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## Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory Regarding Her Life (FA 154)

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Western Kentucky University, [mssfa@wku.edu](mailto:mssfa@wku.edu)

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**Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949**

Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory (CT 34)

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

Paul Eubanks: Ok, I, I, I realize I really need to get down that lifeline. So you're born in 1904, right? And you lived in Beaver Dam at that time?

Corinne Taylor Gregory: Well, I was born in town but uh, the um, my father's uh home's at uh, Prentice Community.

PE: Prentice?

CG: ?? ?? ???government contracts, that's on the other tape.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: We um, My father...trucks, army trucks. Um, we moved in here about 1917.

PE: Ok

CG: He had property here in town.

PE: And how long did you live in town?

CG: Well, I lived here and went to Bethel College...at the women's college.

PE: How do you spell "Bethel"?

CG: B-e-t-h-el.

PE: Ok, And where was that?

CG: Hopkinsville.

PE: Oh, O.K.

CG: Then I went to Bowling Green, at least then it was called Western Kentucky Teacher's College.

PE: Uh-huh. And What year did you, what year did you leave to go to Bethel College? How old were you?

CG: 17.

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PE: So that was about, that was 1920. And, what year did you go to Bowling Green?

CG: Oh now we uh, just went whenever we could....had all sorts of terms and then had two summer terms.

PE: So it wasn't a program like we have now where you go—

CG: No! We couldn't afford it. We didn't have the money.

PE: That's interesting. How'd you plan your college career?

CG: We didn't have much guidance.

PE: How'd you find out that Bethel College even existed?

CG: Baptist.

PE: Mmhmm

CG: You learned it through the church.

PE: Who taught you?

CG: Well everybody knows its one of the finest old colleges around. It's gone now. But you're dealing with my personal life and this is not my life story. I mean, I'm trying to tell...

PE: Now how did, how did young girls in this town learn what their options were for later life? You mention the church as a source.

CG: Well the church and the school. And sometimes the ministers. Parents did the best they could.

PE: While parents were doing the best they could, what were they doing for their daughters?

CG: Trying to give them values that they had gained. I noticed they had a great respect for their teachers. They, uh, my parents did. Talked about Professor Ray, these people who came and went and said this is the West Kentucky Seminary was here. They didn't have...school. My parents were great readers. They read a lot, but they didn't have a lot...they did have a pretty good library down here at the school.

PE: Was there a difference in what a woman would read and what a man would read in Kentucky, in this area?

CG: Um.... women had a few magazines, yes, they did. They certainly loved them.

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PE: I just bought some magazines that come out of New York and I feel very, happy to be able to know what's going on in the outside world. How did women find out what was going on in the outside world?

CG: Oh that's amazing. But they did, and the styles.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: It amazes me to think they'd be wearing things that uh...of course they had the papers. The daily papers would come down from Louisville. And how about from one to two?? And the songs. Popular music. It got around, but I would have wondered that.

PE: Now, do you think, what years are we talking about here? Are we talking pre-radio?

CG: Oh yes.

PE: Ok.

CG: Yes.

PE: Would they have many travels or traveling shows?

CG: Uh, yes. Chautauqua. That's a great, uh, show it was kind of, put on in the summer.

PE: How- How's that spelled?

CG: It's in the book. I had to look it up myself.

PE: It sounds like an Indian name.

CG: Well, it's uh, it's a troops of people. Some are theatre people. And the merchants in town had to underwrite it and then sell tickets. They have to vaudeville shows. My uncle

PE: Right

CG: Tiny little vaudeville shows. My father was a photographer, A.P.? Taylor.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: And he brought the first little movie here...shown in a little church. It wasn't used for a church, oh because later the preachers decided movies were sinful. We weren't allowed to go because they did that.

PE: [laughs] Do you recall what the movie was?

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CG: No. [laughs] Usually comedies. I remember Punch and Judy once. Then we had a showboat up and down the river.

PE: Really?

CG: Oh yes.

PE: Now we're talking about the Ohio and the Green River?

CG: Green River.

PE: What was the showboat and what- how old were you then?

CG: Oh, we uh showboats ran til the 20s, late 20s I suppose.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: Later they ran one on the Ohio with college people. That was a modern version of it. Well, it was uh, the dramas were usually very tragic. East Lynn was one.

PE: And that was on the showboat?

CG: Oh yes.

PE: Ah.

