

## [Miss Henrietta C. Dozier]

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March 1, 1939.

Miss Henrietta C. Dozier

Architect

415 Peninsular Life Bldg

Jacksonville, Florida.

Rose Shepherd, Writer.

MISS HENRIETTA C. DOZIER, ARCHITECT.

Miss Dozier was visited in her office, one of a suite of two rooms which she shares with a local drainage engineer. The walls were adorned with numerous photographs of homes, residences and apartments she has designed and planned in her many years' residence in Jacksonville, and other new buildings in the course of construction. A rather comprehensive architectural library - books of design by leading authorities, photographs, magazines of the craft - filled the ten shelves of the open bookcase by the east window, flanked by a long drawing board with its high stool.

Opposite, at the roomy office desk, sat Miss Dozier, a rather attractive slender woman, with gray hair fashioned in a simple knot on the crown of her head, steel grey eyes, a mobile face, and dressed in a plain black print dress with [organgy?] collar adorned with small red hand-embroidered rosebuds with green stems and leaves.

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"I do not know whether my life history will be of any interest[?]" she said, "but, believe me, I have always lived! I love life and I want / to live just as long as I can be of any use.

"My father, Henry Cuttine Dozier, came from Georgetown, South Carolina to Fernandina, Florida with Walter Coachman, Sr., shortly before the War between the States. My mother was Cornelia Ann [Scriven?], South Carolina.

"My ancestors on my father's side were French and English,

2

"My mother's family were of French, English, Scotch and Welsh extraction - among them the Duponts, Landgrave Smith, of South Carolina, who was my mother's grandfather, John Scriven, a Georgia Patriot, and his brother, General James Scriven, of Revolutionary War fame.

"I was born in Fernandina in 1874. My father had died about four months previous. When I was a year and a half old, my mother moved to Atlanta - there was an older brother, Scriven, and a sister, Louise, two years older than I. My early education was secured in the public schools of Atlanta.

"How did I happen to take up architecture - an unusual occupation for a woman? Well, even in my childhood I wanted to study architecture, and have drawn plans since I was seven. In fact, when I was just a little tot I used to draft patterns for doll dresses for my own and the neighbor children's dolls. So it seemed the natural thing when I reached the age to decide what my life work was to be, to select architecture as a vocation.

"By the time I had finished high school, however, I had also become interested in astronomy, and I have often wondered whether I might not have attained more of a monetary success in that field; at least, there would not have been such enormous

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competition. I have always kept up my interest in astronomy, and study the subject seriously whenever I have the opportunity, so I may say that is my [avocation?].

"I served an apprenticeship of one year in an architect's office in Atlanta, then attended Pratt Institute for two years, afterwards enrolling at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in Boston, taking the full four years' course and graduating in 1899 with a B. S. degree in architecture.

"I practiced in Atlanta for thirteen and one-half years, coming to Jacksonville November 1, 1914.

"During the World War I was connected with the Engineering Department of the City of Jacksonville. I opened my own office in the [Bisbee?] Building in 1918, moving to the Barnett Building in 1926, being the second tenant to sign a contract for office space in this splendid new building, where I remained until the depression quite eliminated me - in fact, all architects and building engineers suffered severe curtailment of their business activities during this period - then located in the Peninsular Life Insurance Building, where I have had my office continuously since 1936.

"Probably my most outstanding piece of work in Atlanta is the Southern Ruralist Building, located on Hunter Street near Washington, built for the Episcopal Church. I used to do all of the plans for building authorized by Bishop Cleland Kinlock Nelson of that diocese.

"In Jacksonville, the Federal Reserve Bank Building, southwest corner of Church and Hogan Streets, on which I was associate architect, is one of which I am always very proud. This building completed in 1924 is one on which the 'shifting sands of time' have had no effect, for its foundations are firmly anchored on a clay bed which extends two and one-half feet below the deepest footings. On account of the mean 13-ft. above water level of Jacksonville, it is sometimes a difficult engineering problem to secure firm foundations for large buildings and skyscrapers, but the Federal Reserve Bank is well built and soundly constructed and, I am happy to say, after its constant use all of these years, with heavy

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installations of gratings, shelving, massive safes with heavy combination doors, there is not a crack in the entire building.

“One of the most interesting assignments I ever had was the residence built for the Charles N. [Welshans?]' at Goodwin Street and the St. Johns River. It faces the river, is almost pure Georgian in style, and centering the front entrance is a lovely circular stairway which winds gracefully to the second floor. This residence is now the home of Dr. Thomas W. Palmer.

“Another splendid home for which I designed the plans and supervised building is that of Dr. W. Herbert Adams, on River Boulevard.

