

Week ending August 11, 1939.

FOLKLORE.

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François Ludgère Diard,  
Identification No. 0149-5252,  
Federal Writers' Project, Dis. 2,  
WPA Project No. 5303, Mobile, Ala.

PLEASURE PARTY TRIPS ON THE ALABAMA RIVERS.

Narrated by Thomas B. Allman

to François Ludgère Diard.

(Note: This Folklore Story pertains to the years during the 1880's and 1890's, which custom was a perpetuation of the earlier steamboat days on the Alabama Rivers.)

In the olden days when steamboats plied the Alabama, Tombigbee and Warrior Rivers there was a good deal of romance connected with their trips. The story narrated here, however, pertains especially to those paternal packets plying the Tombigbee and Warrior Rivers, where it was the custom among the young people to get up parties and take a trip up the river as far as the boat would go. These parties were looked forward to by the young people of a number of the communities along the rivers, because they knew that the trip would be a pleasure.

The young men were, as a rule, the leaders in arranging the trips and it was often and difficult to make them a success on account of the difficulty in getting the proper chaperon, for in those days a girl was not allowed to go to any kind of party or entertainment without one of these drawbacks, especially a trip on the boat where members of the party would be gone for two or three days and nights. After securing a chaperon the boys would be especially attentive to her, for they desired to keep her fully entertained while they were aboard in order that the girls might be able to eke out a little more liberty than when the "Chappy" was on the immediate grounds.

When the boat would land where the party was to board it, it was a rush to secure the best state rooms and arrange the baggage of the girls, the boys being left to secure the best locations they could, and in a number of instances some of them hustled off into the "texas," so

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they would be absolutely certain of being out of the way of the girls.

After having been located and plans made for all members of the party to attend supper on the boat, the meals served were more than famous, for the table was filled with every luxury equal to any noted hotel. The fried "golden chicken" and the roasted beef and pork were galore, the fine wines, eggnog, lager beer and coffee. The musician, who was generally a piano player (for every party had to have a good piano player among them), would be brought into action and the cabin cleared so that the dance ~~would~~ could begin. In these parties the village cut-up was always brought along and had a leading part because he was the life of the party and generally called the figures in the dances. In those days rarely ever did the chaperon permit anything but square dances, but the boys would prevail upon her for just one waltz, and when it started, the piano player was tipped frequently so that she would keep playing and it seldom ended until the "chappy" awakened to the fact that something was going on and stopped the waltz.

Some of the ladies who chaperoned these parties became quite famous for their attention to the members of the party, and none of the party would be allowed outside of the cabin while the dance was on for the evening. When the dance ended for the night, she always herded them together and made sure all were in their staterooms before she retired, and before doing so she admonished some of the members of the crew ~~again~~ against permitting any of the party outside of their staterooms after she retired them.

The reputations of the chaperons of these pleasure trips up the Alabama Rivers were an excellent recommendation for securing permission from the parents of some of the girls desiring to make these trips, and

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when petitioning mother and father for permission to go on the boat trips, the first question they asked was, "Who is to be the chaperon?"

While these up-the-river boat trips might seem dull and uninteresting to the young folks of to-day, they certainly were pleasant and enjoyable in those good old days. No matter how cautious the chaperons were, some of the young people would <sup>meet</sup> ~~meet~~ some of the people of the opposite sex traveling on the boat and in some instances some lasting friendships were formed, which budded into love and finally into marriage.

The more familiar the leaders of the party were with the members of the boat crew, the more opportunities they had to get around the boat and locate the best places aboard, and especially those places for dodging the chaperon. With some of these "chaps", however, it was almost impossible to lose her, and if they did for any length of time that one's name was tabooed from the membership of the next trip.

The young folks on these trips were continually having some kind of entertainment through the day and late into the night, and with the assistance of the captain, mate, engineers, strikers, clerks and pilots the boat was what might be called one round of pleasure for a day or two. The "chap" was sometimes troubled with keeping the boys and girls from going ashore at the different landings where the boat had occasion to stop to unload freight or take on a new passenger. On one occasion one of the young ladies of the party was left ashore when the boat stopped at a certain landing to unload freight. She was not discovered missing for a while, but it was fortunately ~~was~~ for her that a young farmer, a graduate of a university, who was at the landing at the time, saw

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her predicament and proferred his service to untangle a grave and serious moment with the "chap," who was wild with rage and fear. It so happened that the landing where the young lady was left was fifteen miles from the next landing by boat because of the bends in the river and only one mile and a half by land, so when the boat arrived at the next landing ~~by~~ ~~boat~~ the young lady was waiting to board it. This action brought severe criticism from the chaperon, but what did it matter even in those days to a young girl who had a most enjoyable exciting experience and had met a young man just the kind of fellow she had dreamed of and who was so gentle and kind?

By the time the boat landed and the freight was being discharged and passengers getting aboard, the young university farmer had sent his ~~his~~ horse and buggy home by one of the farm hands and had himself boarded the boat unaware to any of the party, even the ~~girl~~ girl whom he had ~~met~~ befriended.

After the boat had discharged its freight and backed out in the stream and had been under way a short time, a cabin boy was called to the engine room where the young farmer had a friend who was the engineer. The boy was given a note and given strict charge as ~~how~~ how to deliver it. It took great tact to deliver the note without the chaperon or some member of the party seeing what was going on; however, the cabin boy having been trained how to do things for the captain and other members of the crew finally managed to perform his mission.

No one but the engineer and cabin boy were aware of the young ~~farmer's~~ farmer's presence on the boat until now. The note was delivered and the young lady made some excuse to go to her stateroom, and while there ~~she~~ she read:

"Dear Mary: I am aboard. I could not see you go away without tell-

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ing you lots. Make plans to see me at the dance after supper.

"John."

What was she to do? were the first thoughts that came into Mary's mind. There was the man of her dreams and although never having met him before, she had often heard of him and the influence his parents commanded in their community. His parents operated the largest farm and plantation in that section of Alabama, and had a commissary on the plantation and were quite wealthy and the son John being the only child was to inherit it. Mary being rather timid and at the same time having an inner fear that the man of her dreams had come true and in person would be at the dance in the cabin after supper, she lost no time in making preparations for meeting him regardless of what the chaperon had to say.

At supper she saw him sitting way down at the end of the long dining table in the cabin, and her heart thrilled and thrilled, but all the time she was thinking whether or not she was doing right to meet him, as her parents were of the old Southern type, who did not approve of chance meetings. The more she thought the more she came to the conclusion that it was an act of Providence that she had been left at the landing early that afternoon, and that she would not let the opportunity pass to have her new found friend a partner for the dance that night.

After supper the cabin was arranged for the dance, and as the village cut-up announced "select your partners and get ready for the quadrille," everyone had a partner but Mary on account of one of the boys of the party being indisposed. It was at this time she saw John approaching and in an instant she said: "Oh, there's John, I will have him for a partner." But at this moment the cut-up and announcer called out, "Salute your partners, hands all around, balance all!"

Mary was now satisfied that all these plans had been arranged through Providence and as she was noted for her dancing, the members of

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the party said they had never before seen her dance so gracefully and with so much animation. The dance gave them an opportunity to talk and each by this time had discovered that Mary and John must have been created for each other, as they were not satisfied when away from each other. John professed his love for Mary with such fervor and met with a little encouragement at first, but later as the dance was nearing the end they promised to see each other at the breakfast table the next morning and talk matters over further.

By noon the boat had arrived at its up-river destination, and the party went up to the town and spent the afternoon while the boat was loading for its trip down the river. Upon return to the boat after supper the usual evening's dance was indulged in by the party; but somehow, Mary and John sat out a few dances, much to the ~~disappointment~~ disapproval of the chaperon.

By this time John had made himself quite popular with the members of the party including the chaperon, and he was invited to be a member of the next boat party which would be two weeks hence.

Upon arriving at John's landing the members of the party bade him goodbye, and as the boat rounded the bent of the river they saw his buggy and span of horses drive up.

During the next two weeks several letters passed between Mary and John, and John made a business trip to the little town where Mary lived with her parents and was entertained by them, and while at her home made himself quite popular with the members of her family, as they knew his father in a business way.

When Mary told her parents that John would be a member of the next boat party, it met with their approval much to her delight. Then when the next boat party came the usual gaiety prevailed; but preceding the trip John had a personal interview with Mary's parents, and on the trip up at

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the dance they announced their engagement and stated that the marriage would be performed on the Wednesday following at the home of the bride's parents. They were married on Wednesday following and it was a grand affair, as two of the ~~xxx~~ most popular young people in the adjoining counties were being married.

THE NARRATOR.

Mr. Thomas B. Allman as a young man attended these pleasure trips on the Alabama Rivers. He resides in the popular and historic suburb of Whistler five miles northwest of Mobile, and where the Mobile and Ohio Railroad first had their repair shops. Mr. Allman is a justice of the peace at Whistler, and at one time was connected with the circulation department of The Mobile Register, as well as holding other positions in Mobile. He also edits the little semi-monthly in octavo folio form, "The Whistle," which gives the happenings of Whistler, Ala., and in some issues recalls events of past history. Mr. Allman has spent his entire life in the Mobile vicinity.

F. L. D.

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J. Ogden Belknap, Scenic Artist  
and Inventor, Mobile, Ala.

François Ludgère Diard, Writer,  
Mobile, Ala.

THE FLOTILLA BATH.

