of the Old South, born and reared in affluence and after the war between the States, when slaves were freed and our people had nothing but their indomitable wills to fortify them, it is the brightest gem in my treasured thoughts to call to mind how cheerfully she met the adversities of reconstruction, unaccustomed to hardships, a stranger to poverty, she smilingly met the privations of a completely revolutionized life, and did her bit toward instilling ideals into our characters as would inspire us always to look and strive for better days. We were all members of the methodist church, attending services regularly and were taught to always be honest and trustworthy, this instilled in us, we have held the love and admiration of all the best citizens. In my occupation as industrialist and also a farmer, I have averaged a very nice income, which I would say, before the war boom, was approximately \$3,500 per annum. Before the depression my family consisted of my wife and two children; we educated our children and gave them the same influence that we were given in our childhood; however along came what I called that horrible war, "World War", the period of inflation produced during its duration, gave us all incorrect ideas concerning values, notwithstanding the fact, that we had been born and reared on eight (8) to ten (10) cent cotton, we were completely swept off our feet by cotton selling for from twenty-five (25) to forty (40) cents per pound. We could not see far enough ahead--making

#2.--Life History of John W. Rice

Life History of John W. Rice--Autauga County, Alabama

debts at high costs; buying expensive automobiles and other luxuries -- the collapse of all inflated prices in 1920 left the whole country with debts on their hands acquired when we were spending fifty dollar bills, then the debts had to be paid when our produce sold for less than half the price as when the debt was contracted. The masses of our people grappled with this burden as long as their creditors could carry them, and finally the crash came in 1930, all caused, I think on account of the war and a failure of our industrial and political leaders to sense the danger and warn the great army of me's and you's. We still have our same place of residence which is in a fair and excellent neighborhood; our interests are practically the same, consisting of church activities mostly and the depression having altered quite a lot of our spending and luxuries, we still enjoy good health and try to look on the bright side of life. Our financial losses have been heavy, caused mostly as stated above, the inability to see far enough ahead to keep out of debt and try to take advantage of the good prices during the "boom", however, by struggling we have managed to pay for our folly and still have plenty to eat and wear and have kept fairly good health; our attitude toward experiences is that "we have learned our lesson at a very high cost" and I feel that the effect of the depression on those who were in their prime, will be wholesome "Experience is a hard schoolmate" but unfortunately, many of us will learn under no other. I feel sure forty cent cotton will not disturb me again for I shall not soon forget the tragic days of 1930 to 1933--many were the individual fortunes swept away and many poor fellow was downed after it was too late in life to ever come back. The good that can--and I believe will come, will be the knowledge gained by these hard knocks, which will

#4. Life history of John W. Rice--Autauga County, Alabama.

#3. Life History of John W. Rice--Autauga County, Alabama

well and since the passing of the Neutrality Bill and the orders for  
serve to keep our feet on the ground, and enable us to have better  
ideas concerning values. I have not been unemployed since the  
depression, but my business has been so low at times that I could  
hardly make it pay and I have followed the same occupation all my life,  
my income going up and down with the prices then existing, my outlook  
and prospects are--Well! ordinarily one would not expect much "dreaming"  
from one standing on the threshold of three score and ten years, but  
I am still dreaming, I hark back to the days when ox carts were the  
dominant vehicle on the streets of our beloved little "Burg" (Prattville)  
I have lived to be inspired by looking down Main Street and hardly  
see space to park an automobile; have seen mud holes and swine and  
the like disappear from our streets, each day I gaze upon throngs  
of laughing, happy boys and girls, and rejoice to know, that though  
the time has been, when my salary was reduced sixty percent and I had  
to pay my State and County taxes by installments, I am still in the  
midst of cheerful, happy people and stimulated by the memory that I  
saw "Ox cart days" evolve into "Horse and buggy days", saw the "Spirited  
Horse" and "Chaicest" offering of the "Blue Grass" give way to the  
majestic automobile and each day, listen to the over-head throbbing  
of the Airplane, it all fills me with the intense desire to live on,  
and dream, and see those dreams come true exhaling and inhaling such  
atmosphere as circulates at the foot hills of old Autauga, one can  
sternly wrap his mantle round and bid on Winter's bleakest ground  
"Defiance to her fieriest Storm".

My children both have married and have survived the depression fairly

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#4. Life history of John W. Rice--Autauga County, Alabama.

