

[Mrs. Janie Bradberry Harris]

[?] [?] [?]

February 25, 1939

Mrs. Janie Bradberry Harris (White)

Tallassee Road

Route No. 2

Athens, Georgia

WPA Project Supervisor

Sadie B. Hornsby

Mrs. Henry was sitting at her desk busy making out reports. Are you too busy to talk to me this morning? I asked her. "It all depends on what it is and how long it will take you. You know I can't take my working hours to talk personal matters. But first tell me what is is you want to know? I told her I would like to get her life history and wanted one of a WPA Project Supervisor. "What do you want me to tell you." I asked her if I could see her at her home. "Why, yes if you have a way to get out to my house, but I live way out on Tallassee Road. I guess I can talk and work too. I am waiting for my head boss to come and since I am not so busy this rainy day I expect you had better see me now.

She is a large woman weighing about two hundred pounds, has gray hair and wears glasses. She was wearing a one-piece black dress, the skirt and sleeves were crepe and the body of the waist was cut velvet. She also wore black slippers and gray hose. and shows she is very much interested in her work.

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She began, "I was raised right here in Clarke County and was the oldest of seven. There were three girls and four boys in our family. There is nothing interesting about my childhood. We played and scrapped as children will do, and when we were large enough we helped in the field if there was anything for us to do.

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I dropped corn and beans many a day and picked cotton I was a good cotton picker.

"I remember distinctly there is a big difference back when I was a child and now. My father was an overseer for a man who had a large farm. We had plenty to eat and wear. We raised everything we ate at home. My father was also a basket weaver and made some of the dantiest little baskets you ever saw. He sold lots of them, the most of his income was from selling cattle, he raised lots of them for sale.

"When my sister and I wanted a new hat or dress, we sold eggs, milk, butter, apples or anything else we could find to sell.

"We lived near Barnett Shoals and we could always dispose of any surplus supplies we couldn't use, selling things to the people who worked in the mill. I remember I had a cousin who worked in the cotton mill at Barnett Shoals, whenever I went to see her, she would save up all the tin buckets and give them to me to take home. We thought we were rich when we got them tin buckets, they were rare things for country people to have. When I was 14 years old I bought a sewing machine. I ordered it from Sears' and Roebuck, and paid for it sewing for Negroes.

"When they were building the electric plant at Barnett Shoals my sister and I used to sell buttermilk to the men working on the plant for 5¢ a glass. My favorite sport was horse-back riding believe it or not. You wouldn't think it true to look at me now.

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"We attended Sundayschool in a country school house, the <printpgno>3 same building we went to school in. All my people are Baptist. I was 14 years old when I joined church at Corinth Baptist church and was baptized in Big Creek, not far from the church.

"I knew my husband all my life we were both reared in the same neighborhood and went to school together. When we married we didn't have a wedding, just came to Athens and got married at my cousin's house her husband was a preacher.

"My husband worked for the Athens Railway and Electric Company, now the Gergia Power Company. He started to work for them when he was 15 years old and was still in their service at the time of his death 11 years ago. He started working for them as a errand boy until he learned what to do, than when the plant was made built they gave him a regular job making \$90 a month. When he was made plant manager he made \$165 a month. My husband didn't go to war because he was operating the power plant. We had been married 11 years when he died. I have 4 children two girls and 2 boys, The oldest a boy is 17. [?]

"The day he was killed at the plant at Tallassee where we were transferred from Barnett Shoals in 1926. We had just returned from a 2 weeks vacation. The children were cross and sleepy so I told him I would give them a bath put them to bed and after I got the house in order I would go to the plant and stay with him, as I often did. He agreed to this as the boss from Atlanta was coming the next day on an inspection trip and my husband wanted everything shining for them as that was the orders his boss here had given him. I had just gotten the children in bed and was tying the sheet of soiled clothes to be sent to the 4 wash woman the next day when the telephone rang and a man at the plant told me to come down quick my husband had been hurt. I ran all the way he died soon after I got there. His death was caused from a broken insulator. It probably wouldn't have killed him, but he had been watering the grass and his shoes and clothes were damp.

