

*Prather.  
From undated, unnamed  
news clipping, probably from  
The Atlanta Journal.*

ATLANTA'S PRATHER TWINS  
AGE WITH ALERT GRACE

Miss Emily and Miss Eva, Alone With  
Ghosts of the Past, Much Alive to Present

By Rebecca Franklin

Hidden away in a quiet corner of Brookhaven - just down the street and over the railroad track - two unusually bright, courageous old ladies are spending the closing years of their lives in a truly remarkable manner.

They are the Prather twins, Miss Emily and Miss Eva, and they live alone with their ghosts of the past in a small green house all clustered about with trees and shrubbery. Out in the front there's an old Dutch well and yellow jasmine and honeysuckle vines.

Inside their hideaway on a winter afternoon, you'll find a grate fire blazing, lighting up brightly polished bookcases with their volumes of Dickens and Thackeray and Shakespeare. Along about 4 there'll be tea in fragile china cups and you'll hear talk - good talk - of days that used to be.

Link With Old South

Small and dainty and stooped with the years, the Misses Prather romantic days of Southern elegance and culture. Looking at them you can't help thinking: "Time is out of joint. They don't belong here. They're storybook characters." But they're very much alive.

With a proper show of feminine reluctance, Miss Emily admits "we're in the late seventies now." Yet they're as alert and lively as a couple of sparrows. They do their own housework, their own cooking and gardening, and both are devoting a great part of their sunset days to the recording of family history.

Miss Emily is soon to publish a book. Some time in the next few days, the tiny lady - she's scarcely four feet tall - will take her manuscript to the printer after two years of writing and diligent research. She wrote the whole book in her own precise longhand, working mostly in the evenings. The volume covers 147 years in the history of her mother's family and is called "The Verderys of Georgia."

Plan for "Future"

At the same time Miss Eva has spent the past few years delving into the genealogical history of the Prather family.

She has written much on the subject, but doesn't plan a book. Most of the material has been given over to other members of the family.

"Now that we've looked after the past of our kinsmen," Miss Emily smiled, "we can begin to look to our future on another plane of life. Death is a troublesome thing, but we have to plan for it."

It's been a long, long time since the twins came to Atlanta from Lafayette, Ala., at the close of the War Between the States. In her book, Miss Emily recalls: "Stone Mountain is the first object that the Prather twins can remember, as rising, tall and gray behind their temporary residence, it extended its great arms of granite into their backyard."

Their father, Colonel John Smith Prather, a Confederate hero, published "The New Era" here. It was the first democratic paper printed in Georgia, after the war, and was set up by the colonel himself. He is buried in Decatur Cemetery, where the U.D.C. has erected a plaque in his honor.

#### Careers as Teachers

The twins started early on school-teaching careers, assisting their mother, Mrs. Susan Verdery Prather, in the operation of the Prather Home School, established about 1892. Mrs. Prather herself was a remarkable old lady, wrote short stories at 83, lived 87 years.

Subsequently, for 25 years, Miss Eva taught Latin, math and science, and Miss Emily taught English and history in the fashionable finishing schools that dot New York State. They live now in the summer home they established during those years.

Miss Eva and Miss Emily manage to keep their days brimful of activity. They have their radio running almost constantly in order to hear the "terrible" war news, and in the evenings one of them reads to the other. Right now they're reading Stewart Edward White's "Wild Geese Calling." They're both devoted to Harper's Magazine, which they read "lid to lid" each month.

Alone though they may be, they're not helpless by any means. A few months ago, when children attending a nearby school somehow let fire get over into the Prather yard, burning the fence, Miss Eva marched over to the schoolhouse and gave the principal a thorough going-over. He was most apologetic.

#### Verdery Ancestry

Thus the Prather twins are living up to their distinguished ancestry. The American Verderys are descendants of Jean Jacques de Verdery, counselor to King Louis XVI of France in the parliaments and courts of the Province of Guienne.

A son, Mathurin Marechal de Verdery, brought the family name to America, settling in Augusta, Ga. in 1794. Previously he had lived in Santo Domingo where he wrote the first book ever written on flora of the West Indies.

Miss Emily's book gives much material on early habits and customs in Georgia, and contains considerably history of the Civil War period. In writing of her kinsmen, she devotes most of the space to those who have achieved something. For, as she quotes in the frontispiece of her book:

"Knowledge of an honorable ancestry should be an incentive to noble conduct; for our ancestors are responsible for our lives, and their influence is still felt by all."