"It was in the year of 1857, that I established the 'Flotilla Bath' on the eastern side of Mobile River," said the J. Ogden Belknap of Mobile. "The people of that day used to stand on the wharf at the foot of both Government and Dauphin Streets and ask what establishment was that across Mobile River so neatly whitewashed and resembled so much a fort with its port holes open as if threatening immediate destruction to all water craft plying up and down the river that came in range of its guns? It was no fort at all, but a harmless, and in fact, a useful article in the shape of a floating bath-house, which I had erected for the benefit of a community during the warm summer months. In this establishment of mine was found everything of that day that was requisite to having a fine bath, clean towels, pure soap, ect., and whatmore, ample room in which those who wished to, may not only thoroughly cleanse themselves, but practice or learn the art of swimming without the exposure or danger attending bathing in the open river, or bayous and creeks near the city, where alligators and reptiles abounded."

It must be explained that Mobile at the time of which we are writing had only three or four public bath establishments right in the town proper, where negro slaves were in attendance. These town baths had hot or cold water as desired by customers; but as the patronage was beyond accommodation, Mr. Belknap's idea was that every one could bathe in clear running water that was salty more than nine months out of the year right within reach of the city, for he had row boats and even flatboats manned by slaves to take the customers to and from the Flotilla Bath. This was established, said Mr. Belknap, mostly for people who were not able to spend their summer months at Point Clear, Montrose, Old Alabama City (now the present town of

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Fairhope), Battles Wharf and other smaller resorts on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, or at Coden, Portersville and Sans Souci Beach at the lower end of Mobile County, or at other resorts along the Gulf Coast.

"My Flotilla Bath resembled a fort all right," continued Mr. Belknap. The port holes were merely windows through which to admit air and light, and were perfectly harmless as was the building and myself who owned it. The establishment was opened on the 1st of May, 1857, and boats were kept in readiness to carry passengers to and fro. In those days the river was very clear and the salt water came up for several miles. There was not a great deal of steam traffic then, mostly sailing craft, to stir up the water and very little debris was dumped therein."

This Flotilla Bath became quite a resort during the summer months for several years up to the approach of the War between the States. From its highest point waved a large American flag. Often very fat people, said Mr. Belknap, took baths at this bath establishment, which was built so as to be towed to any point along the eastern side of the river, because some of the tubs in the city were too small for them. The Flotilla Bath had its comical side also. There were many jokers among its patrons, some being a detriment to it. A number of pranksters came over to the place from Mobile one night during its last year of existence. This night was a dark, rainy night, and a heavy September hurricane was reported by incoming vessels as brewing in the lower Gulf waters south of Cuba. These pranksters tied a very stout rope to one end of the structure, and then carried the end of it to midchannel of the river in a row boat, and when an outgoing vessel was passing convenient for two of the pranksters to scale easily the side, they attached the rope to its stern, then rowed back to their awaiting fellow pranksters, who had evacuated the Flotilla Bath for the

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J. Ogden Belknap, Scenic Artist  
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sandy beach of Blakeley Island. The passing vessel soon pulled all the slack that had been allowed, and the rope was on a straight high slant from the bath establishment to the outgoing vessel. Soon the whole structure was towed down the river into the bay and then into the Gulf, the sailors on the outgoing vessel thinking all the time in the dark and rain that the following bathing structure was another vessel just following behind. After they were a piece out in the Gulf past Sand Island lighthouse, they discovered the rope attached to the stern of the vessel and it was cut loose, which set the Flotilla Bath adrift. It seems that a couple of its very fat patrons who were business men of Mobile, had gone over to the Flotilla Bath ahead of the pranksters from the foot of Dauphin Street in private boats, presumably to bathe, and although it was raining ~~at the time~~, they both had been drinking heavily at the time from a jug of fine liquor they had brought with them. Instead of bathing they went to sleep. Then came the pranksters, who discovered them, which prompted the fun and the floating of the bathing establishment down to the Gulf, where the two fat men were aroused by being tossed around by the rough breakers, only to discover where they were. A brig going into port loaded with tropical fruit took them aboard and brought them to the foot of Government Street.

This comical coincidence, like the bathing establishment, passed into oblivion, and only referred to by the older people of Mobile and as told by them to their children. As for the bathing establishment, it, too, is a memory and referred to as Belknap's Floating Fort, or by its more common name the Flotilla Bath. Even the sailors of that day who knew about are all gone.

The venerable J. Ogden Belknap, the scenic artist and inventor was a great character around Mobile. It was an enjoyment to converse with

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and inventor, Mobile, Ala.

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Mobile, Ala.

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him, his knowledge of Mobile and what happened in the past between 1824 and 1917, was a storehouse of rare things. He was in Mobile so long, as one story teller refers to him, that the tradition gained ground that he had always been a part of the place, and always would be there. He departed this life at last on February 9th, 1917, full of life and vigor almost to the day of his death. Mr. Belknap was the living record of his time. As one older ex-slave said, "He 'members way back yonder." As a boy he was a witness to the hanging of Charles R. S. Boyington, the boy poet-printer, who murdered his best friend, Nathaniel Frost, and that was when he himself was ten years old. He was the first baby kissed by General Lafayette while on his visit to Alabama in 1825. J. Ogden Belknap was a baby in the arms at the time and his mother and father and their family were standing in front of their home, northwest Joachim and Government Streets, where he had been born a few months before, to see the great Frenchman as he passed. Mrs. Belknap taking the baby from the slave's arms who was acting as nurse, she held the little fellow up so that the General might touch him with his soldierly hand, when General Lafayette ordered his carriage in the procession stopped, and he not only put his hand on the baby, but leant over the side and kissed the baby's cheek. This was an honor very few men have had paid them that has passed down the ages.

Mr. J. Ogden Belknap never started a letter to his friends, or one who desired some point of information about local history, or to the editor of the morning paper without writing of

"The days of yore that come no more!"

The late Dr. Erwin Craighead, Editor Emeritus of The Mobile Register,

said:

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J. Ogden Belknap, Scenic Artist  
and Inventor, Mobile, Ala.

François Ludgère Diard, Writer,  
Mobile, Ala.

### THE FLOTILLA BATH.

"If he had begun early to write his memoirs he would have filled more than a five-foot shelf of books; and it is a pity that he didn't. While yet in his nineties, he wielded a busy pen. My notes say: 'He writes his foolscap pages, pastes them end on end, and sends them to me rolled up like an Egyptian scroll; and his writings flow like a limpid brook, touching impartially the depths and shallows of history.' "

Old Mobilians can recall the time when it was the custom to spread great banners over the streets, ornamented with the pictures of candidates and calling on the electors to "Vote for So-and-So, the great Democrat!" ? Well, if the banner was done in Mobile and was a true likeness, it was safe to say that Mr. Belknap did it. He had a fine talent in the use of the brush, and his lettering had a perfect touch as well as the design and figures of his paintings.

Only white sand thrown up by the dredging of the river and a marshy shore edge on Blakeley Island across the river from Mobile show the points and places where J. Ogden Belknap's Flotilla Bath was once moored, resembling a white fort with port holes for cannon mouths for guarding the harbor.

--- FRANÇOIS LUDGÈRE DIARD.

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THE PALATIAL FUNERAL CAR OF MOBILE.

Written by

François Ludgère Diard.

In the latter part of March, 1883, the latest wheeled department of Messrs. McKay & Roche, the well-known livery men and undertakers of Mobile, whose place of business was at the Waverly Stables on the west side of Royal Street, between St. Michael and St. Francis Streets, next south of the old Mobile Register Office, in which building Lafayette had once been entertained, was in the shape of a handsome funeral car or hearse of the latest and most elegant finish, in fact the most palatial Mobile had had up to that time. It came from the factory of Crane and Breed, of Cincinnati, Ohio, and was of the highest order of beauty. The truck was substantial and graceful, black, ebonized and picked out in gold. The body was egg-shaped with sides, front and rear framed with convex sheets of plate glass of large size and exquisite clearness. The rear door opened with a pale amethyst-studded nob, which released bolts both at top and bottom, and threw both wings of the door open.

The interior was beautifully upholstered and decorated. The floor was covered with a fine piece of Brussels carpet, and the portion of the hearse near the rear door was laid with a parqueterie of black walnut, oak, mahogany, sandal and box wood, in very pretty design and highly polished. The opposite end of the interior was quilted in brown satin and presented a very pleasing effect. The cornices of the interior were hung with double lambrequins, one of black and the other of white, both ornamented with heavy

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THE PALATIAL FUNERAL CAR OF MOBILE.

Written by

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bullion fringe. The black was to be used for grown and aged persons, and white for children. This was in correspondence with the plumes on the both the car and the hacks and the heads of the horses. When the black was in use it completely hid the white hangings. The ceiling of the funeral car was in white silk, with a centerpiece pendant, with bullion fringe, and represented the Star of Hope. Altogether the arrangement was rich and tasteful, and was quite an addition to the mortuary paraphernalia of the city. The roof of the hearse was guarded around the edges with a silver railing and accented with plume stands covered in lacquered woods. The coachman's seat was elevated well above the forewheels and was tastefully upholstered. The mountings throughout were of polished silver, which, contrasting with the shining black of the wood work, made a pleasing effect.

