

1-1

MUR AND GRANDADDY:  
An Elderly Couple  
Adjusting to the City

by  
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Folklore 371  
Dr. Teske  
Spring 1979

DIARY OF EVENTS

These selections are taken from a daily log that I kept while living with the informants from April 9 through April 20. I tried to relay an assortment of the informants habits, actions, feelings and attitudes, on the spot; as I observed them. Also included in this log are jokes, recipes, proverbial phrases and tales. I made no attempt to organize this material. The events and pieces of lore were gathered as they occurred.

Monday night:

Mur is experiencing the remnants of a cold induced by Granddaddy. She's clearing her throat. "Stayed in bed all day yesterday after church . . . the wind was so cold," she said. It was 75° yesterday, by the way.

"They keep raising our telephone bill!"

She read to me the total of the bill as well as each amount itemized and made out a check with a sigh. She's been a little ill and said she's feeling better.

I asked her if she was going to attend the dinner in honor of Thelma Stovall, a candidate in the primaries for Governor. Her answer:

"Politics is awful. We were victims of it. Orville was due for a big job and a big Todd County scandalous judge was rulin' at the time. Well, Orville wouldn't work with him, blamed judge almost ruined him. He promised Orville a big job with the Alcohol Beverage Control and instead gave him a lesser job with the Highway Dept. Orville called Waterfield and he called Governor Nunn. They were able to straighten things out and we were able to save the farm." (By "Save the farm" Mur is referring to a number of debts that they owed at the time. They were able to pay their debts because my granddaddy received the higher paying job).

Mur wouldn't attend the dinner, saying she'd rather maintain a low profile. She supports Thelma Stovall and talked at great length about their association with her. Then she talked at great length about the

high cost of college tuition reminding me subtly of my privilege to attend college.

She's read the paper once or twice over. Granddaddy does the same thing. They read the local Park City, Courier-Journal and Todd County Standard. I can't believe they're still taking the Standard, they've got copies dated from 1977. ( The Standard is from the last community in which my grandparents lived, Allensville, Ky.) Mur says she usually reads at night until 2:00 or 3:00. Her hair is in rollers and she's in bed clothes. She's eager to talk. "I wear my bed clothes more often now. Somedays there's no need to dress." We begin looking at old photos. "Grandfather <sup>Henry Clay</sup> Patton knew the entire Bible. He used to tell people where a verse was or he'd quote scripture when somebody asked him about a passage. He used to accept \$10.00 from people who'd try to catch him incorrect."

She showed me great grandmother Cordelia Merrifield Patton who was first cousin of Jefferson Davis. Then she showed me pictures of her grandfather and grandmother Patton. "See how they look alike." Mur is obsessed with her ancestry. She spoke of photos lost and antique frames lost during the move from the farm at Allensville to Rockfield. She is convinced that the Cawoods who bought the farm took some of their things which were stored at the farm before they moved. Speaking of the Cawoods she said, "They turned out to be nothing like they seemed to be."

She began to preach again. Told me several examples of how some "nice Christian kids" she knew "went bad." Then she spoke of drugs: "At the farm some marijuana was sowed in cornfield by a plane. One of the neighbors had it and didn't even know it. Happened all of the time." Before I finally got tucked in, Mur said, "Men are gonna' get married or they're gonna' live in sin." It's 2:00 AM. Good night.

1-4  
TUESDAY MORNING:

Grandaddy woke up groaning, "Oh me!" "Oh me" is a familiar phrase in both their vocabularies. It is used to express pain or discomfort. He's got a cold. "I didn't sleep at all last night. Took two asprin, didn't do a bit of good. Never hurts to, though." He rarely takes medicine. He groans about Mur putting away his sweater, "She thinks she's the only one that lives here." Coughing he complained about a burning mouth and refused cough medicine. Mur, in the kitchen, scoffed. At breakfast Mur ate no sugar on her grapefruit. She took a diabetes test at a local clinic and found that she had it. She reminisced about throwing away good bacon grease, "I used to save it to cook vegetables in but now I must throw it away." I cook breakfast every morning, usually grapefruit and eggs, but I can't eat eggs because I've got high cholesterol."

They save and conserve everything. I feel guilty about throwing "used" toilet paper away. Mur puts all the leftover food away in the refrigerator at once so as not to waste energy.

I ran the water faucet in the bathroom about 30 seconds and Grandaddy made a comment about waste, "Don't waste water!" He's a firm believer in conservation and says, "I made my money by saving everything. That's how I got successful." They save jars, newspapers and many things used that I would discard such as matchbook covers that are used to write on.

