# Scenes In South Boston, Va.

Paying a return visit to South Boston, Va., thriving community in the Old Dominion State, the AFRO roving photographer found fine homes, solid business concerns and an expanding community.

Smaller towns often exude a spirit of the calmer life and this quiet air is reflected in many of their homes. Many residents in South Boston, a city at center of a thriving Piedmont tobacco area, have built and bought fine homes of wood and brick that would credit any town.

You will see examples of comfortable living on this page. Colored citizens here are active in business. A group of professional men have acquired a valuable row of buildings on one of the city's main streets and rents them to white business concerns.

Dr. L. V. Ragland saw fit to build a structure which houses dentist offices, a doctor's suite, beauty shop, pharmacy and barber shop. Other residents have entered similar business ventures with success.

Many residents of South Boston work in tobacco processing plants. The J. P. Taylor stemming company is one of the largest of these firms. It is one of the largest employers of colored laborers in the city.

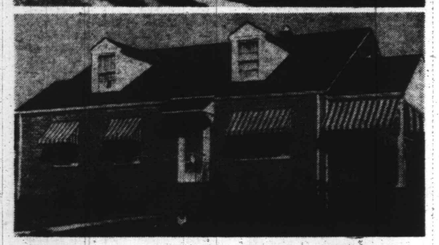
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church plays a leading role in the city's civic affairs, having been host to the NAACP state conference last year; and it is the scene of many community undertakings.

These photos, made by AFRO roving photographer Scott Henderson show more of South Boston's face . . . the face of a growing city.

**COMING . . .**

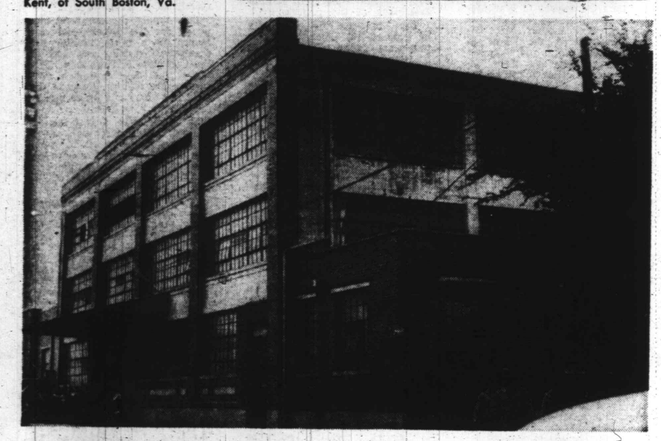
**The AFRO roving photographer brings you photos of Roanoke, Va., Henderson and Oxford, N.C., Frederick and Tapahannock, Va.**

Main Street, South Boston, Va. This block is owned by a corporation comprised of five leading colored citizens. Most of the tenants of business shops are white. Owners are Dr. L. V. Ragland; D. N. Sugg, I. D. Sugg, Charles Humphrey and D. R. Briggs.

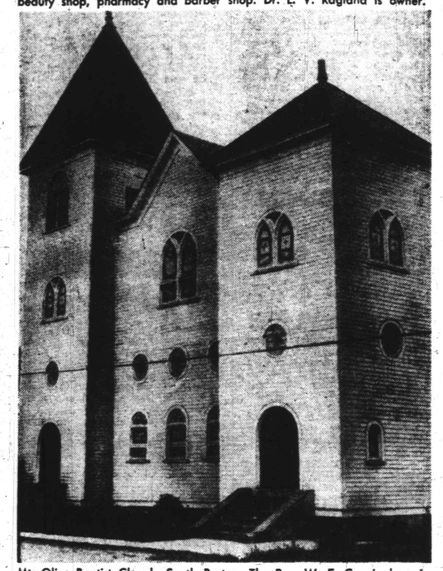


At top, the attractive home of Dr. and Mrs. J. J. Bates and bottom, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Kent, of South Boston, Va.

