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Ed. F.

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS ROACH

Thomas married twice . His first wife Mrs. Alma Roach, nee Alma Neil, died many years ago. He described one of these wives as "a half angel." With Alma he had 3 children:

1. Mrs. Doris Wilson; she has gone to America -2 years ago.
2. Mrs. Marion Johnson; she is the wife of Isaac Johnson.
3. Louis Roach; Louis lives in Christiana where he has married a woman nee Mc Adam. The girls father has a bus and a truck.

"These are the children that come out of the poor orphan," he said of the above children. Later, he said "I have about 25 children -it may even be 35; some of them a don't even know. I say 25, it could be 35; I only tell you a quarter. I was a good billy." Challenged by a listener as being wild, he said -"Yes, but a was a good looking man, an' them like mi.

Recently he met one of these many children -a daughter in Bull Savannah, and she asked him to give her a dress. He gave her the dress. It cost him 18/-.

Career

School was the Bull Savannah elementary. ~~sxx~~ He does not remember how old he was when he ~~xxxxxx~~ began attending nor at what age he left school because -"that time people don't take date." Shortly after he left school, school teacher Charles Harriet took charge of the school.

After school: -"A went to Christiana as a boy. I left school in 1895, and in 1897, went to a half uncle named Felix Roach." Felix R. is yet alive. (Thomas is 70)

In Christiana with uncle Felix he worked in cane fields (his uncles,) mek sugar in the mills: head sugar."

First child:

"In 1900 a get in trouble as a rude boy: got in trouble with a girl." Asked what trouble he said -"y' u noh know!" He ran away from Christiana. He ran away after the baby was born; the baby's mother had had difficulty in the delivery of the child and the doctor had had to be called. The doctor's attendance had cost money. He did not have the money. ~~xxxxxxx~~ He had had to run away

because "the board Inspector Shaw was on mi every day for money, and I have to quit." (He did not say to what board Inspector Shaw belonged, or to what service)

From Christiana he returned to Ridge to ~~xxxx~~ share house with his father. In the meantime his father had heard about the baby in Christiana and had sent for it. The child arrived in one of the hampers carried by a donkey. The hamper ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ on the other side was weighted by about 6 heads of sugar.

He had only a 9^d in his pocket when he left Christiana. He arrived in Ridge without any money because he had lent the 9^d to another man who had used the money to buy a 1/2 pint of rum. The drink had been consumed by four men altogether, himself included.

There were others of his parents children sharing house with his father when he returned home. One of these, a brother named Cana Roach, was the one who went to Christiana with the donkey, for the baby.

He cultivates: He cultivated on his father's land. He did not say what was the acreage of the plot cultivated, or ~~of~~ the area of the land owned by his father. He cultivated yams, sweet potatoes cassava and tobacco. He sold a portion of all his crops, particularly the ~~the~~ tobacco. He saved some of the money made from the sale of these crops.

/what was

Buys his own land: About 10 years after his return from Christiana, he bought with money saved, a 17 1/2 acres plot. He cultivated ~~/crops/~~ as on his father's land. Sold some of the crops; again his chief sale crops was tobacco. He saved some of the money from the sale of these crops.

/the same kind of

His house: He built a 2 apt house on the land. He has since enlarged this ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ into a 6 apt. house. He really did not build the first 2 apts. the land he bought being his "father's claim" ~~xxxxx~~ had the 2 apt house on it when it was bought. By "father's claim" he means land claimed by his father ~~xx~~ but for which his father had not been paying taxes. When the government surveyor had come and found the land to contain more acreage than was being paid for he was given priority option to purchase the land.

/the entire acreage of

Buys more lands: "After a start make a little climbing, with good luck, and a good wife -with a half angel," (the wife) ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ he had enough money to buy another piece of land adjoining the first piece and consisting of 27 acres. This

piece of land had been/ owned by one named Butler and the other Solomon. He paid £20 for the land. He had got the money for the purchase from the sale of his crops -chiefly tobacco. Tobacco was then "low-priced;" it used to be sold at from 20/- to 32/- per 1 cwt. (112 lbs)

He boasts modestly that he is "a pioneer." He is the first man who tried out using "cave MOLD mold," and also the first man who in Bull Savannah who launched out to give his children a good education. An example of his enterprise in this direction is his daughter Mrs. Marion Johnson; she is a trained school teacher; he sent her to The Bethlehem Training College. Her training in that institution cost him £20 per year. She spent 3 years in the college.

Thomas does not look his age. He is fond of rum -very fond of rum; it seems he is never sober save perhaps in the early mornings; I have seen a number of times during the day. He was sober on none of these occasions.

He talked quite willingly. Seemed quite happy in the telling of his life's story, details to which he has promised to give next Saturday when he will call again