“A church - St. Paul's Negro Episcopal - on Newman Street is one of the best examples of English architecture in Jacksonville, with the possible exception of the Church of the Good Shepherd. The negro mechanics of the congregation built the church, giving their services free. They changed the inside somewhat, but the outside is practically as I designed it, and is a beautiful example of its kind.

5

“The greater part of my work has been residences, apartments, and small churches.

“What do I think of the modernistic trends in architecture? I do not like it - in fact, I consider it only a fad and, while I am no prophet, will give it about five years to wear itself out. Speaking of [prophets?], I did, however, predict a five years' existence for the craze for the Florida-Mediterranean type of construction, and it did last for just about that length of time. One squibb in an architectural magazine recently referred to the modernistic as ‘nudist architecture’ which, in my opinion, very aptly described it.

“One of the first residences I built after I graduated was that of Mr. John C. Cooper, Sr., southwest corner of Market and Duval Streets, Jacksonville. It was completed in 1902. This was just after the fire of 1901 that wiped out all residences in that section. This house

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is in good condition and still occupied by Mrs. Cooper as a home. The same year I also built three houses on Monroe Street for my aunt, Mrs. C. P. Cooper. They are also still standing and have been occupied continuously. This is the reason I contend that if you build a house which is in good style at the time and of first class materials, it is always good. This modernistic fad is 'jazz architecture' and will not, in my opinion, last for any considerable period.

"Furthermore, I believe northern styles are absolutely unsuited to this State. Every house should be designed for the climate and all materials should be suitable to this climate. I believe wherever it is possible it is wisdom to use all Florida materials, also Florida labor.

"For the houses I build, all material is purchased right here in Jacksonville.

"Air conditioning? Yes, as a means to further comfort at all seasons of the year. I believe in air conditioning of residences and other buildings. I use the gravity system - a special ventilator in the roof, arranging it to take advantage of the natural law that hot air will rise and pass out through the ventilator, with the cool air replacing it from the bottom - a continuous circulation. This can be put in residences and many other classes of buildings. It is not as quick as some other much advertised systems, but it is reliable and satisfactory and there is no cost for upkeep - just the original outlay for the initial installation.

"Business? When I came to Jacksonville, during the World War period and [immediately?] afterwards, building was dead as a mackerel. Then the boom caused some excitement in building, but the depression brought another slump. Now government stimulation has increased and demand for homes, and the 'own your own home' slogan has instigated the demand for new domiciles by persons who never before had any ambitions in this direction.

"However, the greater part of those homes built with government loans are of very flimsy construction. Most of them are erected without architectural supervision, with no regard either for quality of materials or workmanship. They are built of tinned [(turpentine)?]

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timbers, bleached as white as paper, and will not, in my opinion last out the term of years of the government loan. The lumber companies handle most of the financing and construction of these homes, [ranging?] from a top cost of \$3,500 downward, and the owners themselves seem unaware of or indifferent to the type of construction they are obligating themselves to pay for in installments 7 over a considerable period of years.

“The houses I build I insist must be constructed of untapped timber, full of rosin. These will endure and will really give good service for the money invested.

“I consider the best house for this climate, where everything permits, is the rammed earth construction, like that of Mexico and some of the Mediterranean countries. A great many homes in California are of this type - the earth put in like poured concrete and rammed down. This construction costs no more than a frame residence of the same proportions, and will last for two or three generations.

“Do I believe in people owning their own homes? I do not know; young people, yes; but for the majority of persons, no. My sentiments on this subject are expressed in excerpts from the very able article printed in the Philadelphia Record of May 15, 1938, written by Stewart Chase of the Survey Graphic, in which Mr. Chase says:

“Home is an unsafe investment. I advise most wage earners to rent; and most builders who do not wish to be caught in the next real estate debacle, to build for renters. Home ownership brings great hazards - foreclosure and loss of equity to the owner.

‘In 1934 in this city (Philadelphia) a count showed 433,140 residential structures, out of which no less than 40 percent were foreclosed during the preceding period of six years (from 1928) - not including the very considerable number [rescued?] at the last minute by the federal government through the Home Owners' Loan Corporation. Four out of ten homes down the chute. This situation prevails throughout the United States.

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'the building industry is not yet equipped to furnish in most sections of the country a sound modern dwelling unit for a family that cannot pay \$30 a month, which is the limit for most dwellers . . . . The way out is, therefore, in the rental housing field. For many workers who cannot afford accommodations offered by the private home can yet have them at costs they can afford by renting. And for rental projects there are today many advantages.'

