

March 21, 1939  
Davison Fore. (White)  
Atmore, Alabama.  
Route B.  
(Country Merchant)  
Annie L. Bowman (Writer)

It was twenty minutes past nine in this crowded little country store. Davison Fore was sitting at his desk with a crowd of men sitting around him, giving him their order for tons of fertilizer that was being hauled from Pensacola for the farmers' spring planting. He stopped and looked up to ask if I wanted anything. On being told that I would wait outside, he resumed his work, which kept him busily engaged for over an hour. After the trucks were on their way to Pensacola, he asked me in.

"Well, yes ma'am, I am doing a slow but steadily increasing business. With spring planting going on it has kept me very busy supplying the farmers with fertilizer for their crops. I have been dealing with fertilizer for this farming section for ten years now. The profit is small, but a country merchant is like a farmer in some respects. He has to diversify his selling and make every little thing count to keep us moving along."

The neighbors will tell you that the reason they buy from him is that he always treats them fair and square in all their deals. He sells and hauls their fertilizer for them cheaper than they could get it from any other source. He only makes a small profit but does this to help the farmer, and there is not a better or a more accomodating merchant in Escambia County.

Davison Fore was born at Beatrice in Monroe County July 23, 1898. His father, Steven Fore, moved to Beatrice from Kentucky when a young man along with his fater and mother who had sold out his home in Kentucky and bought a forty acre farm in Monreo County where he farmed and operated a gin until his death. He married Mary Francis Davison at an

at an early age and there were twelve children, three of whom are dead and there are nine living. They are scattered all about Alabama.

After his father's death, they continued to run his father's farm and gin until all his brothers and sisters married and moved away and left only Davison and his baby brother Woodrow. His oldest brother was killed in the Battle of The Marne; and his mother was so grieved over his father and brother that she became dissatisfied and sold out and moved to Escambia County where she bought five acres of land - on which she built a small store.

Mr. Fore continued the conversation by saying, "I was always store-minded when a little fellow. During <sup>ginning</sup> season I had a big wood box which I made a set of shelves out of. I stocked this with candy, cakes, crackers and canned goods. I would sell this to the farmers that came to my father's gin and it wasn't long before I found that I could make profit with this. I kept this up until I stocked up several wood boxes. Then we moved here to Escambia."

While talking with him you find that he had no money to start this business with; and had to borrow it from his mother. They had only five acres of land which was not enough to farm. His store opened its doors to the public the first Saturday in November 1922 and has faithfully continued to stay open. It is five miles from any other store. This is his reason for his success although in 1932 he considered himself a broke man; but he didn't give up hope.

He said that they had always been Baptists as far back as his great-grandfather. When he first moved here, he attended the B. Y. P. U. The first Sunday night he met the girl of his dreams. He had no chance to be introduced, but fate was in his hands. She came in a wagon with her father and he, being a stranger in the crowd, was shy and felt out

of place. He was walking ahead when the mule ran away with her father and he had the honor of jumping on board as they came by at a terrific rate, stopping them so quick that Doskie fell all over him. Of course he had to drive home for them and you know the rest. Doskie Bozeman was his first and only sweetheart. Not being financially able to marry then, they had a two year courtship and were married November 22, 1925.

He was still in debt to his mother, but he had married a farmers daughter and a hard worker. They made a trade with his mother for three acres of land and built a very small but comfortable home, and by careful saving and close economy, they managed to pay every cent they owed to his mother in three years and were able to enlarge their dwelling and have a larger stock of goods in the store.

During this time two children were born in this home and they were accumulating a very comfortable living until the depression hit them so hard in 1930; business began to fall off and those that came to the store had no money. It was then he and his wife Doskie made a contract between them to do with out anything only the barest necessities for themselves to help their friends and neighbors. They had no idea how long this would last but they could not turn away the needy,

Their neighbors will tell you that if every two people sacrificed themselves for others it was these two. It was no uncommon sight to see people going there for groceries they would have to have and promising him they would do their best to pay him when they could find any work to do, and Davison asking them to economize for he was getting lower every day. They will tell you that Davison has never mentioned this to any one. They know that during the depression he had carried several as much as five hundred dollars each. The smaller debts which he knew he would never get was never entered on the books.

Doskie asked me to sit with her as her husband was busy in the store. She was preparing the mid day meal and I went in from the front through the house to the kitchen. She says that she can't quit work for her two older children are in school and will be home at twelve for dinner. Her baby girl was playing in the yard and she had to make time while she was out for when she came in she claimed all her time. She had washed that morning was her excuse for not having the house straight as it should be. She was a comely looking girl with a tendency to gossip.

She began by telling me about Woodrow, her brother-in-law, who had married a year ago. She says that they don't know what to do with him, as he had always lived with his mother until he married this girl with low morals. Mother Fore wouldn't have this girl in the house. He has no work of any kind and expects Mother Fore and Davison to take care of him like they have always done. When Jim Fore was killed in the Battle of The Marne, he had his life insurance for his mother and naturally if you are inclined toward loafing you would expect them to dish money out to you. How does he live? Why, he stays with her people. They are just tenant farmers and there isn't much to divide. If he would work, we would give him all the help he needed.

She tells you that they intend to give their children all the advantages of an education. Her two older children will be in high school next year and we hope to send them through college if they don't get marriage in their heads like she did.

She says she had a hard time when they were broke. She couldn't get Davison to close the store. It almost closed itself as there was scarcely anything left to sell or give away. You find as she continues that if Roosevelt had failed to provide relief for the people, they would have had to close up. After their customers began to get work,

they would pay a little on their old accounts and would trade with them and pay cash. It wasn't long before they had restocked their store and were beginning to gain ground again.

At this time their store and dwelling had so long been neglected that it was impossible to put it off any longer. Money was scarce and he went to the bank and mortgaged his all for enough to recover both buildings, painted and patched them up. Then began a long series of economizing. Although they had been accustomed to this so long it went hard with Doskie. She wanted a new car. She couldn't get out of sight with the old one fearing it would break down. She was expecting a new baby soon and her nerves were all unstrung.

After the baby came she got back to her normal health and neither one of them has had to have a doctor since. She laughs and says that her health is too good to be a lady.

Davison and the children came in to dinner, which was served on the kitchen table, which consisted of corn muffins, sweet potatoes, turnip greens and rich sweet milk.

He tells you after he had gained and paid his debts he decided he would like to spread out a little. He purchased a lot, built and stocked another general store in the little Station of Canoe, which came very near laying him flat again. He says he didn't have a very good insight to human nature or he would never have picked this so called friend to run this store for him. One of his brothers ran it awhile until he found something better to do. Then he hired this man, a so called friend, to work for him. Well, he held it open for a year and he losing money all the time. When it collapsed he found this man had continually been carrying unperishable things home at night, locking them up in a room. He opened up with my stock in another building in three days after he left, but I had to take my medicine and it left me pretty flat.

He paused and looked thoughtful, and with his slow drawling voice, continued. I was afraid to venture again and I might unconsciously cook the goose that laid the golden egg. Many a good man has succeeded unusually well for some years and then to his own surprise fade out. Sometimes it has been because he didn't understand some vital reason for his previous good fortune. He didn't have fully opened eyes.

He says that to be safe, then, let's assume that in the midst of your prosperity you really are in a little danger. And then let's check the success order with the tag, so to speak, and see if some item is being overlooked in the delivery.

He has before him some items in the success order displayed and those are the ones that particularly appealed to him: Modernized store, concentrated buying, loyalty to dependable **BRANDS** attractive and open displaying, emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables, courteous treatment, efficient accounting, persistent and well-thought-out advertising.

He says a force of good clerks is like a good digestion - likely to miss its just share of conscious appreciation until it is lost! If your clerks are really good - people like to meet old friends. Another thing, when people deal with the same clerks over a considerable period they become less price conscious. Good clerks mean more business - and more profit on a given volume.

He says though this is hard to do in a country general store after he made such a failure in Canoe, he determined to put all his time and energy on his store here at home. He takes the Merchant Weekly and tries to develop his selling technique, by using some of their ideas. He thinks there are some people who can't be pleased but you must please them to a reasonable way. If you are the loser at times, always give them the benefit of a doubt.

