

PAULINE DICKMAN LAWLER, MARCH 27, 1973, INTERVIEW WITH A. McA. MILLER.

AMM: One of the problems seems to be that a lot of the records were destroyed in the fire that burned the college ~~building~~ library, and reading The Commongood minutes, like all minutes, they just give a very kind of synopsis idea. And I was interested in some of the important things that happend in people's lives with respect to the community.

PDL: Well, now, what angle are you talk~~ing~~ about?

AMM: Well, I was thinking about so many angles I don't know which one to think about (laughs). I was th~~in~~king for example of when the community first started and people got off the train at Wimauma. The first settlement was over there at the terpentine still.

PDL: Well, now my recollection of transportation to Wimauma, that was by mules. Dad, or the Dickmans, brought them from Missouri, the mules and other livestock. Dad had never cared for mules, but he understood the importance of bringing them down here, so he, before he left MO he traded his horses for two mules, Jim and what was the other one? So, all of this stuff land~~ed~~ at Wimauma and they had a wagon for the two mules. So after we came here any transportation that they had was by mule. To go through the woods to Riverview and you crossed the river there on the bridge, there was a bridge there at that time, you went on in to what is now 50th street. And as I recall, that's as far as they went. They could take a street car down ~~and~~ as I believe, may-be I'm wrong about that, but anyway most of it was all done by mules and all trips to Tampa was done by mules. I don't know how long it was afterwards, but one of the mules stepped sadly and died, and I tell you, this was a very tragic thing because we didn't have a one-horse vehicle, and when that mule died, why everywhere up, still there was no transportation. And they never did get another one, and sometime, apparently shortly after that, the Dickmans and Millers bought the old ship, the first Kilcare,



and Dad was the captain. He'd never piloted his own ship, I don't know, but he was the captain.

AMM: Did he have any experience in that line, or?

PDL: None at all. He couldn't even swim.

AMM: Oh! Is that right? (laughs)

PDL: Now, Paul could tell you more about that, because when Paul wasn't in school, he was the engineer on this boat. Now he could tell you all kinds of things about the Kilcare. So, thereafter all transportation was by water, and its part of my experience(?). I don't ever recall anybody coming in to Ruskin by mule.

AMM: I see. Well, when the Dickmans were over there at the turpentine still were the Millers over there, too, or were they down on the shell mound?

PDL: Oh, yes, they were over there and living there when we came. Now, I know nothing about their experience between the shell mound and turpentine still. And when we came they were living just about where the Council boys live(d), a little closer to the inlet. And there was a foot bridge, quite a long foot bridge, and that was while the inlet was quite wide and narrow so that you couldn't step across it when the tide was high or the water was high. (101). So it had been dug up in places. I believe it was as high, the water was as high as my head. It was just a long foot bridge with pad(half?) railing on the side so that you wouldn't fall off. And that was the communication between the Millers ~~on~~ who lived ~~on~~ this side of the inlet, and the Dickmans who lived on the other side.

AMM: In line with that, did the early community ken the split between the farming community and the college community? Or were things pretty well tied up?

PDL: Coupla minutes, coupla minutes. The whole community I believe entered into the college whenever the college had any outstanding speakers, and they had some good speakers, they had got some awfully good speakers at that time, and the whole community entered in. We had a literary society, and it was connected to the college and the whole community. And we had singing, now that was mostly the



college age kids, people that did this. Now mother's voice was always good, she was outstanding. But Georgadda had a good voice, she went to school, college, but not the whole community. And as far as farming was concerned, the college ~~arr~~ the farming. And then when Lester came, I don't believe he ever taught or anything like that, but he and Georgadda were married and he was one of the first ones to build a cart, and then they found that the transportation was practically impossible, to haul it ~~from~~ the field down to the boat, and the boat, taking the boat in to Tampa, and unloading it again. By the time they did all that, why, it was . . . that is the most unusual bird I've seen?

AMM: What? I don't know...

PDL: What in the world is it?

AMM: I didn't notice it, I must've looked right when you looked left.

PDL: I've never seen anything like it.

AMM: We have some lovely cardinals out here.

PDL: Oh, they're beautiful. But, no, there wasn't, the cockpit(?) came later when Hawk came. Now Hawk, maybe

AMM: Was he a plan man or what was he?

PDL: Hawk was a scheister, (155), and he died just shortly ago. He lived, he ran close to 100. He was younger, a little younger than our folks and he had a son and daughter who were a little younger than all of us. And Uncle G. had--well, why ~~xxx~~ should I waste my time on that, because Hawk was a big ass(?).

AMM: Oh, no, tell me.

PDL: And Dad was the one who kept Hawk from taking over. He wouldn't have taken Dickman absolutely, he could have just taken over. Now I heard Paul tell this not long ago, so he could give you the information.

AMM: Well, I'll check Paul on that.

PDL: I suggest you take notes and ask Paul about certain things.

AMM: Right. I'll do that. I'll listen to the tape again afterwards and then I'll take notes.