"This condition prevails generally, in Jacksonville as well as other sections. Very few are able to carry a mortgage on their home or a loan to its conclusion; and when they cannot keep up their payments, they not only lose their home and all they have paid in and improvements made at their own expense thereon, but they lose their equity as well, and have nothing with which to start over again.

"Religion? I am an [Episcopalian?] - died in the wool, so to speak. I am a firm believer in the influence of the church. If it were not for the church, the world would be in a much worse shape than it is today. It is the 'anchor to windward' for every human being.

"Yes, I vote. This is the individual's priceless privilege and duty. As to national politics, I consider some of the New Deal's policies good, some ought to be changed. I think President Roosevelt is too radical. His first administration was splendid, his remedial legislation was most noteworthy, and he no doubt saved the country from a revolution; but now he has too much power. The power should go back to congress. I think, too, that President Roosevelt has been most unfortunate in his advisers.

9

"As far as the South is concerned, no man above the Mason and Dixon line does anything but exploit the South - they still think we are back in the Reconstruction days. If the South votes as a solid unit, we will get somewhere; if we do not, we will simply be ruined. If any section can work out a condition like that in which we were left in the War between the States and the Reconstruction period, with the carpetbaggers around [out necks?] - and

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without any help or whining, remember - then we can take care of our problems in any situation.

“If the Roosevelt administration does not stop this class legislation, it will result in dire consequences. The last le election went to his head, and I most certainly would not vote for him for a third term. For that matter, I would not favor a third term for any president.”

At this point, Mr. Ulrich, for whom Miss Dozier is erecting a home in the San Jose section, South Jacksonville, came in with a worried look on his face, saying he had just been out to note progress and was not satisfied with the [proposed?] location of a downspout which he feared would drain the water into a court, causing a mudhole.

“I forgot to tell you I have changed that,” said Miss Dozier, and her deft hands quickly drew a penciled diagram, showing the downspout carried to the far side of the building where it would drain into the concrete driveway. Mr. Ulrich look much relieved.

“By the way, “she said[, ?] “You can begin on the landscaping Monday. The sooner the better, now. First plant centipede grass, then sow rye on top. When the rye attains its growth, cut it, but do not turn the sod under - that is where a great many people make a mistake.

10

“The general opinion prevails that rye acts as a fertilizer. It does more than this - a good stand of rye holds the roots of the planted grass on new ground, gausing causing the grass to take firm hold, and produces the prettiest lawns you can imagine.”

The telephone rang - a contractor on another piece of work. “No, don't make any changes. I'll be out the first thing in the morning, and we will decide then.”

She resumed her seat at the desk. “That was the electrical contractor; he wants to put the light over the sink in the kitchen, but that cannot be done on account of the plumbing



## Library of Congress

pipes; the light will have to go over the cabinet. You have to watch those contractors constantly so that everything is carried out according to schedule.”

A dark haired girl came in rather timidly.

“How do you do, Miss Marks, come [in?]” cordially Miss Dozier greeted her.

“You know, Miss Dozier, that Morrison Smith is reducing his force, and I am leaving Sunday morning for Savannah, and if I cannot obtain a position there, will go on to Atlanta. I thought perhaps you might refer me to architects in those cities, which would be lots of help.”

“I can, and I most certainly will.” Miss Dozier went to her filing cabinet and in [a few ifew?] minutes supplied the waiting stenographer and office assistant with a list of six names in Savannah and eight in Atlanta - architects whom she knew personally, some of whom she had trained as young fledglings in the architectural world - and after being the recipient of cordial good wishes for success in her new field, Miss Marks departed, with a little more assurance of success than when she came in.

11

“You have trained a good many young people in your office, haven't you, Miss Dozier?” I queried.

“Yes, there have been twenty-four in all - four of them women. Some I have lost track of, but among the outstanding successes have been W. C. (Dick[ [?]?] Vaughan, with the Government Engineering office, of Jacksonville; Charles Bosenburg, with the City of Jacksonville Engineers' Office; young Charles Daniel, of Daniel and Buntell, one of the leading architectural firms of Atlanta; Wilford Keel, in charge of the Chase & Co. (Atlanta) branch in Albany, Georgia; Charles Hayes, of Atlanta, a graduate of Georgia Tech, also the M. I. T. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, now located in Cambridge, Massachusetts).

## Library of Congress

“There were a number also who started with me, but did not show sufficient aptitude, so I discouraged them, [advising?] them to take up some other line of work. You know architects are rather like poets - they are born, not made. And since the field requires long, expensive training, it was only kindness to advise those young people who positively had no qualifications for the work to discontinue their efforts in this line.

“What about the four girls? Oh, they worked awhile, then got married.

