Western Kentucky University
TopSCHOLAR®

FA Oral Histories | Folklife Archives

8-14-1986

Interview with Irene Taylor Regarding Her Life (FA 154)

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
Western Kentucky University, mssfa@wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_oral_hist

Part of the American Popular Culture Commons, Education Commons, Folklore Commons, United States History Commons, and the Women's History Commons

Recommended Citation
Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Interview with Irene Taylor Regarding Her Life (FA 154)" (1986). *FA Oral Histories.* Paper 44.
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_oral_hist/44

This Transcription is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in FA Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact connie.foster@wku.edu.

TAPE1, SIDE1

CHRISTOPHER CAREY: This is Irene Taylor on August 14th, 1986. Tell me about Duncan Store.

IRENE TAYLOR: Duncan Store. Duncan Store was just one, little, building, about, a fourth of a mile from my house. The road was dusty. I would walk barefooted, and the dust was hot. It would burn my feet. I would there, and, just thrilled to death. I was goin' get, something good. Uh, there was no ice, no refrigeration. Uh, he would unlock the store, and it was so hot inside. The stick candy that he kept in a glass jar, unwrapped, uh, was uh, two for a penny or something or this sort. He would put his hands in there and take out the candy, and put it in a brown paper bag. Then uh, the Cracker Jacks, uh, if they would rattle, they were fresh, but if they didn't rattle, they were stuck in one block. Uh, but to me, they were good, any how, and uh, I would eat the tough things, sticky things, and they were good. Uh, there was um, cheese, that he would slice. Everything was handled by hand. Nothing was wrapped individually. Uh, if you wanted a quarter's worth of sugar, that was weighed up into a brown paper bag. Um, anything was weighed up. Um, sometimes bugs got into his crackers. {Chuckles} My mother discovered that. {Chuckles} So um, but you could imagine, a store, with no refrigeration, and uh, how that was, but I was always thrilled, to go. And uh, get something, from there.

CC: Is there anything else we haven't talked about that you want to mention?

IT: I don't know. There probably is, if I could think. I, that just came to my mind, you know,

CC: Mm hm.

IT: About this little store. Um, I don't uh, I can't recall anything right now, but that was one little thing. Uh, {Chuckles} I do remember, wanting to go, to a barbeque, or a picnic. These things were very rare, and uh, this was when I was a child. My neighbors, were going, I, and I was supposed to be going, but my daddy took the toothache and couldn't go. I was just really put out. So this neighbor said she would bring me a box of popcorn from this picnic. This was sweet popcorn, called "Monkey Business." {Chuckles} This box had a monkey on it, you know. Well, of course, they wouldn't get in until in the night some time, and I couldn't get my popcorn until Sunday morning. And I went over, oh, I couldn't wait, and I went over to get my popcorn and they were asleep, and I didn't want to wake 'em, so I came back, and um, had to go back a second time, to get my popcorn. And some of that would be tinted pink, pink color, and of course it was as tough as a piece of leather. Uh, all night long, you know, and the next morning, this popcorn, but, that was a treat to me, so uh, {Chuckles} I remember something else we used to get when we would walk through the woods in the fall. Pawpaws.

CC: Oh, uh huh.

IT: P-A-P-A. You know, that banana flavored fruit.

CC: Mm hm.

IT: Why that, they would just grow, they were so good, and uh, that's {Chuckles}

CC: Sounds like you had quite a appreciation of nature.

IT: Uh, yes, I do yet. I love nature, and you know, and I, I talk, to my grandchildren about "What kind of tree is this?" and "Now, look at this bug," and all this. I have one son that loves, when he was small, he, would, have all these animals around, you know. He would find water dogs and bring 'em in. {Chuckles} And I never forget, he brought a little rabbit in here, and I didn't know it, and the little thing died, you know, and he was so young, that he said, "Well, it'll come alive. It's asleep." {Chuckles} Frogs, and all these things. Uh, yes, I do, I, you know, now, I go after my paper. I love my early paper, and that's the Owensboro paper, you know, that, comes early. And I walk out there through with my cats, and I look, you know, over the hills, and over everywhere. I can see out, so far and it's so pretty, and I just enjoy every minute of it. Love the cows and all that. Uh, I guess, that's why, I love 'em, I guess, I grew up that way. I had pet cows, pet chickens. {Chuckles} Everything pet, and uh, I, but uh, just enjoy living. People talk about the good ol' days. They were good, and they're good now. I, I like, every day.

CC: Mm hm.

IT: No matter what it is. And I usually go to Owensboro when, it is raining. I love the rain. It does something to my ions, I guess. {Both chuckle} Makes you feel good.

CC: Well, uh, I don't have any other questions for you.

IT: You don't?

CC: I can't, uh, anything else?