In the country, he only used a paper napkin with his meal on Sunday and then claimed he used that same napkin the rest of the week. We wondered what else he used it for. Throughout the weekdays we grandkids would tempt him, "Need a napkin?" and he'd show us the one he saved from Sunday and say, "Not til next Sunday, I'm not finished with this one. See, I just need one for the whole week. I save."

Breakfast finished. I am scooted out of the house and told to go to school and "Get your lessons." School and study is deemed important by

each. I am the only grandchild in six to attend college. Mur is always regretting that she didn't attend nursing school and regrets that Grandaddy didn't attend college.

Grandaddy asked me what I was going to do. I told him possibly I'd like to work for TVA's Land Between the Lakes, Corps of Engineers or a state park. He said, "Black your skin and you'll get in." I replied, "My being female, I might have an advantage. He laughed and said, "Kink your hair."

# TUESDAY EVENING

*Todd Co.*

My grandfather was a member of the House of Representatives in Ky. in 1958. He eats up politics and loves to talk politics. I went with him to a local fish fry for a candidate, Thelma Stovall, who Grandaddy has known for many years. He thought it important that I meet the candidates and introduced me as his granddaughter who could recruit votes "up on the hill" (meaning WKU students). He congregated and socialized during the dinner with old political buddies and strangers. A black man played the organ quite enthusiastically which annoyed Grandaddy. I asked him if he could chew his fish alright (he wears dentures) and he replied, "I can't hear a thing, there's no use talking for that blamed music up yonder."

Loud noises, hard driving or piercing beats bother him. This includes any sound from church singing to the clatter of excited voices. According to Grandaddy, one should speak slow, clear and deliberate.

At the political dinner, he wore a plaid coat and cleaned his fingernails and had his hair trimmed before he went. His palms were almost unstained. At the farm, his nails were always dirt-filled and his hands were always stained. I had to leave the dinner early. It began at 6:00PM. He came home at 8:30 and hit the sack.

As I lay in bed, my grandaddy's room opposite mine, I can hear the

radio he keeps by his head, resting like a teddy bear beside him. He listens to late night talk shows, preaching, jokes, stories and country and gospel music. He finds this amusing and often records late night radio on tape.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

Granddaddy told me of his father whipping him for bringing a bicycle home when he was young. He earned and paid for it with his own money. His father called him selfish and made him return the bike. He tells me this story from time to time. He's bitter about it.

Mur confided later that he thinks he's sick and she feels sorry for him. "He always makes faces at my people," she said, "and is jealous of my family because we're loving."

When we drove to Hardees for a beef sandwich he told me how to hold the steering wheel and gave me driving instruction. He likes to eat out and take me places, especially to Captain D's.

Mur talked on the phone a long time-45 minutes. She remarked of Granddaddy in the conversation, "He used to work on the farm. He'd turn over all that earth, now he does nothing. But he did get the garden planted."

Granddaddy loves chocolate. They used to always keep a can of Hershey's syrup around and I can't find it anywhere. Since Mur is convinced of her diabetes, she is watching Granddaddy's diet closely also and rarely keeps sweets anymore. Granddaddy does have some Coke though, against Mur's better judgement. I sneaked in some of his favorite chocolate cookies to him.

I noticed a gun in the den, one of those once used devices. Also noticed a tool box. He sold most of his tools and doesn't have a shop anymore. At Rockfield, he did some woodworking but he's since refrained. I have asked him several times to make me a birdfeeder to replace the one

damaged one he made me. He gets busy on other chores and projects and forgets. "You all think all I do is sleep but I don't. I fixed the roof and cleaned the gutters til' I was sore," he said.

While we were out together, we saw some workmen perched high on the roof of a building. I remarked about how high they were. Granddaddy said, "Oh honey, I've been higher that-fixing the roof of barns and building homes. But not anymore."

While we were cooking dinner Mur remarked that I was "skinny as a mosquito." We were talking about home health remedies and Mur said she treated diarrhea with tender leaves of asparagus cooked in pork grease. She gave me a recipe for a topping she always makes for cobblers:

1/2 cup of water

1 tablespoon flour

butter to taste

1 cup sugar

teaspoon vanilla

"Makes larrupin' sauce!" she said. It does.

She also makes her own peanut butter and mayonnaise. Granddaddy loves peanut butter and relishes mayonnaise on his tomatoes.

