

Oral history with 74 year old white female, Quicksand, Kentucky (Transcription)

CAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN DIALECTS CASSETTE NO. 44 SIDE A The first excerpt is taken from original tape W115. Begin M22 B(3)

QUESTIONER: What kind of games did you play?

RESPONSE: Hide and seek and jump the rope. (laughs) I don't know, all of them old-fashioned games that they played.

Q; What if it rained outside? What did you play inside?

R: Oh, we'd make candy and ...

Q: Taffy, probably.

R: Pull candy, it was pull candy they called it.

Q: OK, let's go to school. You said it was a one room place, didn't you? Did you enjoy going to school?

R: Yes, I did. I really did.

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Q: OK, what made you enjoy it so much?

R: Well, I don't know. It was just, I was interested. But my mother, she was a widow woman, and them days, honey, you couldn't hardly get by at all. And she took in washing, laundry for people, and I'd have to stay most of the time and help her. In my growing up. Yeah, she would wash for people here in town. And we lived in a little old two-room house where that bucket sits now.

Q: That was home? What were the teachers like then?

R: What was their names?

Q: What were they like? I mean ...

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R: Oh, <unintelligible text>. She taught me at the last school I ever went. She was good. And the principal is <unintelligible text>. He was the principal of City School.

Q: Can you remember anything unusual that happened back then while you was going to school? Something that you wouldn't forget.

R: I can remember one thing. () and me was coming from school. We went to skate rink school then, they called it Skate Rink school. And it was a skate rink while they got it to teach school in. And the pop factory was on the, on Broadway, right where--you know where Deaton's Restaurant is?

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Q: Yes.

R: Well, right along there. And this pipes run out, red hot pipes. And we both, we was both barefooted. Barefooted to go to school! And I went on and I burnt my feet. Ooh! Hot! And you know I wouldn't tell her, and she come on the same route and burn her feet. Well, we liked to have never got home! She lived all above me, and it was such a hot day! I'll never forget that. Mama doctored and doctored my feet. "Why they's blistered, honey!" Oh, my lord. What about me? I felt bad over that, Pam. I sure did. I should have told her. I thought about that many a time. Now, I wanted her to get burnt. That's just like, you know, people, I wanted her to get burnt because I got burnt.

Q: I guess that's just people.

R: That's the truth.

Q: I always heard that little girls, no matter what the situation

C 44 page 3 are always supposed to be sweet and nice, aren't they, you know?

R: Yes.

Q: But were you ever punished in school for anything?

R: Yes, I was.

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Q: Can you tell me about that?

R: () the boy that was sitting there, they used to have desks, you know. When I go to school. And every time it he'd steal, <unintelligible text> would. I'd, I couldn't keep an apple or nothing. He would hook them, I'm telling you he would. And one day he took my pencil. Mommy got me a nickel pencil, and them days if you got a nickel pencil you was tickled with it. And I'd sharpened it one time. And <unintelligible text> and me was talking about that before he died. And so I had that pencil laying on my desk, it was recess time. When I went back, my pencil was gone. <unintelligible text> he was sitting over in front. And he, I said, <unintelligible text>, did you see my pencil?" He said, "No sir, I never." And he said, well, () <unintelligible text>. Said, <unintelligible text> she's accusing me of stealing her pencil." Well I said, "You did get it, you were the only rogue in here!" I was mad, Lord, I remember that so well. I said, "You did get it!" He said, "I didn't!" And <unintelligible text> said, <unintelligible text>, you say that another time and I'll bring you up here and whip you!" I said, "He got it." I got myself a good whipping over that. () passed on, and she said, the next day she said, <unintelligible text> do you believe that <unintelligible text> got your pencil?" And I said, <unintelligible text> . he got that pencil!" And she said, "What makes you believe that he got it?" I said, "He had a pair of boots on, and he put it down in his boots." Well, that's

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what he done! He put it down his boot, and she said, "You know what I'm going to do? I'm sending, <unintelligible text> to the <unintelligible text> tomorrow to get a whipping." And, Good Lord, he got a bad whipping over that.

Q: Is that what they used for punishment back then? Just the whipping?

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R: Yeah. They'd whip! They don't do nothing now like they did when I was in school. But you'd done things, you paid for it. They'd whip you to death.

Q: What would they spank you with?

R: Miss () and her brother, <unintelligible text> () and <unintelligible text> and (), they'd make her mad, and I've seen them many a times, get her hands, one'd hold one hand, the other the other, 'cause <unintelligible text> was, <unintelligible text> was <unintelligible text>'s brother. I mean was the brother <unintelligible text>. And she sent them to <unintelligible text> they was mean! Why they was mean as they could be! They're not like children now. My (), they'd fight you or anything else.

Q: They're not like children now. How are they different?

R: Well, they're just different, honey. The children, well, anyway, they didn't have the amusement, now, and things to enjoy like they have now. They had nothing. Nothing, nothing to, you know what I mean, they didn't have no amusements to go to, just a silent picture show, now that's what they had. In my growing up, Didn't have no talkies.

Q: You said that you had to stay home and work a lot.

R: I did.

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Q: Did your father own land? Did he own a farm?

R: No. No, honey, we didn't own, we rented.

Q: You rented?

R: We rented.

Q: What did you rent? Just a little house, or what?