Born at Milton, Autauga County, Alabama, on April 17, 1882, was a shy little boy, well and since he grew up had more than his share of ambition. George attended public school in Autauga County and later at Marion Institute, Marion, Alabama. When determined to be a doctor, he was sent to Atlanta College of Phys and I for one, if benefitted by the additional work and money that will be put into circulation, will hold my head this time and try to profit and by my mistake, as was the mistake of most of all the American Citizens so who made easy money during the boom, and save for a "rainy day", which is bound to come and at my age a nice sum laid up for a "Rainy day" will be a reward for my suffering during the depression. I have tried to follow the traditions of life as my mother did when poverty came her way, "smilingly" and to make the best of it without any complaint.

Interview of John W. Rice, Prattville, Autauga County, Alabama.

grow since that date. In May 1931, Dr. Taylor accepted a position as Chief Surgeon and Physician for the State of Alabama and was in charge of the convicts; in 1935 he returned to his private practice in Prattville. Dr. Taylor said: "Knowing the great need of a Clinic or small hospital in Prattville to take care of the great number of cases who needed hospital care, in 1934, I started this Clinic in a very small dwelling which was converted into a two-room hospital service for patients and an operating room, treating room and small office." He has all watched this little clinic grow and watched the care and protection given the poor as well as the rich and now Dr. Taylor has made additions to the same little clinic until it consists of a twenty bed ward, colored ward, two treatment rooms, two large offices, a complete X-ray and therapy treatment room, a very modern operating room, diet kitchen and adequate supply rooms. There is a house physician on duty at all times and a staff of seven nurses. Located immediately behind the hospital is a very nice nurses' home which is comfortably furnished and very conveniently located. Dr. Taylor says: "during the years of the so-called depression my institution has continued

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Prattville, Autauga County, Ala.

LIFE HISTORY OF GEORGE MALCOLM TAYLOR

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Born at Milton, Autauga County, Alabama, on April 17, 1882, was a shy little boy, who as he grew up had more than his share of ambition. George attended public school in Autauga County and later at Marion Institute, Marion, Alabama. Then determined to be a doctor, he was sent to Atlanta College of Physicians and Surgeons, which is now Emory University, and was graduated and licensed to practice in 1905. Dr. Taylor, realizing that he could do so much good in a small town and in the county where he was so well known, settled at Burnsville, near Autaugaville, Alabama, in the year 1905 and practiced his profession in that town and surrounding community until the year 1912. In the meantime he married Miss Ellie Harris of Oak Hill, in Wilcox County, Alabama. In February 1912 he moved his family to Prattville, Autauga County, Alabama, and established a practice that has continued to grow since that date. In May 1931, Dr. Taylor accepted a position as Chief Surgeon and Physician for the State of Alabama and was in charge of the convicts; in 1935 he returned to his private practice in Prattville. Dr. Taylor said: "Knowing the great need of a Clinic or small hospital in Prattville to take care of the great number of cases who needed hospital care, in 1934, <sup>I</sup> ~~he~~ <sup>my</sup> started ~~his~~ Clinic in a very small dwelling which ~~he~~ I converted into a two-room hospital service for patients and a operating room, treating room and small office." We have all watched this little clinic grow and watched the care and protection given the poor as same as the rich and now Dr. Taylor has made additions to the same little Clinic until it consists of a twenty bed accomodation, colored ward, two treatment rooms, two large offices, a complete X-Ray and therapy treatment room, a very modern operating room, diet kitchen and adequate supply rooms. There is a house physician on duty at all times and a staff of seven nurses. Located immediately behind the hospital is a very nice nurses' home which is comfortably furnished and very conveniently located. Dr. Taylor says: "during the years of the so-called Depression my institution has continued