These people here, my neighbors, have helped me to build up this store and I claim it is most through them that I have prospered. They have helped me by being good customers, and I tried to do my part when they were in need.

He tells me of his one known enemy in his neighborhood whom he had advanced one summer, until his crop was made. James Smith, a political boss, or so he thinks, found out he was for the New Deal and Roosevelt. James made his brags that he would turn him, or he wouldn't pay him what he owed. He came to the store for groceries for his wife and several children. Davison let him have the groceries. James told him he would regret his political views. He didn't give it much thought. He traded on and at the end of the year he made good his word and refused even an honest talk. Davison tried every way for a settlement, but he goes by with his face averted. He doesn't care now and is glad he found out about him before he used him further. He does everything he can against him, and Davison doesn't want him for a friend.

He has to keep a close watch out for the trend of the market. A few times he got left by buying when the market is fluctating and to do this he takes two daily papers. He doesn't wait for the mail carrier to bring these. He either sends or goes himself to town five miles away early in the morning for his papers.

He says he has studied the wants of all his customers, and if he fails to have what they want, he doesn't let them leave the store but sends some one else-where after this article. "Yes, of course the ladies go else-where to get their finer clothes. I always keep just the standard kind of cloth." I also sell friendliness as well as food and clothes.

Davison Fore didn't know it when it happened, but being "fired" was the best thing that ever happened to him! He knows it today, however, and so would you if you could see his store. He was fired from his first job as helper in carpenter work as being incompetent. From the two hundred and fifty dollars he borrowed from his mother in 1922 has with all his discouragement built himself up to a ~~Ten~~ ten thousand dollar a year business. His honesty has caused him to be held in high esteem and a leader in the community in which he lives.

Davison Fore

Is a tall well built man, weighing one hundred and sixty five pounds. He walks with a slow moving easy grace and stands erect. His hair is light brown with a tiny sprinkle of grey. His eyes are grey and he is very fair. He speaks with a long slow easy drawl like he is afraid he might say the wrong thing. He has a habit of twisting his head to one side as he talks. He wears cotton clothes, a blue shirt and pin checked pants, and is always spotlessly clean.

Doskie Fore

Doskie is a low stout built girl, not given to being fat. She weighs one hundred and thirty pounds. She stands erect and steps quickly. Her hair is black and curly. Her eyes are a deep blue. She is very dark and has a well modulated voice. She has no characteristic gestures. She dresses neatly in print dresses while at home.

Environment

Neighborhood:

This is a farming community, the citizens own their farms with the exception of their tenant farmers. They are good substantial people of the progressive type. There is a three room school that carries them through the third grade. The county furnishes a school bus to carry those who have finished this grade to town to the grammar and high school.

It boasts a baptist church, as most of the community are of the baptist faith. Those that belong to other denominations, go five miles in their cars or trucks to worship in their own faith.

Description of House:

The house is composed of six rooms, three on each side with no connecting hall between. A large front porch that extends all the way across the front. It is painted white and covered with green composition roofing. The parlor, dining room and kitchen are on one side and three bedrooms on the opposite side. The parlor has a rug, living room suite, a floor lamp, and radio. The dining room has a silk rug, a dining room suite and an old time chandelier lamp that hangs from the top of the ceiling. The kitchen was equiped with a wood range, two tables, a closet that was attached to the walls. A bright colored linolium covered the floor.

The guest room has a bedroom suite, a blue

Mary Hines and Family, (Negroes)  
Atmore, Alabama  
Teachers

Annie L. Bowman  
Escambia County

The Hines

THE HINES

Mary Hines is the mother of nine children, four of whom are dead. Leona, the oldest, is married and lives in Dothan, where she now teaches. Her other four daughters are also teaching. Elona, Myrtice and Pauline teach nearby and stay at home while Dorothy teaches in Columbia, Alabama. The youngest child, John Wesley is still in high school.

Since the girls are professionally employed, Mary's family lives somewhat better than the average colored family. Each of the girls makes \$30 a month and Mary makes some on the side with her washing. They are now trying to redeem their home which they lost during the depression. To do this they will have to pay \$5 a month to the government for the next seven years. This is much better than paying rent.

Down the highway through the Atmore Negro quarters, this house, somewhat better looking than the other makeshift structures which the Negroes call their homes, is approached.

A gate gives access to a neatly trimmed and freshly swept front yard. An old half-blind Negro was in the back yard cutting wood when we arrived.

To the question, "Is Mary at home?", came the reply:

"Yes Ma'am, she were in there an hour ago," he answered, as he shuffled into the house to find her.

Mary came to the door with an invitation into the parlor. One who is used to going into colored folks' homes is sure to be amazed at the inviting appearance of this one. The parlor has a living room suite, piano, and rug on the floor.

her room as she had a fire in there.

The fireplace has an old iron pot on the coals.

"Yes, I'm trying to save fuel by cookin' my dinnah on the fire," she explained. The room has two beds, covered with neat cotton counterpanes, a sewing machine and three chairs, one a rocker.

She has been sewing on quilts and she proudly displayed three that she has recently pieced.

The girls' room has a bed, table, wardrobe, dresser and two rocking chairs. In the guest room is a neat bed-room suite, and a wardrobe, washstand, a rug and two chairs. John Wesley's room also serves as the pantry. Mary says that she keeps her canned fruit there; and she displayed the kitchen and dining-room, which are common in appearance but clean.

She said, "The girls warned me this morning that if they left without cleaning up the house, I would neglect it and company would surely come and now, sure enough, you're here."

Just then the door opened and her half-blind husband walked in. He appeared to be about seventy-five years old. He told me that he could see a little since he was operated on. He then proudly declared that he could work his own garden, and he then pointed out the window to prove it.

"I couldn't give satisfaction by hiring myself out to anyone else," he added, "but I can pick cotton a little. The bolls are so big and white that I can see many of them and feel the rest. So you see I can do a good day's work yet," he explained.

"Today, our new governor goes in office. I kept telling the old lady that I wish we had a radio so we could hear his inaugural address. Well, he has a load on his shoulders and I guess he is a lot like school teachers. They walk into the room the first morning with high hopes, but

before it's over, we are doing the best we can."

He went on about the Federal government, "I don't believe there's going to be any tenant farmers any more, since the government has fixed it so the tenant farmer can get half the subsidy. The landlords will just hire help and you can work it or let it alone which means that most of them will work at any price to keep from starving. The government has just made two classes of the American people. The lower class has turned to beggars; the higher class has turned to grafters. That comes from putting so much money in their control.

He then asked if I had read about the tenant farmers in Arkansas. Then he left the room to go out in the garden to work. I wondered where he got his information, until I noticed the Montgomery Advertiser and the Mobile Register lying on the sewing machine.

Mary was born in Monroe County, one of seven children. Her father, David McCants was a slave before the war. He didn't remember much about slavery, however, for his mother and father were freed when he was a child. They kept the name of McCants, their master.

When Mary was four years old, her father and his family moved to Wilcox County near Pineapple and lived there as a tenant farmers until she was grown. Before going there he had been a tenant farmer for David Watts.

In 1911 the family moved to Escambia County where farming conditions were better, and the father worked here for John Maxwell and Mr. Wagner until he died.

Mary again took up the conversation. "I stayed with my ma longer than any of her seven children. All the others married and left home and I decided to become a teacher. I begged my ma and pa to let me go to school. They finally consented to let me go to the Colored Industrial Seminary at Snow Hill. I worked there in the laundry for my board."

She sat for a while, gazing out the window.

"Then was happy days. I just loved it all. I finished the eleventh grade and took state examination. I then taught school for three years. Then I married at the age of twenty-five. I had done give up hopes of ever marrying by then, and sometimes I wish I never had."

She confessed that she had a very desperate love affair when she was very young. "Lord how I loved that man," she recalled. "He was no account so ma, she just broke it up. I grieved so hard after he married that the neighbors said it was a sin to covet another woman's husband. I went to church one day and the preacher said it was a shame and disgrace to grieve over spilt milk. I've seen him several times since and it seems now that I am just meeting a dear old friend.

