

Melissa Kenney

Fieldwork Project

April 24, 1989

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I decided that I would do my fieldwork project on my grandmother Mrs. Lucille Rascoe. I grew up a military dependent which meant traveling around quite often and if we were lucky we would get to visit my grandmother in the summer time each year. I remember very vividly looking forward to the special trips. I think because I was separated from my extended family this caused an interest in the past family narratives and the family folklore of my family.

My mother would tell my brother and I stories of when she was a kid (especially when we were in trouble) and how little they had but how they always managed to make ends meet. When I would get the chance to see my grandmother I would look for the reinforcement of these same narratives.

Grandmother Lucy is a person known for saving everything and remembering every detail. She has to be able to remember a persons name and their family lineage before should could possibly begin a story. Almost always the stories that about the Rascoe family are told in the "private sphere" usually centered around a food event or at least the kitchen table. These same narratives have been told repeatedly over the years, each time they change a little but the basic narrative always stays constant.

Lucille Elizabeth Gray-Rascoe was born in Trigg County Kentucky near Southern Academy in July of 1910. The first of five children to be born into the Gray family.

Lucille attended Southern Academy School (which she very firmly announces is Not a Catholic school). Lucille attended many schools, there was Menton, Hannabery, Wilonia Institute, and finally Trigg County High School. She drove a horse and buggy to and from school each day with her sister Francis. Lucille would put the horse in a stable and she and Francis would then walk the remaining distance to school. Lucille said that it was less expensive for them to take themselves to school and they much preferred to take their own buggy.

The fact that Lucille was the oldest meant that she had certain responsibilities to her younger brothers and sister. She would help dress and feed the young one and also took them to church. At a very young age Lucille started teaching Sunday school. To this day she has continued to teach.

In 1928 Lucille graduated from high school. She was the only actual senior in her class (meaning attending all twelve years of school). It seems as though the class that was a year behind her took the remaining classes in order to fill their requirements and graduated a year early. In that time period it was unusual for a young woman to receive college scholarships let alone think about going away to school. Lucille received two, the first was for sixty dollars and was from Draus Business College in Paducah. The second was for ninty dollars from a college in Chilathy,

Missouri and was a lifetime scholarship ( she kindly told me in the interview that if the college was still around she could still take them up on their offer).

Later in 1928 Lucille met and married Andrew Jackson Rascoe better known as A.J. They had met when his sister had been her teacher and they also had some social engagements through their church. They were married on December 25, 1928.

This began Lucille's mothering years. She was to have nine children, eight of which are still living today. In total she was to have five girls and four boys each approximately two years apart. She says that she remembers as soon as she was to get on baby out of diapers she had just had another to put in. She also reminded me that there was no such animal as disposable diapers. As time passed one of the nice things was that the older children could help with the younger ones. They all had to chores to help out some of the big family problems. One of the hardest obstacles to deal with on a day to day basis was the fact that they did not have running water. Each day someone had to walk over a hundred yards to get water for cooking, cleaning, washing, drinking, and so on. Many times the local men would get together and fill up fifty gallon drums and drop them off along side each house. In the springtime, they would take these same barrels and place them underneath the gutters of the house to collect the rain water. Lucille said that there is no softer water in the world to wash with than rain water. She also said that you hardly need to use any soap when you bathe with rain water. Lucille said these days were very

different from today, there was no washers and dryers in these times everything was done by hand.

In order to make ends meet, the Rascoe family farmed a piece of land. They grew tobacco, wheat, corn: they would also make their own corn meal and flour. They had some animals too, a milking cow , pigs, and chickens. A.J. was a school teacher but did not receive much pay because he was not a college graduate. Lucille was to become a head cook (what we would call a dietician today) after her youngest one started first grade. eventually, A.J. went to Western Kentucky University for three months to be certified teacher. Keeping jobs straight and feeding the kids became a major task especially when the numbers kept increasing. Lucille says that there were a lot of cuts and bruises, scrapes and tiffs, but Momma could always kiss the hurt away. She also said there were a lot of crazy stories. It was in these childhood crazy stories that I became most interested in.

The oldest girls Mildred and Betty did not have many parts in the stories that I heard from Lucille. The stories were usually situated around the four boys and the two youngest girls. I believe that one of the best narrative that Lucille told me had a two part injury list.