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to grow and prosper." "Countless charity cases have been handled by me without any outside ~~any~~ financial help whatsoever and hundreds of tonsillectomies and other minor operations have been performed in co-operation with the Department of Public Welfare at less than actual cost;" Many of the public health ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>activities</sup> have been given ~~xxxx~~ at the Clinic due to the inadequacy of the local unit and the lack of facilities to handle cases. This Clinic has the reputation of accepting every case and never refusing any emergency case or a case where the suffering is severe whether ~~whama~~ they are able to pay their bill or not and for this distinction and the great work Dr. Taylor has done in this county and the adjoining counties, this Prattville Clinic stands as a memorial to Prattville and also has the distinction of being the first and only hospital in this County. Dr. and Mrs. Taylor have one son, George Malcolm Taylor, Jr. He was educated at the University of Alabama and is now practicing Law in Prattville, is married and has one child. Dr. and Mrs. Taylor reside in a well constructed house on the same lot with the Clinic and the grounds and shrubbery on the grounds are beautiful and well kept. The Clinic is located one block from the Prattville Postoffice and on the same street; The outside activities of Dr. Taylor are Civic Clubs and his interest in the administration of our city and government affairs and his hobby is Horse-back riding. You can look up most any Sunday afternoon and see Dr. Taylor riding his beautiful saddle horse. Mrs. Taylor is a member of the U.D.C. and takes active part in Church and Club work. She is a perfectly composed woman--once you see her you will always remember her and she dresses very modest and nice; Dr. Taylor is a doctor who you can look at and tell he is a doctor "stout, erect and wears glasses, making him look all the more professional. He wears dark clothes most all the time for street wear making him look so much neater and dignified. Their interests have not been marred by the depression as during the real slump, Dr. Taylor was a salaried man with the State and was able to save some money; prior to the depression

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Life History of Dr. and Mrs. *James* Tankersley

Upon entering the Tankersley home for this interview I found Dr. and Mrs. Tankersley, Mrs. Nelda Murphree, ~~and~~ a daughter and her two small children. The Tankersley home is a large two story white house situated on the corner of the block and faces two streets. It is a picturesque place, the grounds being kept beautifully and a beautiful flower garden in the back yard and running blooming vines all over the fence surrounding the home and beautiful crepe myrtle trees in front of the house. As you enter the entire front of the house welcomes you as a living room which extends entirely across the front of the house, when open; one side of the living room is used for a music room and is furnished beautifully and the right hand side is a regular sitting room with dozens of beautiful lamps, chairs which make you so comfortable and all living room furniture in antique fashion. The cozy and comfortable place is further carried out by the warm hospitality you receive by the Tankersley family. Dr. and Mrs. Tankersley both come from true aristocratic families and the tradition still remains in them as well as their children and grand children. Dr. Tankersley started his medical practice in a small mining town many years ago and after reaching a very substantial and profitable practice he married beautiful Miss *Zelma Herring* of *Heilandhome*. They later moved to Autaugaville where Dr. Tankersley had a very nice office and a grand medical following. Autaugaville at that time was a very thriving town with several cotton gins and other industries and Dr. Tankersley was the only physician there. Having a very good offer made him to come to Prattville, which is about thirteen miles from Autaugaville, Dr. and Mrs. Tankersley moved to Prattville.

(B)  
Where is the Tankersley Home located - How reach it? Corner of what block from what street

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This was about twenty years ago. Dr. and Mrs. Tankersley are the parents of three daughters; the eldest Zelda, then Nelda and the youngest being Annie Ree. The children were educated in the schools of Prattville and Zelda and Nelda attended the University of Alabama. ~~Zelda~~ Zelda equipped herself as a High School teacher and has been teaching in the Guntersville High School for approximately eight years. Nelda, after attending the University two years, being so much in love with one of our own dear Prattville boys, quit school and married Howard Murphree, whose family is among the leading citizens of Autauga County. Nelda and Howard started out in their little love nest in Prattville and have a very comfortable living, in spite of the fact that their expenses have been heavy. They married during the height of the depression and a darling daughter, Anne was born; Anne is now three years old and has a beautiful little "Pug-nosed" baby brother, James Tankersley Murphree, two months old. Annie Ree, the youngest of the Tankersley children finished college in June of this year (1939) and is now employed as Secretary in an attorney's office in Prattville. The Tankersley family stand very high in Prattville and Autauga County; they are leaders in the Church of Christ activities in Prattville; belong to several civic clubs and Mrs. Tankersley and daughters are real bridge players. In all charity work Mrs. Tankersley and Dr. Tankersley are always numbered among the leaders.