Mobile has had many fine funeral cars or hearses in the years preceding 1883. These were used for a period of time by their company owners, then discarded for a new one, but on the arrival of the palatial funeral car I've described above, Mobile and its vicinity was in a sensation to see it on display. There are still living to-day older Mobilians, who remember this palatial car as it was drawn down the principal streets of Mobile by six plumed white or black horses, followed slowly by many plumed hacks, all in even step and slow. The people of Mobile no matter how solemn the funeral might be invariably stopped to view and see this beautiful car move along. White plumes in the past were generally used for young people and babies, and black or black and white plumes for elderly people; and

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often purple plumes for very old persons were used, and if the deceased was a very notable character red and white plumes as a matter of distinction were often used, but black and white were generally adhered to.

The negro servants took the "white folks' " children as far as Government Street, or to whatever street the funeral procession was scheduled to pass on, to also see this palatial car, which like its sister horse-drawn hacks, on the event of the introduction of motored funerals, passed into the folklore of the town like nearly every other horse-drawn vehicle and conveyance.

In this palatial car of McKay & Roche's burial company was often carried the remains of wealthy people and in some instances it also carried those of persons not so wealthy; but it was always viewed in the funeral procession as something to see and to admire, and even on rainy days the old negro mummies would say, "Happy is the corpse the rain falls on," while often the agnostic and critical cynic on-looker, who had known the deceased being carried out to his last resting place to have been perhaps to his own thinking not as generous with his wealth while living as he should have been, would recall to his mind these philosophical lines:

Did you ever stop and think  
As the hearse drives by,  
That it won't be long  
Until you and I

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THE PALATIAL FUNERAL CAR OF MOBILE.

Written by

François Ludgère Diard.

Go riding out in a big plumed hack,  
And never remember coming back?

Did you ever stop to think  
As you strive for gold,  
That a dead man's hand  
A dollar won't hold?

It was also a custom in Mobile until the entry of the 1900's for the undertaker, after placing the negro logical with the papers to be printed to be read by the public, to have death and funeral notices printed and pasted on posts and fences and even on walls in public places to notify the public of the death of a fellow citizen. These notices, which were invariably printed in black, were generally headed by a weeping willow, a tombstone likeness, a plain black cross, and even a plumed hearse with six or eight horses attached in the drawing. The large letters of each line were sometimes printed in heavy black and the whole edged with a heavy black line. This custom is also a story of the folklore of Mobile, which has descended to posterity, and as well the memorial black cards printed in gold or silver sent to friends of the deceased by his family. We live, we die, Deo volente!

Bibliography: Short notice on the palatial funeral car of McKay & Roche's Funeral Company contained in a scrapbook clipping taken from The Mobile Register of Sunday, April 1, 1883.

Conversations with older Mobilians, who remembered the palatial funeral car of McKay & Roche. Personal knowledge.

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Ila B. Prine,  
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Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.  
WPA Project 2661, Mobile, Ala.

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CUSTOMS OF RESIDENTS OF PRICHARD, ALA.  
IN THE EARLY DAYS.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

The old times in Prichard Station and now occupied by the town of Prichard were far different from the modern days, according to Mrs. Victoria Adams, one of the oldest residents of Prichard. Horse-racing in the spring, "goose pullings" on the Fourth of July; egg-nog at Christmas and calling day on New Year's. Mrs. Adams says that Prichard people who wanted to attend church in those days had a fairly long way to go. The nearest churches were at Turnerville on the Telegraph Road and at the intersection of the Craft highway and Stone street in Toulminville, which is the Toulminville Methodist Church. Since ox-carts, race sulkies, buggies and wagons were the only means of travel she often walked to church. "being young and full of life" she said, "we didn't mind walking to church, or even to Mobile. We would walk to La Fayette or Ann street, where we could board one of the Mobile street cars, then drawn by small mules."

"As for entertainments, aside from the races, they were few and far between. Only twice did I attend the theatre, once to see 'Seven Days' played at the old Mobile Theatre, and once to witness 'St. Elmo' written by the Mobile writer, Augusta Evans Wilson, sometimes, we went driving to Whistler in a sulky or buggy behind a fast horse. At that time, Whistler was a thriving village of Mobile and Ohio shop employes.

There were many bull-dog and cock fights near Prichard Lane and St. Stephens Road, largely attended by men for sport, but were not attended by the women.

Another diversion of that day was the "goose pulling" at the Bull's Head near the viaduct on St. Stephens Road, chiefly on the Fourth of July. This sport consisted of <sup>hanging</sup> bringing a live goose, head downward,

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CUSTOMS OF RESIDENTS OF PRICHARD, ALA.  
IN THE EARLY DAYS.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

over the road. Mounted men would gallop their horses under the goose and attempt to reach up and pull its head off.

There were also candy pullings, play parties and dances, with old time fiddlers providing the music. There was very little disorder or drinking however. Mrs. Adams said Christmas was celebrated by partaking of egg-nog. Very little money was spent for gifts. If we had a package of firecrackers, we thought Santa Claus was especially good to us. New Years was welcomed with watch parties and attendance at the "stunts" of the Cowbellions, Mobile's first New Year organization of merry-makers. We also went from house to house calling on our friends who usually treated us to cake, fruits, nuts and pastries. Good Friday was observed with prayer and fasting. Some people ate nothing on that day. Easter was a day for church attendance. Everybody colored easter eggs, but not with commercial dyes. Mrs. Adams said her mother was quite a botanist and she would gather roots, weeds, to make coloring for their eggs. Some people would use calico to dye the eggs, as well as boil them in black coffee to color them brown.

There were no expensive Easter hats or dresses. If we had a nice calico dress a hat made of straw ground around here, trimmed with spring flowers, we thought we were dressed up. Thanksgiving was a big holiday. Every one had turkey. The turkeys were not shipped in however. They were driven to Mobile in large flocks several days before Thanksgiving. Sunday was observed with great strictness. Few women did any housework or cooking on Sundays. The cooking was done on Friday or Saturday and the food was eaten cold or warmed up on Sunday.

Week ending Oct.16, 1936.  
S-241- Folklore

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CUSTOMS OF RESIDENTS OF PRICHARD, ALA.  
IN THE EARLY DAYS.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: (Personal interview with Mrs. Victoria Adams on  
Main Street in Prichard. Craft Highway,by a reporter of The Prichard  
Citizen.) Published in Prichard Citizen January 24, 1936.

Ila B. Prine.  
Mobile, Ala.

## CUSTOMS OF RESIDENTS OF PRICHARD, ALA.

### IN THE EARLY DAYS.

The old times in Prichard Station now the town of Prichard were far different from the modern days, according to Mrs. Victoria Adams, one of the oldest residents of Prichard. Horse-racing in the spring, "goose pullings" on the Fourth of July; egg-nog at Christmas and calling on New Year's. Mrs. Adams says that Prichard people who wanted to attend church in those days had a fairly long way to go. The nearest churches were at Turnerville on the Telegraph Road and at the intersection of the Craft highway and Stone street in Toulminville, where is now the Toulminville Methodist Church. Since ox-carts, race sulkies, buggies and wagons were the only means of travel she often walked. "Being young and full of life" she said, "we didn't mind walking to church, or even to Mobile. We would walk to La Fayette or Ann street, where we could board one of the Mobile street cars, then drawn by small mules."

"As for entertainments, aside from the races, they were few and far between. Only twice did I attend the theatre, once to see 'Seven Days' played at the old Mobile Theatre, and once to witness 'St. Elmo' written by the Mobile writer, Augusta Evans Wilson, sometimes, we went driving to Whistler in a sulky or buggy behind a fast horse. At that time, Whistler was a thriving village of Mobile and Ohio shop employes.

There were many bull-dog and cock fights near Prichard Lane and St. Stephens Road, largely attended by men for sport, but were not attended by the women.

Another diversion of that day was the "goose pulling" at the Bull's Head near the viaduct on St. Stephens Road, chiefly on the Fourth of July. This sport consisted of hanging a live goose, head downward, over the road. Mounted men

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1429 words (1)  
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WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRÉ, ALA.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

Bayou la Batré, situated at the extreme end of Mobile County on Mississippi Sound, is one of the most picturesque fishing villages along the Gulf Coast. Rich in legends and folklore connected with early pirates and fisherfolk, the visitor will find his stay a pleasure. The Bayou with its winding turns filled with fishing smacks, its quaint fisherfolk and dwellings, its storm-tossed trees and beautiful and picturesque surroundings, the soft breeze blowing in from off the Gulf of Mexico, give it the air and appearance of a fishing town on the west coast of France. It is known as "Fisherman's Paradise." No where along the Gulf Coast does the sun-set look more beautiful, and one can stand in this ancient fishing village on a late afternoon of a summer day and look down the winding Bayou, his imagination will carry him back to earlier times before the white man came, when the Indians in their canoes rowed down the Bayou or fished along its banks.

In the history of Mobile County and the Gulf Coast, Bayou la Batré is rich. It first received the name of D'Érbane from Iberville. This name was given to the spot in honor of a Frenchman, who was lost at the mouth of the Bayou, and upon whose bank Bayou la Batré is situated. The present name of the village is derived from a Choctaw word "boh" for creek. The French wishing to make the name more euphonious gave it "Bayou." A French battery on the west bank, which protected the river during French colonial rule, very

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LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRÉ, ALA.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard. )

likely suggested to the inhabitants a name for their new settlement, Bayou la Batré, on Fort on the Bayou. John Ladnier, who died within memory of the present inhabitants, used to point out to J.J. Delchamps the site where he had seen a colonial battery, and by the Tait place is still a mound, which may be a part of a fortification.