R: Just a small house.

Q: What did your father do?

R: My father was a farmer just as long as he lived.

Q: Did he have a farm land?

R: No, he didn't own it.

Q: Oh, but he worked on it?

R: He worked on the farm, yes.

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Q: He worked on it.

R: He worked for my grandpa.

Q: How has his job changed, comparing farmers today and back then?

R: Oh, mercy. You're getting up in (). Well, me and my mother, <unintelligible text> would wash all day, and if we got a dollar we was tickled to death. Wash all day! Them days, I'm telling you the Depression was a time when people just couldn't get nothing. They sure couldn't. We'd wash for our house rent. Doctor () he lived in town, he owned the house, a little old two-room house, and every morning, every Monday morning, I'd go down to town and bring a big stack of clothes up. Carry them up that road' From here to town!

Q: Can't never get tired, could you?

R: We really got () hard. Sure did.

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Q: What about machines today? They've taken-up quite a bit, haven't they, from what you used to do?

R: Oh, yeah.

Q; Could you tell us how machines have changed people's lives?

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R; Well, one way, peoples has more, lives better. And easier going every way. It's easier now, everything you undertake. I've just paid attention to that. Everything you undertake, it's different, but it's quite different from what I was raised. When I was raised. You really had it hard.

Q: I guess so. Did, this farm that your father owned, did your food supply come from that?

R; Honey, we had to wash it out, and iron. Wash and iron. That's what we got for our washing and ironing.

Q: Well, did you eat off this farm that your daddy had? The food that he grew, did you eat it?

R: No, him and my mother was separated. He went to my Grandpa's, my mother's father, and stayed with him. And when they separated, he didn't help us any.

Q: Oh, so, your daddy didn't help you any.

R: No, he didn't help us any.

Q: Well, what did your mother do, then? You just washed just like you said?

R: Yeah, we just lived the best we could, honey.

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Q: Oh, alright. I'm going to go on and talk about the community itself. Since we're talking about people. Have you always lived here? How long have you lived here?

R: My mother moved right where the bucket sets, in a different

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house, though. When I was six years old, and I've been here since that time. Well, (), in this neighborhood, but I've been just around, you know. Close to here.

Q: Well, how many people would you say live here now?

R: You mean in this neighborhood?

Q: Right through here. Well, is there more now than there was back then?

R: Oh, yes. Houses is built where there was no houses. And yeah, they was, I wouldn't hardly know, well, quite a difference as any, 'cause these houses all was built here since my raising up.

Q: How else has it changed just besides houses? What else has come up? What else has changed about the community?

R: Well, the community, I don't know. We got better roads. Oh, we had to wade the mud over top of our shoes. When we'd go to town. That's the truth. And they'd haul coal with two mules out of this holler. Sure did. Them old mules would get in that mud and get down.

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I've seen them. And one, (), he'd haul coal, and I'm telling you, he had a big long whip, I'll never forget that. And he'd take the handle of that whip and beat them old mules. When they couldn't get out of the mud holes, when they'd get stuck in the mud holes, you know. And what that they've got better highways and better living and everything.

Q; Was there poorer people back then than there are now?

R: Why Lord, honey, why nearly everybody, there's nobody hardly, I was thinking, <unintelligible text>, why the very poorest family now, if they'd

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have had what, they'd have been called well-to-do people. You know, living good. But nobody hardly had anything. Didn't have nothing to live on.

Q; Did each family help each other? Did they help the other families?

R: Well, one wasn't able to help the other. Now that's the truth. They just done the best they could, everybody. Had little old houses they'd rent, you know. They tore all them down, now.

Q: Well, now going on about these communities, was there ever one person perhaps that all the community followed? You know, like we follow the President of the United States? Was there ever one man in the community that was followed, you know? Who was that?

R: Well, I wouldn't know that, because ...

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Q: Well, can you tell me how he or she, whoever it was, how they came to be? You know, a leader. Can you tell me that?

R: What did you say?

Q: You said there was a person, you could have called him a leader.

R: Yeah.

Q: Can you tell me how he got this name of, you know, leader? Or do you know?

R: No, I don't know.

Q: Alright, I'm going to talk about politics just a little bit. Because I feel like back then is when a lot of all of this vote-buying stuff goes on. How has it changed over the years? Politics.

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R: Politics has changed considerably.

Q: Can you tell me something about it?

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R: ... "Well, who are you going to vote for? You going to the election?" And I always was taught that they never done that. A man would come out as a candidate, you know, and they'd just elect him, and no big (), honey, they didn't pay too much attention to it.

Q: Well, does it bother you now to have somebody come up to you and ask who you're voting for?

R: No, Lord, it don't bother me a bit.

Q: Can you tell me something else, how it's changed? In other ways.

R: No.

Q: Well, what about this vote-buying or crooked elections? Can you tell me something about these?

R: I've heard people say, but I don't know. I've heard people say they'll have to have money before they'll vote in the election. (laughs)

Q; Well, what do you think they meant by that?

R: Well, they meant that they wouldn't vote without the money, honey.

Q; That's bad these days, I guess you'd say. Going on just a little further. In this day and age it seems like people are disbelieving more and more in God. Religion-wise. I want to

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talk just a little bit about your religion. What sort of churches were in this area when you were small?

R: None.