#### THURSDAY

Talked to Granddaddy this morning about his days in the legislature. "I saw that a road was built from Pembroke to Guthrie. They made me a lifetime member of the fraternal order of police. Happy Chandler was governor then and Harry Lee Waterfield was Lieutenant Governor. We were living at the Foster Farm then." He said he also helped decrease police working hours from 56 hours a week to 40 hours without a cut in pay.

"I passed a bill limiting speeds to 70 miles an hour, too." In 1959 he quit the legislature to support Harry Lee Waterfield's campaign for Governor. Waterfield was defeated and Granddaddy went back to the farm.

He's given me the Christmas card from John F. Kennedy.

Mur said, "We sure were real active folks in the old days to be nothing now, I'm not bitter though." She showed me a filing cabinet in the garage full of Granddaddy's files, newspaper clippings and materials stored over the years. We spread the stuff on the car hood and Mur remarked, "May as well throw this stuff away, some of it. Nobody'd care about this stuff except you, maybe." I offered to salvage some of it. Granddaddy remarked, "Good scots what a mess! If a wind comes in here it'll blow it all away. Dad blame if she (Mur) can't do the blamedest things for a white child!"

Granddaddy's orange truck sits in the driveway, he rarely uses it now. He does wear a farm cap, but dresses in "city" clothes even while doing his yard work. "I like to look nice" he says. He gave my sister his farm clothes which he was always dressed in except on Sunday. He also had a tan except for the very top of his head which was covered by his cap.

I heard a car screech around the corner and Mur said, "Wait 'til they get out of school. Somebody ran over the next door neighbor's yard and took their mailbox along-dragged it clear down the road!"

FREDDAY

As I was putting on my makeup this morning, I thought of a question to ask Mur. I told her I was going to turn on the tape. She said, "Tell me the question before you turn it on." I asked her to try and forget the recorder. She responded that she wouldn't talk if I didn't tell her what the question was before I turned it on. I told her and she said, "I'll have to think about it." She began to offer a number of answers yet still refused to let me record her. I told her she should relax and edit her information, that it should be as natural as conversation. We decided to put it off until later as she was busy figuring her income tax. I have not as yet used the recorder. I was



8.

afraid this would happen. I might have to hide the device and I told her so. She commented it was too bad that I hadn't thought of that before when we had those lengthy conversations. Mur and I talk frequently and at length. The conversation is varied and flows from one thing to another. I hope I can capture it on tape.

My mother says that Mur never uses a period or transition in her conversation, saying "You can't get a word in edgewise." Mom makes faces, grimacing when on the phone with her and finds it hard to exchange sentences with her.

Granddaddy is off to bed after about 2 hours and a 1/2 work outside. He's fixing up his tomatoe beds, fertilizing them. Mur says he'll plant them tonight.

Granddaddy commented that no one ever talks to him but me. Mur offered a joke that her brothers told her as a child.. It's called "Tin Drawers." She says, "At a protractor's meeting they were all camping out and had a preacher there. Towards dusk a man missed his wife. Now she was a little frisky so he had put tin drawers on her so she wouldn't misbehave during the meeting. He began to ask the others if they'd seen his wife. Pretty soon a man answered, "No, but you know what I did see that was kind'a odd was that preacher goin'toward the woods ~~we~~ carrying a can opener."

Granddaddy watches basketball games on TV frequently. This evening he is commenting about the black players. He's upset that they're 'taking over our teams."

Before I turned in, Mur told me about growing up in Guthrie. She mentioned a section in town they called "Squigg" which was predominately black. She remembers that on Friday and Saturday nights, "They'd cut each other up with long razors, about yea long. The women kept them

in their stockings and the men in their pockets"( meaning the razors).  
"They'd slit each others throats from ear to ear and sometimes they'd grab the jaw and slit from the inside of the mouth to the ear just like they were carving chicken. We knew because we'd see their scars."  
She then told me a gruesome story:

"Another nigra' cut his wife and child's head off and tried to get away. The sheriff and hsi deputies got him on a railroad track- this niger injured one of his deputies and on his way to trial they took him to a tree and strung him up. They called in a man who tied nooses to do it. Then white men shot him full of holes while he hung there. We followed the truck that brought his boly back all the way to town."

I asked Mur if she were prejudiced. She said no that there were good niggers and bad niggers just like there are good and bad people. She said she knew some that she loved because they were so good. "It's just these that are tryin' to take over that urks us. Honey, don't tell me. . . I grew up with 'em I know."

