

## [Blanch Gibson]

September 26, 1939

Blanch Gibson, Textile Worker.

Huntersville, N.C.

Mary [P.?] Wilson, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser. Original Names Changed Names

Blanch Gibson Bertie Gold

Jean Gibson Joan Gold

R.S. Gibson J.B. Gold

Sis Gibson Pig Gold

George Gibson Jim Gold

Uncle Tom Uncle Bill

Charles Gibson Chris Gold C9 — N.C. Box 1.

It was five o'clock. The small kitchen at Bertie Gold's house was like a bee hive. The smallest member of the household, a boy, was busily smoking a cigarette and trying to hurry his mamma in her bread making. His school age sister, Joan, was following him around begging for the 'duck' from the cigarette.

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“Leave J.B. alone, Joan, looks like you ought to be satisfied with that teaspoonful of snuff. Get busy and help Pig / get some water for in the morning. Supper will soon be ready and the night work won't be done.”

A girl of ten, a picture of her mother, except for the difference in years, came in carrying two large pails of water. “Leave her alone, mamma, she'll be only too glad to help when she wants something.”

“I guess you're right, Pig,” her mother replied. “She can work up a storm when she wants a dip of snuff. Fix the table, Jim will be here in a few minutes and he'll be wanting to eat.”

“Can I wake Uncle Bill up, mamma?” J.B. asked. “I want to ask him for fifteen cents.”

“Go ahead and call him, but you better not ask for any money, he's still mad at you for taking some out of his pocket the other day.” Bertie Gold seemed to have lost 2 [controll?] control of her irresponsible brood. “I don't know what will become of you children. I have to be gone off all day, working in the mill; your grandpa don't try to make you mind. It don't do no good to beat on you or talk to you at night after he's let you do as you please all day.

“What's that you're saying about grandpa?” An old man come into the kitchen, his cane making irregular taps on the worn boards of the floor.

“Oh, sit down and eat your supper, grandpa.” Pig said. “You wouldn't have heard a word if we had wanted you to. I wish uncle Bill would come on, I'm hungry. We always have to wait for him since he works in the mill at night and spends most all day talking to that new girl of his. Mamma, do we have to wait for Jim?”

“No, he's just come in the front door.” Her mother replied. “Now sit down and let's see if the house will fall in if we eat in peace for once.”

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After supper was over, Pig and Joan were left to quarrel over the dish-washing while Bertie invited me into the living room, where she began her story.

"I was born here in this county some thirty-odd years ago. My mother died when I was quite young and papa married again. My step-mother was right good to us but she didn't live long after she married my father, she had two children of her own and they had no legal father. She died of T.B. and left them 3 with us, a boy and a girl.

"I've been married twice. These four children I have belong to my first husband. I married Chris Gold the last time. He only stayed with me a short while 'till he got tired of me. I'm mighty glad I didn't have any children by him because it would have made it lots harder for me.

"I've been in the mill since I was old enough to work. I tell you I have my hands full. I keep my youngest brother and my father all the time. Brother Bill could help me lot if he would leave whiskey alone and work, but that's what he won't do. He's got a pretty good job in the mill at night now but it he does like he's been doing, he won't have it long.

"I've got sisters and brothers who could lighten my burdens if they would do it, but they don't bother to ask how I make ends meet. My oldest boy, Jim, works in the store after school and on Saturdays. He hasn't had this job long, but believe me it sure helps out. Pig, Loan Joan and J.B. aren't old enough to know how to earn a penny. They'll have to hurry and start because I'm getting mighty near wore out. Some people advise me to marry again but I don't need a husband. It would be impossible to get one who was willing to provide for this crowd I've got swinging on to me; I've tried it once, that's enough.

"Oh no, I'm not a man hater.; I have dates with them. I get gossiped about too, but I don't care; as long as they are talking about me they are giving someone else a rest.

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If I don't live right poverty is the cause of it. Necessity has caused many a poor woman to sin. I'm not going to sit on the Bible and let my family want for anything; not as long as I am able to put one foot in front of the other and get it for them. “

“What's that you are saying, Bertie?” Her father had come in from the kitchen and was peering over his glasses at me. [One?] of his forefingers was stiff and straight and he pointed it at me. “Ain't you got nothing no better to do than listen to other people's troubles?”

“Hush papa. She's not hurting anybody.” Bertie got up from her chair and went to sit with her father on the settee. “Don't mind what he says; he's getting old and childish. If you'd get him started, I'm sure he could tell something interesting about the old days. I guess you're like myself, interested in the world of today and the means to get along.

“You were living here when our policeman got killed weren't you? That has been nearly two years ago and the law hasn't captured the murderer yet. One man was tried for the crime but was released. I always will think is was a local man who committed the crime.

“I like to live here because my family is here and I've never lived anywhere else. Sometimes, I get the blues and would like to leave it all but I'm sure I wouldn't be satisfied among strangers. It's hard to transplant an 5 old tree. I'll just plug along and do the best I can 'till my children grow up; then I hope they will work for me.

“I don't mind the mill so much, guess I've got used to it; not knowing how to do anything else. No, we don't get very good pay, but it's better than we could get anywhere else. You hear a lot o' kicking about wages, the hard work and the stretch-out system and stuff like that, but some folks would kick if they was tasters in a pie factory at ten dollars a day.

“A feller come through here a couple of years back and tried to get us all dissatisfied with our jobs, and a lot of the hands listened to him—not me. He kept abusing the mill owners, and said the workers ought to run the mills. Huh, I'd like to see that crowd o' hands trying

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to run a mill. Most of 'em's just like me—ain't got education ner sense enough to run a peanut roaster, much less a cotton mill.

“I ain't never asked for charity ner special favors from nobody and I don't mean to as long as I can work. The way I figure it, some people are born to work and be poor. You're educated, don't the Bible say something about some folks are supposed to cut the wood and draw the water—how else would the world get along?”