The first grantee of land at Bayou la Batré was Joseph Baussauge (the name is variously spelled) in 1786. Claiming he needed a home to conceal his misery and the poverty of his family from the world, he petitioned the Spanish governor of the Province of Louisiana, Stephen Miro, for a tract of land on the west banks of the river in 1786. The petition was granted the following month and Baussauge and his family, a sickly wife and seven children, took possession of the property and made improvements. Other settlers of French stock, who wanted country lands near the water in order to raise stock, corn and tobacco, and to fish, followed Baussauge's example as the settlement began to flourish. The petition and grant in this first case, while fairly illustrating the procedure as to lands, certainly ranks among the curiosities of official correspondence.

Following the settling of Bayou la Batré, like all fishing villages and towns, the first inhabitants became associated with legends and folklore and superstitions. Then came the periodical visits of Jean Lafitte and his

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### LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRÉ.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

pirates seeking haunts for their rich booty and yellow gold, which added to the already prevalent legends and folklore, until, as each generation succeeded the other, the place became famous. Even to this day it is not a common occurrence to see an old fisherman, who had sailed the Gulf waters to every corner, sitting by the bank of the Bayou, relating to the younger generation the stories and legends that had come down from the early settlers.

One of these legends tells us that Jean Lafitte, landing on his vessel at Bayou la Batré on a stormy night, walked through the terrific wind in search of a hiding place for his treasure. He found a small bayou along the beach of Mississippi Sound. There he built a small battery and named the place Bayou la Batré, meaning "Batré on the Bayou." The legend further states that Jean Lafitte made himself invisible whenever he thought any one was watching him. It is also said that the entire village would close their doors whenever his ships were seen to land at the mouth of the Bayou, and the more religious would sprinkle their houses with holy water to keep him out. In earlier times the children even believed he would reach out of the water and pull into the Bayou if they stayed out after dark. They also believed the moaning of the surf was his voice, as they pictured him a giant in size.

Another legend is narrated about a certain Tante O'Doon, who resid-

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LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRÉ, ALA.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

*Write*

ed somewhere south of Bayou la Batré. This old woman, who, the legend says, resembled one of the witches in Shakespeare's Macbeth, live (as aged people did then) a solitary life, with only one negro servant. This servant, her malicious purpose unknown, delighted in frightening the poor old woman, seemingly to cause her death. Tante O'Doon (translated Aunt of Doon), whose husband was a Scotchman and captain of a fleet of Bayou la Batré fishing schooners, kept often related that the eggs on her cup-board in a seaweed basket would dance. She even declared ghosts could be seen at midnight floating in the air, and when one followed them suddenly they would take the form of posts. Of course, these acts were committed by this negro servant, who, no doubt, had a rancorous feeling against the poor creature. This old woman, it is told by older natives, died utterly demented.

*Write*

Devil's Bend, where the old Colonial Oak now stands at Bayou la Batré, received its name from a legend told by the Choctaw Indians. Every time the wind would blow furiously around this watery bend, the devil was supposedly riding the wind. The Indians declared that if one would watch carefully at night, a headless man could be seen walking to and fro.

*Write*

There is also a legend of two young fishermen of Bayou la Batré. It seems that they ventured out for a fishing trip one September night, not knowing there was a hurricane somewhere on the Gulf of Mexico. They were

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LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRE, ALA.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

*Write*  
gone, the legend says, that night and the next day before they ran into the storm. One of the brothers was a pretty wicked sort of fellow with low principles, cursed, and was not God-fearing, while the younger brother was very religious and prayed morn, noon, and night to his family's patron saint, Mary, Our Lady Star of the Sea, and daily invoked the Virgin Mary to keep safe his brother, who was also always reckless while out on the Gulf. At every heavy gust of the wind, the younger brother would make the Sign of the Cross.

Now at home in Bayou la Batré lived their aged mother and father, who was an old fisherman now retired, and another brother, who was the youngest, very religious, and totally blind. At every heavy gust of wind against the house the blind brother went to the window and looked out as though he could see, and the old folks watched his every move, for very often he would tell them through natural intuition almost the exact hour a storm out of the Gulf would break.

The hurricane out on the Gulf raged to such a pitch, the two brothers on their fishing smack thought every minute would be their last and their boat dashed to pieces. However, the younger of the two brothers busied himself praying out loud and repeatedly making the Sign of the Cross, until the

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LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRÉ, ALA.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

older brother cursed him until he cried, but kept on praying and asking Our Lady Star of the Sea to come to their aid and for them both not to be drowned, as they had the old folks and the blind brother at home to be cared for.

As the younger brother continued to pray, a white albatross with wings of every color of the rainbow lit on the bow of the fishing smack. Then of a sudden the albatross turned to a flickering star, the wind ceased to blow, the waves became calm like glass, and the two brothers soon had safely reached the shore of Bayou la Batré.

While the storm was raging on the Gulf, a strange happening took place home while the blind brother and the old folks were praying for their loved ones and their safe return. Of a sudden as if prompted by Providence, the blind brother arose from his praying and went to the window, which he opened, and looked out. Then he raised his hands to God, and cried out: "I see a white albatross with rainbow wings! I see a burning star! It is a message from God! I can see the Gulf, it is calm as a sheet of glass! My brothers will be coming safely home soon. Thank God!"

At break of the next day the two fisher brothers, after entering the safe haven of the river at Bayou la Batré, were astounded to find their youngest brother at the landing to greet them. The oldest and wicked brother knelt down on the shore, made the Sign of the Cross, and thanked God for their safe

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LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRE, ALA.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

return, then he kissed the youngest brother on the forehead, discovering that his sight had been restored.

A certain Mrs. Green told a story to the children of Bayou la Batre concerning pirate treasure being buried near Devil's Bend. This was many, many years ago. Many people, she said, had tried to dig up this hidden treasure, but always fled in terror. The reason for this retreat is unknown. Some say that a certain Captain Joseph Green (no relative, however, to the Mrs. Green of this legend) recently acquired vast wealth by excavating the lost treasure.

An old colonial home called Tait's place (also spelled in the records Tate), after having been home-steaded, was declared haunted. The reason for this declaration was affirmed by families who avowed that an old settler had died and left a family there to starve to death. Every resident of the house after that incident told frightful stories of how one could hear "the old settler" dragging cowhides through the hall. In the yard to the rear of the house was a cemetery with marble tombstones. To hold up the building these tombstones were taken from the graves and placed under the house. Small white dogs, the residents stated, could be seen running around these tombstones, and when one would kick at these small animals they would suddenly disappear.

The Indians of the Bayou la Batre vicinity were as superstitious as the white settlers. Tomego, a Choctaw Indian, who resided near this old haunted Tait place, affirmed that "when you hear noise go tock-tock-tock- in big bayou

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LEGENDS OF HISTORIC BAYOU LA BATRÉ, ALA.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

wigwam no good."

Bibliography: Conversations with the older families of Bayou  
la Batré.

Stories told to the older Diard children on  
their annual visits to both Coden, Portersville and Bayou la Batré, Ala., by  
Doctor Goumond, a friend of the family.

Private printing (Bayou la Batré library) 1935.

Notes from the writings compiled from tradition  
left to posterity by the first settlers of the Bayou la Batré vicinity.

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LEGEND OF THE MOURNFUL SOUNDS  
OF PORTERSVILLE BAY.

Story by François Ludgère Diard.

Copy

Thirty-two miles below Mobile at the lower end of the county on Mississippi Sound is Bayou Coden, a barbarous form in name of "Coq d' Inde" (Indian turkey), also Sans Souci Beach and Pointe aux Pines (pines), and near the latter point Isle aux Dames. Coffee Island also nearby has the alternate name of Isle aux Herbes. Here at the mouth of Bayou Coden is also the town of Coden and the site of the old town of Portersville. It is here in the stillness of the afternoon, especially on a windy, cool day of autumn, the waters of Portersville Bay give forth a mournful sound as someone crying pitifully in distress, which is attributed by tradition to the suicide of its native races (Indian) by plunging into Portersville Bay, - a story something like that of Pascagoula, because of the mournful and singing sounds. Many legends have come down to us from the older Mobile Countians of the lower Mobile Bay and Mississippi region, but the following are told by the old-time fisher-folk doctor, the late Doctor Goumond, and the late Captain Peter F. Alba, the former a life-long resident of the Portersville Bay region, who received same from the oldest fisherfolks, and the latter Mobilian long a property and hotel owner and promoter of the summer resort of Coden.

THE INDIAN LEGEND:- A great Indian chief, Conawala by name, was in power of all the waters of the lower Mobile Bay and Mississippi Sound region and had his great wigwam on the banks of Bayou Coq d'Inde (Coden). The view of Portersville Bay was beautiful in front of Conawala's great wigwam, for that body of water forming part of the Mississippi Sound is separated from the Gulf of Mexico by the islands in later

LEGEND OF THE MOURNFUL SOUNDS  
OF PORTERSVILLE BAY.

(Story by Francois Ludgere Diard.)

centuries to be known as Dauphin, Little Dauphin and Petit Bois. Here in the days when Conawala reigned supreme the deep blue waters of Portersville Bay were as calm as glass, so calm, indeed, that even Conawala's massive figure was reflected for miles into the Gulf of Mexico.

Conawala was the father of twelve daughters' as beautiful as the water lilies that grew along Bayou Coq d'Inde, which made the great chief very happy, that he wished to marry his beautiful daughters each to the son of the twelve greatest chiefs living in the interior country surrounding Mississippi Sound. He sent messengers to the twelve great chiefs and offered to them much oysters, fish, many canals and pearls from the oysters in great heaps. The twelve great chiefs accepted Conawala's offer, and Conawala then called in all his tribe to announce to them the great weddings of his twelve beautiful daughters and the twelve young braves.