PDL: Now you ask Paul about Kilcare and the transportation pertaining to Kilware. Now, you need to know how many years ago that was in service before it went, and he could probably tell you when the ferry was built across the Alafia River.

We come a long way then. Back in those days Dad was plagued for, this was after the, when Dad was doing this, this was after the school and the first WW started. There was no road between Tampa and Ruskin. We went just meandering through the woods and all the commissioners from this district came from Riverview area, and all the roads, the commissioners would ~~write~~ build the roads around their patrons.

AMM: Right.

PDL: where they lived, so the road had a lot of dog-turns, dog- what do you call them? Dog- AMM: Dog-legs. (189) PDL: Doglegs, and at that time the Kilcare was gone and we were without transportation, but by that time they'd gotten a road through here so that people could go. And now Paul could probably tell you about his operation in that area and he could also tell you about . .? . .

AMM: One of the things I would like to talk to you about, if you don't mind, is to try to get a sense of . . .What? These are the jets from McDill, I think. Is to try to get a sense of what the community was like from the woman and young lady's point of view.

PDL: Well, uh, from my point of view, well, I was one that never seemed to question what my parents said. You know, I just accepted it. Georgadda fought. She fought it from the beginning to the end. And another cousin, Nidra, who was younger than myself, and she fought it and she didn't have very happy memories of it, but as far as I'm concerned, I accepted it. I happened to be the only girl my age and I played with the boys and I had everything my own way, except I couldn't go swimming, because I was liable to get my hair wet, and I couldn't go hunting because I was a girl.

AMM: (laughs) Oh, boy.

PDL: That's why I said, I'd tell you I came as a second class citizen.



AMM: Second class citizen. The only girl. . .

PDL: But as far as doing things I was pretty popular. Of course, I had my own way, and I thoroughly enjoyed, I had a happy childhood. I think that we, we made our own pleasures, we made our own party. This house was the center of outside activity. The college was the center of social activity, but those were planned, and we danced up on the third floor. And then the belles would dance up at the third floor at Lisbeth's house, but those were bigger parties and they took in everybody. Parties down here were for us youngsters. Mother never planned anything, but we always had something to eat. Usually I had to cook it, but there was never any question of whether we could afford it or not. I don't know where the food came from, but we always had food. And as I said this was the center of activity, and when I was about 13, the first girl friend I ever had came to Ruskin, and she was like my mother, she was very vivacious and people remembered, very popular. She was a little older than myself. A boy came to town and I just fell head over heels in love with him. Oh, he was the handsomest thing you ever saw, and she took him away from me.

AMM: Oh, boy. (laughs)

PDL: and I never trusted a woman after that! (AMM Laughs). I never have trusted a woman! (AMM laughs) I enjoy women, but a man comes in, and a fool can have 'em. But from there on Ruskin started to grow a little and then when the war came, why, everybody was gone, and I was the only one left, and I ran the store down here. But,

AMM: The Coffee Cup? What's the Coffee Cup now?

PDL: Now, not there. Where the Castaños (Castillos) are, more where the lumber yard is. (AMM: I see.) That had been built into the canning factory and when they didn't. . . In the meantime somewhere they had grown tomatoes and we canned tomatoes (253) and the whole community entered in to the canning. The women ~~women~~ peeled, and, well, the whole community.

AMM: Was this before WWI? Did they have the canning plant before the first WW or after?



PDL: It was during the, it must have been before the first WW. It was the first WW. Because the store, when the first WW came, the store was there. (259) In the meantime we had a man by the name of D. D. Estes come in to Ruskin. He was a farmer and he had, I don't know whether it was five or ten acres, and it was over where the Thriftway is. That was his farm. And he was a very independent person and helped do all these things. But when the canning factory had ceased to exist, I mean they used, why then they turned it into a cooperative store (267) and the first man that, one of the first managers, the manager at that time, when they had to go into town and buy groceries and they didn't keep very good track of what he was doing and he was running up bills. And he was a gambler but they didn't know it. And, uh, he went into town and spent some money and ran them into debt. And Admer was running it for a while and of course he couldn't do that, and when he got a chance to get a job up north, why, they took it over to me. And I sold it out, got it out of debt, cleaned all the debts up, got rid of everything, and then I left.

AMM: So you're one of the few people who were sorta continuously here during the periods of war in '17, right? (PDL: What's That?) AMM: You were continuously here, say, during 1914-17?

PDL: Yes. I remember. I was going with a sailor. He was a widower and had three children. He lived in Palmetto. And mother stressed strenuously that she didn't want me to marry a widower with three kids, but when the armistice was signed, he picked me up and we went to Tampa and celebrated in the streets. (289) There was dancing in the streets of Tampa and all over the place. (AMM: oh, I'll bet.) There really was, but as far as the war was concerned, Florida got very little benefit from the war. Now you can say what war it is, but some areas just go in a boom in a wartime. (AMM: Right.) And it is always this, it's always thus, because Arcadia, as I recall, had a camp, a soldier's camp, and as far as I know that was the only place that got any of the wartime money. Farmers must not, they



didn't get anything farming, so Florida was just hit hard during the war because it took the men, and it took the girls, got jobs in Washington and other places and there was just no activity left in these areas.