She told me a few more stories:

"Nigra's use to do our washing and meal preparing. They also hauled our wood and coal. The washwomen would find blood on white woman's undergarments and if it smelled of keroscene, then they knew she'd aborted. Women use to drink the stuff to get rid of a fetus."

"I heard of a man carving another niger right below the belly line- his intestines fell right on the floor. Yes, he lived."

"Kids can be so cruel. I remember the boys pushing each other in the sinkhole and popping each other's suspenders. They use to do what they called, 'bucking'. Four boys would take hold of hands and feet of another boy and ram his head against a wall or tree. They did this to Robert Penn."

"Robert Penn Warren lived across from us. The boys bucked him alot. He rarely played with us. He was smart and studied most of the time. I remember him staying inside and reading during the summer as we played. The other boys made fun of him and bucked him sometimes. Oh and a boy by the name of Greenfield who played for the New York Giants lived across from Robert Penn. I knew Robert Penn's sister well. His brother still lives in Guthrie."

"Some people we knew, their daughter killed herself. I don't know whether she was pregnant or not. She went in the kitchen in the middle of the night and got a butcher knife. Her parents found her body slumped in the middle of the floor and she'd cut her head clear off. They had to mop up all that blood. Carried out buckets and buckets."

I asked Mur if she'd mind talking to a classmate about the Bell Witch. She grew up hearing about the phenomenia from people in Guthrie. Her home town is very near Adams, Tenn. the site of the incident. Mur told me about the story and gave me books on the matter when I was young. She said she'd tell him all she knew.

#### MONDAY

Mur's worrying about cleaning rugs and curtains. "I've lived in this house for two years and it never has had a cleaning. I'm used to keeping house. As long as I am able I'll vaccum, wash dishes and windows."

She mumbles to herself as she washes dishes. I've noticed Grandaddy talking back to the TV set. He mocks it or answers it sometimes.

A car screeches around the corner and Mur says, "Young people are jumpy." She cited examples of youngsters at the movie theater sitting on the edge of their seats. "I remember going into the picture show with the girls and seeing those kids jumpy and excited. I can only imagine what it's like now." She saw "Grease" and was disgusted.

I asked Mur if she missed the farm. She said that she can never go back to those days, that they were "fine memories." She talked of the kinship with the farm and of her involvement with the 4-H and homemaker's groups. When her last daughter finished school she gave up those activities. At a time when they were returning to the country after living in Bowling Green, Mur remembered my mother telling her, "Momma you're a fool if you go back there."

As of marriage Mur said, "I believe I could live alone. It's so hard getting along."

She spoke of the gospel meeting at church last week and of her involvement in the church. "I used to be a church secretary," she said, "and taught many bible classes. I still listen to the sermon. No one deserves to go to heaven except through Christ's grace."

#### TUESDAY

"Oh boy, I feel like a hant," Mur says. A hant is a witch. She was working on her check balance and wouldn't let me take a picture of her. Her hair was dotted with a few rollers and she held up her hand and said, "No!" I went in the den to take a picture of Grandaddy who posed and said that I have a nice camera. Mur went to the bathroom and cleaned up a bit then I snapped the picture.

She showed me some letters from some "nigra's" in Chicago that worked for her family 50 years ago. She quoted them as saying, "We still belong to the Gray family." She added, "There are nigra's today who wouldn't believe that these identify with a white family. . . as their slaves."

Grandaddy read the paper and shared a fact with us, "Chillblum!" he said. "Shirley Chislom," I corrected. "Chillum's coming here," he went on, "Why they want to raise all that ruckus I don't know. . . niggers, why we know what they are. . . talk about their

12.

heritage. . .we know what they are and where they came from."

I told him, "Grandaddy, she was the first black congresswoman, the first woman to run for President. She might have something to say."

"Yeah," he snorts, "yeah, I don't know. . . they're always stirring up trouble."

Grandaddy watches "All In the Family" and as Edith is about to be raped by a burglar he turns it off and comments about "all that stuff on TV that's not fit to watch."

He returned to his paper until the "Price Is Right" came on. He loves game shows. Mur worked on her income tax. During the show, Grandaddy made pp-ss-poot noises with his mouth and mocked the contestants.

WEDNESDAY

Everyone up at 8:30. Mur fixed bacon, grapefruit, sausage, and pancakes. Grandaddy's going to fix Aunt Millie's (his sister) mailbox. Somebody knocked it down. He was dressed in green plaid pants and a gold shirt with a ripped sweater over it and topped off the outfit with a farmer's cap. He used his Buick instead of the truck for hauling posts and tools. Mur said he never uses the truck... "has 2,000.00 in it. He's afraid it'll stop on him."