While the wedding splendor was being prepared and the great feast of fish and wild turkeys was spread, the twelve beautiful daughters were deciding among themselves that they wished to marry braves of their own choice and not the men selected by their father.

The great yellow moon came up over the eastern horizon, and the twelve young braves were in readiness for the wedding, and sat in the great wigwam of Conawala, each smoking the pipe of happiness and peace with the great chief.

The moon rose higher, but of a sudden turned red like blood, and the twelve beautiful daughters could not be found anywhere. The great chief then ordered a search to be made in every stream emptying

LEGEND OF THE MOURNFUL SOUNDS  
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Story by François Ludgère Diard.)

into Mississippi Sound and the entire forest and swamps on the mainland at the beach of Portersville Bay, but it was all in vain. Soon the clouds turned black, the bleeding moon disappeared, and a great storm out of the Gulf of Mexico arose with violent wind and drops of rain as sharp as arrow heads.

The next day after the great storm had abated, the sun rose over Portersville Bay with warm, peaceful rays, but the deep blue waves gave forth a mournful sound, which has been heard even to this day since the fatal wedding night of Conawala's twelve beautiful daughters. Rather than be married against their own choice these twelve daughters, as beautiful as the water lilies of Bayou Coq d'Inde committed suicide by drowning themselves in the waters of Portersville Bay, and since then their cries are heard in the mourning waves of this body of water.

The echo of the pines on the mainland, echoing back to the sound of the mourning waves, is said to be the cries of the young braves, who, on learning of the fate of their brides, fled back to their fathers domains.

Note: Many causes are attributed to this phenomena of the mourning waves of Portersville Bay. In tone they are similar to the musical waters of Delmas Bayou as it flows into the Pascagoula River, the singing fish on the coast of France, described by Charles Kingsley, the great writer. Bienville and his brother heard this mysterious music in both 1699 and 1702 of both Pascagoula and Portersville Bay, and he reported same in his letters to his elder brother Charles Le Moyne, the Baron de Longueuil, of Ville Marie (Montreal, Canada. Telfair Hodgson, son of Colonel Joseph Hodgson, the editor of The Mobile Register and author of the Cradle of the Confederacy, also attributes this phenomena in the Gulf waters to fish, for he as

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LEGEND OF THE MOURNFUL SOUNDS OF  
PORTERSVILLE BAY.

Story by François Ludgère Diard.)

a Mobile wandering newspaper man, sailor and tourist at large, caught some of the singing fish in Guatemala waters identical with those he had heard and seen producing the weird, plaintive, vibrating sounds in Pascagoula waters. The Guatemala fish, which made music were not of the drum family, but a fish commonly but erroneously called pilot fish with a peculiar sucker on the back of the head and which is often found attached to sharks and sometimes to porpoise.

The fish with the sucker on its head is the "remora," and never goes in front of the shark but adheres to him, while the pilot fish, which is more like a mackerel swims just in front of the shark and whether the shark follows the pilot fish or the pilot fish anticipates the movements of the shark as the catchdog of by-gone days anticipated the movements of the <sup>horse</sup> shark, is a question.

It is doubtful if the remora has ever been seen in such schools along the Mississippi Sound as were noted by Mr. Hodgson in Guatemala, or in such numbers as to account for the mystery music of Portersville Bay and Pascagoula, so it is altogether likely that some other fish makes the music and it is most probably the drum William Baxten heard and located the mystery music at both Portersville Bay and at Pascagoula in 1848. Old ship captains are reported to have heard similar sounds in the waters of both India and Java. Another Gulf Coast note, which comes from old fishermen as an authority, and men who have penetrated every lagoon, bayou and bay along the Mississippi Sound, says, that the common sheepheads also congregate at certain seasons in the Gulf bayou waters around old pilings and rock piles in the undercurrents of the Gulf waters and actually make mournful sounds resembling music. Darwin, the great scientist, says that different fish are cap-

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LEGENDS OF THE MOURNFUL SOUNDS OF  
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Story by François Ludgère Diard.

able of making sounds like music, and he described how the sounds are produced. Old fishermen of the lower shores of Mobile Bay also report they have heard the same mysterious music at both Fish River and Bon Secour Bay.

Bibliography: Conversations with the late Doctor Goumond, life-long resident of the Portersville Bay vicinity; also with old Mobile fishermen.

Conversations with the late Captain Peter F. Alba of both Mobile and Coden, Ala.

Conversations with the late Mrs. Sarah DeBois, the Mobile centenarian.

The Mobile Register, Sunday, April 11, ~~1929~~ 1929.

Hamilton's Colonial Mobile.

Judge Chidsey's article on the mysterious music of both of the Pascagoula River, published in the Popular Science Monthly, New York, in April 1890. In this article Judge Chidsey also quotes Darwin on fish producing sounds resembling music.

Scrapbook clipping of 1848.

Week ending Jan.15, 1937.  
S-242 Folklore songs.

Ila B. Prine,  
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Federal Writers' Project, Dist.6.  
WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

A TRUE STORY OF OLD SACRED HARP SINGING  
IN MOBILE COUNTY.

(Compiled by Ila. B.Prine.)

After the close of the Civil War, in the northwest part of Mobile County, there is a little country settlement known as Georgetown. This settlement was very scattered and there was a little one room log house that was used jointly as the school and church. The preacher usually had a number of other churches on his circuit and would only preach one Sunday a month at this particular little log house church. Rev. A.J.Lamar was one of the first preachers at this church as well as Rev. John Frazer, both men who were prominent leaders in the Methodist Episcopal Church South in their later life. Both of these men have passed on a number of years ago. The social life consisted chiefly of church gatherings; but when a man by the name of Moody from Mississippi came through this neighborhood, teaching singing, it was a big event. He used the old "Sacred Harp" books which had the shaped notes, which consisted of only four notes, - Sol, la, fa, mi. He taught only by these notes, and had all the singing in three parts, the bass, trable, and alto.

This man gave a session in singing which consisted of twenty days, using ten weeks to make the session. Uaually he came to this settlement and taught on Saturdays and Sundays. On each Sunday the entire populace of this settlement would turn out and bring basket dinners and spend the day singing.

There are at the present time very few of these books in this section, if any. The writer has been trying to locate a copy, as the old lady that gave her this story said she could sing these old Sacred Harp songs if she had one of these old books.

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A TRUE STORY OF OLD SACRED HARP SINGING  
IN MOBILE COUNTY.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

The Sacred Harp singing in the rural section of Mobile County,  
like the backwoods folklore songs, have become a part of tradition  
of the interior of the county. ✓

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Mrs. Mary E. Sims, Age 74. Corner Osage and Wilson  
Ave., Toulminville, Alabama.

## TEMPERMENTAL BERNHARDT IN A ROYAL TANTRUM IN MOBILE .....

Madame Sarah Bernhardt was coming to Mobile. The leading playhouse of the city was dark for the week. Abbey tried to get it for Bernhardt, but a contract was a contract, and DeLeon could not or would not disregard it. Consequently Madame Bernhardt, the world's most famous actress, had to appear in old Temperance Hall. Imagine the situation. Temperance Hall partitioned off for about 20 feet for a stage, the partition made of domestic, stretched on studding uprights and covered with hideous wallpaper of domino pattern in glaring colors; the stage, about 20 feet wide, 12 feet in clear ~~width~~ and disgraced by the worst painted lot of scenery the eye ever gazed upon. No dressing room for Sarah. Nothing but a corner off the stage, with a sheet hung up. Dirt and dust everywhere; and dilapidation emphasized.

Madame Bernhardt went to the hall early to make up ~~for~~ for the performance of "Camille", and she had about an hour to explore the stage and environments. She commented on the velvet carpets, damask draperies and array of fine furniture, Armand, the elegant had prepared for his exquisite Marguerite. Her associates knew Bernhardt's ~~meagrapertended~~ mood portended an explosion.

Curtain up. Madame Bernhardt went on without acknowledging the cordial reception extended her, and began from the start to burlesque the performance. Her greatest trick was to speak her lines as rapidly as possible, to make her words unintelligible to the audience, this threw all the actors off in their responses.

Soon the audience realized, that there was a big joke being played upon them, but most of those present being unfamiliar with French did not comprehend just how far she was going. Bernhard appeared to be getting some control over herself, as the play advanced, but when she saw the banquet prepared in her honor in the duke's palace she broke and let go completely. That Papiere-mache roast fowl was too much. She grasped it by the leg and beat it upon the table, giggling and laughing; and then rushed off the stage with a hysterical shriek, leaving her guests seated at the table, and motioning the prompter to ring down the curtain.

The curtain down made no change, however, for there nothing but a thin domestic sheet, covered with wall paper between her and the audience. Professor Schlesinger did his best to drown the noise with the music of his orchestra, and at last Dr. Heustis with Mr. Sloan came to the front of the stage and announced 'Madame Bernhardt was too ill to continue'. Screaming hysterically she was carried to her carriage. Afterward Erwin Craighead said to those who had a grievance in the matter " That to see Madame Bernhardt in a first class tantrum has not been given to many; and Mobile had it with all its trimmings".