The Ragland Building houses offices for a dentist, physician as well as beauty shop, pharmacy and barber shop. Dr. L. V. Ragland is owner.



The J. P. Taylor Stemming Company is one of the largest employers of colored workers in South Boston. This tobacco processing plant prepares stalks for warehouses.



Mt. Olive Baptist Church, South Boston. The Rev. W. E. Cunningham is pastor.



# VALLEY of the SHADOW

***The final installment of this mystery thriller about a German war-bride, her young husband and a man whose hatred for them meant MURDER.***

*"Shutup", Barstow snapped, his left lashed out quick as a snake, caught Lois flush on the cheek. She fell.*

**WHAT HAS HAPPENED**

**In celebration of his birthday, and his German bride's release from Ellis Island, ex - Lieutenant GEORGE AMMONS decides to treat his bride, SIGRID, to a round of Manhattan night spots. They go to the Club Velvet, where JOE PETERSON, a mutual friend and pianist with a combo, is playing. Soon after GEORGE and SIGRID arrive, a waitress brings him a note from TED BARSTOW, the club's owner, inviting GEORGE into his office.**

**SIGRID makes GEORGE remember that BARSTOW is the blond GI GEROGE kayoed for a nasty remark back in Munich, and is apprehensive about the invitation. GEORGE, however, insists that the owner merely wants to let bygones be bygones, and enters the office. Shots ring out as soon as GEORGE enters, and after a panic, during which JOE PETERSON rescues SIGRID, BILL GUNDERSEN, a swede, and a crony of BARSTOW'S is found dead in the office.**

**GEORGE is charged with the murder, and is taken down to headquarters and worked over. Meantime, JOE takes SIGRID to her newspaperman brother-in-law, PAUL AMMONS. PAUL hears their story and is convinced his brother is innocent. He calls headquarters and asks about a paraffine test in the Ammons case and is told that GEORGE has confessed to the murder.**

**PAUL is convinced that if GEORGE "confessed" he did it under duress, and decides on casing the dead man's apartment. He gets the dead man's keys from a friendly morgue attendant and visits the apartment building. Coming a bigoted super into helping him, he gains access to the apartment and unearths pictures, money, and bankbooks, which could mean the dead man was blackmailing BARSTOW. He is about to leave for headquarters when GUNDERSON'S girl returns with the super. They are followed by BARSTOW himself, who draws a bead on PAUL. NOW READ ON.**

**PART IV (Conclusion)**

**"PAYOFF"**

When Sigrid Ammons got into the cab after Joe Peterson's departure, she had no plan of action. But she knew that sleep, with George being held for murder, would be out of the question. There were some sleeping tablets in the bathroom of their suite in the Bristol, too, but she didn't want a soporific.

It would be like burying one's head in the sand — like an ostrich. Finally, she was done with crying — feeling sorry for herself. There were no more tears left.

When the cabbie said: "Where to, lady? It startled her — as though he should know it would be best for her to go. Her mind was a maelstrom of ill-assorted ideas.

"I—I'm not sure."

The cabbie sighed, pulled his heap over to the curb, muttered something under his breath about the characters you pick up in the early a.m. Then he turned around to get a good gander at her.

He said: "Now, look, lady, I —" and he stopped. He stopped and rubbed his eyes and squinted at her, aided by the diffused light of a street lamp. Sigrid felt a twinge of apprehension, but only momentarily.

"I — I mean, I'm not sure where he—"

**Cabbie Remembered**

The cabbie snapped his fingers, and it sounded like a minor pistol report. His lean, saturnine face lit up. "I got it! Ehrlich's in Hamboig Joimany. Roll an' rock wit' Sigrid Schacht, the gut-bucketest - playin' Fraulein in all Yurrup. They jus' can't be two like you in a crummy ol' worl' like this."

Warmth and reassurance spread over Sigrid like the spreading glow of brandy on a frigid night. "You were with the Americans?"