I had to leave at 2:00 for class and when I returned at 6:00 Mur and Grandaddy were dressed and ready to take me to Ponderosa. They'd waited for me. I had further business to take care of and we decided to eat at home. Grandaddy was eating a sardine cassorole and tried to get me to take a bite. I didn't even want to see it or smell it. I asked him what was in it and he said,

"Sardines. With a little of their oil poured on 'em. Then I pour melted butter on it and scrunch up crackers on it. Then I add a little mayonnaise and red ketchup and pepper. Um Umm, I hate to see it go!

THURSDAY

THURSDAY

Mur feels bad this morning. We watered the flowers and talked of the geraniums that grew at the farm. Granddaddy ate pork brains and eggs. Yuck. Mur had cream of wheat, egg without the yolk, and grapefruit. She said she was taught to wait on people and wouldn't let me help. Granddaddy made a remark about how late I slept-8:00-AM.

Mur's lost a cameo that a dead woman gave her. She will despair some about that. "It seems as if we lose things all the time" she said.

She was talking to herself and I said, "What?" She said, "You know when you get old, old people talk to themselves. Get a little off the loop."

I 've heard phrases like "we can't do this or that because we're too old" or "I'm too old to do that."

Granddaddy's playful this morning. He gave me a punch in the arm and told me to sit down. He wants to go to Captain D's, again.

I was putting on make-up and Granddaddy remarked, "You oughta' do your eyes the night before, that way you'd be ready to go in the morning. Before Mur left she commented, "I'll tell you, if you have a husband and he hits you in the eye, it'll look just like that." I told her I'd bean her for saying that. Granddaddy added, "She don't need no husband, to boss her around."

Thurs. lunch: Met them at Captain D's. Mur was dressed in pink and Granddaddy was in a long-sleeved shirt. They were well wrapped- a little overdressed for the 75° weather. Both feel well. Joked about restrooms. Granddaddy said he would check the Women's room. They've been eating fish here once a week for about 2½ years.

I returned at 7:30. Mur is checking old records for income tax. Talked about managing money. They've a large sum in a bank earning interest which is their income, they're taxed heavily on that. Mur

commented about "high living Congressmen in Washington", their purchases, drinking and eating out, flying here and there on "our money."

For their amusement, they're playing bingo for money sponsored by a local grocery store. Some of Mur's acquaintances played and won about \$200.00.

Thurs. pm: While watching TV Granddaddy mocked a Preparation H commercial saying, "Leave my ass at home." I could've died.

He's really hacking and coughing. Before he went to bed he told Mur, "We gotta' get up early for the garden."

"Wanna' get up at 5:00?" she asked.

"No, no I don't think so."

As a farmer, he was always the first body up in the morning.

While Mur was doing her income tax she hummed and ho ho hoed. "Tell them your grandmother has a beautiful voice." She began breathing rapidly, "I'm having a canption fit!" What's that? She told me it's when your ribs hurt or the feeling you have when your heart has gas-"You can't breathe in all the way."

She couldn't get her totals right. Made farting noises with her mouth. After she finished we tried to decipher some writing in an old Bible.

The Bible belonged to J.J. Alley, Mur's grandmother's brother. The writing was faded and in pencil. It intrigued us for 2½ hours. The book was dated 1864 and had dates in it from the late 1700's. According to Mur, he swam the Ohio in the Battle of Ashland. — *William Samuel Gray did*

#### FRIDAY

At breakfast we talked of nuclear war. I took pictures of the quilt and chased Mur around the room with my camera. Took a picture of them working in the garden and Granddaddy hollered, "Oh golly, you ought not to waste film!" Mur informed me of one of their friends from Guthrie who was an electrician and now is in the obituary column. He was electricuted.

"We go to funerals alot. We've seen so many friends buried" she said.

Grandaddy's going to get fertilizer for the garden. Mur's going to work at 12:00 as a Greenview Hospital Volunteer.

She told me about the time a pressure cooker broke. "The Lord was with me. . the pressure cooker gasket broke and hot steam escaped all around." She moved out of the area just at the time of explosion.

Another testimony of faith- "The last year we were at the farm I prayed for a good yield from the garden and we had an abundance- the lettuce weighed over a pound."

*Haley Finney*  
Haley and Olivia came over. ( relatives) Olivia asked Grandaddy if he got his pants at a yard sale.