*Mobile's Past. Erwin Craighead  
Houston Ptg Co. p 235-236.*

JASON FOUND HIS  
GOLDEN FLEECE

Communism<sup>n</sup> in its purest sense is being practised in Alabama<sup>1</sup>, <sup>although</sup>  
~~and~~ there isn't a single red flag flying and the only sickles are  
those used to cut hay for the growing dairy herd which helps  
to support <sup>n</sup> the community.

"The Plantation" is the name given to a Greek colony by  
its founder, Jason Malbis, who came to Alabama in 1907 looking for  
a golden fleece as did his namesake of mythology and the twentieth  
century Jason found his fleece in prosperous acres and a contented  
colony of his fellow countrymen.

The entire community<sup>n</sup> lives in one huge house, attractive  
in design, which was built immediately<sup>m</sup> after Malbis acquired the  
property in Baldwin County near Loxley. He erected a sawmill and  
cut the lumber from the timber<sup>m</sup> cleared from the fruitful acres.  
After the house was erected more colonists came in, some of them  
from Chicago but the majority from Greece.

The Plantation continues to house immigrants<sup>mm</sup> from the  
Aeolian Isles who get established in the language and customs of  
the new country and either stay on in the pleasant community or  
seek their fortunes<sup>s</sup> elsewhere in America.

The first business of the colony was agriculture, but this  
has been enlarged now to include a nursery, a dairy, with a herd  
of registered cows, a small packing plant and a canning plant.  
The colony owns its own electric plant and ice factory.

All the earnings from the various industries are pooled.  
They are then divided among the colonists or reinvested in the  
community property as occasion directs.

Mobile

Mr. Kettle  
Story

HOODOO MURDER

The Negro youth was almost breathless as he ran, wild eyed, into the guardhouse at Mobile. Stumbling to the desk of Detective Bressingham, he tried to speak, but his voice failed ~~him~~. He was helped to a chair and a guard brought him a glass of water.

"Why are you trembling so, boy?," Bressingham asked.

The youth slumped exhausted in the chair, and the detective saw that he was badly frightened.

"Murder!," he gasped. "Grave on Claiborne ~~Street~~ Street, close ter Lipscomb. Boss man, dey's a hoodoo cross mark on de grave!"

Hurrying to the designated spot, Bressingham and his fellow officers discovered a freshly <sup>turned</sup> ~~heaped~~ mound of earth.

~~They immediately began digging. They dug down~~

~~ever so far, but nothing was found.~~ Near the mound was a tin can filled with blood. A short distance from the can was a sack, saturated with blood.

Ordering picks and shovels, the officers dug frantically. They uncovered a hole several feet deep, but nothing was found. Bressingham was frankly puzzled.

He began asking questions, and soon discovered things that interested him. He found that about a year previously, an aged woman had lived in the shack near which the grave was located, and that she had died suddenly from a heart attack. But

the most interesting thing that the officer discovered was this: The woman was reputed to be rich, and Negroes of the vicinity believed that she had buried her gold somewhere on the premises.

In the Alabama of that day--1883--hoodooism was at its height, and conjures were being worked constantly by the Negroes. After studying the location of the blood-filled can and the soaked sack, Bressingham asked one of the ~~black~~ older Negroes, "Isn't it true that blood and tin and cloth are used to work a conjure?" The Negro nodded his head hesitantly.

The detective then asked another question, "Who has been talking about this old woman's riches a great deal?"

After a moment of study, the aged darky replied, "I believes dat Tom Taylor has been doin' some loud talk about ~~it~~ it. He allus interested in makin' easy money."

Bressingham nodded grimly, and searched the faces about the grave. He found Taylor among the vigilant watchers.

"You might as well confess, Tom," he said. "What's back of all this."

The accused Negro at first denied that he had taken any part in the grave digging, but finally admitted reluctantly that he had thought a great deal about the money buried on the place, and that he decided he should have all of it for himself.

"But what's the idea of the grave and blood?," he was asked.

"Well, sir," came the reply, "I dug de grave an' put de blood dere to scare away de wiches what guard de ol' lady's

gold. I was comin' back tonight an' hunt fer it."

But the officers were not satisfied. They had examined the ~~shank~~ can carefully, and had determined that it contained human blood. They accused, "But you've murdered somebody. You had to. The loss of this much blood would be fatal."

The Negro hung his head.

"Boss mens," he said slowly, "I guess I oughtn't a done it, but I'll tell you 'bout dat blood. You see, I wuz skeered to use my own blood, so I jest kilt me some chickens an' used dat. An' de chickens wuz my very own."

The detectives realized that he had committed no crime, so they released him with a warning that further hoodooism would not be tolerated. Then they went back to the guardhouse and had a good laugh.

**Bibliography:** Conversation with present Police Officer Bressingham, a relative of the detective who investigated the case.

Week ending Aug. 8, 1936.

S-679

*negro. folk story*

710 words -

-1-

Ila B. Prine,  
Identification No. 0149-5302.  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.  
WPA Project 694, Mobile, Ala.

LEGEND OF THE OLD THEOPHILUS L. TOULMIN HOME.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

Many years ago before the war between the States, an aristocrat of Kentucky moved to Alabama. His father was an Englishman who came to America in 1791, because of his expressions on political questions. He settled in Kentucky in 1792 and later became President of Transylvania University in Lexington. He afterwards was elected Secretary of State and served four years.

He also read law and compiled a code of laws of the State of Kentucky. In 1804 he was appointed Judge of that part of the Mississippi territory, lying on the Tombigbee; and he first held court in Wakefield.

He held the Judgeship until 1817 and in 1819 he was a member of the State Convention which framed the Constitution representing Baldwin County, Alabama, in which his residence then stood. He then compiled the first digest of the laws of Alabama, published in 1823.

His home was a rendezvous for prominent people of that day. Many enjoyed his hospitality, among whom were such men as Jackson, Claiborne, Benton and Gaines.

Theophilus L. Toulmin was born in Kentucky in 1798, and moved to Alabama in 1804 with his parents, who as we have already stated were true aristocrats. He had a heritage of knowledge in political matters as well as cultural. He represented Mobile County in Legislature in 1831 and a year or two later he was elected Sheriff of Mobile County. Following this he was a member of the State Senate for 14 years, closing his services with the overthrow of the Confederacy. The beautiful old semi-creole, Colonial home of Theophilus was surrounded by a large acreage. There were many slaves who worked around this home and cared for the plants and shrubs and

Week ending Aug. 8, 1936.  
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Ila B. Prine,  
Identification No. 0149-5302.  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.  
WPA Project 694, Mobile, Ala.

LEGEND OF THE OLD THEOPHILUS L. TOULMIN HOME.

Cont.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine,)

trees as well as the live stock. But among the slaves none were more faithful than those who had the immediate care of the home and the family. Before the war between the States many happy hours were spent in this old home, as the slaves were well fed and cared for in their quarters, and the family was content in their home life. Many guests dined in this home as the hospitality of this man was known far and wide. The large farm that surrounded the home was rich in its yield of vegetables and fruit; but the outstanding feature was a beautiful drive that led from St. Stephens Road to the front of this home with its 82 foot long verandah. On this verandah on each side of the main entrance were two large cypress rocking chairs in which the general sat many hours enjoying the scenery and listening to the birds sing in the trees that bordered this drive.

But in 1860 the war clouds arose and there was much unhappiness especially since war was declared and the Federal Troops began their overthrow of the Confederacy.

In this old Southern home there were beautiful furnishings of silver and antiques. When the Federal troops entered Mobile and the batteries and redans were thrown up from Magazine Point to Dog River, the people of the South hid or buried their treasures and the legend says that many years after, the family would awaken some mornings and find holes in the ground large enough to bury a cow, where people had been searching for the buried treasures. A negro would never be found on the premises for they believed the old General came each night looking for his buried treasures.

To this day the present owner has difficulty in keeping servants

Week ending Aug. 8, 1936.  
S-679

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Ila B. Prine  
Identification No. 0149-5302  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.  
WPA Project 694, Mobile, Ala.

LEGEND OF THE OLD THEOPHIUS L. TOULMIN HOME.

Cont.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

because so many times the negroes believed they had seen the General walking with his body-guard who was a fat old negro mammy following at his heels. Each night at 12 o'clock he is supposed to come and sit on the porch and rock, and in some mysterious way the massive mahogany doors swing open with a soft, sighing sound. One maid who worked for the present owner told her mistress that she often saw the old General going down the back steps with this old mammy following after him. This majestic old home still stands in Toulminville, one of the beautiful suburbs of Mobile.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Brewer's History of Alabama, Publishers, Barrett & Brown, Published in 1872. Montgomery, Ala.

Personal interview with Miss C.R. Buck, 16 Wilson Avenue, Toulminville, Ala., and

Mrs. Bingham Cook, Stone street, Toulminville, Ala.

Week ending Oct. 16, 1936

TWO NEGRO STORIES OF "SPEERETS" (Spirits)

One day Della C. King (Negress) was at the funeral of a friend, sitting in the room where the coffin was, and this is her story - "Yes 'um, I sho did see hit, jes as long as dat coffin wuz in de room, dat gal's speeret, hit wuz unner it, an' hit luk jes lak er, but when dey tuk dat coffin outen de room, de speebet lef', yes um hit did an' I didn't see hit no mo'."

-----

Della had been living with her Aunt Mary, Aunt Mary died and Della saw her buried, but she tells this story - "One evenin' when I went home I seen Aunt Mary a comin' outen de house, she stopt an' lucked at me, an' I lucked at her, but she didn't say nothin', an' I didn't say nothin', we jes lucked at each udder, den I went in de house."