"I was teaching at Wallace when Dock Hines' wife died. She was giving birth to a baby girl. It wasn't long before he came a courtin'. I decided that I was getting to be an old maid. If I ever married I had better take him. I never loved my old man but I respected him. After I bore him nine children, I couldn't give him up. He got sick and blind and I'm certain that it's my duty to keep up with him.

"After we were married, I went with him to Camden to live. He was teaching there. Dock taught school for twenty-five years. I was ailing that winter and was homesick for pa and ma. When school closed, we moved back to Escambia County.

"Dock kept teaching and pea-patching until three of my children were born. He only made \$27.00 per month and I can tell you there was hard times.

"He finally quit teaching and went to work at a sawmill for Mr. Harry Patterson. Pay was better there and he worked for fourteen years at this mill. In 1926 it closed down.

"By that time I had raised most of my family. Four of them had

died, the screech-owl screeched in the Chinaberry tree by the door. There was bad signs and I knowed right away that something bad would happen."

At this point Mary paused with a sorrowful sigh as these sad memories came back to her. She got up and walked about the floor before she continued her story.

After her children's death, her husband's eyes began to fail. He would not tell any of the family about it, but they could tell by his feeling and fumbling around. This incapacitated him for holding a job, and he has not worked regularly since.

These were hard times for Mary and her family. Old Dock lost his sight entirely. According to the doctors, a cataract had covered his eyes and sight was impossible without an operation. There was no money in this poor family for one.

Mary continued, "To keep from starving I gathered my four girls and John Wesley and went to the field to hoe. I put the baby in a corner of the fence in a big cotton basket, and there we hoed, picked cotton and strawberries from morning until dark. We kept together some way, sometimes I wonder how."

Mary was interrupted by John Wesley coming home from school. He is a big overgrown boy who will finish high school this year if he passes his grades. Mary ordered him out of the room to go help his father get the wood cut but <sup>as</sup> I looked out of the window, I could see him going to the playground with a ball under his arm. Mary saw him at the same time and declared, "That is the most trifling boy I have ever seen. I'll get him yet for this. I don't know what's goin' to become of him."

Like many of her race and sex it is plain that she doesn't put any dependence in any boy or man. It is further shown when she makes a

remark about Dock. "My ol' man is not brutal - jus' shiftless, but I guess it is because of his health."

Mary spoke of the possibilities of the future. "Now, if I can keep my girls at home for seven years longer, we can pay off the mortgage; but one of them has a suitor - a teacher at Freeseville who has been paying her court. If the other two has ever had a beau, I don't know it. I reckon though it would be better for them to marry before one of them should disgrace herself. But if I even so much as mention such things to them, it makes them mad. They always claim that they are old enough to take care of themselves. But I don't know and nobody else knows what a girl might do. After all my raising them right; I always made them go to the Methodist Church with me and tried to bring them up in the straight and narrow way; but I didn't spare the rod either. But if some wolf in sheep's clothing should ruin one of my daughters by big promises and honeyed words, I wouldn't leave it up to the Lord. No ma'am, not me."

She is one of the strictest members of the Methodist Church; and she can shout louder than most of them when the spirit gets her, she says.

Mary said of her husband, "We were speaking about Dock's eyes. He was a terrible care, a man ailing and me with a living to make, but one cold day I was sitting in my room - brooding, praying and wondering what we were going to do. We had no wood and nothing else such. When I heard a knock I went and opened the door. You could have knocked me down with a feather. Mr. Harry Patterson; a man Dock had worked for fourteen years, stood in the door. The spirit rose but I said to myself, 'Down spirit, wait 'til Marse Patterson goes home. Then you can do all the shouting you want.' He had heard of our plight and had come to see about taking the old man to a hospital for an operation. I have never been so happy since I was in in Snow Hill in the seminary."

Dock Hines was carried to the hospital and the cataract was removed, so that he can now see some out of that eye but a cataract has covered

the other one.

The girls came in from school and greeted us courteously. They were dressed alike in plaid skirts and red topper coats. Their mother's training showed in their pleasant manners and self-possession. Myrtice had a headache; so she lay down on the bed. Blona went to make a fire in the stove and fix supper. That was breakfast and supper when they got home from school. Myrtice, regardless of her headache, was in a talkative mood. She began to tell about incidents that had happened that day at school, and soon was telling me all about their school life.

"All the time that we were working in the field, Blona and I were planning to go to school. We didn't see how we could for we had no money, but we didn't give up hope. After we finished high school, we wrote to the Alabama State Teachers' College in Montgomery, the school for colored. The principal got a place for us to work in Cloverdale, with some of the rich white people and go to school. We borrowed some money from Mr. Jones, a banker, and promised to pay him in the summer by working on his farm. This we did. He was glad to help us. It didn't take much, just train fare and a few clothes. We worked hard at the white folks' house and went to school during the day. We stayed all that first winter.'

"The next year we couldn't be spared at home. Mama couldn't take the load by herself. Dorothy and John Wesley were still in high school at home. The next year Blona went back for four months, and the summer following, she went for three months. That winter we both stayed in school. Dorothy was large enough to work and help at home and Papa was assigned to teach an adult school.'

"Blona was able to teach the next winter but Papa lost his job after she began teaching. We have both been teaching for three years now and Dorothy, with the help of Federal aid, spent three years in Huntsville

school. She is now teaching in Columbia, Alabama. We miss her very much but we are making a living. When school closes, we work in the field."

Blons came in the room to announce the early supper. They were hungry because they hadn't eaten since breakfast. They were planning to practice their pupils in a play that the school was giving for the benefit of the library.

They say that their only recreation is school entertainments and church and Sunday School activities, but they make the most of this for Mary would never let them go to parties and now they never get invited.

As I left the house I wondered if education with the right kind of environment isn't the greatest boon for the young of any race. Even this colored family has made a pleasant life and they are useful citizens in comparison to many of their race.

These poor Negroes have worked out their own salvation with very little help from outsiders, and they are not sitting on the curbstones in town or on fence rails at home bewailing their fate and waiting to be taken care of by the community.

2/3/39

S.J.

Red file: Bowman

Dick and Charlie Gandy

Date Of Appt: December 28, 1938

Salary Per Mo: \$48.10

Hours Per Mo: 130

Classification: Writer

Full Name: Annie Leigh Bowman

Identification No: 0127-5505

Atmore Alabama

July 21, 1939

Dick and Charlie Gandy

(Ex- Slaves)

Annie L. Bowman

Identification No: OI27-  
5505

"Yes Miss ize libin on borrid time and de good lord has been good to me! Says, Uncle Dick Gandy as you come upon him chopping cotton in his field.

You can find him any day in the summer working on his five acre farm, chopping cotton, hoeing corn and sweet potatoes. Uncle Dick was born a slave in Georgia his master Mr. Orphan Gandy or Ole Marse as he calls him owned a big plantation and six hundred slaves in Macon Georgia.

"No Miss I dont member my own mammy. But I does member Liza de woman what took care ob me and raised me from a baby.

Uncle Dick says he was eight years old when Old Marse sold his plantation in Georgia and moved to Ala. He bought a big plantation about twenty miles from Greenville and brought all his slaves with him. It was here that he went through the horrors of the civil war. He was raised as a yard boy, taking care of the horses and dogs. His daily tssk at noon was to take the dogs on a four mile trip giving them plenty of exercise. He didn't have as hard a time as most of the other slaves claimed they had.

The happiest and saddest time of his life was during the auction sales. He somehow always managed to get his

his Ole Marse to let him go. Ole Marse would tell them it would be a good lesson to all of them, for if they wouldnt behave and work hard he would surely sell them which was a horrible thought to them all as they never knew what kind of a man would buy them.

When the wagons would come bringing the negroes to the auction block, all the prospecting buyers would be there. When the gong sounded, the negroes would come bounding out the wagon like a drove of black mules. There were blocks to mount the negroes on and they would look in their mouths, feel their muscles and have them prance about to show their activity, that was fun to him, but some times it was more than a body could stand , when they began separating the families, sometimes a woman was bought and they wouldn't want the children, they would be thrown back in the wagon and the moans would break your heart. There was no help for it and some woman would look out for them the best they could, while the mother would take hold of some other child that was left behind without its mother and soothe its cries the best they could while their hearts were breaking.