"After his death the company paid me \$50 a month until the workman's compensation was paid, which was about three thousand and six hundred dollars. After that was paid, they

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gave me a job looking after the property at Tallassee until the new plant was built and they put men out there. Than I had to look out for myself. I got \$25 a month a house to live in and lights and water furnished free. They let me live in the house now. That is the reason I don't move in town.

“The first year I took charge after my husband's death, and paddling my own canoe I made \$85 that year selling milk, butter, chickens and eggs. I was out of work from December, 1937 until March of 1938. Did I try every where to find work I asked everyone I knew for a job. Many a day I have gone back home wondering where to try next. Finally one day I went to the Welfare Office, asked for work and they sent me to the sewing room. What a [revelation?] that was to me. That was my first job on WPA and if it wasn't for the government work I don't know what people like us would do. In this day and time you can't get office work to do or even a job as saleslady. The people employing help want young attractive people with pep and energy.

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“My work at the sewing room was very pleasent, however I didn't stay there very long before I was transfered to another project paying more. I was there from March until July. I was sent to the Housekeeping Aid Project as an Aid and in October of last year I was made Supervisor of the project. “

Someone knocked on the office door Mrs. Henry answered it: “Good morning, what can I do for you this morning?” “Good morning,” said the visitor. “Carson is my name I work over here at the University at the barn, I heard about your work and thought I would investigate about getting a nurse to wait on my wife and son, my wife had been sick since Christmas, now my son come down sick and I need some help. I went to the Welfare Office and they sent me to you.” “Where do you live?” asked Mrs. Henry.” “Over her on Ag Hill.” “That is the address?” “Taint got non ‘cept Ag Hill.” “Well, you take this blank to the Welfare Office and they will fill it out for you and you bring it back to me then I will see what I can do for you.” He left, but was back in a few minutes. “Say, lady I took this slip where you told

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me too. I didn't get to talk to the one you told me too as a big head lady was coming out the office, she took the paper, read it and told me to give it back to you they didn't have nothing to do with it." "All right, just give it to me and I will look after it for you, as there was a misunderstanding on the part of the person with whom you talked to. (?)

He started to leave, with the door open his hand on the door knob, he turned back and stuck his bald head through the open door.

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"Look here lady; if you want a recommendation just call Sheriff Jackson he will tell you all you want to know about me. I am a deputy sheriff of this county, I have a daughter working here in town, my son has been working for the city and I have a daughter working in Atlanta, but she has got to go back today. I have been working all my life and married when I was 17 years old. This is the first time I have ever asked for help before. We need somebody right away. The bills have piled up on me so since Christmas it has got me down, and I would appreciate anything you can do for me." "Now, you must remember Mr. Carson our aids are not nurses they do practical nursing and look after the home while the mother or whoever is in charge of the home is not able to see after it." "I understand, but I need somebody bad and would like to have them today.

He left Mrs. Henry was silent a few moments: "Now, I don't see why they can't hire someone to do the work however, when a case is reported we have to investigate whether its a worthy one or not. You know this is one way I think the government is spending their money that really is worth while, of course all the projects are or they wouldn't have been created. But this one helps humanity in more ways than one. It gives us work and in doing this it helps others who are not able to help themselves.

"We have 8 workers most of the time. Seven of them are white and we have one Negro helper. This negro is a practical nurse. She hadn't had a job in months when she was put on this project, and was only on the job a day and a half when she got outside work to

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do making \$15 a week, she worked 2 weeks. When a person gets outside <printpgno>7 employment to do, which we are suppose to do, they are automatically dropped from the project and if by any reason they lose their job than they are taken back again after the case is thoroughly investigated.