CG: They had a calliope. We'd know the showboat was coming 'cause you'd hear it all the country, the calliope.

PE: O.K.

CG: That was after the days of automobiles, because I remember driving to Carmel to the showboat.

PE: Carmel?

CG: That's where it used to stop, Carmel, Rochester.

PE: Uh-huh. I'm new to the area, so these are new names for me.

CG: Where you come from?

PE: Well I just moved here from San Francisco.

CG: Oh!

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PE: I'm into earthquakes.

CG: Yeah.

PE: And we've got 'em here!

CG: I had two little cousins visit when I was a child and they lived there.

PE: Oh really? Had they? What did they say?

CG: Why didn't?? they know to go under the house. and uh, ?? under. ?? ?? ?? ?? ??

PE: And were they visiting because their house was demolished or something?

CG: No, the mother just come back because she was...Care? They had a candy store and they went back and had another candy store.

PE: And when were they visiting? Do you know?

CG: It was, uh ,during the, uh, World War I, because my father was into that lumber business at that time.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: We took them to Mammoth Cave. He took em to the boat. He couldn't go because of his commitments there. So I know it was during World War I.

PE: Ok. Now I'd [like] to go over some questions that will take us through each decade. And, um, you had mentioned to Charlotte that there was a doctor, I think he was a relationship of yours.

CG: Dr. Gil?

PE: Yes. And then he would sometimes get really frustrated. Why?

CG: He had so little to work with. And he uh, he was, very good diagnostician. He knew what was wrong. We had nothing to work with.

PE: Did he have an office?

CG: Yes, but he had no medicine except quinine and Castrol oil and Tichenor's.

PE: And when was this?

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CG: Well he practiced before 1900 and on up uh I don't know when he died. You can find out from some of these Hartford histories.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: He probably died in the early 1900s, but uh....

PE: And how did you know him?

CG: Well everybody knew him.

PE: Oh really?

CG: ??

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: Later he had two children; I can't remember the daughter's name. I can only remember the surname. But there's nobody around. He was in Hartford, but he's from Butler County.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: That's where he practiced out of Hartford but he went all over the county.

PE: How old were you when you knew him?

CG: Well he delivered me.

PE: Oh really? So was this the doctor, the type that did everything?

CG: Oh yes.

PE: And was he the only doctor?

CG: No no. there were 2 doctors here. The Mitchells. and then Doctor Willis, and Doctor Allen started out as very young at Cromwell and then they later moved in here.

PE: Now why did Joe Taylor have so little to work with?

CG: They all had so little to work with.

PE: Why? Was it just not available or was it hard to get or was it—

CG: Well they didn't have anything. They uh, they took the wonder drugs well into the 30s. They didn't come into

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PE: Mmhmm.

CG: First, uh, doctor, Dr. McDowell that came to Kentucky did the first ovarian surgery without anesthesia.

PE: Yikes! Now, did Joe Taylor have to do surgery ever?

CG: Yes. I've heard of it. I guess he had morphine probably.

PE: Uh-huh. They had it during the Civil War.

CG: Now people down to Rough River threw his black bag in the river. He had to go out and buy a new bag. Swore he'd never practice again. [Laughs]

PE: Now did he have a wife? What was her role in the community?

CG: We never heard of her.

PE: Really? Why not?

CG: Stayed home and cooked.

PE: I would have thought that she'd be a prominent

CG: Mm-mm. no.

PE: Person, uh...

CG: She might have been in Hartford society but I didn't live in Hartford then. We never heard of her. The two children didn't seem to pick up any careers either. You might could look into that..

PE: Uh-huh. Now, do you remember any sicknesses in your home at that time?

CG: Yes, we all had typhoid fever and-

PE: Typhoid?

CG: There was no vaccine at that time. Smallpox was a dreaded thing, but they did get the uh vaccination, malaria, all these.

PE: What were- what was the common knowledge then, of how to keep yourself healthy? Nowadays you've got to not eat salt, you have to drink milk, you have to exercise and not



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smoke. What was the common knowledge at that time to keep healthy? Or did anyone even think about it.

CG: I didn't ever really think about it. There was nothing said about salt or sugar. Well we drank milk and we ate uh, vegetables in season.

PE: Mmhmm.