That was the worst part of slavery to him otherwise he says they were fed and clothed if not with the best it was good and substantial.

There was one incident that stands out in his memory which happened on the plantation in Georgia before they came to Alabama to live. If a slave did any thing that needed punishment , the others had to witness the punishment It happened in August on a hot day. The overseer in the feild had some trouble with the negroes and they decided

to kill him. It was alright for Ole Marse to lay the strap, but they couldn't stand for the overseer to touch them. There were six of the slaves who did the plotting but only two that did the actual killing. We were all ordered to witness the hanging and after these two were hung to punish the four others that were in on the murder plot, they had some branding irons red hot and branded each on the forehead.

"Now Miss dont think Ize takin de part of dese low down niggers, case som ob dem wus so bad dey had to be took care of som way. It was something like a convict farm.

His master fought all through the war, he staid on the farm and took care of his old Miss. He tells you he was twenty years old when the war closed. He dosn't know the month only the year, because his ole Miss kept all her niggers births by the year they were born. He is almosttynetyseven years old. He has his own sound teeth and has never had to wear glasses, he thinks it is because he never learned to read or write and had never used them in straining to see fine print. He has never been sick much and hasn't took a dose of medicine of any kind in six years. He is hale and hearty and is proud of the fact that he is the oldest man in Escambia county and is able to tend his little farm himself..

He married soon after the war closed and has had fifteen children. He doesn't seem to know where they all are , but he knows some of them are dead. After he was freed he says it was worse than slavery for a long time , he worked three years for thirty cents a day and

with his wifes help they managed some way. After raising a family of fifteen children his wife died. He then moved to Escambia county and settled in Atmore, where he worked in a saw mill for Mr. Carney until the mill closed and here in Atmore he married again. He had no children by his second wife who died fifteen years ago. and since then he has lived alone, doing his own cooking and taking care of himself in every way except his washing which he hires done.

While working at the mill he and his son bought twenty two acres of land to farm , his son died and this was too much for him to work so he sold all but five acres

Glancing around you see another colored man hobbling towards us . Look he says, there is my old friend Charlie; take a shot at him. He is eight years younger *than* Uncle Dick, but you wouldn't believe it, most people think ~~think~~ they are brothers, although they are not any blood kin. He tells you they both had the same master and of course they both went by the name of Gandy.

Charlie Gandy is not the free and happy man that Uncle Dick is, regardless of his eight years in his favor and that Uncle Dick nursed him when he was a baby and almost raised him, he looks years older, because of his bad health. The government gives each six dollars a month. They both are alone, each doing as the other does and *are* most always together. Perhaps it is because they *were raised the same* way , but Charlie seems a little bitter and thinks the government should do more for him as his father had run away and fought with Grants army.

Graham, T.A.

Date of Appt: December 28. 1938

Salary Per Mo: \$47.70

Hours Per Mo: 90

Classification: Writer

Full Name: Annie Leigh Bowman

Identification No: 0127-5505

Atmore, Alabama.

April 3, 1939.

T.A.Graham ( white )

(Executive)

Atmore, Alabama.

Annie L? Bowman ( writer )

With a big cigar tilted up in one corner of his mouth, T.A.Graham stepped from his car clad in a bright colored sport suit. In his hand he held proudly a wild turkey that he had killed on his week-end hunting trip in ~~the wilds~~ of Baldwin County, near Stockton. <sup>H.S.</sup> After receiving a few compliments on his marksmanship and gobbler, he remarks, "If there is anything that I like better than hunting, it's fishing."

If one is in doubt as to whether Mr.Graham is a sportsman or not, all he needs to do is to walk into his beautiful home. There are enough bear and deer skins, mounted heads and bodies of different animals to make a casual observer think that he was in a zoo.

Mr.Graham often says, " I reckon quite a few people wonder how I get off from my business so much, but I have made a plan to always get honest men with level heads, and give them an interest in my business so I can take things easy. It has failed sometimes; but I watch closely until I get the right kind,; and you can rest assured they won't fail me."

As he talks, one will find that he is engaged in several businesses and is executive in ~~each~~ nearly every one. He owns the controlling interest in a big wholesale grocery, beer, gas and oil business is director of the First National Bank of Atmore, where he has a big share, and has other property all over Escambia County.

Mr. Graham, a native of McRae, Georgia, came to Escambia County forty years ago, when he was only eighteen years old, to join his brother, John, who had bought two sections of heavily timbered land in the western part of the county named Little Rock. Here he was engaged in the turpentine business. John took him in as a partner; and since the pines were virgin and turpentine was at its highest price, the two men soon made a fortune off the little tract of land. As this section was densely forested, there were only a few inhabitants dwelling near by - three to be exact. The men brought negroes from Georgia to work, and soon white men began to move in to work and to make this new land their homes. They bought farms here and there, erected schools and churches and soon the land around became a desirable place to live.

After the boys had made a clear fortune, out of the clear sky, came a bomb shell, a law suit in which they, being the loser, lost everything they had. After this, there was nothing to do but to carry on and try to regain back that which they had lost. In spite of their misfortune they were still owners of the land, and soon they were on top again, making big money.

They continued on for several years, making money and spending it. Soon John's health failed. He was all for going back to Georgia but Tom wasn't ready yet. Tom believed that John, being more cautious than he in business, was afraid of his wild speculations. Tom always figured that if one didn't take a risk, he would stay in a rut and never get anywhere. Since Tom's brother was sick, they decided to dissolve partnership. Tom bought him out for approximately fifty thousand dollars.

Mr. Graham will glance up with his veiled eyes and tell you with a gentle drawl about his wild speculations. He says that he

continued running his still for several years after this and made money all the time.

You find that he is quite a sheik with the ladies. One of the old farmers living here when he arrived from Georgia had several children , one a beautiful little girl of eight years. He would bring her candy and chewing gum when he visited at her fathers home. He says he always meant to marry her if she ever become educated enough to meet his mother and sisters in equal socity.

The neighbors will tell you that he liked to put on a lot of style. This was during horse and buggy days, and he would drive a pair of fine spirited horses with a negro driver. He also carried another colored boy along to light his cigar. Now you never see him with out a cigar, which he considers his cheif luxury. He could drive to town and get the pick of any girl he wanted to carry riding.

Mr Graham gambled in cotton for several years and it is said that he once made twenty five thousand dollars in one deal. With this money he bought a block of dwelling houses and stores near the L.& N. depot. This block was called Graham block for some time. This he lets out for rent for a substantial sum although he has had to rebuild in brick by an ordinance of the city council. He says that that this has overpaid him two-fold and he also operates one of these on the corner as a garage and beer stand. He is doing well with this.

Mr. Graham was born in McRae Georgia in 1880. Of rich parantage. His father the late Judge Graham Of McRae was a planter who owned other business . was a very rich and a leader in the community where he lived. His mother was a member of a prominent family in Georgia. They married early in life. T.A. says at that time every body married young . There are five in this family, all are living. His oldest brother, also a Judge lives in McRae has been married twice. His son by his first wife practices law, and a daughter by his second wife is still in college. John his other brother , lives at Little Rock where he first settled, an old bachelor, but he is

still does business on a small scale. Abbie his oldest sister lives in Georgia with his mother and takes care of her. He speaks with pride of his mother who was ninety years old last November. Eva his younger sister, a widow won the world champion contest in California for the best typist. She has worked in Washington D.C. and was secretary for Governor Talmage while he held office in Georgia.

You find that T.A. finished high school when he was sixteen, and attended Emory college for nearly two years. Life was dull and monotonous to him in college. He liked adventure and work where things were doing. He left his college career where he was studying law and came to Alabama. Naturally being the baby he was some what spoiled and had his own way.

During his conversation you find that he has never regretted leaving home, for he found independence in working and making money which he had always wanted.

How did I get all this ? well, everything adds up. America is the sum of my desires, my skills, my conscience, my will power is myself.