“As I have all ready stated this project was created to help those who are not able to help themselves, and to make living conditions in the home worth while. You know yourself when you are in the dumps and everything goes wrong all we need is a friendly pat on the back to help us along, and that is the objective of WPA. We train these women on the project to go into homes where the families are not able to hire help when they are sick, to have their work done. They do practically everything there is to be done, except the family washing and heavy scrub work. Of course you know your self if you had illness in your home and no one to help you, and there were several small children you wouldn't have time for that sort of work. They clean house, cook, sew or mend if it is necessary, care for the children as well as cooking the proper food for the family and patient and they do wash the patients clothes. In fact they do everything a nurse and housekeeper does, but give medicine that is not allowed.

“Than after the mother is well again, before the Aide leaves meals are planned by the aid showing them how to cook it to get the best food value out of it. You know some people cook their food all day, in that case the food isn't fit to eat. We also teach children as well as the grown ups how to eat at the table, also how to set the table and serve a meal. As well as to keep a clean neat house. We also encourage them to be clean with themselves, however, there are people who wont do any better no <printpgno>8 matter how much you talk to them. After the aids leave a home, they drop in as if for a friendly chat just to see how their plans are progressing. It is remarkable to find the improvement in some homes and very discouraging to go into the home of those who don't have any pride what so ever.

“We have a group meeting of the workers in my office once a week, we get an outsider to talk to us sometimes its the head of the Red Cross here in town. She tells us how to

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make bandages, make beds and care for the sick. We also have our Clarke County Home Demonstration Agent to give us a talk on how to prepare food for the sick as well as for the children. How to set the table and table manners. You would be surprised how little some people know about such things. I didn't know as much as I thought I did myself about lots of things I have learned since I came on this project.

"We had a group meeting one day, presided over by our Home Demonstration Agent, talking about how to care for the home, food, setting the table and manners. One of the workers were so impressed she went home and began with the children up to her mother. Teaching them the nice ways of doing in the home. Now it's attractive as it can be considering what she has to do with in her home.

"The other night I got so mad at my oldest son, he came rushing in without washing his face and hands. He went to the table grabbed up his cup of coffee without setting down to the table. I said, 'son why don't you sit down and eat like you ought to instead of gobbling your food up like a hog.' 'Oh, mama I ain't got no time to fool with table manners hang with it, I have got to go.' And off he went now you know that won't be the way for him to act.

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"One way we make money for our project, as our sponsors did not supply any for it. I made marmalade at night and the aids sold it after they got off from work. However, we didn't make a great deal it did give us a little to carry on in our project and the money needed could not be obtained. This money was used to buy provisions for demonstrations we have once a week in teaching the aids how to prepare diets for sick people. Most of our food is furnished by the commodities, but not what we use otherwise.

"We have a loan closet, most of the linen was donated by the aids, however, several organizations have given a few sheets, pillow cases and gowns. These things are loaned to the sick attended by our aids. When the patient is well again they are taken up laundered

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and put back in the closet. You know lots of people don't have what they need and these things have to be provided for.

“One day a case was reported, so I went to investigate it. I found a widow with two children, she and one of the children were sick in bed. There was no one to do anything for them but a man she had hanging around. She called him her boy friend. We went in that home and took the woman and child in charge. We cleaned the house washed their clothes and cook their food, the man never left. We got tired of him staying there doing nothing while we waited on him too. She didn't realize he didn't care anything for her only to eat up what she had, and a place to sleep. I put him to work cleaning yard and burning trash. So the next day I made him scrub floors, each day we gave him a different job. He soon got tired of working and left. Of course we had to get rid of him in a nice way, so she wouldn't get mad with us about it, and <printpgno>10 not let him know what we were up to.

“The aids wear white uniforms, and go quietly about their work in the home just like any nurse would do. It is strictly against the rules to relate anything they see and hear other than what they go to do.