"Corporal Hoibert McLanahan, Proy-line; Hunert an' fifty-thoid Infantry Battalion, Army of Occupation—at yer soivice, an' th' tab's on me!"

"How nice," Sigrid said. "Makes me feel like — like a celebrity."

"Wot else, but a celebrity? How long you been on this side o' th' pond—I mean—how long you been in the States?"

"I just got in from Ellis Island this morning — that is, yesterday morning."

The cabbie unwittingly provided Sigrid with a gambit. "Where you gonna open Stork, '21,' La Vie en Rose?"

Sigrid smiled. "No, that's just the trouble. I'm so unfamiliar with the city. You see, I met an American over there. He has a night club here—the Club Velvet. Maybe you've heard of it."

**"Sure. Ted Barstow's old man gave it to him for a present when he got back from duty in Europe. But don't tell me you're gonna debut in Harlem!"**

**"Why not? Playing swing music made me quite a lot of money, didn't it. Besides, I promised Herr Barstow I'd open at his place before I took any other offers."**

**Herbert McLanahan grinned. "I guess that figgers. You wanna go to the Club Velvet then"**

**She frowned. "No—I — You see, I left some music at Herr Barstow's place this afternoon. I'd like to go there and get it, but I can't remember where it was he lived. He picked me up in his car."**

**"At one a.m. — you want music yet?"**

**"I do my practicing in the early hours on a muffled piano. Do you know where Herr Barstow lives?"**

"Sure — the Cliveden. This time o' mornin' I can get you there in 12 minutes flat. It's a swell dump on Eighth ave., right near Columbus Circle."

They got there in nine, and Sigrid asked him to wait, please. Herbert McLanahan was as pleased as punch. A nonentity brushing shoulders with the great. It was very stimulating —like the time General McArthur had got into his cab . . .

The night clerk at the Cliveden exhibited mild interest in Sigrid. Evidently he had been used to escorting nocturnal females to Ted's apartment, for when she said that the night club owner was expecting her, he merely reached up in the right slot, handed her a key and a piece of paper. "You might leave the note by his telephone. You—have any baggage, Miss?"

Sigrid flushed a livid pink, averted her eyes to the impeccable desk. "No — but then, I don't plan to stay long."

The clerk smirked. "I see. Well—I hope you're the quiet type."

Her face burned with embarrassment. She took the key and the note and headed toward the stainless steel elevator bank. Inside the elevator, she read the note.

"Attention Mr. Barstow: Call Algonquin 8-6111 immediately."

It was the first thing she did when she let herself into Ted Barstow's luxurious apartment —a thing of ultra-modern decor accentuated by abstractionist sculptry and paintings. There were at least two Dali originals.

A man's voice answered the Algonquin number. "Swope speaking."

Sigrid trembled in spite of herself. She took a firmer grip on the phone, but it still shook slightly. "I'm calling for Mister Barstow. He's—indisposed."

Swope, whoever he was, didn't like it. 'Oh,' yeah? Who're you, and where you calling from"

**Friend Of Barstow's**

"Im a friend—and I'm in Mr. Barstow's apartment. He—doesn't feel very well." She waited with bated breath.

"Look, sister, whoever you are. You tell that gun - happy punk Larry Swope wants to see him first thing in the morning, or the D.A.'ll be swooping down on his neck. Don't tell me he got drunk on his own rotgut he sells at the Club Velvet?"

"All right, Mister Swope. I'll tell him."

She hung up quickly, looked in the phone directory under the S's until she came to the Lawrence Swopes—stopped at the one that matched the Algonquin number.

"Lawrence A. Swope, Private Investigator."

**She leaned back in the upholstered telephone chair. Swope had called Ted a "gun-happy punk." Then there was the expression, "D.A." The jargon of American English was still quite unfamiliar to Sigrid, but her intuition told her that something in the phrase, "gun-happy" was very important to bringing about the eventual release of her husband. The initials, D.A., had her baffled; but not for long.**

She stuck her finger in the last hole in the dial and rang the operator. "I'd like to speak to the D.A.," she said evenly.