I want the credit for what I've done, yet I've had plenty of help. You would think I must have a fairy godmother: and you would be right. She is my mother.

I hated school but she was always right behind me to get me off to school in time, and when I came home I had to get my lessons before I was allowed to go out with the boys to play.

She would say, you dont have to be a hoodlum just because the neighborhood is poor and sorry. You can be a gentleman always.

His formula for dealing with his fellow workers , and competitors <sup>is</sup> are simple. He says, I'll fight like hell to get a man's respect, Then lets what follows --admiration & take care of itself.

You find T.A. to be a true democrat, but his competitors say

that he votes which way he thinks will help his business best, nevertheless he has been known to spend fabulous sums to help in the democratic elections.

He is one of the pillars of the methodist church in the community where he lives and he gives freely to all charitable ~~institutions~~<sup>tutions</sup> ~~institutions~~.

He says, there are two things he doesn't mind doing: giving charity and paying his income tax for he feels that it will help others directly or indirectly, yet at times he is called on to frequent.

He again speaks of when he dissolved partnership with his brother. He lived in a little log shack on his place of business and had a negro woman to cook and keep house for him. Abbie Cunningham a young lady now and spending her time in college was considered the prettiest girl in Escambia Co. And his happiest times were when she spent her vacations at home.

During this time he was making money in various ways, with his his still and *Commissary* and speculating in cotton, he was buying up property in different places.

He enlisted as a private in the world war in 1916, but was turned down because of his health which had never been good, yet he bought up liberty bonds and did everything he could to help the cause.

The railroads were calling for timber during the war, and he got a contract to furnish all he could get. And you find that he never made less than one thousand dollars a month as long as they needed timber. He gave his reasons for making so much he owned his timber and the prices were higher than they had ever been since he could remember.

He says with a smile, after the war he thought seriously of settling down and being a fireside man, although he had to think

quite a while before he decided to take this step. He didn't have the time that he once had for frolicking, he become lonesome and things began to pall on him. So he got on the train, went to ~~Monty~~ Montgomery and sent Abbie a telegram where she was in school telling her, if she ever entended marrying him now was the time and to meet him in Montgomery . He says, he didnt' give her time to pack her things. She just threw what she could get hold of in a week end bag and met him in Montgomery that day and they were married that evening. They spent their honeymoon in Georgia. They lived at Little Rock a year . So he desided it would be better to move to town , where his wife would have more social enjoyments.

They lived in one of his houses on Graham block for sever-  
al years, and then built a beautiful home in town and he enter-  
tains lavishly.

In 1920 the Graham Brooks grocery store went into opera-  
tion, yet this nearly went bankrupt at one time. He says his  
clerks were inefficient: to get rid of his men he pretended to be  
broke and closed up to reopen again with a new force of clerks.  
and since then has been doing a big business and making money.  
All during the depression , when others were failing, we didn't  
do so well but our expenses were paid and we made a good profit.

When light wines and beer was legalized in Alabama. He  
had a monopoly on three counties , Escambia, Monroe, and Baldwin  
to sell beer wholesale, and he readily put in a big wholesale beer  
house and erected beer stands all over three counties. But since  
then he has lost the monopoly and others have taken some of his  
trade. He says, he loses all the time on this but he feels that  
in time he will get efficient men that will make good. He doesn't  
intend to give this up until he has made sure.

Mrs. Graham, who is a society belle and a big church  
worker in the methodist church. Says , she never has time to do

any social or church work any more, you see I am on the payroll. Yet you find that she still goes to Sunday school and belongs to one club, and she tells you that is the only way she has to meet her friends.

When she saw the beer business almost a failure, she ~~inde~~ induced T.A. to let her manage this part as he had so many other things to do.

You find she has no children but her baby brother lives near and she lavishes her affection on him. With his help she believes that they will make a success.

He tells you that on many instances he has failed and out of concern for his businesses means a living for at least five hundred fellows beings, he is obliged to search out some answer which he believes, and being convinced, he must convince others, so that he may carry on.

His next step after financing the beer business, was building up a wholesale gas and oil trade along with the beer.

He says, he has gas and oil at every one of his beer stands which number sixty in the three counties. He has trucks that bring the oil and gas from Mobile and is distributed to every place as needed.

You find that he finances the places for those who he ~~is~~ thinks are competent and they work up the customers, pay rent and a small per cent on the beer, gas and oil. It isn't long before he finds if they are honest and have any business qualities

The men on my pay rolls are on good terms with me. No ~~matter~~ <sup>now</sup> matter, ~~mad~~ I feel I never curse or lose my temper before them.

He says, it is not the cost of increased wages that he worries about, but the ever increasing taxes keep him on the jump. Why dont I shut down my business if things get to bad? I'll tell you why: taxes and the hundreds of mouths to feed

that would be laid off from work. I have to pay taxes and keep going whether I make a cent or not.

Naturally, I make a lot of money, Does it cost me a lot to live? well, that depends on what you call a lot. I can remember when twenty dollars a week was a lot. I can get rid of two thousand dollars a week now with less effort. Of course, the government helps me, but I still have a certain amount left. But if you should ask me what becomes of it I couldn't tell you. It just melts away.

He says, considering the numerous taxes he has to pay, there is so much time I have to lose with the government men, that he could spend otherwise profitably. Now understand he is not criticising the new deal, but at times it is a problem to him. He helped to put Roosevelt in office and is going to try to keep him there.

You find that he spends all his leisure hours hunting and fishing. He says, that if he didn't get out and rough it occassionly he would have been dead long ago.

Yes I worry about whats here to-day. But even more I'm worried about whats coming I'm a certain kind of crook if I try to limit wasteful productions. Yes, I worry, but after all, thats my job.

If I demand any one thing more than any other, it is this: I want some one who can help me with my problems. and my problems are to make more money, lower operating costs and to step up service.

Mrs T. A. Graham

Physical Description

She is a small woman and walks erect with a little stoop of her shoulders. She is very quick and nimble. She has large gray innocent looking eyes. Her hair is coal black and she wears it in a short bob. She uses the best language and is the life of her crowd. She dresses in modern style and is very neat.

Environment

Neighborhood:

Environment in this neighborhood is good. The citizens are well educated, and have a good background of family connections. There are five churches in walking distance, and a grammar and High school near which employ thirty or more teachers

Description Of House:

Their home is large with a brick foundation, it is painted white. It has eight rooms and is furnished with taste throughout with the best of furniture. A colored man is kept on the place to keep it in order.

T. A. Graham

### Physical Description

He is a tall slender man. He stands erect, and walks softly with his head to one side. His eyes are steel gray that has a veiled appearance as if he sees through you without being seen. His voice is soft which has a slight drawl and he puts great stress on his language which is always correct. His hair is iron gray a little bald on top, and his complexion is very fair. He is modern in his dress, and dresses in gay sport clothes on his hunting and fishing trips, and at informal affairs he always wears a tuxedo. You will always find him neat and clean.

T. A. Graham, Liquor Dealer  
Atmore, Alabama

(Escambia Co. #6)

Annie L. Bowman, writer  
Atmore, Alabama

R. V. Waldrep, revisor  
Editorial Department

*Approx 2,893 words*

"I WANT THE WORLD'S RESPECT"

With a big cigar tilted in one corner of his mouth, T. A. Graham stepped from his car. He wore a bright colored sports-suit. In his arms was a wild turkey that he had killed on a week-end hunting trip in Baldwin County, near Stockton.

He is a tall man, slender and erect; he walks softly, head on one side; and he looks from steel-gray eyes that are veiled, but penetrating. His voice as he spoke of his turkey gobbler drawled slightly yet his enunciation was good and he apparently strives for correct speech: He said, "If there's anything that I like better than hunting, it's fishing."

Mr. Graham entered his house with the turkey. His manner was casual as though bagging one of these wily birds was no unusual feat. In his large white-painted brick house are bear and deer skins; a number of mounted heads *animals* and ~~beds~~ are scattered about the rooms.

Mr. Graham said, as we were seated: "I reckon quite a few people wonder how I get off from my business so much, but when I hire anybody I have made a plan to always get an honest man with a level head. I give these men an interest in my business; so I can take things easy. My plan has failed

sometimes, but I watch closely and keep trying until I get the right kind.