“Do I have any hobbies? Yes, geneology is my pet hobby, and I am registered with the American Institute of Geneology.

“I am also very fond of fishing, and fishing in Florida waters is the best ever! But I am so busy I do not get much time to devote to it these days.” 26008

March 10, 1939

Miss Henrietta C. Dozier

Architect

(additional)

415 Pen. Life Bldg.,

Rose Shepherd, Writer.

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(Additional)

“Were there any women interested in studying architecture when I first took it up? Yes, when I matriculated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in Boston, in 1895, there were two other women in the class. But they dropped out in the second year, and I was

## Library of Congress

the only woman member to be graduated in 1899. I have been a 'lone wolf' right along. I have never had any woman associate in my work, and so far as I know have never had any competition in this line in Jacksonville.

"I have always had to compete with men, yes. In submitting designs, plans, bids, I have never asked any consideration at any time because I happened to be a woman; I put all my cards on the table in fair and honest competition, and ask only consideration on the same basis.

For the most part I have been treated fairly. I remember one instance when designs were asked for the State and County Building in Atlanta, I went to the county officials, in the confidence of youth - it was in 1904 - but I knew what splendid training I had received, and stated brashly I would like to have this job.

"They said, 'We are sorry, Miss Dozier, but we cannot give it to you because you are not a voter.'

"Well, that was a new argument and was my first experience with officials' playing of politics with the tax-payers' money.

2

Miss Dozier - (additional)

"Then, when I came to Jacksonville and had done considerable local work to which I could point with pride, I contacted the Duval County Board of Public Instruction when a new county school was under consideration.

"I felt my accomplishments in this respect and my standing as a resident of Jacksonville would entitle me to compete on this job, for which an allocation in the amount of \$100,000 had been proposed. When I looked at the plans, however, and read the specifications I realized it would run at least another \$100,000 over this amount, so I immediately

## Library of Congress

sought out the Chairman of the Board and patiently explained to him in detail why, in my estimation, unless the plans were curtailed in some respects, the work would approximate the higher figure.

“Imagine my surprise a week later to read a published report of a school board meeting, in which it was announced the contract had been given to a man, a local resident, as there was only one other bid and it was approximately twice as high. The completed job finally reached the appalling figure of \$250,000, the tax-payers were bonded, and in the end paid that amount. Everything was under cover, but it was a ‘political’ job, nevertheless, and it was my pleasure to so inform the board later on, reminding them that my bid was for \$200,000. Who got the \$50,000? Well, I leave that for you to surmise.

“Then in 1925 the Women's Club of Jacksonville, of which I had been a member for a number of years, transferred their old clubhouse at 18 East Duval Street to the City of Jacksonville and purchased a location on the St. Johns riverfront at 861 Riverside.

3

“I submitted my designs, asking for consideration on account of my membership in the club. The job was given to a man, whose wife was a member also, and who I learned had bought a considerable quantity of the bonds then being offered to finance the new building.

“Again it was my great pleasure to go before the board of this organization, and give them my personal opinion of such ‘political bargaining.’ It is needless to say, I withdrew my membership, as it has never been my policy to belong to any organization engaged in unfair dealings. Were their faces red? I'll say they were!

“On the whole, I have had only courtesy and consideration in my competition with men in my work. During my thirteen and one-half years in Atlanta, I dealt with the same contractors and subcontractors most of the time, and had the greatest cooperation possible.

## Library of Congress

“There was one instance of a crazy plumber in Atlanta that maybe caused me a gray hair or two. He was working on a residence building, and when I went on the job as a matter of routine inspection early one morning, I noticed he had roughed in the plumbing all wrong. I called his attention to it, as a matter of course, and without any warning at all, he picked up a 2 by 4 and came at me, saying: ‘God A’mighty never intended a man to be bossed by a woman!’ I thought my time had come as he advanced toward me with the heavy board in his right hand, which he was wielding as a most formidable shillalah. Just in the nick of time, the contractor appeared on the scene and grabbed him, having a rather hard time to subdue him and get the club away from him. He had been crazy all the time, but I was not aware of it, and after 4 this incident he was adjudged insane and placed in an institution.

“Once I get in with people , contractors, tenants, clients or organizations and the they come to know me, I never have any trouble about my work or retaining their friendship. But there is one thing I will not do, and that is carry a ‘political club.’ I get the assignment on my own merits and the quality of my work, or not at all.

“As I said about the Atlanta Courthouse, this work was refused me because I was not a voter, so they said. When women obtained suffrage in 1920. I became a voter ever since, so on the school job, I was not considered - even though a voter - but politicians usually twist things to suit themselves.

