

Jullulah, La  
December 23<sup>rd</sup>

Dear Walter:

Just came here from Waterproof, La. this morning. Waterproof is a terrible hole but the town is full of levee workers employed on Callahan-Walker jobs. Work on the 6 or 7 drag lines and the quarter boat laying mats has been suspended until after Christmas, and in case of continued bad weather, until after New Years. I was unable

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to even get the worst of sleeping places at Waterproof. Went over to Locust Ridge where there is a drag line but there too work had been suspended. In both places the men get no more than \$1.50 or \$1.75 on the drag lines. On the quarter boats the pay is \$2.20 for laying mattresses. There are no camps or commissaries at either place, the men boarding and feeding themselves. It is very muddy after

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the torrential rain of day before yesterday and more rain impends. Under the circumstances I do not feel that it will be really worthwhile to try to get work merely for the sake of working when all of the necessary information is readily obtainable. At any rate, nothing can be done before next Tuesday or Wednesday, and Roy and I had agreed to return to Memphis

on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of (4) January.

What now do you think I should do? Stay here and attempt to get a job at St. Joseph, La. just below here where there is another job or try to find more places (jobs) to visit or return to New York? Of course at our agreed stipulation it is to my advantage to stick around this country as I can

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use the money which would be due for another week of investigation. It appears that there have been changes in policy as to the abolition of camps and commissaries. The only point on which I think an issue can be made is the low rate of wage, out of which the men must board and feed themselves. Most jobs of which I have knowledge are located

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near towns or villages in which the men live. Hours of work are never less than ten and the men sometimes have to work all night for which they get paid, but no overtime rate - just \$1.50 or \$1.75.

I wish you would send me a night letter to: George Smith, % Emanuel Johnson's Shoe Shop, Tallulah, La. embodying

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your views on the subject and  
telling me what you think I can  
or should do. It would reach  
me Sunday. Word the wire  
carefully. You understand why.  
Let me know what you have  
heard from Roy and what  
his fortune has been.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,  
George Schuster

*Flood Control*  
*Investigation*

Mr. B. BURNETT, MGR.

When in Memphis, Tennessee, For Service Make

**EUREKA HOTEL**

212 SOUTH THIRD STREET

**YOUR STOPPING PLACE**

YOU WILL BE SATISFIED

Steam Heat

Hot and Gold Water

MEMPHIS, TENN.

Thursday January 5 1933

Dear Walter:

I have just wired you that we are leaving tonight for Chattanooga and asking that you wire one hundred thirty dollars. That amount may seem a little large to you, but expenses have been heavier than we estimated, including the Vicksburg police taking \$30 from George, an unexpected \$12 taxi bill for a 50-mile drive and other matters. Then, too, no estimate was made for a drawing room on the return trip, but even Mr. Church assures us that it is most desirable, especially since we are traveling on the Southern, which is known hereabouts as a "mean" railroad. We are taking the drawing room only as far as Washington, of course. If we did not have to come through Chattanooga, we could get a drawing room out of here on the L.&N. to Cincinnati for the price of two lowers. The L. & N. is supposed to be a more liberal road.

Naturally I am curious about the developments contained in your last letter and will await your account of them eagerly.

Now, to tell you the latest about us: We are lucky to be here, I can assure you. After George's experience in Vicksburg we all thought it best that we not separate any more. Accordingly we left here Tuesday morning to go into the delta country between Lula, Miss., the river and, roughly, Tunica, Miss. We were in strictly hinterland territory, as I told you we would be in my last letter. The ~~nearest~~ nearest railroad was five miles and most of the ~~ix~~ time we were eight to ten miles from the tracks. If you think two or three miles not a great distance, you ought to be there with no way of covering them except feet and legs.

The first camp we struck was that of the ~~xxxx~~ J.W. Noble company a mile or two north of Jeffries, Miss. Most of the gang there was laid up with only a few men and one machine working.

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The foreman told us he was "full up" at present but might need some men later in the week. He directed us to Noble's second camp about a mile further on across cotton fields and fresh levee dirt--all mud from the recent hard rains. There, too, we were told the same story. However, camps were fairly thick along there and, anyway, we were ~~xxxx~~ really after Noble's camp or Clark's camp, or both.

We passed the Brandenburg outfit, all ~~xxxxxxx~~ machines and no men and all laid up. We also passed the Canal Construction company which had two small camps, with all machines laid up, waiting for sun to dry out the gumbo.

Paused for lunch which consisted of sardines packed in cottonseed oil, which we ate with our pocket knives underneath a big tree, some crackers and an apple with Coca Cola to wash it down.

Then on to Flower Lake, Miss. (which is no town, only a location) and the camp of R.T. Clark, the terror of the river. It was a long tramp farther yet back into the country and night was coming on. We made arrangements to stay in a crowded country cabin and took up the journey yesterday. The least said about these country stopping places the better as they are not pleasant memories.

Clark's place was also shut down, but they were planning to start work the next day. Here we found a very suspicious attitude. The Negro straw boss was most evasive in his answers to our request for work and to our suggestion that we might hang around, since we were so far from the railroad until in the morning when he could determine whether he needed any more men. We hung around a bit and rested and found out from one of the men that the night crew was short, but the whole attitude was so indifferent bordering on hostility that we decided to ~~xxx~~ clear out in the afternoon. We had a long tramp ahead of us and we were already sore and ~~xxxx~~

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weary.

On the way back to Dundee, Miss. the nearest town (about 9 miles) we got our warning. Some crackers in a little sedan stopped us and asked a flock of questions since ~~XXXXX~~ we did not work on the ~~X~~ Norfleet plantation over which we were traveling (and which took up a large portion of the county). When they found we were not Mr. Norfleet's boys and had no job in any of the camps thereabouts they told us we had better be "gittin' on up the road" and drove slowly away. We turned on the steam and, as George says, did a forced march to town. We had plenty of stimuli as night was falling and we were far out in the lowlands. In a few minutes we met one of the numerous chain gangs on its way home after cleaning out a drainage ditch under the supervision of a guard and shotgun. This sight added wings to our heels because it was not hard to ~~xixxi~~ visualize ourselves in like condition. We hove into Dundee at dusk, missing the last train to Memphis by a few minutes, but catching a northbound bus at 9 p.m. arriving here a little before 11. Got your letter, rubbed down my sore legs and sore, sore ~~x~~ "foots", as these people say, got some sleep and up early to speed leaving arrangements. Have just had wire from Chamberlain saying he will be pleased to confer with me tomorrow morning. We leave there tomorrow night at 6:30 and are due in New York Saturday afternoon at about 4:25. Minnie will meet me, I know, and after I get to a barbershop and a tub I will want to have a chat with you to sketch the highlights. But the tub and the barber come first--and how!

The way I feel--and the way I know George must feel--this economy business is not popular because we both could stand a private car and lounging pajamas all the way to New York. Until I see you.

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