IT: I uh, I think uh, oh, the Punch and Judy Shows, I think we mentioned that, didn't we, before? You know, that, this man, would come around, through the country, and these were, puppets, you know.

CC: Mm hm.

IT: And uh, he would if he could give a show at school, and he would give 'em at these one-room schools. I remember Punch and Judy. And he made a curtain, you know, across, up

high, and these little puppets uh, went along, up there, and uh, oh, we had a Christmas trees, programs at our one-room schools, too. Uh, programs with these children. That was good for them, you know, they memorized things and uh, and we had plays. Oh I, this was when I was in grade school, that we had "Rip Van Winkle," and I, I can remember that. And that was put on right to the very, uh, word, and uh, we borrowed a neighbor's dog, collie dog, and we had this boy that was typical. He was slow. He moved slow. He talked slow. And he was just an ideal Rip. He did not have to, to act, and his wife, and all of that, and that dog did EXACTLY what we wanted him to do, and uh, now, you know, that was good. Rip Van Winkle. At a grade, a one-room school.

CC: And did the parents all come and see this?

IT: Oh, yes, they loved it. They would, uh, see these were centers, and this, uh, some people, we've lost people by consolidating schools. Because some would say, "Well, I'll not go to Lewisport, to a consolidated school." Excuse me.

CC: Mm hm.

TAPE TURNED OFF

IT: When we

CC: Well, uh, you were talking about the parents coming to the school.

IT: Oh, the, uh, yes. These one-room schools were centers, in the community, you know. Uh, they went there for, every program that, was there, or the last day, they would have, dinners, and uh, some, parents, I suppose, that were, shy, would not come to a consolidated school. They would say, "I don't feel at home there, and I won't go." And we lost some, that way. So uh, the one-room schools were, were centers in the community. We would have Christmas trees, Christmas programs, and I guess a lot of holidays, we would have, oh, we used to, on Fridays, some times we would just have a, impromptu, program, on a Friday afternoon. And uh, spelling bees, that was, they liked that, and uh, that was good. So uh, sing-a-longs, {Chuckles} and school fairs, and uh, children display what they had done, you know, work, parents liked to see that. And uh,

CC: So school was, was more of a social thing back then?

IT: Now, you know, you can't do this, you've got to spend so many minutes, in the classroom, and there's no time for, all these things. I used to have style shows when I taught, and everybody liked them. The men even came, you know, and the girls, really it was, class work. Uh, they uh, modeled what they had made, all, all year long. They made children's

clothes, and they made garments for themselves, and uh, we would put it into a story form, and uh, music and all of that. But uh, now they don't have time to do these things. 'Course they had to get on the bus, and go home. So uh,

CC: You did those, at about, what time, what year, something like that was?

IT: What years? Well, that would have been in the, the forties and fifties. {Pause as cars go by.} You, do you like to talk? Oh, in what decades do you, do you rather, have, information?

CC: Well, the way we're doing this is, it will be run over five days. One of the first ten years of the decade, and then the next ten years, and the next ten years, and like that.

IT: Mm.

CC: We're just getting a little bit from every decade from the people we talk to. Is there anything else?

IT: Uh, you do, uh, when we played, let's see, basketball, a-, a-, at Lewisport High School, it used to be played outdoors.

CC: Hm.

IT: Yeah. The coach said the sky was the ceiling. {Chuckles} But uh, we had some good basketball players. Uh, one of 'em played at UK. He wasn't on the starting five, but he was uh, he played some.

CC: Now was this during the winter that they were playing or did they do it during better weather?

IT: Well, uh, it musta been. Uh, in the winter, but it couldn't been, when it was cold. I suppose uh, maybe the beginning of school and the end of school, or something like that.

CC: Mm.

IT: But uh, let's see.

CC: Did you go, to the county fairs back, in the early days?

IT: Yes.

CC: What were those like?

IT: Uh, well, we usually had a parade, and that was schools. You know, each school um, I remember, getting my, my Chestnut Grove, a school ready, and we made caps, to wear, cricket

for caps, everybody had a cap alike, and then they knew that was Chestnut Grove School. And uh, there, they had exhibits, of work, that was done, like uh, I guess canning 'n, sewing 'n, art 'n, uh, baking, uh, athletic events, but uh, now the Centennial Fair at Lewisport, that was really something. They uh, a lady rode a sidesaddle on a horse, you know, like they did. They tried to go back, the one hundred years, and get clothes, that were one hundred years, and wear them, and I have that in the parade, the um, and then they had the schools, and um, all that. This could be where you met everybody.

CC: Mm hm.

IT: Talked to everybody, like a homecoming event. {Pause}

CC: Well, I guess I'd better head back to Owensboro, and let you uh, {Tape turned off.}

END TAPE1, SIDE1