CG: Uh, seemed like they had a pretty good idea of a balanced diet. You know, greens and fruits and nuts and berries. But then the preservation of food was not as easy as now, it's so serious. Couldn't get ice but on weekends.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: Of course, here in town we could get ice delivered every day. And uh, ice boxes. People out in the country would hang their milk and butter in wells on a rope.

PE: Really?

CG: They had cellars. You know cellars, where you'd keep your fruit. They did a lot of canning, but they didn't have the pressure cookers.

PE: Wow.

CG: Jams and jellies and dried, you know, dried fruits.

PE: Which doesn't happen much nowadays.

CG: A few people dry apples.

PE: Now that's really interesting. I'd like to talk about that. Um, were the women the main people that did the preservation?

CG: Oh yes, yes. Men did the hog killing.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: Did the hunting.

PE: [laughs]

CG: Made their own lard. It smelled terrible.

PE: And the women did that? Made the lard?

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CG: Uh, yes. And that's the work outside I've seen men helping outside.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: The men that did the barbecuing. That's uh,

PE: There was barbecue then?

CG: A big uh, dinners.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: A lot of big dinners. I wonder how they kept from getting sick, keeping that food overnight.

PE: [laughs] I wondered about that.

CG: Um, they learned what not to do.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: If they cooked fish they ate it.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: Yeah they ate it. And you had to be very careful with pork. They cooked things well. Fast cooking in those days.

PE: Now what time period are we talking about? Would this be in your childhood and teenage years or, by the time you were a teenager were there.

CG: Mhmm. Up to 1920.

PE: O.K., this is something I'd really like to go into more in depth. Um, you said people hung their butter and milk in wells.

CG: Mhmm.

PE: That was during the summer only or?

CG: Yeah, I think they learned a little deep freezing there. Especially when they killed rabbits and wild game. They learned to freeze.

PE: And how do you do that? How would it freeze it?

CG: Just put it out in the...

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PE: In the winter?

CG: Coalhouse or whatever [laughs]

PE: So in the winter they hung it out overnight or?

CG: Um, they were hunters and trappers here then they would uh, freeze the skins and send them up on a train to Louisville. I-I don't see how they did it either but they did then.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: They learned to make do with what they had.

PE: Now how would people- what was canning like? Was there a certain way that you do it?

CG: Whenever you need to do it. So whenever you had a bunch of fruits or whatever.

PE: Sitting on your porch.

CG: But they uh, in the mountains they'd have shucked beans. They'd string green beans on a string, hang them on the porch and then dry 'em.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: Then soak 'em overnight and then eat 'em. And now they don't, I've never known to do that here. But maybe these beans have too much water in them. In the mountains it's a drier kind of...

PE: Mmhmm.

CG: But they, would dry beans here, they'd dry butter beans. Shell out the dried beans with the corn. Fried apples, fried peaches.

PE: What was the- what did the pantry look like at that time? During the-

CG: Well there was jams and jellies and canned stuff.

PE: Uh-huh. And was that upstairs or was that downstairs in the cellar?

CG: In the cellar mostly. Uh, we put apples and uh some things in the upstairs.

PE: In the attic?

CG: Uh-huh because it'd be warm up there and they wouldn't freeze and they could eat it.

PE: Uh-huh.

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CG: Or in the ice houses, they cut ice in the ponds in winter and uh, store 'em in ice houses and uh, sawdust. I've seen many many, that'd be back in the teens.

PE: Uh-huh. Now would that be – an ice house – would that be something that each family has? Like a?

CG: Not really.

PE: Was there any type of community storage of food or canning food?

CG: I never knew about it.

PE: So this is a supplement.

CG: Each family, each family was self-contained, and each family uh would take care of shoeing their horses and repairing harnesses.

PE: Yeah. Was the blacksmith around?

CG: Oh yes. There was a blacksmith. We had to take care of the horses.

PE: Would that blacksmith travel to? To the?

CG: Not, not like they do now, no.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: We went to him. And he was a handful.

PE: And when did the last blacksmith disappear around here? Do you recall? Probably whenever the last horse did.

CG: Well, now they travel, we have them here. Uh, pretty sure the one apprentice stayed until even the 30s. He lived down near in town. I remember it turned into a garage.

PE: Uh, bet that makes sense ?? [laughs]

CG: I would say that the late twenties.

PE: Ok. Do you recall, now this is a different topic, do you recall the formation of police and fire protection in this area.

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CG: [laughs] If you're reading a book, this town burned down many times and uh, well, we must have gotten a little fire truck in the 20s but it was sort of bucket brigade thing, most of the time it just burned down.

