

There are two versions of the following interview which are substantially different in content and/or format. Therefore both versions have been included in the project.

## A DAY ON THE FARM

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Mrs. Dora Hayes and Miss Annie Fuller are two lone old ladies that have made a success of their farm without the help of a man. The farm is on the Richlands Highway, about one mile from the village of Richlands. On one of the highest points in Catalan County and surrounded by rolling lands with high ridges on either side, it is very lovely.

Miss Annie is about seventy and Miss Dora about sixty-eight years old. Miss Annie said: "It don't get you nowhere to tell your age, but I'll say this; we been right here on the farm since 1881. Our father had two other farms, but he was a slack business man and sold them both; but he kept these four hundred acres."

I rode out this morning with a friend who owns a large plantation at Comer, to see Miss Dora and Miss Annie. I have never received a more cordial welcome. ~~Their's is true hospitality.~~ The attractive, bright old ladies invited us into the "sitting room," which had a hand-made rug on the floor, a big open fireplace with oak logs burning brightly, old-fashioned rockers and marble-topped tables, a what-not, and family pictures in antique frames on the walls. My friend said he would go on to his plantation and come back and pick me up; but before he left they brought us both a glass of scuppernong wine that looked and tasted like champagne. They have a large scuppernong arbor and are noted for their wine. They keep it up in the attic under lock and key and not in a cellar. They explained: "We would not have none left; our niggers would steal it all."

Miss Dora was married one year, and has been a widow thirty-five

years. She is very deaf and uses an ear trumpet. Miss Annie has never been married. She is getting very feeble, but is the business head of the family.

Miss Dora said: "Now, honey, you got to eat dinner with us first and then we will tell you all you want to know about the farm. Our dinner is all cooked, yesterday being Sunday and all we got to do is to make up some biscuit and make coffee. We got a little nigger girl that helps us. She lives on our farm. Her mother washes our clothes. We have two Negro families that live on the place. We give them so much land; they give us a bale of cotton and help on the farm.

"Right now there is nothing much to do. We kill a beef most every Friday and sell it at any of the county towns. We kill on an average of fifty a year. There are not more than thirty-five head right now, but we have about eleven that will drop their calves before long.

"Our nephew from Chicago, that married Christine (she's the baby that we raised from two weeks old) wants to stock our farm this summer with two hundred head of Hereford cattle, but we don't think we are going to let him. It will be too much work on us, and we are getting old. It wouldn't have meant nothing to us ten years ago, but not now. We might if we had a man, but we ain't.

"The weather has been so warm we haven't killed hogs but once this winter, but soon as we have a cold spell we'll kill again. We don't sell much pork; we cure it for ourselves and put it in the smoke-house. If I do say it myself, we make the best sausage of anybody in Catalan County."

Just then Miss Annie came to the door and invited us in to dinner. If ever a table "groaned" this one did. It was set with a snowy white cloth and napkins and with old-fashioned china that Miss Annie said belonged to their mother. Unusually large coffee cups completed the setting. On the table were platters of sliced turkey, country ham, fried chicken, and sausage. Other foods were turnip greens, peas, stewed tomatoes, pickle, brandy peaches, jelly, cornbread and hot biscuit, coffee, buttermilk, fruit cake and coconut cake.

I said, "Great goodness, I have never seen so much to eat! It would be enough to last me a month." "Go on, honey," said Miss Annie, "if we had known you was coming we would have had something. We don't have to buy a thing except a little flour, coffee, sugar and kerosene now and then. Everything is raised right here on the farm. We used to get up before day when we were young, and ride on mules all over the farm, but not now; we got too much sense. We sleep till eight and nine o'clock.

"We make a right smart selling cedar posts. We got so much cedar down on the creek. Then we make money on our timber; but we don't make nothing on cotton. We raise all of our feed for our cattle, hogs and chickens and turkeys. Turkeys are hard to raise. They stray off so bad. We got about a hundred head of hens; sell our eggs for thirty-five cents a dozen now. Of course at Christmas time we got more.

"Our timber," remarked Miss Dora at this point, "is bought for a ten year contract, but the man went broke and moved away. Now another man, Mr. Dixon, wants it. We want to sell it to him as soon as we get everything straightened out."



Miss Annie then took up the thread of conversation with "We get plenty lonesome here at night all alone. Christine's been away fourteen years; four years at school, then she's been married ten years. Her mother was a western woman and she died when Christine was born. We took her when she was two weeks old and raised her as our own. Her father died two years later. She called us Mama Dora and Mama Annie.

"She was a blessed child and beautiful. Law, but we had a time at first. Two old maids that didn't know nothing about no babies. We raised her on cow's milk and everything was sterilized. Then when she was six months old we gave her pot-licker from collard and turnip greens too. That's got iron in it. Then we gave her cow's milk with cream. Her cheeks were like roses and she was fat as a little butter-ball. We would take her to town in our flivver and everybody would stop and look at her. She is a beautiful woman now and has two lovely children, a boy and a girl. She married a man of means who is a fine fellow. She was going to school and living with her mother's sister when she met him. He sent us a check for three hundred dollars Christmas and Christine sent us a big Christmas box. Law, honey, I could talk forever about that child. We sent her four patchwork quilts and crocheted her a beautiful bedspread for Christmas. They are coming back for a visit in June and we are going to bring them to see you. Her children call Dora and me Granny Annie and Granny Dora."