When I find my man, you can rest assured he does not fail me."

He added that he is engaged in several business operations, and is an executive in each one. He owns a controlling interest in a large, wholesale grocery, beer, gas, and oil business. He is director of the First National Bank at Atmore, and he has large shares in other property in Escambia County.

Mr. Graham is a native of Macon, Georgia. He came to Escambia County forty years ago when he was only eighteen years old. He came to join his brother, John Graham, who had bought two sections of heavily timbered land in the western part of the county, at a place called Little Rock. At Little Rock John engaged in the turpentine business, and he sent for his eighteen year-old brother T. A. Graham to become his partner. Together the two men made a fortune from the little tract of virgin pine, as the turpentine they took from it was at its highest price. The section was densely forested; there were three inhabitants. The Graham brothers brought Negroes from Georgia to work for them. Soon white men began to move in, to build homes, to buy farms; schools were erected, also churches.

After the Graham boys had made a fortune, out of a clear came a bomb-shell. A law suit was begun that took everything they had. There was nothing

to do, but start all over again, but with the land they still owned, they began to go toward the top in money-making once more.

For several years they made money and spent money. John's health failed, and he decided to return to Georgia. T. A. wasn't ready to go. The two boys were different. T. A. thinks that John was over cautious in business and afraid of what he called "wild speculation." He believes that if you don't take a risk, you will stay in a rut and never get out. So the partnership, under these circumstances, was dissolved. T. A. bought his brother out for approximately fifty-thousand dollars.

Mr. Graham shifted himself in his chair; he lifted his head which is fringed with iron-gray hair and has a small bald spot. His dress is modern in cut and color. He looked from veiled eyes as he spoke of his "wild speculations" and his operation of the turpentine still and the money he made.

Mr. Graham used to be a great beau. One of the farmers living here when he arrived from Georgia had several children, one a little girl of eight. Mr. Graham brought her candy and chewing gum when he visited at her father's home, and he says: "I always meant to marry her if she ever became educated enough to meet my mother and sisters."

The neighbors say that Mr. Graham liked to put on a lot of style. Back in the horse and buggy days, he drove a fine pair of spirited horses and

kept a Negro driver. He also carried another Negro boy along to light his cigar. Now, he is never seen without a cigar; it is, he says, his chief luxury. The neighbors say he could drive to town and get the pick of any girl he wanted back when he was young.

After his venture in turpentine, Mr. Graham gambled in cotton. "I once made twenty-thousand dollars in one deal. With this money I bought a block of dwelling houses and stores near the L. & N. Depot. The block I bought was called 'Graham Block' for some time." He lets out his buildings for rent. "I make a substantial sum from the rent, although I had to rebuild in brick because of a city ordinance. "But", he said, "I was repaid two-fold." In one of the buildings he operates a garage and beer-stand.

Asked to tell more about his people, he said: "I was born in McRae, Georgia in 1880. My people were rich. My father was the late Judge Graham of McRae; he was a planter who owned several businesses. He was a leader in the community. My mother was a member of a prominent family. My father and mother married early in life, but everybody married young," added Mr. Graham. "There were five in our family, all are living. My oldest brother is a judge, lives in McRae, and has been married twice. His son, by his first wife, practices law; his daughter, by his second wife, is still in college. My other brother

is John; he lives at Little Rock where he and I had our business; John is a bachelor. He is still conservative and does business on a small scale. My oldest sister, Abbie, lives in Georgia with my mother and takes care of her." Mr. Graham spoke with pride of his mother: "She is ninety years old." Eva is his youngest sister; she is a widow, world champion typist in the California contest. Eva worked in Washington, D. C., and has been secretary to Governor Falmage, when he held office.

Mr. Graham said he finished high school when he was sixteen. "I attended Emory College for nearly two years. I got tired of life at College. I liked adventure and work that was accomplishing things. I left college while I was in the law school, and then I came to Alabama. Back then I was spoiled and headstrong; for I was the baby of the family.

"I have never regretted leaving home; I have found independence in my work. I have made money, as I had always wanted to."

I looked about the eight-room house, with the skins, the mounted heads and the animals; the Negro caretaker. "How did you get all this?"

"Well," he said, everything adds up. America is the sum of my desires. I have my skills, my conscience, my will power with which to work for the sum.

"I want credit for what I have done; yet I've had plenty of help. You

would think I must have a fairy godmother. You are right. She is my mother.

I hated school, but my mother was always behind me to get me there on time. When I came home, she made me get my lessons before I was allowed to play with the boys."

"She used to say: ' You don't have to be a hoodlum just because the neighborhood in which you happen to live is poor and sorry. You can be a gentleman always.'

"My formula for dealing with my fellow workers," he said; "is simple: I'll fight like hell to get a man's respect. Then I take what follows. With respect coming your way, admiration will take care of itself.

"I am a true Democrat, but my competitors say I vote the way that will be to the best interest of my business. Nevertheless I've spent a lot of money in helping the Democratic elections."

Mr. Graham is a Methodist, and he says of his charitable donations: "There are two things I don't mind doing: giving for charity and paying my income tax." He feels that charity and income tax helps others directly or indirectly. "Yet at times I am called on too frequently."

After a short silence, Mr. Graham returned to the subject he had already touched on. It was the dissolved partnership. After he and his brother

dissolved partnership, he lived in a little log shack on the grounds near his place of business. "I had a Negro woman to cook and keep house for me. Abbie Cunningham, of whom I spoke, then a child, spent her vacations with me, and it was the happiest time of my life when she was there with me. I was making money in various ways, with my turpentine still, commissary, and my speculation in cotton. I was buying up property in different places."

I asked him what part he played in the war, as it was evident he was of the proper age, and he said: "I enlisted as a private in the World War in 1916, but I was turned down because my health had never been good. I bought Liberty Bonds and did everything I could to help the cause.

"The railroads were calling for timber during the war, and I got a contract to furnish all I could obtain. I never made less than a thousand a month as long as the Government needed timber. The reason I made so much is because I owned the timberland and the prices were higher than anytime I can remember."

He said with a smile: "After the war, I thought seriously of settling down and being a fireside man, although I had to think quite a while before I decided to take this step. I took the step. It was lonesome and things had begun to pall. I missed the times I had had once. I missed the frolicking. I couldn't stand it any longer; so I got on the train, went to Montgomery and sent Abbie

a telegram to where she was in school. I told her if she ever intended marrying me now was the time. I told her to meet me in Montgomery. I didn't give her time to pack her things. She just threw what she could get hold of in a weekend bag and met me in Montgomery that day and we got married that evening. We spent our honeymoon in Georgia. For a year we lived in Little Rock, but we later decided it was better to move to town. My wife wanted to have more social pleasures. I agreed it was better.

"We lived in one of my houses on Graham Block for several years. Then we built a house in town and entertained our friends." He entertains lavishly.

"In 1920 I was interested in the Graham Brooks Grocery Store, but the concern nearly bankrupted at one time. My clerks were inefficient. To get rid of them I pretended I was broke and closed my doors. Shortly afterward I reopened with a new force of clerks. The concern has made money since then. All through the depression, when other concerns were failing, we didn't do so well, but our expenses were paid and we made a good profit.

"When light wines and beer were legalized in Alabama, I had a monopoly in three counties: Escambia, Monroe, and Baldwin. The monopoly gave me the right to sell wholesale. I put in a big wholesale beer house and erected beer stands all over three counties. But since then I have lost the monopoly and others have taken some of my trade. I lose all the time on this business, but I feel

that in time I will get efficient men. I don't intend to give up this business until I am sure there is no money in it."

Mrs. Graham, is active in club work and a worker in the Methodist Church.

She came into the room. She is a small woman and walks erectly like her husband.

She is quick and nimble in her movements. Her eyes as she looked at me were

large and innocent. Her hair is coal-black, cut and dressed in a short bob.

It is evident she is as modern in her tastes as her husband. Her language,

as she spoke of her church work was of the best.