PE: Do you remember seeing any of those?

CG: Oh yes!

PE: Describe what-what happened.

CG: Everybody jumped up, put on their clothes and ran down to wherever it was.

PE: And then what does someone do? Do they stand around?

CG: Yeah, they'll stand around.

PE: Wait? Is there one person who uh, can tell you what to do or how does it work?

CG: Well, the women and children stood around and watched and the men all jumped in. Did what they could. Carry things out and uh got in the bucket brigade. Of course they had to pump the water into the buckets. But this little fire engine I guess had a tank.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: We later got deep wells here.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: But the reason everybody had so much malaria and typhoid fever was they were about 40 feet deep and they had sulfur water.

PE: So, the sulfur, you think caused the-

CG: No, no.

PE: Or the-

CG: Just the seepage and impure water.

PE: Ok.

CG: Then there was a pump with a tin cup hanging on it and of course everyone drank after each other. [laughs]

PE: Uh-huh. Really? When did that get torn down?

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CG: I wanted to say the 20s.

PE: And this was even while sickness was going on?

CG: Oh sure.

PE: Now, in school at that time, what were they teaching you about health? Anything?

CG: We had, they called it physiology. Telling about the body. Bones and the...

PE: I don't suppose there was anything about sex education at that time?

CG: No [laughs]

PE: How would someone learn, at that time. You know a small town like this, where there wasn't...

CG: They depended on their parents or uh, kids learn it from each other. We were very much protected.

PE: Do you ever remember any girl getting "in trouble" at a young age without being married?

CG: Uh, none of my group did and about the worst thing my friend did was to cut her hair and she got expelled from Bethel College but that was a little before I went so my hair was short when I got there.

PE: Now was that a bob that this person got?

CG: Oh yes. Mmhmm.

PE: What was the reaction when someone walked by with a bob, at that time? When you were a teenager?

CG: Well we knew it was a, it was a trend that was coming and we just wondered who'd be next. Now my mother would have her hair cut she just walked down the street and went to the barber shop and had it done

PE: How'd the barber think of it? He just see it as more money?

CG: Oh he did...

PE: Or did he see it fitting into the delinquency of a minor?

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CG: Oh no. everybody took all these things in stride. I think we heard these trends. Goodness knows how, we knew they were coming.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: I'd say it was no big deal.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: There was no big deal.

PE: Hm. That's interesting. Now, you mentioned that there was physiology class and that you pretty much depended on your, your family and your friends to learn about sex education. And that none of your group got in trouble. What, what was the difference between your group and other girls in town? Were they different classes or income levels? Or?

CG: I think all towns run in cliques and clans, yes.

PE: What were the different cliques? In a small town.

CG: Well, of course the races were separated.

PE: Ok. But you know, I read in your book that that you said commonly that black people were respected as co-workers.

CG: Yes.

PE: When did that start changing or did it?

CG: I don't think in this part of the country that we never had race problems .

PE: Good. Oh, we've got a visitor!

CG: Mhmm. They were regarded as friends and real people.

PE: Did they have the same income level as you?

CG: No.

PE: They were always lower?

CG: Oh yes.

PE: So they got treated differently somehow. Do you recall it ever being an issue? In the church or anything?

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CG: Mm. uh. Now, now in this mine there was a time when they uh, they worked hard but they made fairly good money.

PE: Were they ever paid less than white people for the same amount of work?

CG: I-I wouldn't think so.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: See, nobody made that much and the. Dollar a day and... [tape ends abruptly]

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

CG: Very, very few. Uh. Now my father had this government contract you see...

PE: UH-huh

CG: And uh, lot of men would be called up, if they they made the cut they wouldn't have to go and that's what we would watch and see, who had to go and who didn't.

PE: Ah.

CG: Well, I really don't know. There was a draft board, I remember...

PE: In the town?

CG: County, it was...

PE: How is that-how is that formed? I'm not familiar with that.

CG: I'm not either. [laughs]

PE: Was it seen as a problem just for men or was, was the war very much affecting women?

CG: Um, everybody was a nurse. There was a few nurses from this county. Nurses and, then I suppose people began to leave here going in to World War II.

PE: That would be when women started working in factories?

CG: That would be World War II. I don't have much memory. I know the trains, the railroad was very busy. We'd watch the soldier trains and that sort of thing.