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(NOTE - Della C. King declares both of these stories to be true. She was born at Grove Hill, Ala., but has lived in Mobile the greater part of her life. She can neither read or write. She has been a cook in the family of a friend of mine for twenty-two years.)

THE BRAVERY OF A MOBILE LADY,

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

Mrs. Isadore Middleton, a very beautiful lady of Mobile, and one of the acknowledged leaders of fashion in Mobile in the 1870's could certainly boast of the possession of as much nerve and true moral courage as are often vouchsafed to any of her sex.

The story related here happened on the evening of September 19, 1879. Mrs. Middleton was in her boudoir putting away some article of jewelry, when she noticed that the peculiar position of a library lamp, that was burning upon a chair in the back part of the room, had thrown upon the floor, almost directly at her feet, the shadow of a man who was crouching under a broad-topped ornamental table in the center of the room. She also remarked that the open hand of the shadow had but two fingers, and remembered that several desperate burglaries had recently been committed in the neighborhood, suppositiously by a negro desperado who was notorious as having lost two fingers of his right hand.

Mr. Middleton was absent from Mobile at the time, and, besides, Mrs. Middleton herself in the house, there was but a single maid servant in the house. Instead of becoming alarmed or shrieking for help the brave lady seated herself at the very table underneath which the miscreant was concealing himself, and coolly rang for the servant.

"Hand me some writing material, Bridget", said Mrs. Middleton, with perfect calmness, "I want you to take a note this instant to Mr. Forfar, the jeweller, and have him send you back with my diamond necklace and ear drops which I left at his shop for repairs several days ago. Bring them with you, no matter if fully repaired or not. They are but twenty-fold the most valuable articles of jewelry that

Weekending Oct. 30, 1936.  
S-240-Other Folklore.

*Missing in page 1*

-2-  
François Ludgère Diard,  
Identification No. 0149-5252  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.  
WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

### THE BRAVERY OF A MOBILE LADY.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

I possess, and I do not wish to pass another night without having them in my bureau drawer."

The note was at once written and despatched, but instead of being in the tenor that Mrs. Middleton had signified to her servant (on purpose for the concealed robber to overhear, for she had no jewelry under repair, and even the Mr. Forfar she referred to as the jeweller was fictitious), it was a hasty note to a jeweler of Mobile, who was an intimate friend of her family, urging him to hasten her relief, with the requisite police assistance, immediately on receipt of the written message.

The agonies which Mrs. Middleton underwent when left alone in her home, with the consciousness of the presence of that desperate robber, perhaps assassin as well, crouched under the very table upon which she leaned, and perhaps touched by her very skirts, can only be left to the reader's imagination; but Mrs. Middleton's iron nerve sustained her through the ordeal.

Mrs. Middleton yawned, hummed an operatic air, turned over the leaves of a novel, and in other ways lulled the lurker into a sense of perfect security and expectancy. She waited- waited with a wildly beating heart, and her eyes constantly fastened upon the hands of her little ornolu clock with a greedy, feverish gaze.

At last, however, arrived the longed and prayed for relief. The front door bell rang, and Mrs. Middleton carelessly strolled into the hall, and then downstairs to open the door. The ruse had been a success. Mrs. Middleton not only admitted the servant Bridget, but also the jeweler friend whom she had called "Mr. Forfar", and three stalwart policemen.

Dr. William Pape (born 1850) had a significant career. The unfortunate circumstance of having been a musical prodigy (it seems he was acclaimed throughout Europe, whose music tradition was imposed upon him) he quite naturally became confused between that awesome tradition and his own budding native idiom and deserted music. His own native outburst (Massa's in de Cold Cold Ground), for which he was half apologetic, indicates what a genuine native lyricism he had, and what it might have resulted in had it been allowed to develop,

*Alabama*  
Week ending June 18th, 1937.

(1)

S-200 History.

S-S-260 Racial elements.

François Ludgère Diard,

Identification No. 0149-5252,

~~Federal Writers' Project, Dis. 2,~~

~~WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.~~

SLAVE BAPTISM IN FRENCH COLONIAL TIMES IN MOBILE.

(Literal Translation from the French by

François Ludgère Diard.)

(NOTE--No date or month is given in this record in the Catholic Church Baptismal Records contained in the Cathedral Rectory.)

1726.-- I baptized this morning with the ceremonies and laws of the Church a *negrillon* (little Negro) of the age of two, and a *negrillonne* (little Negress) of the age of two, which was bestowed upon her (the *m*) within the house because of the danger of death and in compliance with the law, belonging to (or owned by) M. R. Babilant. The little negro (boy) was given the first name Etienne of the godfather, Etienne Tessier, sergeant in the company of M. Pelalous, and for the godmother Marianne Rouvielle Colon, wife of M. Rochon, the little negress (*negrillonne*) was named Catherine for the godmother (Maraia) Catherine Christophe and the *negrillon* (little Negro boy) for the godfather, Noel Comaud. The last (or their last name) was Mathias given by the godfather, Etienne Tessier and by Marianne Rouvielle Colon, and for which I have signed this morning.

Fr. MATHIEU.

(Note--The godparents do not sign; also it appears there were two male sponsors, as the early French colonial custom often required, and very often the child was given the name of all its sponsors. The little negroes in this record were twins.)--- Bibliography: From the Mobile Catholic Church Records.

Week ending June 18th, 1937.

S-200 History.

S-S-260 Racial elements.

François Ludgère Diard,  
 Identification No. 0149-5262,  
 Federal Writers' Project, Dis. 2,  
 WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

SLAVE BAPTISM IN FRENCH COLONIAL TIMES IN MOBILE.

(Literal Translation from the French by

François Ludgère Diard.)

(NOTE--No date or month is given in this record in the Catholic Church Baptismal Records contained in the Cathedral Rectory.)

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Week ending June 18th, 1937.

(1)

S -200 History.

S -260 Racial Elements.

François Ludgère Diard,  
Identification No. 0149-5252,  
Federal Writers' Project, Ds. 2  
WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

SLAVE BAPTISM IN FRENCH COLONIAL TIMES IN MOBILE.

(Literal Translation from the French by  
François Ludgère Diard.)

The year 1738, the month of September, I Capuchin priest in charge,  
apostolique Curé of Mobile, administered the ceremony of baptism upon one (or  
a) negress, slave of the godmother, whose name is Rochon. The godfather was  
Pierre Favre, and the godmother Marie Joseph Rochon, who have signed for her,  
and who was given the name of Jeanne. I have signed my name.

ARMAND, Capuchin Curé.

FAVRE

M. J. ROCHON.

(NOTE---The above document shows the ROCHONS, after BIENVILLE, his  
brother CHATEAUGUÉ, and their kinsmen the LANGLOIS family, were among the first  
slave owners of Mobile.---F.L.D.)

Bibliography: Mobile Catholic Church Records.

Week ending Dec. 4, 1936

A PREMONITION

Emily Ates, an old negress, who was living at Grand Bay, Mobile County, Ala., about forty-five years ago, one day said to the lady for whom she worked:- "Mis Fo't what duz yer hyar frum Miss Dora?"

Mrs. Fort replied, "They are all well, I had a letter from Dora yesterday". (Miss Dora was her daughter, who was married and was living in a nearby town.)

"Emily answered, "No Mis Fo't dey haint, kase I dun see dey haint, sumpens wrong at Miss Dora's."

"What do you mean Emily? If Dora or the baby were sick, some one would let me know," replied Mrs. Fort.

But Emily kept insisting that something was wrong, "Kase I cyarnt he'p feelin' dey is." Several times that day she asked Mrs. Fort the same question and would not be satisfied with the answer, she was so confident that something was wrong.

The next day passed, and on the second day Emily went again to work for Mrs. Fort. When she went into the house the first thing she said to Mrs. Fort was - "Has yer hyerd frum Miss Dora?"

"Yes I heard from Dora this morning", answered Mrs. Fort. "In her letter she said the baby had fallen out of the second story window onto the brick pavement below, but that he was not seriously hurt, and Emily, it happened just about the time that you first said to me that something was wrong at Miss Dora's, when you were here day before yesterday."

"I knowed hit, I knowed sumpen was wrong, kase I dun see dey wuz, I she is glad hit haint no wuz," Emily replied.

-----  
Emily Ates had worked for the Fort family for many years and was

devoted to them. When she knew Miss Dora was coming home on a visit, she would meet the train, and pick Miss Dora up and almost hug the breath out of her. Miss Dora was nearly six feet tall and very thin, and Emily was several inches shorter and weighed about two hundred pounds. Anyone who who saw that embrace, would not forget it.

Emily had been a slave, she wore a head handkerchief, and nearly always went barefooted, she was heard to say on several occasions - "Yer cyarnt mak' nuthin' but a nigger out'r me nohow." This was usually when her sister would try and get her to "dress up" and wear a hat, as she did.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Personal knowledge - Having known all of the characters in the story, when as a child, I was living at Grand Bay, Ala.

THE OAK TREE LEGEND

A huge rattle snake in the act of striking an Indian warrior in the temple is carved deep in the trunk of a massive oak tree at Oak Hill, Alabama. Around that figure has grown up one of the intriguing tales of Alabama Indian folk-lore.

In the Oak Hill district, in the days before the white man, resided an Indian tribe. Although once powerful, the ravages of war and disease had reduced them to puny strength with a chieftain who had outlived his usefulness.

The chief had no sinewy son to assume his leadership, his only child being a daughter, -slim and beautiful.