The operator's voice had a mechanical politeness. "The District Attorney's office closes at five, Miss, but it's listed in the—"

Sigrid hung up, feeling triumphant for the first time since George's debacle. Her fingers riffled through the directory again. She found the D.A.'s office number, dialed it.

It rang a long time before a sleepy voice answered it. "Sergeant Morrow speaking."

**Heading For Mexico**

Sigrid's mind raced. "Im calling for Mister Theodore Barstow, his secretary. Mr. Barstow says that a private investigator, by the name of Lawrence Swope is deeply involved in the killing in the Club Velvet earlier tonight."

The sergeant seemed to wake right up. "Swope That grifter! We lifted his license last month. Boy-oh-boy! Is that on the level, sister?"

"Mr. Barstow says so. Only if you wait until morning, Mr. Swope may be on the way to Mexico."

**Sergeant Morrow was obviously seeing a big fat citation in front of his eyes—maybe a lieutenancy. "Don't worry Miss, and tell Mr. Barstow thanks. Somehow I didn't think that colored boy did it. Well—whaddaya know—"**

Lieutenant Cay couldn't sleep. It was one o'clock and he had chain-smoked a half pack of cigarettes. In calmer moments the homicide man never smoked cigarettes. Cigars — expensive Havana fillers. Like tonight while his boys beat a helpless black man senseless six times; then before he passed out for the seventh time, made him sign some paper shoved under his nose while one of the interrogators clicked an empty gun in the victim's ear, pretending it was mis-firing.

It was a nasty business sometimes, and it was beginning to turn Cay's stomach. But what hurt most was the fact that his two subalterns seemed to derive real pleasure out of torturing. Cranford and Wells. He had suspended both for thirty days last year for slugging a colored charwoman unconscious when an office building tenant had complained of losing a petty cash box. The thief had turned out to be the tenant's own son, and the police department had quietly settled a thousand dollars on the charwoman, plus hospital fees and dental work.

And dammit - all, there was something wrong here. George Ammons had a perfect record —both as a civilian and service man. Then there was that wound on the left side of his head struck; and there was the note where a blunt instrument had Barstow had written, inviting Ammons into his office.

Cay's wife rolled over and said: "Aren't you going to sleep tonight, Charles?"

Cay blew out a long stream of smoke, contemplated his slippered feet in the soft orange glow of the night table lamp.

**"Irene, I coerced a man into confessing a murder tonight—a murder I believe him innocent of."**

**Irene sighed, rolled her elephantine form closer to his back. "Well it's not the first time, darling. And if you're worried about it, stop by the rectory on your way to work tomorrow morning and see Father Quillan." She reached out and took his arm. "Now come. Get to bed with you!"**

**Just like that. Have a man's brains beat out and confess to Father. Get absolution for sending a man to the electric chair.**

"If you don't mind, Irene, I'll sit up a while longer. I don't know, maybe it's age. Maybe I'm getting soft."

He lit another cigarette from the one which was burning his fingers; drank the smoke deep into his lungs, enjoyed the soothing effect. Maybe if George Ammons had been white . . .

**Phone Call**

The phone rang, piercing the night stillness. The clock said 1:35. Irene sat up in bed. "Now who could that be? The department must mean that crack about a cop being on duty 24 hours a day."

Cay got up and pulled his robe together. "Sundays and holidays included," he added and went out into the hall, where the phone was jangling insistently.

"Hello. Lieutenant Cay speaking."

The voice on the other end was eager, full of excitement. It was Sergeant Morrow, from the D.A.'s office. "The Gunderson thing's busted wide open."

Gay gripped the phone tighter as Morrow told him about the phone call, supposedly from Ba-

(Continued On Page 11)