Mur introduced me to her co-workers at Greenview. She said, "We're all a bunch of SOG's-Silly Old Grandpeople!" Her duties include delivering flowers and waiting on patients.

Grandaddy left for his Board of Director's meeting at First Federal Bank. He said, "They give me \$200.00 to vote on things."



# CONCLUSION

Mur and Granddaddy represent a couple adjusting to the effects of age and an urban environment away from the peaceful country life they're so fond of. This research is not an in'depth study of each, instead it is an attempt to record a segment of time and their responses within that time. Perhaps with further research a conclusion could be drawn that would encompass their response to an urban area and their ages more accurately. I enjoyed the research and hope that the material provided is enlightening and interesting.

## DIAGRAM

The purpose of the diagram on the following page is to provide and outline showing how Mur and Granddaddy have moved from urban to rural areas during the course of their lives.

They seem to prefer living in a rural setting. Granddaddy stated while visiting my <sup>Linda - Southern Indiana - Marengo - Milltown area</sup> sister's farm, "This is livin'!" He speaks of buying another farm and asks me if I would like to have a farm. He attends farm sales and auctions in the Bowling Green area and keeps close contact with friends in the real estate business. Although he is not physically able to return to farming, he would like to. This accounts for much of his mental depression. He often has fits of anger and goes into a rage until he has to take Triavil, or some calming drug to help him relax. He says, "I never got sick until I moved to the city." He is of a nervous nature and prefers the peace and quiet found in the country. He is adjusting to a home on a busy intersection very near Bowling Green High School. On weekdays at 2:15 when school is over he sits by the window and complains about, "... those crazy, blamed kids screeching those cars" as they leave school. He finds traffic and loud noises very annoying. He often turns the television volume down and watches the picture. More comments about Granddaddy can be found in the diary and introduction of this paper.

Mur, in turn, says of their life on the farm, "It was the best time of our lives." She relays they were happy when active with their chores and enjoyed a close relationship with the members of their church and community. She is thankful to be in an urban setting, near hospitals, shopping centers, and relatives. "I've had my dream home," she says, "and a good life. It's time for a rest. I'd hoped to retire and travel when we moved back to Bowling Green . . . see some things I'd never seen. But your Granddaddy won't do anything of the sort, traffic makes him nervous." Mur calls herself a "city girl!" as she grew up in town and wasn't accustomed to country life. "I thought I was marrying a businessman. Orville was a travelling salesman for the Brach Candy Company. He took me straight to the farm and I learned fast."

Bowling Green is the largest city they have lived in. The towns of their previous residences were small and within a tri-county area, those being Warren, Logan and Todd Counties.

PHYSICAL SETTING

A description of their suburban home and the relevant belongings therein is necessary in order to illustrate the setting in which the informants live. Mur and Granddaddy's knick-knacks, their junk and treasure, are silent objects that display the personalities of two elderly people adjusting to the transition from farm to city.

KITCHEN

The kitchen-dining room area is a room used for cooking, eating, sitting, talking on the phone and for conducting business matters, such as letter writing and working on income tax.

Adorning the walls are:

An old coffee grinder filled with artificial fruit that was kept full of candy at the farm. Mur's mother ground coffee in it during early 1900's. A picture of the Lord's Supper and a plaque of the Lord's prayer. A tiny iron skillet, given to Mur by a traveling salesman when she was a child in Guthrie, Ky.

A calendar for 1979 that a grandchild had especially made for them. On the calendar is a xeroxed photo of my grandparents.

Pictures of grandchildren .

An antique walnut clock that antique dealer and Granddaddy's sister, Aunt Millie, has been trying to swindle them for about 12 years.

Other knick-knacks include:

Plants in the kitchen window. Mur is quite proud of her house plants. If anyone else tries to water them she becomes quite protective.

*Mur* [Antique vases from Arnettes Antique and Auction House in Nashville. While living at the farm, they would travel to Nashville every month and bring back some purchase. They still enjoy attending auctions, but as Mur says, " I've had my dream home (meaning the farm), and

don't care to buy anymore. We have what we need."

A small black and white T.V. sits on the counter by the sink, here Mur is able to watch the shows she enjoys without opposition from her husband.

Food adorns the kitchen counter. Jars of pickled beets, watermelon pickle, ketchup and crabapple jelly were made by Mur and are her last batch for a while. "I'm not able to can like I used to at the farm," she says, "I make what you all will eat and what we'll give to folks, but no more."