The boy were playing basketball, they had one goal on the garage and the other was on the chicken house. The boys had spent some time with making the ground smooth to play a better game. The only problem was that the two younger girls Linda and Martha, thought that this was a great place to jump rope. There was only the two of them and they could use the garage as a third

partner. Of course it was best to tie the end directly under the basketball goal. The boys, Ralph, Ewing, Jerald, and Bobby, would go round and round with the girls. The girls would tie their end and one of the boys would take it down. Lucille said that she heard them fussing and fighting but kids were kids and with as many as she had she had learned that you don't go running as many as soon as you hear one cry. Well eventually the yelling got louder and Martha came into the house and locked the door. Jerald was trying very hard to get inside. It seems as though the two girls had aggravated him so much that he was going to teach them a lesson. The only thing that he taught Martha was how to push her arms completely through glass door. Lucille said it was chaos. Martha was screaming, glass and blood was everywhere, and then Jerald starts screaming how he is going to kill himself. She (Lucille) told him he could go right ahead. Now the Rascoe's lived outside of Owensboro, they had no phone and no way of getting to a doctor. Lucille had to wrap Martha's arm with rags and wait for A.J. to return from work.

Meanwhile Jerald has gone out to finish his chores and in the process of gathering eggs from the chicken house slips and falls and severely breaks his arm. Now the other boys can hear him screaming but just figure that he is after some attention because when A.J. was to return home he was going to receive the punishment of all time. Jerald was very hurt though and decided to make his way back to the house. He was covered in manure and was crawling through the coal shed to get to the house screaming the whole way. Finally, Ralph went out and checked on him and

saw that he was truly hurt. So now Lucille had two hurt children, no way to contact anyone, and for some reason her husband was not home on time. This was the one time that A.J. stopped in town. When he did finally return he had to make an immediate turn around and head back into town to Davis County Hospital. As it turned out everyone survived but with scares.

This is one of many narratives that Lucille Rascoe shared with me. This had also been one of the narratives that my brother and I had heard when we were growing up because my mother to this day has scares on both of her arms.

I believe the reason that this narrative still exists in my family folklore is for two reasons. First, my uncles very much enjoy poking fun at anyone. Some still carry the nicknames that they earned many years before. Second, growing up in a family so large I'm sure that there was so very difficult times and these narrative indicate being able to survive. These were not necessarily success stories but they are very entertaining now.



10 Minute Transcription

Tape 1 February 18, 1989

Interview with Lucille Rascoe, Owensboro KY.

Interviewer Melissa R. Kenney K=Kenney R=Rascoe

Equipment: Panasonic model RQ-350

K: Do you have any stories to tell me of how the kids were mischievous? (220)

R: Oh yes! And of course we had a basketball hoop on the garage and one on the chicken house. They would--the girls would get out there, it was smooth of course to play basketball -- the girls would get out there and tie one end. See there was only two of them. They would tie one end to the building and the other would throw the end, you know, while the other jumped. They took turns doing that and uh, so of course they'd get in the way of the boys and they could not get to their goal with their ball and so they would --- they would get a hold of the girls and told them they were going to take it down. They just went in there and took it down. Well then they (the girls) got mad and was a fussing because they could not play jump. And then your mother, Martha, and Jerald were the ones that were doing the most of the fussing and fighting.

So she run in the house and was going to lock him out. [10 second pause] And finally he turned the door a loose and she came in and he ran out, so [10 second pause] then he, --, they had another round and he came back in running

-- in and out, back and forth they went. So they ran out again --- and so finally he got in and locked the door and wouldn't let your'e momma in. And so she was screaming and beating on it and of course the glass just cracked in two. She cut her armand blood was going everywhere, it was just squirting. So Jerald ups and I said "Well young man did you have to do all that? Now look what you've done what a mess!" Of course their daddy was at work, I had no way to call, we did not have a telephone at that time so I couldn't call him. Of course I tried to stopp the bleeding.

So I turned to Jerald and said "Young man your daddy is going to get you tonight!" (271) I did not ever try to whip them but if they had done anything really bad or tore up something, I would tell them that I was going to tell their daddy when he came home. Jerald says "Well I know that you are going to tell Daddyso I'm just going out to kill myself!" Well he went out to gather --- I said no you go out and gather the coal and get some eggs.

K: You told him to go and kill himself?

R: No, I told him he could get some buckets of coal in. We heated our house with coal. I told him to bring the coal in and get some eggs. Well he brought some coal in and had to get some buckets down from where they were supposed to be. We kept --- we put one bucket in the middle room

and then we had a little room that we had a water heater in it and a oven. We would put several buckets in their late at night so we could get the fires going to keep the house warm.