The tribesmen decided they would choose one of their number to take the place of the aging chief and to lead them in battle against the foes who were encroaching on their hunting grounds. The chosen leader was to have the hand of the chief's daughter in marriage.

But Oneonta, for that was her name, had pledged her heart before her subjects could pledge her hand, and even while the tribe was assembled to select their leader and her future husband, she left to seek the trysting place beneath a huge oak tree where she was wont to meet her lover.

He, however, had preceded her, and weary from the chase had laid down to sleep. While sleeping a huge rattle snake had found and struck.

Oneonta came beneath the tree only to find her lover dead.

She threw herself on his prostrate body. The aroused snake struck again.

And it was beneath the oak that the new chief found them, locked in a last embrace, and it was there that the tribesmen buried them and carved their story on the oak.

Week ending Dec. 4, 1936

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-----  
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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Personal knowledge - Having known all of the characters in the story, when as a child, I was living at Grand Bay, Ala.

Week ending Nov. 10, 1938.  
S-200  
S-676  
OLD CUSTOMS.

-1-

Mary A. Poole,  
Identification No. 0149-4366  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 2  
WPA Project 4454, Mobile, Ala.

#### OLD MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

(Collected by Mary A. Poole.)

One of the quaint customs of long ago in South Alabama, was, that a bride must not be seen in public for a week previous or a week after her marriage. Her first appearance after marriage was in attending service at church with her husband, at which time she wore what was known as her second day dress. The appearance of the bride and groom at church on the Sunday following the wedding ceremony was looked forward to by their relatives and friends with almost as much interest as the wedding ceremony itself. After service they usually had dinner with the groom's family, the bride's family having entertained the wedding party and guests following the marriage ceremony.

When the bridal couple returned from their honeymoon trip, their first visit, was to the parents of the bride.

In these modern days the prospective bride and groom with the round of social events given in their honor before and after the grand event, when they are more in evidence than at any other time in their lives, the bride especially flitting from one affair to another up to, and sometimes even on the very day of her marriage, it would be hard for them to understand that to the couples of the years of long ago, the days of their betrothal and honeymoon were as full of romance as of those of the present generation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Conversation with Mrs. Mary Farnell, Age 85,

52 South Hallett St. Mobile, Ala.

Week ending Jan. 22, 1937.  
S-676

Mary A. Poole,  
Identification No. 0149-4366  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.  
WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

EARLY CUSTOMS IN MOBILE, ALABAMA.

(Compiled by Mary A. Poole.)

Among the early customs of Mobile was the printing of funeral notices on small posters which were posted in prominent places, either by being tacked to walls or corner fences, or pasted on lamp posts. These notices as well as obituaries in the early newspapers, depicted a figure of a woman dressed in deep mourning, seated beneath a weeping willow tree, as it was the custom in early Mobile to plant Weeping Willows, in the grave lots in the cemeteries. This was no doubt the printers cue for this caption "Weeping Willows". When the man was seen going from post to post, pasting these well known notices, some member of each family in the surrounding neighborhood hurried forth to read the name thereon, and quite a little crowd gathered around and comments passed back and forth relative to the deceased and the family to which he or she belonged. This old custom was abandoned in the middle of 1890's, after the newspapers increased in circulation, the last to use it being those of the colored race, who did so up to a comparatively late date.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Personal observations and conversations with old Mobilians.

S-676

CUSTOMS PECULIAR TO  
THE STATE.

Ma. A. Warren, Mobile, Ala. - 1 -  
~~Federal Writers' Project of W. P. A.~~  
~~District 6, Project 3041~~  
Identification No. 0149-5073

~~Week ending Nov. 27, 1936~~

*Mary A. Warren  
Mobile*

CUSTOM OF MEN SITTING ON ONE SIDE OF THE  
CHURCH AND THE WOMEN ON THE OTHER SIDE. *Mobile*

This is a custom that prevails in many of the churches in the rural sections of Mobile County.

There are usually two rows of pews or benches in the church with an aisle between them. On Sunday morning one will see a whole family (generally large) drive up to the church. As they enter the church the women and girls take seats on the right hand side, and the men and boys on the left hand side.

In the rear of the church there is always a space left for the babies and the small children. Here the mothers make pallets (a quilt folded and laid on the floor) and as the little ones go to sleep they are placed on the pallets, to remain, usually until the church service, or preaching, is over.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interviews with residents of Union Church, Wilmar, Tanner-Williams and other rural communities in Mobile County.

Week ending Nov. 27, 1936

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interviews with residents of Union Church, Wilmer, Tanner-Williams and other rural communities in Mobile County.

~~Week ending Nov. 27, 1936~~

#### A HOMESPUN-DRESS PARTY

In the days long gone, seventy-five and more years ago when material for ladies' dresses could not be bought as at present, when much of it was woven at home, a group of young ladies in Mobile decided to have a "Home-spun Dress Party."

No dresses were to be made of "bought goods", these young ladies were to spin the thread, weave the cloth and then dye it with home made dye. they were to make the dresses, doing all the work themselves.

They vied with each other to see which could make the prettiest color of dye. Some of the dye materials were, red-oak bark, poke berries, copperas, tea, etc., many very pretty colors resulted. The dresses were made in the prevailing styles, full skirts with tight basques, pointed in front.

The dresses were a success, as well as this unusual party.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interview with Mrs. Virginia Buckley George, aged 92 years, who lives on the Old Telegraph Road about three miles <sup>north of</sup> ~~from~~ Mobile. This road joins U.S. Highway No. 43 at Chickasaw, Ala.

Week end Oct. 16, 1936.  
S-241- Folklore.

-1-

Ila B. Prine,  
Identification No. 0149-5302  
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.  
WPA Project 2661, Mobile, Ala.

CUSTOMS OF RESIDENTS OF PRICHARD, ALA.  
IN THE EARLY DAYS.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

*Mobile Ala.*

The old times in Prichard Station, and now occupied by the town of Prichard, were far different from the modern days, according to Mrs. Victoria Adams, one of the oldest residents of Prichard. Horse-racing in the spring, "goose pullings" on the Fourth of July; egg-nog at Christmas and calling ~~day~~ on New Year's. Mrs. Adams says that Prichard people who wanted to attend church in those days had a fairly long way to go. The nearest churches were at Turnerville on the Telegraph Road and at the intersection of the Craft highway and Stone street in Toulminville, <sup>where now</sup> ~~which~~ is the Toulminville Methodist Church. Since ox-carts, race sulkies, buggies and wagons were the only means of travel she often walked ~~to church~~. "being young and full of life" she said, "we didn't mind walking to church, or even to Mobile. We would walk to La Fayette or Ann street, where we could board one of the Mobile street cars, then drawn by small mules."

"As for entertainments, aside from the races, they were few and far between. Only twice did I attend the theatre, once to see 'Seven Days' played at the old Mobile Theatre, and once to witness 'St. Elmo' written by the Mobile writer, Augusta Evans Wilson, sometimes, we went driving to Whistler in a sulky or buggy behind a fast horse. At that time, Whistler was a thriving village of Mobile and Ohio shop employes.

There were many bull-dog and cock fights near Prichard Lane and St. Stephens Road, largely attended by men for sport, but were not attended by the women.

Another diversion of that day was the "goose pulling" at the Bull's Head near the viaduct on St. Stephens Road, chiefly on the Fourth of July. This sport consisted of <sup>hanging</sup> ~~bringing~~ a live goose, head downward,

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CUSTOMS OF RESIDENTS OF PRICHARD, ALA.  
IN THE EARLY DAYS.

(Compiled by Ila B. Prine.)

over the road. Mounted men would gallop their horses under the goose and attempt to reach up and pull its head off.

There were also candy pullings, play parties and dances, with old time fiddlers providing the music. There was very little disorder or drinking however. Mrs. Adams said Christmas was celebrated <sup>with</sup> by ~~partaking~~ of egg-nog. Very little money was spent for gifts. If ~~we~~ <sup>the children</sup> had a package of firecrackers, ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> thought Santa Claus was especially good ~~to us~~. New Years was welcomed with watch parties and attendance at the "stunts" of the Cowbellions, Mobile's first New Year organization of merry-makers. ~~we~~ <sup>people</sup> also went from house to house calling on ~~our~~ friends who usually ~~treated us to~~ <sup>served</sup> cake, fruits, nuts and pastries. Good Friday was observed with prayer and fasting. Some people ate nothing on that day. Easter was a day for church attendance. Everybody colored easter eggs, but not with commercial dyes. Mrs. Adams said her mother was quite a botanist and she would gather roots, <sup>and</sup> weeds, to make coloring for their eggs. Some people would use calico to dye the eggs, <sup>and sometimes</sup> as well as boil them in black coffee to color them brown.

There were no expensive Easter hats or dresses. ~~If we had a nice~~ <sup>new</sup> calico dress <sup>and</sup> a hat made of straw <sup>grown</sup> around here, trimmed with spring flowers, <sup>made the wearers happy</sup> we thought we were dressed up. Thanksgiving was a big holiday. Every one had turkey. The turkeys were not shipped in ~~however~~. They were driven to Mobile in large flocks several days before Thanksgiving. Sunday was observed ~~with great strictness~~. Few women did any housework or cooking on ~~Sundays~~ <sup>that day</sup>. The cooking was done on Friday or Saturday and the food was eaten cold or warmed <sup>over</sup> on Sunday.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY: (Personal interview with Mrs. Victoria Adams on  
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