“One of the most pitiful cases we have on record, is blind woman who lives alone, and as far as we could learn has no relatives living in town or any other place. The house was very good, but the interior was terrible to see. This case was reported to us, so one day one of the aids went to the house, and found her in bed sick. She did not have any food in the house and hand't had anything to eat in several days. The aid went in and did everything that was necessary. She has been on the case two weeks. Every day before, she leaves the aid brings in wood to make a fire, coal and put it in reach so if she should have to get up in the night she wouldn't hurt herself or take cold going out for it. She also places her food and water on a table by the bed. The doctor told us this one case was worth all the money alone spent in the county from this project.

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"There was an old woman who didn't have anyone but two boys to wait on her. They didn't even have a change of sheets nor the proper clothes. So we got clothing and food for them, as well as to care for her a long time. We went back to that home to see how they were getting on and you wouldn't know it there was such a change. At first the yard was littered with everything under the sun. When we went back the yard and house was as neat and clean as could be. There was clean cover on the beds, a clean cloth on the eating table and a flower pot in the center of it. Things like that makes us know our work is worth while. Our work is very interesting, but since our project is not such an old one I believe I have told you all of any importance. I have heard of people in other places having doors slammed in their face, water thrown on them as well as being cursed out, but that has never happened to us. People we have dealt with are only too glad to have us go into their homes and help them."

Her son came in: "Mama we will have to get a new cross member for that car." "Well, I can't get it fixed today." "Yes, you can and I have to have a new wheel too. It shimmies so I can't hold it in the road." Well, you ought not have run in the ditch and broke it." You know I couldn't help it the road was slick. The garage man said he will sell me a wheel cheap." I reckon he will, but I need to buy a pig to fatten so we will have some meat to eat next winter. Did you see any pigs this morning?" "Naw, I didn't look for none." "You had better go back to school." "I ain't going to no school today. I want -the car fixed." "Hush! about that car it will run a few days longer." I asked him where do you attend school? "At the University High." He answered.

"I am glad you came." said his mother. "I want you to mail these letters." "I ain't going to mail no letters, less you have the car fixed." "Now, as soon as I can, I will. I need it now in my work I have got to go way on the other side of town, since it isn't raining I will have to walk. Now go on I am busy and can't take up anymore time today I have other things to do." The last thing I heard as I thanked her, saying good-bye, was. "Well I am going, but ain't you going to have the car fixed today.?"

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As we chatted, I glanced about the [livingroom?]. A sleepy hollow chair matched the roomy divan, both upholstered in a shade of green that formed a harmonizing contrast to the blue fabric on a mahogany occasional chair. A similar shade of blue was on a rocking chair. The books piled around the white lamp on the reading table had a used appearance that gave me the impression they were not there, just for ornament, but more for the joy of reading and study. A pair of exquisite vases resposed on top of a spinet desk. They were faithful representations in glass of bunches of luscious, mouthwatering, purple grapes. The stem forms the mouth of each vase. Tendrils are the handles and the green leaves against the purple glass grapes tend to make the illusion more complete.

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“One afternoon she was entertaining the Community Club. The boy that worked for us was helping me clean out the pool to make it ready for a social group that had rented it for the evening. When we finished scrubbing the cement bottom of that pool I was so tired that I sat down on the bank to rest for a moment. Sister came walking up.

“ ‘What are you doing?’ she asked.

“ ‘resting, for I'm really tired out,’ I answered.

“ ‘Well,’ she said, ‘if I hated the country as bad as you do I'd get out of it. If you don't like this, why don't you get out and go in business for yourself?’

“That made me mad. I'd worked so hard to build up our business and it really belong to both of us together. But that's when I decided to get out and see if I could not do better. I came to town, rented a small place, and a friend went into business with me. That made my sister mad for she had not thought I really would take her at her word and get out. She did everything in her power to stop me. She even told the telephone company that they could not install a phone in my name or in the name of my new shop.