Other items of interest:

A dishwasher is used, whereas at the farm the one they had was rarely used. I attribute this to Mur's slowing down her pace a bit. She has no desire to clean and "keep house" as she used to.

The kitchen table was Mur's mother and father's table and is quite large. It has many leaves, is made of maple and was used as a card table in the Gray household. Mur relays, "Mother didn't at first allow face card in our home, but she wanted us children to have friends over, and since we all enjoyed cards, she finally allowed us to play." The kitchen table was used at the farm. Mur and Granddaddy eat at a separate counter and only use the table for family gatherings and other social occasions.

An antique desk, imported from Europe, holds papers and documents of business. The kitchen table is used as a desk, however.

Antique chairs are scattered about the room. Mur's father's straight back chair is of interest. A cushion covers a hole in the middle of the chair which used to be covered with leather years ago, but has since worn out. As a child, I used to invite others to sit in the chair and get a kick out of watching them fall through.

#### LIVING ROOM

This room is rarely used and the doors into it are kept closed.

As I wander about, Mur accompanies me and reminisces of furniture and

things that were destroyed or lost during a move from one place to another. We come across her father's baby picture, a tin type, and she speaks of Grandfather Gray's chest. The chest used to sit outside on the back porch of the house at the farm. "We never realized it's value. We sat greasy old cans on it and it was full of dirt and junk." Her grandfather made the chest out of cedar and it has a walnut finish. "I'm glad we finally had it done over." In the chest is a quilt that her mother began in 1895. It is now 89 years old. (See slides and descriptions) The quilt is fragile and like many possessions is stored away.

- Other materials in the room include-
- Some pictures framed by their daughter, Mary Francis or "Fanny"
- 2 old mirrors
- 2 antique sofas with doilies made by Mur on their arms
- Old scatter rugs they've had since 1930
- Dining table with photo's strewn all over it
- 2 antique hutches with knick-knacks
- Lord's supper candle
- 2 plants
- Hand made pillows. Mur used to make pillows and quilts.
- Grandmother clock. They collect clocks, all of which were kept running at the farm. Only one clock works in the house.
- Mur's brother, Ralph's candle holder and dog that he carved from wood.
- Her mother's lead glass saltshaker
- Mur's grandmother's cut-glass shaker
- Antique cannisters from Holland
- Mur's mothers china doll. Her mother got it when she was six years old, which dates back to 1870. It is 109 years old.

## DEN

The den or lived in room is the room where my grandparents spend most of their time. Reading, sleeping, resting, watching t.v. and entertaining occur in the den. A fireplace makes a cozy fire in the winter and Mur spends most winter nights in this room because of the warmth. Most of the books and magazines are in this room and some of them include:

Kentucky Farmer, National Geographic, old newspapers, Bible handbooks, dictionaries, bird and wildlife books, Bibles, photo albums, Modern Maturity, Know Your Antiques, History of Todd County, Alex Comfort's It's a Good Age, The Book of Firsts, Newsweek, Farm Journal and others.

It seems as though they never throw away a thing as cartoons and other newspaper clippings are found throughout the room on walls, in between the pages of books and underneath the couch.

The main furnishings in the room include a hall tree, couch, coffee table, footstools, deacon bench, 4 chairs, and lamp table. Other features include book cases and the fireplace. Old keroscene lamps are about the room also. The lamps were frequently used at the farm as the electricity failed because of faulty wiring.

## BATHROOM

The bathroom is similar to any lavatory. Of special significance, however, is a plaque given to Mur by a school friend that hangs on the wall. Mur recites the poem on the plaque which is yellowed from age but bears a hearty message:

"All is not gold that glitters  
All is not wealth that brings  
Coin of the realm abundant;  
Life hold still better things,  
Health and a heart's contentment  
Friendships that bless it's way  
For these are the sources of gladness  
Which flower afresh each day! "

Friendship's Message-author unknown 1930

## MUR'S ROOM

Mur's bedroom includes:

Sewing machine- she rarely sews anymore, except to mend clothes. "I made all your momma's clothes during the depression and sewed for you girls. . . made your pajamas," she says.

Rocking chair- I have failed to mention that a rocking chair is in each room of the house. Mur collects rocking chairs and used to rock all her children and grandchildren.

Old pictures- including that of a Gibson girl.

Drawings and paintings by grandchildren.

A faded quilt made by Mur.

Antique clock.

Antique jewelry strewn all over the dresser.

Ironing board

Bed

Pillow cases emboidered by Mur.