AMM: Coming back again, you mention that Georgadda ~~hadn't been very happy here in an earlier day. -- What were the points~~ and Nidra felt very diffident at best about what was, about what their ~~parents~~ parents were planning. (PDL: What?) You said that there was a fair amount of conflict and that Georgadda hadn't been very happy here in an earlier day. What were the points of disagreement on that?

PDL: Well now this is what, and I, looking back on it, I can see her point. They had been living in Chicago and Admer was in Chicago and she had stayed with Admer, as I recall, she had stayed with Admer for a while after mother and Aunt Addie and Daddy and the boys were down here. And Zoa was up there. Zoa was engaged to be married, so she never did come down here and live. She did come down here and they were married, she was married down here I think, I'm sure she was. But I don't know where Aurora was, whether she came down with the family, the first family. Georgadda came down later. (322). Well, of course, she was up there with Admer and she was having a wonderful time. She was, I'd say 17 or 18, just you know, when she was dating. And they brought her down here, stuck her out here in the woods. No eligible men, and not even anybody that was congenial. And when we came, I think they lived down there about a year and a half, maybe two years. When they had moved up here, now I don't know how long they had been up here before we came, but by the time we came Georgadda and Aurora were there and Uncle G.M. and Aunt Addie and Mom and Willard. Well, when the family came we used to have a lot of get-togethers and singing and Aurora gave readings. Oh, we just had a wonderful time! But that wasn't for, that was for the birds as far as Georgadda was concerned. Because there were no young people, so she had run around town with the rest of us. Oh, mother dang, mother had a few little tricks that were always cute, but mother wasn't cute, that's probably the wrong word. They were



always entertaining and she did it nicely. But eventually the young men from the woods came in. Of course, they were attracted to Aurora and Georgadda and they all wanted to go with Aurora. Well, they couldn't all go with Aurora, so Georgadda would take the pickings. And there was a boy called John Sackle. Umm, what time do you have? (AMM: 20 after.) Well, I have to go. John Sackle, and he was a very unattractive creature, but he was about the same age as, a little younger than somebody by the name of Bud Barnes who had fell in love with Aurora, and he was the ...local form the area and oh, the most courteous person that you ever saw, and oh, he just thought Miss Aurora as the prettiest thing that ever was, so Mother just delighted in Aurora because she was going with him. So, Georgadda had an uncle(?) on her side, she really did, and it's a shame because Georgadda was attractive, and then when Ray Gene, Aurora's husband came, he was a musician, and you would look at him who was a musician, and then Georgadda really shone as far as her accomplishments were concerned, because she accompanied him and she sang beautifully (so did Aurora), but that still didn't get ~~her~~ her the attention of the opposite sex like every girl would like. So Aurora, I mean Georgadda, was never happy here, and when she, when Duncan wanted to go back down here to live, she didn't want to come back.

AMM: She didn't want to come back down there?

PDL: My understanding, she didn't want to leave. ./. .But she was very happy with Duncan here.

AMM: Well, I don't want to keep you from your lunch, but I would like to talk to you again, if you don't mind doing it. (PDL: What, again?) Well, I don't mind but, uh, (AMM: because it's) they're silly little things. (AMM: Well, that's)////(380)

PDL: I don't know how far I have to run on. I can probably tell you more about that, rather for the fun of it, than old Willard.

AMM: Which time span would that be, approximately?

PDL: Uncle G. M. died a little while ago and O. D. had just after that. What



would you like to know about their memories?

AMM: (laughter) Catch up on those. Well, but, there seems to be a time when all the people who are now here weren't here and you were sort of here.

PDL: Well, I can give you this time and a lot of Millers were here. When Uncle G. M. died, so he was in ..? .., so Willard was in Washington, I guess. And Aurora was in Washington, and Aunt Addie was down here. And now, you ask Paul about the telephone numbers. The boys sent Aunt Addie money, and then Willard and O. D. I don't know whether Georgadda did or not, but it was Willard will be the ..? fifth-most? son. And the man that opened the telephone (401). Aunt Addie was so eager to get the telephone. We had a separate telephone and a system all of our own, and it just broke her heart when Paul, against her wishes, sold it to that man who had a new business with telephones. So you ask Paul about that telephone, but it just broke Aunt Addie's heart. But this Billy Walker that was running it thought he had a gravy train and he could go down for money on this telephone thing. Well, all we needed was one hurricane and the telephone system was out. You know how expensive it was to try to operate those things. And we had a telephone operator listening to all the conversations.

AMM: (laughs) Don't they always? I bet they still do!

PDL: Well, now if you want to hear about the times I could probably say more of the intimate things that were of Aunt Addie's concern.(417). . . .

END OF TAPE