Having bought their beautiful home in Prattville and educated their children and other expenses incurred, the family was still in good financial shape; their income being a substantial and steady one-- then the usual business trend--patients not able to pay for medical services--both banks in Prattville went broke with most of our life's

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savings and then the general masses of people were unable to pay debts and on account of their losses became careless and indifferent toward their own obligations--then the depression perfected that despicable character--the deadbeat, into legion making obsolete truth and honor and the ability within ones self to rise. Dr. and Mrs. Tankersley, when asked if they intended changing their plans or occupation said: "We are too old to change our occupation now, but we are trusting that the cursed desire for gold, and what it can buy, coupled with man's inhumanity to man, which is my decision caused the depression, will subside and our people will see the light and realize what they are coming to." The only cure for the depression said Dr. Tankersley is: "honest labor--honestly done with adequate remuneration instilled by righteous fear of God born of His simple truths stript naked of mans wise emoluments".

In Dr. Tankersley's family and also Mrs. Tankersley's, most all of the ancestors are professional people, there being doctors, lawyers, preachers, teachers and cardinals and one of their ambitions has always been education. "Annie Ree did not get to attend the University as the other girls did as we have lost so much money and assets during the depression that we had to send her to a denominational school for a two year course in Secretarial work and we now feel that the children are all self supporting and we will have a comfortable living in our old age". The Tankersleys are all well groomed--Dr. Tankersley is very thin, tall and erect; Mrs. Tankersley is very nice looking and has the best of taste is her dress and of course the Tankersley girls are all

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very modern in their dress and activities. The Tankersleys are very calm and expectant toward their experiences in life and especially during the depression ~~and~~ which has of course, caused a delaterious effect, naturally and coupled with their financial losses during the depression, the flood in August of this year, (1939) washed away the entire office building, including library, books of accounts, instruments and all possessions of Dr. Tankersley's. This is why the Tankersleys say: "If we were not so old we would change our profession". Mrs. Tankersley says: "there is little retrenchment we can do as our standing requires a certain amount to be spent and we do not think we are extravagant".

Interview of Dr. and Mrs. James Tankersley, Prattville, Ala.

## Life History of Judge C. E. Thomas

Born February 11th 1869, in the midst of the Reconstruction period, when the Sunny South lay in the wake of the Civil War, carpet-bagism and political bonds. C. E. Thomas was reared on a farm which was almost in the shadow of the Capitol at Montgomery and was married to Augusta Pratt of Prattville in the year 1896. When asked about his education Judge Thomas said, "With merely the rudiments of an education, accustomed to hardihood and domestic economy, and cherishing laudable aspirations, I pursued life's walks, putting forth every honorable endeavor to span not only my own personal career, but the horizon of my beloved Southland with the rainbow of hope, and from several points of view, some degree of success attended my feeble endeavors." The Judge has not only been a very successful business man but has been a political leader in the south, and has had many appointments under the Governors of this state and also United States Representatives and Senators have recognized his political aspirations. And he has acted as adviser in the political world to many Congressmen, Senators and Governors and he has also the distinction of being President of one of the leading banks in Prattville and has good common judgment and the way he applies himself is known throughout the state. In January 1929, Judge Thomas was one of the largest holders in several representative institutions and was very prominent in financial, political, social, fraternal and religious circles and as he said, "I was then consulted in the making and breaking of men, and sat about the festal boards with outstanding monetary commissions." During that year, the winds of adversity—the unprecedented depression, with its frenzied finances, thousands of bank failures, agricultural, commercial and manufacturing collapses swept over this fair land and and literally engulfed millions of heretofore master builders of the nation. And it was in this storm that the compency which had been created in Judge Thomas, his multiplicity of interests, were completely

devastated. He said, "I was left penniless, with a vault of books of open accounts and notes payable. "Having spanned several decades, and beyond the bounds of today for all practical purposes, Judge Thomas is very unfortunately situated and says, "I must spend my declining years simply abiding my call to the grave." And then added, "however with confidence in our administration leadership, I believe that the mercury is gradually rising in our great financial thermometer." Judge Thomas' home is located about three blocks from the Prattville-Selma Highway, and about eight blocks from the Post Office in Prattville, and sits on a large hill; the home is of Colonial type, made of concrete and looks very much like marble; it is a very spacious place with ten rooms beautifully furnished. The barn and stable is a quaint looking place, being a two story building, as is the home. It is made of the same material, located on the same land line and facing the same street and it has numerous doors opening into the different stalls, which makes an individual stable for each cow, horse or whatever stock he should happen to have and there is a porch around the entire upper story which attracts the attention of all who see it; the lands surrounding the home consists of about six acres and are under fence and completely encircled by a winding road which is traveled daily by hundreds of sight-seeing people and the deer of four different kind, goats, ducks, chickens, turkeys, peafowls and peacocks and even fish are there to greet you and the bird baths, which are placed at numerous intervals, are always being used by birds when you appear to look the estate over, which place has been known throughout the state of Alabama and a portion of the South for about twelve or fifteen years; however the house and land are badly in need of repairs and the place has gone down very fast and especially since our flood in August of this year (1939), when the hill where the houses are located was completely surrounded by water which caused the sandy land to wash and cave in, damaging this

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Writer.