Miss Annie, speaking of the farm, said: "Well, honey, since we have diversified crops; cotton, corn, peanuts, velvet beans, sugarcane,

potatoes and our vegetable garden, we have done much better. It use to be nothing but cotton; now we raise our own food. As I told you, we don't spend but mighty little on flour and sugar. We don't sell our vegetables. We can them to use in the winter. We still have about three hundred quarts to last us 'til our spring garden comes in. We have a lot of jelly and preserves and marmalade. Our peach and pear trees and crab-apple trees are doing well, and we have the blackberry and huckleberry bushes, more than we can use. We make blackberry and elderberry wine too, but make more scuppernong wine than any other kind. We don't waste nothing; save all of our leaves even. Leaf mould is one of the best fertilizers.

"Our stock don't take near as much feed in the winter. We just turn them a-loose and they just graze from early morning 'til late in the afternoon. Now, from March on we have to put them up and feed them on corn and cotton-seed meal. Of course we have some pasture. Our cotton seed we exchange for cottonseed meal. It don't cost us nothing. And we raise a lot of corn. Another thing we have is our pecan trees. We make some money off of them, but the price hasn't been good the last few years, and the crop has been poor; not enough rain. We ain't had near enough rain. But here we go, liable as not it will rain. Ain't farmers terrible? I am one and I know. Can't please them; even God Almighty can't; they're always grumbling."

Miss Dora re-entered the conversation with comments about some of their other troubles. "We have had a time with niggers stealing, she said. They just can't help it; it's born in them. But we can't stay here and watch things all the time. If you turn your back, they'll grab up a chicken, steal your eggs and sell them to the rolling store.

"We were robbed Saturday night. Somebody stole twenty-six dollars out of my trunk. We were here all alone and heard the bog barking. I mean Annie did. I am so deaf I can't hear nothing; just like I am dead when I take my ear trumpet off. The dog kept on barking. After a while Annie got up and opened the door. There was a door, leading to the porch, wide open; the trunk was open and the purse gone. It sho' is worrying us. We have a gun and the dog; but that must have been a nigger that knew the dog or he sho' would have bit him. If we just had a man to stay out here with us. But we don't know who to get. We are getting old, and if Annie were to die and leave me, what would I do?" Big tears rolled down Miss Dora's old wrinkled cheeks. "We were smart girls in our day. Annie can shoot just like a man but she don't do it now 'cause her eyes are bad.

"We got a lot of game on our place; quail, dove and rabbits. In the season Annie would get up before day. I'd hear her gun pop, pop, at first light -- that's when the birds start coming in -- and in no time she would come in with enough to last several days.

"That's one kind of meat you get tired of mighty quick. There's a saying you can't eat birds twelve days straight running.

"The birds are beautiful out here. I tell Annie we ought to call our place 'Bird Heaven' because of the red birds, thrush, and mocking birds. Now, I don't like the blue jays, they are mean to the other birds. Peckerwoods are good to keep insects away, but they are aggravating sometimes. Sometimes they tap-tap-tap so loud, we say 'come in' and it ain't nobody but the old peckerwoods. Its spooky too with nobody there. They say old folks love birds' best. I 'speak its true. I didn't used to love them like I do now.



"Now, Annie, is the hunter, but I can beat her fishing. I'm the fisherman. I could set all day and never get tired. It's convenient to have your creek in walking distance. I fish a lots on Sunday; I'm so busy in the week. Ain't no sin to fish on Sunday. That's when I see God most. Setting on the bank, its so beautiful down there. In the Springtime -- that's my favorite time of the year -- the wood violets, the lilies, the honeysuckle, yellow jasmine, and dogwood are all blooming at the same time. It smells like heaven. It's funny, but Annie's favorite time is Autumn. That's because she likes to hunt. And mine's Spring, because I like to fish. I ain't never fished at night, 'cause I'm scared of snakes. I always take our dog because he ain't scared of snakes. He kills everyone that he sees.

Just then Miss Annie came in out of breath. She said, "Excuse me, honey, but I been out there talking to that nigger. I believe that son-of-a-bitch got our money. I caught him stealing eggs and chickens before. Now you are laughing at me 'cause I am cussing. But you got to cuss if you run a farm." I told her to go ahead.

She said, "We pay the preacher regular, give him hams, sausage, chickens, butter and eggs and things. He knows I cuss -- 'speck he does too -- but nobody knows it. Now, Dora don't swear as much as I do, but she likes a drink better."

Then Miss Dora said, "There you go, don't you like a little toddy too?"

"'Course I do," Miss Annie retorted, it hopes me up; but I don't take but one and you take two. Now, honey," she explained to me, "we takes a little toddy in the winter and a little mint julep in the



summer. As Pa used to say, 'a little for the stomach's sake.'

Excellent

A Day on The Farm (Farm owners)

Two old ladies 68-70 — thrifty — efficient — farm four  
hundred acres — raise beef cattle — diversified crops —  
one hunts, the other fishes — one spinster — one widow.

Features — Chief interest — two old ladies who have carried on for  
many years and done a swell job.

Names changed.