PE: Did they have special cars, or were these passenger cars, or were they...



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CG: We had 8 trains a day here, you see. You'd see an army train every once in a while.

PE: I see.

CG: Boys hanging out the window, waving flags.

PE: American flags.

CG: Well sure. [laughs]

PE: Did they have a flag just for that or...?

CG: Well everybody had flags.

PE: How big were they?

CG: All sizes.

PE: Really?

CG: Regular sizes.

PE: How did you get the news of what was happening in World War I?

CG: There again, I uh, marvel at electricity. We did have telephones. But we were dependent on the *Courier-Journal* and The *Louisville Times* to come down on the trains.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: And the wireless, see, telegraph had to be at railroad stations.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: And then people who would come back from someplace would tell us something.

PE: Now were there any customs surrounding um, what would happen would someone got inducted? I know in Ireland when people are about to emigrate, there's something called an American wake. And there was a very clear set of procedures that you followed to bid this person farewell.

CG: No. not that I know of.

PE: Did you know of anything like that?

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CG: Not that I know of. Each family dealt with it in their own way, each community, church and, but it was frightening...

PE: Now, were there- when people, when boys would go away and get killed and news would come back, was there any type of mourning that went on?

CG: Oh yes.

PE: What, what, what form did that take? Services? Special?

CG: The church would honor that person. The community...

PE: Uh-huh. Now do you know of anyone who was widowed or who had a fiancé killed or anything like that? Who had her life changed because of the war?

CG: You're talking about World War I?

PE: Yes.

CG: Yes, there were many but I knew none of them.

PE: Let's talk about World War II and how that differed. Now, you're saying that women went away during WWII?

CG: Oh we went to factories, yes far and near. Men too.

PE: How far did they go?

CG: Well, there's so many people here went to Detroit, went to Michigan.

PE: Ah.

CG: And Louisville, uh, Oak Ridge, they didn't know what they were doing but they were down there. [laughs]

PE: Was this exciting for people?

CG: Very.

PE: What was the common...

CG: Well they made a lot of money.

PE: And that was probably the most exciting.

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CG: Uh-huh. And uh, well uh...

PE: Was that the women or men too?

CG: Both.

PE: Uh-huh. So this is people that are remembering the Depression, right?

CG: Yes, that was a very bad time then and nylon was discovered. He was history teacher there and I can't think of his name but their son, was part of the team over at Kingsport, Tennessee that discovered nylon. And we soon got our hose, made out of coal, water and air.

PE: Oho. Are you talking about nylon or stockings, right?

CG: Stockings.

PE: Now they used to be silk, right?

CG: Mhmm.

PE: That's what the average-

CG: Silk went west. [laughs]

PE: When the depression hit, right?

CG: Well the silkworm business-

PE: Oh.

CG: And of course then Japan; we didn't have anything more to do with them.

PE: Oh that's interesting. When did those, when did, when did the silk stocking start disappearing around here?

CG: The late 30s.

PE: And when did the nylon start appearing?

CG: Uh, it would be uh,

PE: The same time?

CG: Same time. Oh, in the beginning, rayon stockings. They were terrible.

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PE: Why? What did they feel like or?

CG: Just a cheap, scratchy. Not very sheer.

PE: Now, did, what did someone prepare, what did someone take with them when they were leaving Beaver Dam to go work in a factory. A woman, what does she take?

CG: She'd take any clothes she had because...

PE: Were there any special work clothes that she had?

CG: Ah, I don't know. I wasn't connected with it. I know they didn't have jeans then. Probably overalls. Coveralls.

PE: Uh-huh. Did she have to do anything like join a union before she found work or did someone just strike out, say bye mom, bye dad. Just get on the train and go?

CG: I suppose unions weren't in effect then, but know I...

PE: Now, were you at all considering work in a factory during World War II?

CG: Not at the school.

PE: And were you teaching it or were you learning it?

CG: You talking about World War II?

PE: Right.

CG: I was the director of the Grace Netherington School of Character.

PE: What type of school was that?

CG: Well, Lincoln Memorial took over the English recreation center at Harrogate, Tennessee. And uh, there was a school-center and uh, back in Scranton, Pennsylvania they bought an old English inn and missionaries came in and established this school little girls in memory of his daughter who died of diphtheria. She was really sick, and they couldn't save her. They had a lot of money, so that's what they did. It was endowed.