“I have traveled considerably and have had opportunity to study architecture in the different sections of the United States. Also, in 1904 I went on a Cook's tour of Europe. The friend, who was to accompany me and whose relatives we were to visit in France, suffered a death in her family which caused her to cancel all her plans, so I went on alone.

“Strange to say, the architecture of Europe did not particularly interest me. You see in school and afterwards we had studied prints of the old buildings of renown, and when I came upon the original it was so familiar, I felt like saying, ‘Oh! [hello,?] I remember you,’ like I would to an old friend.

## Library of Congress

“What impressed me most was the flowers, such flowers! From the time I arrived at Antwerp until I left Italy I was amazed at the beauty and brilliance of the wild flowers. In the Italian Alps there were blue sheets of purple violets and yellow buttercups, with a line drawn definitely between them, where the blue ended and the yellow began. And one whole canyon was crimson with poppies.

“I was disappointed with the Coliseum. It looked like a miniature to me - I had such enormous ideas..”

A young man appeared in the door with a small bundle under his arm, which he rather deftly explained was a model of the new “Arch-lex” type of garage door. Miss Dozier asked him to come in, and he set the miniature up on the floor, showing the metal closing apparatus with a chain-pull that automatically opened or locked the door either from the outside or inside, with fittings of Yale lock and key for the outside.

“I have been reading about this new invention in one of the metal trade magazines, and I was sold on it from the illustrations,” said Miss Dozier, as she fingered the pictured [?] folder he handed her. Noting the name at the bottom -“J. Miles Lewis,” she exclaimed:

“Look here, young man, do you come from the Miles Lewises of South Carolina?”

“I wouldn't be surprised,” said the young man. “I am a redheaded son of Georgia myself, but some of my ancestors came from South Carolina?”

“Well, if you are related to those Lewises, you had a Dozier for a great-grandmother,” said Miss Dozier, switching the conversation from salesmanship to her hobby of genealogy.

“I have a cousin here in Jacksonville who is a ‘bug’ on that stuff. She keeps up with all branches of the family tree, and I'll ask her tonight.”

## Library of Congress

"You do that and 'phone me tomorrow. I'd like to know the ramifications of the Georgia branch of the Lewises."

6

"What about the Arch-Lex?" queries young [J.?] Miles Lewis.

"I have already recommended it to one of my clients, Mr. Ulrich, and if you'll go see him at his office in the Blum Building, he'll buy one. Only, he does not want the outside lock. You see his garage adjoins his residence and he plans to go through the kitchen to unlock the garage on driving in."

Young Mr. Lewis' face lit up eagerly, as he said: "I have seen him - got his name from the building permits, and he has purchased one of my locks. He mentioned about taking off the outside knob, and I told him we could make this job up special just as he wants it, for the complete price of \$16.00."

"I knew you could from looking at the illustrations," said Miss Dozier. "Well, goodbye," and don't forget to call me tomorrow about your great-grandmother."

After young Lewis had departed, Miss Dozier went on: "If he is who I think he is, he comes from the real Dozier branch. There are two families in the original, one 'dozier' and the other from 'Pierre Dager' which is now also spelled 'dozier' by his descendants, but the two branches are in no way related. I have gone back in some cases ten generations, without finding a single inter-marriage, which is rather unusual, as both are of French origin and both branches very prolific.

"Well, I'll have to get back to my drawing board. My work is just like my fishing, in which I use just plain old poles, hooks, and worms - no fancy bait. Sometimes I have sat beside a fishing companion, who would be jerking out one bass after another; while I alongside

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would yank out nothing but catfish. Maybe somebody versed in the psychology of fishing could give the answer, but I 7 Believe I was only over a 'catfish hole.'

"When the depression eliminated me in 1929. I lost my home - the one I had built for myself and my sister after much pains-taking effort and considerable self-denial. It was valued then at \$8,000. The other day, the mortgager offered it back to me for \$2,500.

"This made me realize that many people were in the same boat, so in the last few years, I have done nothing but small residential homes - maybe that's my 'catfish hole'. But at any rate, I believe from my own experience and with a woman's general reputation of condensing space and utilizing corners for wall spaces and furniture settings instead of blocking them up with windows, doors, and closets, it gives me the very best ideas for commodious and comfortable homes.

"And if I can once get started on my idea of the earth-rammed house, it will catch on like wildfire - durable, vermin-proof, termite-proof, insulated against cold and heat from the outside, with an average expenditure cost of around \$500.00 a room, compared with the present government cost of around \$1,000 a unit, it will be Florida's own house and home, good for the constant use of two or three generations."