Prattville Autauga, Co. Ala.

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property several thousand dollars. Judge Thomas is one of the bravest men I know, having made his fortune and then losing it almost over night; his children are married and living in other cities; he is still living and hoping for a better day; he is completely white-headed but carries himself so erect that you would not think he was over fifty, yet he has years to add to that; he still retains the old family car and his chauffeur and most every Sunday you can see him sitting in his pew at the Methodist Church in Prattville, Alabama. Judge Thomas always has a word for everybody he meets and his friends are numerous and having married into one of the most distinguished families of the South he also enjoys the cooperation and love of all the Pratt family and their descendants.

Interview of Judge C. E. Thomas, Prattville, Ala.

Judge Thomas' children

Pratt Thomas, lives in New York City, N. Y.

Mrs. Johnson (Emma Julia) lives in Selma, Ala.

Mrs. Lanier (Augusta) lives in Mobile, Ala.

Judge Thomas married a few weeks since, Miss. Mary Caruthers, at the home of her Aunt Mrs. R. L. Faucett, Prattville, Alabama.

12/13/39.  
V.W.

NOV 20 1939

Mary E. Livingston, writer, Prattville,

Autauga County, Alabama

Life History of Mrs. Don Wilkinson

Born in Veles, Massadonia under the Turkish Rule. It was during the World War when this beautiful little black head, brown eyed dark complexioned girl was left an orphan by the miserable war; she was placed in the War Orphanage, having no other means of support as her nearest of kin had been stricken out and that was the only home left; this happened at the age of twelve and of course, being old enough to realize the sorrow she had gone through and knowing that her parents had died such horrible deaths, Don went to the orphanage to make the best of life, but this did not take the sorrow and grief from her as she was sad the entire time and could not seem to realize just why this had to happen to her family; On one of the visiting days a very good, kind-hearted man was among the visitors, Don said: "Mr. George Waller, Consul to Athens Greece was going around looking at all the children, the buildings and equipment and making a general survey of the entire situation, and when he came to me, I was sad looking and he said he was attracted by my dainty face, but yet such a sad expression made him so sorry for me that he decided to adopt me". This was my happy day-- Mr. Waller, whose home was in Montgomery County near Montgomery, Alabama, sent me to the dear old United States to live with his mother and their family as one of their family. In the Waller home Don was treated as one of the children, her adopted mother not showing any difference in the other children and Don; she loved the entire family as if they were her own people and she realized that she must grasp an opportunity of this kind as so many of the little girls and boys perhaps were still in the Orphanage and would not have the education and other luxuries of life that she was getting; she attended school in Montgomery with the other Waller children and graduated ~~from~~ <sup>From</sup> ~~the~~ ~~school~~ ~~in~~ ~~Montgomery~~ ~~Alabama~~ ~~in~~ ~~1938~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~age~~ ~~of~~ ~~16~~ ~~years~~ ~~and~~ ~~was~~ ~~then~~ ~~sent~~ ~~to~~ ~~live~~ ~~with~~ ~~her~~ ~~mother~~ ~~and~~ ~~her~~ ~~family~~ ~~in~~ ~~Montgomery~~ ~~Alabama~~ ~~in~~ ~~1938~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~age~~ ~~of~~ ~~16~~ ~~years~~ ~~and~~ ~~was~~ ~~then~~ ~~sent~~ ~~to~~ ~~live~~ ~~with~~ ~~her~~ ~~mother~~ ~~and~~ ~~her~~ ~~family~~ ~~in~~ ~~Montgomery~~ ~~Alabama~~ ~~in~~ ~~1938~~ 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#2.