PE: Uh-huh. That's interesting. How long did you live there?

CG: 8 years.

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PE: Ok. Now, how did leaving town and going to work in a factory affect women's plans for marriage and life in Beaver Dam.

CG: Well I think that marriage was delayed in a lot of cases and families were poor? But I don't think it changed anybody, maybe some of the teachers did work in the factory in the summer, yes.

PE: Uh-huh. Were there a lack of men at that time, World War II, suddenly the town was all women or all female?

CG: Well, there was a scarcity of labor, of course yes. See so many men worked in the factory, we didn't go on to the service.

PE: Mmhhh. Now, during the war, um, were you at all responsible for teaching current events to your students?

CG: No.

PE: Ok.

CG: We could get current events at the movie houses, go see the news reels.

PE: Oh yeah. Uh-huh.

CG: Radio. Newspapers.

PE: Now, you've mentioned unions every so often. What um, was the climate for labor in Beaver Dam at that time?

CG: You have coal and that was it, coal, no other factories.

PE: What, were there no factories that could have been unionized?

CG: Not in Beaver Dam.

PE: Just because of the politics?

CG: No, there was just no reason.

PE: Or there was just no factories?

CG: No factories. There's one little canning factory started out, canned tomatoes.

PE: Uh-huh.

## Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949

Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory (CT 34)

CG: But it didn't last very long. No, the, the business in town was mercantile.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: Hotel and restaurants. Course there was a lumber mill, sawmills around.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: No factories were here.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: The young people knew they had to go someplace else, cause there wasn't any work.

PE: And what year was that or what decade was that when you felt that young people were realizing they had to go other places to find jobs?

CG: The 20s at least.

PE: Uh-huh. Now, at that time, during the, the 20s and into the 30s, the Depression, um, were women looking for work while they were married?

CG: Yes, but they couldn't find anything that they'd try to do, they'd do it at home, and they were all sorts of rip-offs in the mail, where you could send to get a knitting machine or...

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: All sorts of things that uh, people would try to invest in. no women wanted to work-

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: Trying to take orders you know. So...

PE: Who was, who was one of the most successful women in this town during that time?

CG: Well, let's see there's Edith Porter who became postmistress and she ran a store. There's uh, Barnes. It's in the book. She uh, was a teacher and ran the Barnest Mercantile Company. I don't really remember many women in business except Edith Porter.

PE: Now, Charlotte mentioned that you told her that your father thought it was really important for you to learn business, or at least—

CG: Now, to learn a way to make a living, yes. Mhmm.

PE : Uh-huh. And for you, what was that? That was teaching?

**Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949**

Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory (CT 34)

CG: Well he saw it I got typing early.

PE: Ah. How young were you?

CG: 16 at least.

PE: And where'd you learn typing?

CG: Owensboro Steno Center on 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

PE: Uh-huh. And...

CG: I know about 3 women--

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: There's a restaurant that's also in the book. Three girls started in their 20s, they're still down there, this little restaurant.

PE: Really? What's the name of it?

CG: It's called Beaver Dam Café. We call it "Bivinses", because it's a, it's a Tilford that started it, all the girls are Tilfords, but their mother remarried. So uh, those three women, they should be mentioned.

PE: That's interesting.

CG: He changed names for awhile, he in 1922 or 3, she was born in that year. And then, I don't know what Tootsie's name is. And then Daddy. And those three are down there, and their picture hangs there and they're written up in this book.

PE: And that's in Beaver Dam?

CG: Mhmm.

PE: Yeah. Ok. Um, who were your classmates in that typing course? Were they the same girls from your crowd or were they...?

CG: Not very many. Uh, uh, not many that got into it. I don't think any of my class was in it.

PE: Did you feel different being the only...

CG: No! [laughs]

PE: Feeling?

**Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949**

Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory (CT 34)

CG: I thought it was a chore, but I was so--

PE: Yeah.

CG: Grateful later. I'd say, Wendy Taylor might've taken that typing class, and I guess there were some boys, I don't know.

PE: Really?

CG: I don't remember. Maybe some older girls that were already, women worked in the stores here, as bookkeepers.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: So...

PE: Now, so typing wasn't considered only female work at that time? Now it's female only.

CG: No, I imagine there's some boys. I don't remember.

PE: Now, do you remember any, the switch to a minimum wage law? For women? And the forty hour work week law for women?

CG: Well that didn't apply. [laughs] We worked long hours I know they post...