"I never have the time I once had," she said, "to do social - or church work. I am on my husband's payroll. I still go to Sunday School and I visit one friend. The club and the Sunday School are my only means of making friends."

She said: "I help my husband the best I can. For instance, when I saw the beer business was a failure, I induced him to let me manage this part of his business, as he has so many other interests."

Mrs. Graham explained that she had no children, but that her baby brother lives near and she lavishes her affection on him.

Mr. Graham resumed his part in the conversation: "In many instances I have failed and out of concern for my business, on which means a living for 500 people, I have been obliged to search for some answer to my failure"

in order that I may not hurt my employees. When I find the answer, then I must convince others in order that they may carry on.

"For instance, when my beer business failed, I decided my course was to build up a wholesale and gas trade along with the beer. I have gas and oil re-tailed at every one of my stands; and there are sixty in the three counties. I have trucks that bring the oil and gas from Mobile and distribute to every place that oil and gas is needed.

"I finance the places of business for those who are competent and who will work up customers, pay rent, and a small percent of profit on their beer-, gas-, and oil-receipts. It isn't long before I find if they are honest and have business qualities. "The men on my payrolls are on good terms with me. No matter how I feel I never swear or lose my temper before them.

"It is not the cost of increased wages that I worry about, but the increasing taxes--they keep me on the jump. Why don't I shut down my business if things get too bad? I'll tell you why: the hundreds of mouths I have to feed. If I quit, they would be laid off. I have to pay taxes and keep going whether I make a cent or not.

"Naturally I make a lot of money... Does it cost me a lot to live? Well, that depends on what you call a lot. I can remember when twenty-dollars a week

was a lot. I can get rid of two-thousand dollars a week now with less effort.

Of course, the government helps me, but I still have a certain amount left.

But if you should ask me what becomes of it, I couldn't tell you. It just melts away." He dropped back in his seat with a sigh.

He resumed: "Considering the heavy taxes I must pay, there is a great deal of time I must lose with government men. I could spend that time profitably."

He bent forward, finger out: "Remember I am not criticising the New Deal, but at times it is a problem to me... I helped to put Roosevelt in office and I am going to try to keep him there."

"How do you spend your leisure time?"

"You saw me come in: hunting and fishing, they occupy my leisure. If I didn't get out and rough-it occasionally, well, I'd have been dead long ago...."

"Yes, yes, I worry about what's here today. But even more I'm worried about what's coming. I'd be a type of crook, if I didn't try to limit wasteful production. Yes, I worry, but after all, that is my job."

"If I demand any one thing more than any other, it is that I have efficient help. I can originate and plan - but I cannot execute completely without faithful helpers."

8/18/39

MS

McQUEEN, Boyd

Date Of Appt: December 28. 1938

Salary Per Mo: \$47.70

Hours Per Mo: 90

Classification: Writer

Full Name: Annie Leigh Bowman

Identification No: 0127-5505

March 7. 1939

Mrs. McQueen and son (white)

Atmore Ala.

(farmers)

Annie L. Bowman (writer)

It was Boyd McQueens habit, on leaving the dinner table in any afternoon, to drop in the swing and read the days mail before going out in the field to plow. On this particular afternoon, you will find <sup>him</sup> lolling on the front porch with his pipe, smoking peacefully and busily engaged in reading the daily papers that had just come in on the daily rural route. Near him in a rocker padded with cushions sat his mother a little old aristocratic lady reading letters from her girls who are away from home.

"Soft ? It isn't so soft, this business," he replies to my salutation and inquiry as to having a soft job running this farm. "I can remember when times were better and you might have called it soft then."

"No", spoke his mother, "And I can't do anything but sit and read".

As she talks, you find that she is seventy-three years old and has lived on this farm all her life. Her father, William Leatherwood, was one of the first settlers in this county. At that time he was considered a man of wealth. He was borne and raised here and owned several hundred <sup>acres</sup> of heavily timbered land. Since the country was thinly settled, he had hundreds of sheep and cattle that roamed all over the woods. With his stock and timber he had accumulated what was considered a small fortune.

Her mother, Susanna Emmons, who was raised here in the piney woods, was his childhood sweetheart and they were married very young. They had never been further than Pensacola Florida; and

then to carry their produce such as wool and fruits to town to sell. They traveled in an ox-cart which was the only mode of transit in those days. This slow method would take three or four days to make the trip. At the time when yellow fever was at it's worst, he would carry a lump of assafetida around his neck to keep off that dreadful disease. They would camp out at night and use a thousand dollar candlestick, which was a (negro slave) holding a lighted splinter for them to cook and eat by.

Her remarks about the people and their surroundings shows you that although they are poor now, they still stand far above the others in their community; and class distinction is shown plainly by her remarks. "This country was at one time a desirable place to live. Like everyone else in my time I was trained to an habitual belief in class system; and still in spite of Gone With The Wind and Southern Gentlemen I still believe that this democratic veiw is the real ruin of our country today. Why, the young people think nothing of marring<sup>y</sup> way beneath them. Just look at the children they raise."

You can see that in spite of this worn out farm and the country's trend toward democracy, the upper class, the middle class, the working class which meant ~~real~~ <sup>real</sup> differences by social arrangement in her time ~~by old traditions~~ still leaves its traces upon her world today. She was born in November, 1866 just after the Civil War on this same farm. She went to the old log school house, sat on the log plank seats and studied the Blueback Speller, Smith's Grammer, Davies Arithmetic and McDuffies Reader along with the rest of her class, her brothers and sisters until she was sixteen years old. She talks with pride

of her old home, which is just across the field from here. Even though it is over a hundred years old, it is still standing. It has been repaired, however, and the upper story has been torn down.

She says, " I married at sixteen, a long ways too soon for any girl. They never see or know anything about the pleasures of single life; but I was happy and it didn't make any difference for in my time this was a girl's only ambition and if you wasn't married before eighteen you was classed as an old maid. This is so different from my girls today."

She tells you that in the influx <sup>of men</sup> from Georgia and the Carolinas to work in the turpentine business was one, John McQueen, from South Carolina. They met and it was a quick courtship. They married that same year. He bought this forty acres joining her fathers and after her parents died, he bought in part of the land after it was divided. He made a good living and was the finest watermelon grower in Escambia County. There wasn't any trucks then to bring in produce from South Florida; so they could sell all thing they raised. John McQueen was a scientific farmer and people from all over the country would come and get his advice.

She speaks of her health and curvature of her spine which was injured by a fall from a horse when she was fourteen years old. After the strain of bearing and raising eight children, this has caused her to be almost bed-ridden at times. Her doctor whom she had placed so much confidence in had died a few months back and she feels like she is almost ruined.

You find that after Mr McQueen died twenty years ago they have had a hard time. Her children didn't know how to take the responsibility that was left for them to carry on. After struggling along as best they could for several years they saw that there wasn't a

a living for them both , they decided among them to turn the farm over to Boyd, the eldest and Price went to business school in Montgomery and worked in odd times with the Montgomery Advertiser. And he is now circulation manager in Augusta Georgia for the Augusta <sup>n</sup> Chronicle. Two of her girls are married and two of them are teaching. Clara has been teaching in Montgomery for twelve years. Bessie May has been teaching in Bay Minette for eight years. Two of her children are dead and you find that they lean on Clara for help to hold their home together.

This three hundred acre farm has been advertised for sale stock and all for twelve thousand dollars. But it was hard to sell. No one had the money that wanted to buy. They were on a trade with the government last year, but this was more land than they needed. And they found it was to be paid like rent and were afraid they would have to take it back after the renters had let the place run down worse than it already was.

Her main purpose in selling was to move to town to give her children better advantages socially and to get rid of the hard labor labors of farm life.

As she talks, you find that although Boyd is fifty two years old, and he is still single, but it is his mothers dearest wish that he would find some nice girl to make a home for him after she is gone. She feels that he is lonely as he cant get out in company as he should, because he has to stay with her most of the time. In spite of her difficulties she has managed to send two of her <sup>girls</sup> girls through college. Or the ones that would take an education, this has been a source of real pleasure to her as well as financial help.

