

*Mrs Bertie Turner (white)*  
Turner Farm  
Route # 4  
Alexander City, Ala.  
December 30, 1938.

Maude E. Cain  
Tallapoosa County,

AL-4

BERTIE TURNER

When I knocked on the door at 12:30 Bertie Turner answered. "Come in," she said. ~~"I'll~~ "I'll declare, I am glad to see you. I thought you were one of the boarders", she said as she closed the door behind me. "Here, take this chair and I'll just mend the fire and let you stay in the kitchen with me, and we will talk while I finish cooking my dinner. I have given my boarders the two front rooms, and Ernest and I use these two back ones. I spend most of my time in the kitchen anyway," she said, as she placed some huge split oak logs on the fire. "I will move the churn out of the way so you will have room to sit."

"Ernest is not here today, he's gone to town and will not get back till late, is the reason I <sup>is</sup> started my dinner so late. I always try to have dinner by twelve when he is here, though.

"I have been sick. I had a terrible spell with my back last summer and have not felt well since. Sometimes I can hardly go, and I have no help.

"I am boarding two old ladies. They were placed here by the Department of Public Welfare and it is right hard on me, having to wait on them like I do. The oldest one, Aunt Martha, is ninety, Aunt Beckie is in her eighties. They suffer lots with rheumatism and kidney trouble. They grunt and groan all night. Poor things, I am so sorry for them. I never get a good night's sleep, and have not for a long time. Having to wait on them keeps me down, but I do try to make life as pleasant for them as I can. I planned last

summer to take a vacation for a few days, and visit around some, but you know they would not let me go. They are by me like children would be by their mother.

"We do not have much to eat," Bertie Turner apologized, as she took from the new Home Comfort range a delicious-looking pan of egg bread, a dish of home-made sausage, a large bowl of scrambled eggs, and a pot of steaming hot black coffee.

"Fred Wright was sent here to live with us because his mind is not just right. He has three married sisters, but they had rather pay his board here than to have him with them. They go in high society, and because he is slow mentally, they just don't want him, just to tell the truth about it. He is very pleasant, and all right physically, and never gives any trouble. I just don't see how they can be that way, and they are not so good about paying his board, either. Sometimes it is six months before I get my pay. He has all his money invested, or they did it for him, and he gets a little money along from that. I suppose I shouldn't worry, but I can't help thinkin' about it," she said as she placed the plates on the table.

At 1:30 the dinner was all ready for her boarders and a tempting meal it was. When the two old ladies, both wearing sunbonnets, which they did not take the trouble to remove, were seated at the table, Bertie Turner stood over the table as she bowed her head and said: "Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this food, and for all other blessings. We ask this in Christ's name, Amen." *I wonder* why Fred does not come to his dinner," she said as she went again to look for him. -- Fred must have been a little timid, as he never came in while I was there.

With dinner over, Bertie Turner began putting the kitchen in



order as she talked.

"I hope to make some changes," she said, "and I am trying to put a little money away to get some things for my kitchen; and I want to have a decent living room, where I can carry my company. This is papa's and mama's home place, and I love it. Sis Vida is coming this week-end to spend a few days with me, too.

"There was a large family of us, eight children; four girls and four boys. All the girls made teachers and two of the boys, doctors. One of the doctors got me this stove," she said, "I had to take it on debt. Of course, I paid him for it but it did not cost as much as a new one, and it cooks as good as new.

"My mother was tetally blind for twenty-five years. Come in here and I will show you her picture", she said as she led me into one of the bedrooms. "That's papa over there", she pointed to a picture as she said, "we girls are all like him." But I wondered how this could be, when Bertie weighs about 160 pounds, while this man looked to be very thin. "That is mama over there," she said as she pointed to a picture of a fine-looking old lady wearing colored glasses, that <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ very becoming to her plump, round face. "If I only knew that I would be that good-looking and as sweet as my mother was, I would not mind getting old," she said. Then we went back in the kitchen to sit by the fire again.

"We never will have anything," she said, "for Ernest just spends all his time tinkering, trying all the time to invent something, and he has been at this ever since we married, too; and it does look like he would be convinced sometimes. At one time he thought he was going to get a patent on an inner tube, punctureless, I believe, and he missed it.

"Why, last summer while I was away from home with a sick sister,

I got back home and I found that he had killed our two meat hogs and used some of his meat-preserving fluid on it, and it every bit spoiled? It is just that way all the time. To tell the truth, sometimes I think he must be losing his mind over inventions. Why, he has spent all we both have made on this tinkering and tinkering. I tell you it's a problem.

"When my health got bad, and I had that spell with my back, the doctor made me give up teaching, but that would be a whole lot easier on me than what I am doing. Waiting on my boarders, and Ernest, too. Yes, I have him to wait on.

People would think I don't have any pleasure a way out here in the country, but I do. I enjoy living."

When I got up to start home, Bertie <sup>led</sup> ~~conducted~~ me into her back yard. "I have fourteen guineas. I love to hear them sing," she said. "I did have thirty and the lumber haulers ran over and killed all but fourteen. I had seventy-two turkeys also, and the lumber haulers killed most of them. They just run over them and leave them in the road." "Don't they pay you for them?" I asked. "No, they never mention it," she said. "I sure did hate to give up my turkeys, too."

"I declare, I hate for you to go so quick", she said hospitably. "But it is getting night," I ~~said~~ <sup>told her</sup>, "and I must go."

"I want you to come back when the days get longer and spend a whole day," Bertie said as I left her standing in the yard.

1/17/1939

S.J.