

[Betty Lowe]

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Betty Lowe (Cook & Waitress)

Taylorsville, N. C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names Changed Names

Betty Lowe Reba Lane

Taylorsville Jefferson

Smitheys Levys

Lena Lula C9- 1/22/41 - N.C.

1

"I was born on a farm in Alexander County. My home is now in Jefferson. Father still owns the farm of one hundred and sixty acres. Our cash crops are corn, wheat, cotton and vegetables. Potatoes also grow well on our place. Most everybody tries to raise some apples. We have a big orchard, possibly three thousand trees. When the crop is good and we get them marketed right, they bring in a tidy sum of money.

"I finished school at Jefferson. Our family being large, I didn't have a chance to go to college. Father didn't approve of us girls going even if we could afford it. He argued that girls don't need so such education. All they need to do was to get married and raise a family. I don't agree. I think everybody should have a good education. A woman may marry and not have to work. Suppose her husband dies and leaves her a widow, with a crowd

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of children to support. What's she going to do? Course you can go to the cotton mill or hosiery mill and get a job without education, but you may not want to do that.

"I'm glad I was able to finish high school. Some of my brothers and sisters were not so fortunate. I belong to the Baptist Church and am the secretary and treasurer. My one ambition is to be a nurse. I wanted to enter a hospital for training but some how or other I've kept putting it off.

"After I finished school in 1938. I got a job in Levy's Lunch Room at Jefferson. He has a chain of stores and lunch rooms. I didn't like it so well in Jefferson. The people there was hard to please. I asked the manager to change me and let me come here where my sister works.

"We have been here about twelve months and like it fine. We do all the cooking for the lunch room. You can get a plate lunch at Levy's for twenty five cents. This plate lunch includes meat and three vegetables. Dessert is extra, and you have your choice of pie for five cents. Lula and I bake all the pies; cocoanut, lemon, chocolate and butter scotch are our favorites. We never have any left over and could sell more if we'd make them. We feed a lot of people. Noon is a busy hour, people come from all over town for lunch. We get about all the people from the court house. After we get our lunch hour over, we string our beans and prepair our vegetables for the next day.

"The pay is not so good for the long hours put in, only ten dollars a week. We get our board, three meals a day, that counts a lot. We have a room at the hotel. The proprietor is nice and lets us have a room together for a dollar a piece. This room don't have a bath, but we have one close by. He couldn't afford to do this if he didn't have extra rooms. Getting our meals at the lunch room we're only out one dollar a week expense. A colored woman does our laundry for twenty five cents each, its delivered to the hotel.

"Excuse me," Reba said as she got up to wait on a family that had just come in. Lula brought me a dish of cream and a cup of coffee. "I declare," she said, "we don't get time to

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tell our story. Guess you will have to get it piece-meal. Reba wants to be a nurse. I don't, I just as soon be a cook. Its interesting to work here , it sure don't get dull."

My attention was attracted to the people in front of me. The woman was dressed in a green polka dot dress. Her hat was navy, trimmed in red, she wore brown shoes, trimmed in white. Her husband was a timid and wretched looking man of about forty. Reba brought my coffee and whispered, "Them folks will never know what they want."

"Now look here John," said the woman, "if you think I'm going to ride all the way home and nothing to eat you're mighty mistaken."

"Sure my dear," he said, "I don't want you to go hungry."

Reba and Lula fluttered about and waited anxiously. John ordered a hamburger sandwich. "I don't like hamburgers," the woman said scornfully.

"I can give you a plate lunch for twenty five cents, green beans, creamed potatoes and carrots with stew beef, either one you prefer," said Reba.

"I don't like carrots and I won't eat them"

"I can leave them off," said Reba.

4

"And me pay for them? Oh, no, well I don't want no sich a dinner. I got a plenty of them things at home, taters, and beans. "Hey, you," she called as Lula come from the kitchen, "have you got any potted ham?"

"Of course," said Lula.

"Could I have some in a saucer and some crackers?"

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“Surely,” said John, “you ain't going to a cafe and then eat potted ham.”

“I'm going to eat what I want.”

“Of course my dear, its you and not me.”

Now that the mother was satisfied the two children were told to order.

“I'd like some chocolate cream like the lady over there,” said one, and the other yelled, “me too.”

“You know,” said Reba confidentially, “some customers sure try your patience. Think about going to a lunch room where they have a variety of things to choose from and ordering potted ham.”

“I can understand why it is,” said Lula, coming up with a glass of ice tea. “You can get so tired of the things you have to eat on the farm that anything for a change seems good. You know how it use to be at home, we had all kinds of good things to eat. Father always raised lots of chickens, fried chicken was common; we had big hogs to kill each year, ham was nothing unusual; plenty of vegetables and fruit; beside all kind of good things made from milk cream, and butter. I say the poor woman was fed up on good home-cooked rations and wants a 5 change.”

Reba laughed and said, “I suppose you're right, but when we go back home for a visit things sure taste good to us.”

“We go to work here at seven thirty. The first thing we do on coming to the store is prepare our breakfast. The manager of the store usually eats here too. He's nice and treats us swell. We can have anything we want to prepare for ourselves. We work to six on week days; Saturdays 'till nine o'clock. Sunday morning we sleep late and get our lunch out. If we're not to too tired Saturday nights we go to the last show; [?] Sunday nights we go to

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church. We are both young. I'm nineteen and Lula is twenty one. We don't know exactly what we want to do yet. Father don't need any help from us, our money is our own. We've been raised on the farm, and not used to spending so much. We like good clean fun, but we are going to save our money so if the time comes when we have the opportunity to do something we like better we will have a little money ahead to make a start. Our clothes don't cost us much, since we have to wear uniforms here. These uniforms are very easy to keep looking nice. “

The girls were neat and attractive in their blue uniforms trimmed with white rickrack braid. Their black hair, done in curls around the neck and topped with a little white cap, framed faces free of make-up; while their smiles, dispensed freely to all, evidently endears them to their customers both old and young.

6

“Be sure and say that we both like all kinds of sport. Swimming comes first, then basket ball, tennis and croquet. Baseball is all right too. Right now we got to string beans.”