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: My aunt's cousin worked for the post office here. And they had to get up and get the mail out on the early morning train, 4:30 so, then they'd have to put up the mail train at night.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: And their hours were terrible and so were the stores. Oh yeah, their hours, I don't know when they changed. I'd say maybe, might have been the 40s.

PE: Hmm.

CG: And then they'd start, they had to keep it open at night for no good reason.

PE: What do you mean for no good reason?

CG: Well, I guess they thought somebody might. [laughs]

PE: Uh-huh.



## Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949

Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory (CT 34)

CG: Well, I guess they, people that worked all day, come to town at night.

PE: Uh-huh. Ok. Now, I've gone over all the questions that I had, I was wondering, are there any significant, um, historical events that happened in Beaver Dam that really affected your life? That you'd really like me to, take a note of?

CG: I remember, being home one summer and two little boys ran the entire length of Main Street, crying out, "Will Rogers and Wylie Post are killed."

PE: Really?

CG: And that's the way we got that news. I never forgot that.

PE: And how'd they die?

CG: Crashed in the north. You know about Will Rogers, don't you?

PE: Yeah.

CG: He did an awful lot of exploring. Some way or another the news got here about the crash. And two little boys, I guess they were boys who delivered the afternoon newspaper but they ran the entire length of the town, which wasn't a long town, but from school to the crossroads they were screaming.

PE: Uh-huh. That time, Will Rogers, was a radio name.

CG: Radio and uh newspaper.

PE: Newspaper?

CG: He wrote a column. And I forgot what the name of it was.

PE: Ok, well I really appreciate you taking your time..

CG: Somebody asked me the way things happened. I don't know if I asked you or not, but I'll never take peace for granted again. Peace on earth.

PE: Really?

CG: Peace of mind or [ringing]

PE: [laughs] [ringing]

CG: I'll never take uh, [ringing] I'll never take uh-excuse me one moment.

## Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949

Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory (CT 34)

PE: Why is that?

CG: Well, um, the wars, they were frightening. I'll never take the basic freedoms for granted. Freedom from oppression, freedom from war, freedom from lack.

PE: Now why? Why, what taught you that?

CG: Times were hard and we were scared, we had so little. I don't have too much patience maybe, but uh, people could have so much and yet complain. One of the sweetest boys I know, a few years ago, told his mother, said "Mom, I'm the only one out of high school that can drive a four door car." [laughs] And we had so little. And uh, but that's, the suffering, and uh. People died who shouldn't have died. They had better care.

PE: Medicine.

CG: Medicine, no public health. Nothing was free.

PE: When did you know that it was time to leave your family home and to start taking care of yourself in this world?

CG: I think my grandparents taught that to their children. And uh, uh, well I always wanted a career, I uh, I had marriage in the back of my mind somewhere.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: Oh, but uh, I think I always knew, I uh. I think it was a blunt feeling... 'go away and make something outta yourself'. They seemed to think they couldn't do it if they'd stayed here. But now, many people did stay here.

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: And became very successful.

PE: That's really interesting.

CG: I know my grandparents told their sons that, they had two sons. They gave them a business education. Bowling Green. Bowling Green Business College and then they sent my mother through this West Kentucky Seminary and she was a schoolteacher. But I think it was a philosophy "make something outta yourself." I had an uncle, who went west and became a notable.

PE: Oh really.

**Folklife Archives Project 154 – A Generation Remembers, 1900-1949**

Interview with Corinne Taylor Gregory (CT 34)

CG: And uh, he said, if I stay here I'm just gonna just began to drive on down the road, so he left and made good. [laughs]

PE: Now is he the one who went to San Francisco?

CG: Uh, El Paso. It's in, oh, it's in another little book. They've got it—*Once Along the Trails*.

PE: Mhmm.

CG: But that, that doesn't represent everybody in this town. We knew farmers and we knew people--

PE: Uh-huh.

CG: That stayed here and said, they stayed home and say 'this is my roots' were here.

PE: Uh-huh. Well I'm glad you're here now. It's good to meet you.

CG: That's why I don't know, feel like I've got any right to tell everybody's story on here.

PE: Well, ... [tape breaks off] the tenth would be a good time to?

CG: No, I "Go to bed? Make it the 15<sup>th</sup>.

PE: The 15<sup>th</sup> would be even a better time for a photograph.

END OF TAPE