## GRANDADDY'S ROOM

Grandaddy's bedroom includes:

Bed, 2 dressers

Antique trunk

Pictures Buffey, the small girl next door that he's fond of , made him.

Plaques I made him.

Pictures of daughters, grandchildren.

Rifle- He gave his guns to his daughters and grandchildren. He hunted on the farm but has not since.

Victorola records

Calling cards of politicians and businessmen.

Picture of him as a baby with 2 sisters.

In his closet I noticed no boots or shoes that he wore at the farm. Also, his farm grey work clothes were given to grandchildren.

## GUEST ROOM

In the guest room furniture and items include:

Couch

Antique spindle bed with blanket made by Granddaddy's mother (crocheted)

Antique bowl and pitcher

Antique dresser ( bed and matching dresser given to my mother, now in our home)

Unrefinished table started by Mur

A storage barrel with a cloth over it-used as a table. The barrel is full of dishes, china, and knick-knacks used at the farm.

In the closet and attic are belongings still packed from the major move from the farm in Allensville in 1974. Chandeliers from the old house and Mur's Indian arrowhead collection are among some of the materials stored away. Mur kept them packed away should they decide to move again. She doubts they will be unpacked.



*Finney & Gray*

From April 9 to April 20 I chose to live with my grandparents, Mary and Orville Finney, in an attempt to sensitively record and observation of their lifestyle. This observation is an example of ethnographic research for Urban Folklore 341.

My grandparents were chosen for study for a number of reasons. An obvious reason perhaps is that I have always been close to them and am interested in their welfare. As a child, I was able to spend many summers with them and have since drifted away as my life has become more and more involved with college duties and interpersonal relationships outside the family. I wanted to spend some time with them again and attempt to restablish some rapport in our relationship.

Another reason is their availability and access from my home as they live within one mile. Also, I am confident that both have something of interest to say and I want to preserve their ideas for myself and others to enjoy.

The data offered in this paper hopefully presents the lives of an elderly couple previously from a rural setting, in which they were very active, adjusting again to an urban environment. I tried to record their perception of being "elderly" and the fears, problems and joys they've experienced thus far in the "golden years." Their diets, recreation, hobbies, daily habits and general interests are some of the points surveyed in the research.

Data was collected through a series of interviews and observations over a period of five weeks, two of which I lived with informants. Photographic slides, tapes, diary of daily observations and various relevant paraphenalia will be included with this paper. *(Paper is all that was donated)*

Most interviews occurred in my grandparents home. The diary of daily observations was recorded during my stay at their home. I engaged in many

2.

outings and activities with them including dining at restaurants and attending a political dinner. I spent 2 days with my grandmother on the job as a hospital volunteer. Also one of the interviews was tape recorded in my home.

Most observations are included in the Diary of Events. The subject headings in this research include: (in order of sequence)

"Profile" of each informant

"Diagram" of Finney's transition from urban to rural areas

"Physical Setting"

"Questions"

"Diary of Events"

"Slide Identification"

"Tape Identification"

"Materials Identification"

Orville F. and Mary G. Finney were the informants. They reside at 190 Melrose Drive in Bowling Green, Ky. They have been married 48 years.

Mary Gray Finney, age 71, <sup>as of 1979</sup> was born in Guthrie, Ky. and was the daughter of a railroad worker and homemaker. She relays most of her personal background on tape. Mary, aka Mur, for the purposes of this paper and as she is called by her loved ones, is a volunteer at Greenwood Hospital. Her activities include sewing, cooking, canning and reading.

Orville Francis Finney, aka Granddaddy, is an ex-farmer, candy salesman, store and restaurant owner, and <sup>Todd Co Ky Representative 1958</sup> politician. He is the son of a <sup>Diemars + Finney 620 Perry</sup> store owner -farmer and homemaker and was born in Warren County near Bowling Green on the Gasper River. He is a <sup>as of 1979</sup> 74 year old who is now an avid TV and radio fan, gardener, and politician. Bowling Green  
12th Street

Both fear communism, blacks and cold weather. Both are Church of Christ members and attend, devoutly, three services a week, including

3.

A weekly ritual with both is a trip to Captain D's restaurant, located at 31-W By-Pass, Bowling Green. They report on the restaurant's cleanliness, service and over-all effectiveness for the Jerrico Corporation. They act as "spys" for the corporation and their meals are paid for. Both have numerous relatives and friends in the immediate geographic area and they have lived at various locations all their lives in Warren, Todd and Logan counties. An incomplete, yet descriptive diagram shows the transition made throughout their lives from urban to rural setting.