Life History of Mrs. Don Wilkinson

Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery. It was the plans of her adopted parents to send her to college; however, Don being in love with a very nice young boy, she decided to marry, which she did two weeks after graduating from high school. This of course, was against the wishes of her dear parents as they had wanted so much to give this child a college education, but marrying a young man who was the son of the Probate Judge in Autauga County, Alabama, she had shown them that she wanted to live up to their standard of living and thinking and equalization. Jack Wilkinson, the husband had a very good job when he and Don were married and they remained in Montgomery for almost a year after their marriage and Jack obtained a job with Birmingham Cast Iron Pipe Company and they lived in Birmingham for four years and then were transferred to Pennsylvania; then to ~~Massachusetts~~ Boston, the depression was then getting at its peak, rent and food was very high in Boston and salaries being cut; a beautiful baby girl having been born into this family made it all the more hard to meet the high costs and low salary, and finally the crash came, Jack was cut entirely off and then we started out looking for a job, going from place to place and facing the same situation each time, "We are cutting off, not hiring", until our money gave out, then finally landing back in Prattville, Autauga County, Jack obtained a little job which was a bare living, just enough to keep sole and body together and friends--"Well if it had not have been for our dear friends and neighbors and our little garden, we would have perished". Jack had gone through so much nervous strain and mental worry about our financial condition and not knowing where the next meal would come from (this before we had gotten back to Prattville) ~~that he collapsed and was placed in a State Institute~~

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#3.

Life History of Mrs. Don Wilkinson

that he collapsed and was placed in a State Institution where he was kept for six months, my baby girl was only two and one half months old at that time and it was necessary for me to get out and try to get employment; when asking for employment at the different stores in Montgomery the remark would be "Lady you are not able to work, you should be at home" I realized that my physical condition was very grave, but my getting a job was the sole means of bread and milk for my babies and finally I got a job as sales lady at one of the department stores in Montgomery. "A very dear friend took care of my babies during the day, I came in from Montgomery and my work at night, about thirteen miles from Prattville, and prepared the bottles and food for my children for the next day and early in the morning before leaving for work, I would take my children to this dear friend who would take care of them during the day." If it had not have been for the kindness of this woman, Mrs. Turk in Prattville, Don could not have held her job and kept the wolf from the door. "I did not sleep very much during that time, after preparing the food for my children and then doing the laundry and other necessary work, I would get to bed around mid-night, then the mental picture of my dear husband would appear before me, and I could not sleep." Jack was released after his nervous condition had sub-sided and was allowed to come home. He obtained a job traveling but did not make good and finally was given employment by the State Highway Department and it was then that this little family was brought back into union; Don quit her job and after a very serious spell of sickness is now looking good and it is marvelous how this little family is getting back into normal life. They live in an old house which is very hard to make attractive, but Jack and Don both work hard to keep the premises nice looking and the interior is in fair shape

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#4.

and they have planted shrubbery around the house and keep the lawn mowed; Jack keeps his little garden in good shape and this past Summer they have had plenty of vegetables to furnish their table. Dianna, the baby girl is now approximately eighteen months old; Jackie the oldest girl is about fourteen and the family, through all their troubles and tribulations, have kept up their church work and saw to it that the children were in Sunday School, the neighbors having taken the children to Sunday School each Sunday when the Mother was so tired and worn that she could not attend. They are members of the Methodist Church in Prattville and this past Summer Jackie was selected to attend a Camp for the Methodist children, where she spent two weeks. Don was still as meek and refined as she was when first Mr. Waller saw her, she kept her troubles from her adopted family and it was not until Jack collapsed that they knew of her financial troubles and then came to her assistance and later obtaining the job that Jack now holds from the State; this was done through Mr. Luther Waller, adopted brother of Don's, who now <sup>is</sup> State Senator. Jack and Don are living as cheaply as possible and are paying obligations back just as fast as possible and the entire community loves Don as she is still the same little delicate, dainty, sad looking person and has a good word and kind thought for everybody. Don is practically grey headed, very thin, but wears her clothes beautifully, always looks nice even though in a cheap outfit, her outlook on life is very much changed and she can now see that their ~~lives will be brighter and her whole life is to strive to educate her children and make a home that they will be proud to live in and to bring their friends into. Jack looks the picture of health, a good looking black headed, <sup>blue</sup> eyed man, weighing approximately 180 pounds and looks very~~

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Mary E. Livingston, Prattville,

Autauga County, Alabama.

#5.

Life History of Mrs. Don Wilkinson

distinguished and intelligent and wears nice clothes and keeps his clothes always in the best of shape, and this being his home the people never say a word of his mental condition, thereby enabling him to forget it.

Interview of Mrs. Don Wilkinson,  
November 13, 1939.