So he goes back out to the chicken house, climbs up on the roost to get the eggs. The chickens had poles up on the building and the chickens would sit up on the poles at night. They would go in there at night to stay out of the cold. So Jerald climbed up on one of these poles. Well there had been a little rain that day and he had mud on his shoes and his shoe slipped and he fell and broke his arm. Well when he said that he was going out to kill himself I said for him to go right ahead. Well he got to a screaming outside and I just thought he was playing. Well he ended up crawling out of the chicken house. You can imagine all the manure on him and how his arm is broken bad. So he keeps crawling and ends up in the coal house and now he is covered in coal dust too!

By that time the other boys had quit playing ball and they were back in their room, finally one of them went out to check on Jerald it seems as though they had heard him too and were tired of listening to him holar. So he comes back in and says that Jerald had really hurt himself and had broken his arm. I said "Well you all have told me so many stories that I am not going out there! I am not going

out there to see about him, he just wants me to pay some attention to him and I'm not going to do it. I'm not going out there!" (301) Well anyway they kept nagging on that I finally went out there to see. And oh my goodness his arm was so broken that the bone was just limp. His arm was just dangling. He had broke it, I mean really broke it. So then I had to get him - I got the older boys to help get him in the house. And I had to take off his outside clothes, he had so much old coal on him we didn't want him to get on the bed like that. But you couldn't do much because of his arm was so you couldn't move it, it hurting him so. So anyway I finally rolled him around and got him cleaned up a little bit and had him lay on my bed. His daddy, instead of coming straight home when he got off from work, well he had a lot of business to tend to. Stopped here, stopped there picking up things so he was forever getting home. When he fin ally got home, of course, he had a fit. So we got him in the car and off to Davis County Hospital.

K: Did you bring Martha with you too? Did you have two kids to take to the hospital or by then, was she O.K.?

R: Oh no, by then she had quit bleeding. No it wasn't ever sewn up. Hers was not. It was for a while she had a big scar. I believe she still has it today doesn't she?

Any way, I had to stay in the hospital with him all night. They said didn't want him to leave that they wanted

to stay over night. They had to put him to sleep to set it and I was supposed to wake him and make him sit up or to say something back to me every half hour. (351) Just keep him awake. Well you can imagine how tired I was, I was wore out but anyway that's the way we did that. I finally' got him- around two-thirty in the night- I finally got him to answer my questions. But before he would never answer my questions- you would ask him something you know to see whether or not he could talk right. So that's the way that went. Jerald would always laugh and say that one good thing came out of his broken arm, he didn't have to wash dishes.

CATALOG

Tape number 1

Date of interview- February 18, 1989

Interviewer -Melissa Kenney  
334 South Hall  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Interviewee -Lucille Rascoe  
1119 Castlewood Pl.  
Owensboro, Ky. 42303

Place of interview - L. R.'s home

equipment- Panasonic Model RQ-350

tape - Maxell UXD- 11 90 IEC type II

length of interview- 40 minutes

(opening announcement)

005 I was born in Trigg County Kentucky in 1910, the first born (to live) of four children. When I was thirteen when I taught my first Sunday school class and have been teaching off and on ever since.

050 I met my husband in Wylonia at church. His sister was my teacher. I graduated in a small school. I was the only senior. I received two small scholarships to business college but never went away to college. I graduated in June of 1929 and was married on Christmas of that same year.

100 I am the mother of nine children, eight of which are living. There were almost 2 years apart. No disposeable diapers

in these days. The kids help bring up the other ones behind. We had alot of chores, no running water, no inside bathroom, no washing machines, and it was not easy times.

150 My husband taught school and we also owned a piece of land. We raised tobacco, corn, and wheat. We had a few farm animals, milking cows, pigs and chickens. We supplied alot of our own food. It was still a task to make ends meet. My husband wasn't paid that much for teaching because he was'nt a graduate of college a first but then he took some classes at Western Kentucky University. All he needed was three months of classes to secure a better job.

200-The girls and boys usually got along pretty well but occasion-  
250 ally they would argue. On one particular occasion I ended up with two kids that needed immediate medical attention. I had one with bleeding arms and the other had a broken one. I had no phone, I didn't have a car but I didn't drive anyway. I ended up in Davis County Hospital over night.