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“A lawyer that I consulted asked me if the Smith Flower Company — that was the way sister and I had been listed in the directory — was incorporated. I told him it was not. Then he said, ‘there's no way in the world that she can legally prevent you having a telephone in your own name.’ So he called the telephone company and explained it. Pretty soon they were there to install my phone.

Athens, Georgia

Feb. 25, 1939

Mr. C. L. Butt

Clerk of Superior Court

Blairsville, Georgia

Dear Mr. Butt:

We have not been able to complete our collection of facts and legends concerning source and origin of place-names in Union County, about which we wrote you under date of November 25th.

One reference says that Blairsville was ba

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“ ‘Yes, sir,’ she stated again. She had answered ‘yes’ to so many questions that she said it again without stopping to consider the meaning. I put my plea before the jury. The judge was mad as fire about it. But I cleared the boy. The jury was out only about five minutes before they came back with the verdict of ‘Not Guilty.’ Of course the victory wasn't quite as easy as I have pictured it. It was proved that she was made with

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“They were married and left the State. I lost track of them, but I have heard that she lived with him until her death. Her first divorce had taken place before I began my practice, but I had actually gotten two divorces for her in a very few years.

“You may not want to hear about a rape case. It was ridiculous. The boy's father employed me to represent his son, who was accused of raping a woman who lived in another state. The woman was much older than the accused youth. When the case came up for trial, her testimony was positive and emphatic. She stated that he entered her bedroom in the absence of her husband, and assaulted her. Both parties were of low character. My client had no witnesses. Her statement sounded so logical and convincing that I decided not to cross-examine her regarding the actual crime, but to try another plan to save the boy. I had been seeing her around the courtroom 9 the store and phone out there for them and what do you suppose I nearly always learn? They are usually gone fishing or hunting when I need them. They think because one of them is my own nephew they are privileged to do pretty much as they please. They even use my cars to make these pleasure trips in and charge the gas to me. I guess I'm just too easy on them.

“I own my business all by myself now. I started out in a very small place, and have had to move twice to have room for my business 2 ing milk, butter, and eggs. After one year at Mercer University, I stopped to teach school for a year, and then I enrolled at the University of Georgia. My sister went to Bessie Tift College at Forsyth, Georgia, after she finished High School. She left Bessie Tift to go in training at St. Joseph Infirmary in Atlanta. Her experiences as a nurse would probably be much more colorful than mine as a lawyer. She has nursed in Atlanta, in our home town, and she was on a case in Gainesville, Georgia, when that terrible storm struck there in April 1936. That catastrophe caused so much suffering that it was months before she could get away from Gainesville. It may have been the experiences of the tornado and the emergency needs that followed in its wake that influenced her to go to Washington, D. C., for special graduate training. Now she is working in a Hospital in Virginia. “Long before I had the 6 cities, and those of some of the

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suburban areas. Usually when several lawyers here are concerned in a session of court in some other county, they will go together in one car. Then too, procedure and practice in the average county court is informal, free and easy. Of course there are exceptions. For instance, chamber hearings are usually held in the judge's office. Lawyers, clients, and all parties attending the Superior Court's regular Saturday session are allowed to chew and smoke tobacco, and very few rules are enforced at these particular sessions. "The greatest trouble that lawyers in the smaller courts have to contend with is getting their cases to trial. If one or the other side does not want the case tried it sometimes goes on from term to term and from year to year until it wears out - parties die, get together or it is finally dismissed for lack of prosecution. The main cause for this is that attorneys in small towns have to depend on the good will of fellow attorneys, and of the judge, in order to make a brotherhood, and they do not care except in exceptional and very rare cases to incur the displeasure of their associates, by insisting on a trial in the face of a motion for continuance from the other side. Of course as procedure is being constantly simplified and 'streamlined' this objection is being overcome by the modern reforms. "As to my religious activities, I couldn't be anything except a Baptist, as all of my people have been of that denomination and I grew up in that faith. An uncle of mine is pastore