She cant do much, but sits around directing Nannie the colored cook whom she raised and trained from a little girl, listening to the radio, reading the daily papers and moderns magazines to keep up with

the  
the current news.

And she thinks we have a wonderful President, that he is equal to Woodrow Wilson. She says she could never have carrird her girls through college, if the right kindoof man had not been in office. Cotton was up to thirty cents a pound. And during this time they were were way a head.

She speaks of her minister and you find that she has always belonged to the baptist church at Sardis. Mr. McQueen worshiped in the methodist church and the children were equally divided. She dos'nt think it makes any difference, just so they worship in some church.

She feels that her condition is a draw back to the family as they have to use hired help all the time, and a nurse most of the time. The Dr. bills are enormous.

After finishing the plot of ground he was preparing for irish potatoes for early market. Boyd came in and after taking his favorite place in the swing, filling his pipe; he picked up the paper to finish the news and talked as he read. "Yes we have had a pretty hard time for the last few years. Try as I would I couldn't make ends meet. Mama and the girls lay the blame on me as poor management, but with the depression, low price of cotton and the expense of taking care of my tenants, it has been real hard. They talk about the poor tenant farmer, but I can tell you right now the poor land owner needs a break!

You find that he is running his mothers farm and has two hundred acres of land in cultivation. He says that before the subsidy was divided with the tenant farmer, they had something to depend on to build up the place, where they could have help. Although they have four tenant farmers on the place, they havn't made enough to carry them through until the next crop is made. This year they will have to borrow money from the bank to start their farm running. And they

have found this method much cheaper than having the stores to ~~advance~~ advance them.

"You spoke of the A.A.A. Why yes, I guess it has helped some. One thing it has taught me, that we farmers will have to diversify our farming and depend more on live stock. We have got to get away from the one cash crop system. I see that I will have to stay here and I am trying to learn all I can."

You find from his talk that he never misses a farmers meeting, while he doesn't do or agree with everything they say. He finds he is not too old to learn.

If things turn out right for him, he expects to plant a cover crop to help enrich the soil by planting summer legumes in the corn this summer and winter legumes this fall.

And he explains to me that the Ala. experiment Station has recommended applying lime and phosphate, and planting a mixture of clover and grasses on his pasture to increase the amount of grazing for his live stock. This will take time and be expensive for him at first but with careful planning and hard work, he hopes to get the results his father had after three or four years.

Times are not like they were when his father was living. They all worked and there were no hired help or tenant farmers on the place. His mother and sisters did all the house work. Living ~~expens~~ expenses have increased alarmingly and they find <sup>it</sup> hard to adjust themselves to the hard ships of life.

Walking over this farm, he points out and tells you how he intends to run it this year. His hog pasture, he tells you is where his father had always kept his hogs and he had never tried to do any thing to enrich the land, but this year with the help of the Ala. experiment Station expects to make all the meat for home use, tenants and a surplus for the ever ready market. Most of their cattle are grazing in the woods. For they have no stock

law in Escambia County. He says, they have forty head in the woods and are raising more which they will sell to the market as they need the money. The cows come up every night to shelter and are given a handful of shucks and hay to keep them coming home. He has never lost any like the most of the people, when the cattle rustlers caused such a tumult in this county last year. But the chicken thieves made such an inroad on their chickens, they were forced to buy more and keep them locked up in a strong chicken house at night.

He has an acre that is reserved for their minister, which had been plowed first. It is characteristic of this community to reserve one acre for church contribution and what is raised on this plot of ground regardless of how much or how little, this was carefully put away for their part as church dues.

He spends his leisure hours hunting and fishing on the Escambia River, which is back of their farm. He says, exactly a mile from his corn crib. And relates a humorous tale of outwitting the law. The game season being over, he and his companions had decided they would like some fish for supper and set off for the river. They were returning home with a corn sack, each full of sucker fish, for the river abounds with sucker and trout fish. Being tired he was lagging behind out of sight of the others when he was met by the game warden. He was suspicious and asked him what was in the sack and was told that he had borrowed some corn from a neighbor. The warden was satisfied. But those ahead didn't think in time and it cost them each one hundred dollars. But they abided their time for revenge. And one day in Flomaton these men being half drunk, they found this warden on the street and with combined force gave him a good beating.

His views on modern women are not very complimentary. He thinks they have degenerated from a once pure ethereal characters

to painted hoodlums. Bein the old time southern gentleman type He finds it hard to believe that there are many good women to-day and says he will never marry. For who wants a woman with dresses up to their knees, smoking cigarets, drinking and gambling for the mother of their children.

On leaving this farm, you find this self made man has found that the one cash crop system will have to be abandoned and in its place if he succeeds he will have to use the new methods of farming. And must deal with conditions as they are not as he wishes them to be And <sup>he</sup> has recognised the fact that under no possible program will cotton produce enough income to provide a decent standard of living for all of those who are engaged in producing it.

That he cant live as his ancestors did that if you prosper you will have to use the thread that weaves the many patterns into one design, that gives a feeling of oneness, with others, who as he, are struggling for better and richer living.

Mrs. Lizzie McQueen

Neighborhood:

The people in this neighborhood are old settlers and own their homes, which they inherited from their ancestors; who had homesteaded here when government land was open to settlers. They are of the ignorant type and are not very progressive.

For years they had no schools, nearer than five miles. Since these people cared so little for education, they failed to prepare a way for the children to go.

This is a baptist community, although the nearest church is five miles away.

Of recent years they have had schools that teach through the sixth grade and busses that carry those who are ready for higher grades to consolidated schools.

House:

The house is built in an L shape and is composed of six rooms. There are two rooms on one side, a guest room and a living room that extends on the front. Four rooms are on the opposite side. Boyds room is connected to the living room by a small narrow hall. Mrs. McQueens room is next then the dinning room and kitchen. There is a long narrow porch that extends all around the front and back porch. The house is painted red and is covered with a tin roofing.

The house is inexpensively furnished but with good taste and care.

The lawns is spaciouly dotted with flowers and shrubs, and an old pear tree that has stood in the corner of the front yard for ages is covered with white blossoms <sup>to</sup> lends a charm. *very*

The house and surroundings are spotlessly clean.

Physical Description:

Boyd McQueen is a small man, weighing about 120lbs. He steps quickly with a slight stoop of the shoulders. He has red hair, black eyes, red freckled face and is very fair. His voice is loud and he expresses himself with many gestures. He is irritable, quick tempered and very positive with his likes and dislikes.

Physical Description:

Mrs. McQueen is very small, with a curvature of the spine that causes her to hump and gives you the impression that she is a hunchback. She walks with a crutch most of the time. Her hair is snow white and she combs it slick with a coil at the back. Her eyes are blue and her complexion is very fair. Her voice is a low course monotone. She has no characteristic gestures and always dresses neatly and with great care.

Annie Leigh Bowman  
Escombria Co.

Mrs Sue Troutman

#### Physical Description

Miss Sue is not a very large woman, but is low and very fat. She weighs one hundred and sixty pounds. She walks slowly with a bounce and is inclined toward being a little stoop shouldered. Her hair once black is gray and she wears it with a long curled bob. Her eyes are brown and she has a very dark complexion. She talks slowly with a coarse brogue and cannot pronounce her words very plain. She is very dignified and sits quiet and composed as she converses. She dresses plain although her clothes are made of the best material. And is moderately neat.

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page #1 is missing*

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Classification: Writer

Full Name: Annie Leigh Bowman

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October 1926 she organizing Worthy Matron of Beck Chapter No 371 Order of Eastern Star.

She organized the Red Cross Chapter here and is now Chairman of Wilcox Women N. R. A.

She is still Chairman of Wilcox Women's Democratic Club. She is noted as an organizer and also for her zeal and efficiency in office and gives enthusiasm to her co-workers, Though she is a great grandmother she still has time to work of her different organizations, she is still very active and in addition to looking well "to the ways of her house hold". She has time to do beautiful handwork, knitting and crocheting and she is most skilful in all culinary arts. Only last June she received the Orchid from the Birmingham News for her outstanding work in church, Civic, Patriotic, Red Cross, Good Roads and World War Work. A Wilcoxian of whom we are and should be justly proud