300-I tried to make sure that the kids felt like they were special. If it meant cooking fried chicken for breakfast I would do it. Not all the time but a little portion now and then to let them know I was thinking.

400-Education was very important. My husband, A.J., would dis-  
450 pline the children in front of the rest if they couldn't  
spell something or didn't know a definition to a word they  
could sit at the dinner table until they learned it. Some  
of the kids did their own disciplining. Most of the time it  
time it would backfire. Its hard for one to gang up against the  
other seven.



## photo numbers

1. Lucille Elizabeth Gray - Rascoe
2. Lucille Rascoe  
Nelly Francis Rascoe
3. Sarah Martin - Rascoe
4. Nora Martin
5. Lucille Gray  
Lewis Leitchfield
6. Thelma Collins  
Lucille Rascoe  
Mary Hopkins
7. Lucille Gray  
A.J. Rascoe
8. Andrew Jackson (A.J.) Rascoe  
Carney Moore
9. Nelly Francis Gray  
A.J. Rascoe
10. Layton Leitchfield  
Lucille Gray
11. Glen Wood
12. Layton Leitchfield
13. FeEleanor Dunning - Martin  
Mildred Rascoe
14. Nora Martin  
FeEleanor Dunning - Rascoe  
A.J. Rascoe  
Mildred Rascoe

15. Ralph Rascoe
16. Betty Rascoe  
Ralph Rascoe  
Mildred Rascoe
17. Mildred Rascoe  
Betty Rascoe
18. Gabe Martin - Duke  
Adrian Peterman  
Betty Rascoe  
Ralph Rascoe
19. Lucille Gray - Rascoe  
A.J. Rascoe  
Mildred Rascoe  
Betty Rascoe  
Ralph Rascoe  
Ewing Rascoe
20. Ewing Rascoe
21. Betty Rascoe  
Ewing Rascoe  
Mildred Rascoe  
Ralph Rascoe
22. Mildred Rascoe  
Betty Rascoe  
Ralph Rascoe  
Ewing Rascoe  
Gerald Rascoe  
Robert Lewis Gray

23. Mildred Rascoe

Betty Rascoe

Ralph Rascoe

Gerald Rascoe

Ewing Rascoe

Babney Rascoe

24. Nanny Rascoe

Gordan Byron Rascoe

Martha Rose Rascoe

25. Martha Rose Rascoe

26. Ralph Rascoe

Martha Rascoe

Linda Rascoe

27. Betty Rascoe

Bobby Rascoe

Martha Rascoe

Linda Rascoe

28 Betty Rascoe

Ralph Rascoe

Bobby Rascoe

Ewing Rascoe

Gerald Rascoe

Martha Rascoe

Linda Rascoe

29. Linda Rascoe

30. Graham Rascoe

Betty Rascoe

Linda Rascoe

Martha Rascoe

31. Lucille Rascoe

Bobby Rascoe

Ralph Rascoe

Mildred Rascoe

Martha Rascoe

32. Lucille Gray - Rascoe

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY FOLKLIFE ARCHIVES

INFORMANT/FIELDWORKER DATA FORM

I. INFORMANT

NAME: LUCILLE ELIZABETH GRAY - RASCOE

(Include fullest possible name -- first, middle and/or maiden, last)  
(For example: John James Smith; Mary Ann Franklin Smith (Mrs. John))

ADDRESS: 1119 CASTLEWOOD PL.

PERSONAL DATA: Age 78 Date of Birth JUNE 27, 1910

Place of Birth TRIGG COUNTY Sex Female

RACE/NATIONALITY/ETHNIC BACKGROUND: white, American

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: (Include education, occupation, places of residence, religious affiliation, etc.)

SOUTHERN ACADEMY SCHOOL, Menton, Hannabery, WILONIA INSTITUTE,  
TRIGG COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, SCHOOL COOK, TRIGG COUNTY, SOUTHERN  
BAPTIST Affiliation.

II. COLLECTOR

NAME: MELISSA RUTH KENNEY  
(Include fullest possible name as described above)

ADDRESS, LOCAL: 334 SOUTH HALL, BOWLING GREEN KY 42101

ADDRESS, PERMANENT: USDAO KHARTOUM, APO. NEW YORK 09166B

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE INFORMANT, SUCH AS COUSIN, FRIEND,  
EMPLOYER, ACQUAINTANCE, ETC.: GRANDMOTHER

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_