

Interview Log

Interviewee: Richard and Martha Robinson **Tape #:**
MAAF/KF/MD/FT5.22.312/415

Interviewer: Kelly Feltault **# of Tapes:** 1

Date: 5/22/98 **# of Sides:** 2

Location: Mardela Springs MD; in the Robinson home

Topic: fanning, vegetable auctions, scrapple making

Corresponding Photography Log #: MAAF/KF/MD/PP5.22.200-206

Comments: File name: Mdft312.doc. See Fieldnotes: FN05.22.98. *Italics* indicate emphasis; [brackets indicate additional information not on the tape or asides by fieldworkerJ; "quotations indicate direct transcription."

Richard and Martha were recommended by a heritage group in the Mardela area; Richard tells great ghost stories if prompted. He is an elderly man and doesn't get around much. I met them in the evening after they'd worked on their farm all day, and I interrupted their dinner.

BEGIN SIDE A

Scrapple making; took 3 or 4 days; old days didn't work on Sunday but now start on Thursday and work to Saturday; butchered someplace else;

Process for making scrapple; season first and let sit over night; red pepper, salt, sage, brown sugar, black pepper; next morning grind it; do first cook; cook off bone, grind, put back in same pots; season to taste; add flour and cornmeal; wife always started with cornmeal and ended with corn meal

[cb radio on in background]

looking at photos of them making scrapple with whole family; hog killing;

making casings for sausage; 2 women cleaned them all day; Martha describes process; salt water;

scrapple as shore food; hog's head cheese; only place to get scrapple; sending it to family who don't live on shore;

[showing more photos; table is set in front of me and 2 albums; equipment on table; Martha on my right, Richard on my left]

made in Jan. and Feb.; used to have hog killing 26 times a year when they sold meat at local places; now health regs have made them stop;

curing hams; selling those locally;

breakfast foodways

what farm used to look like and what he used to raise; now considerably smaller; not as many pigs as used to;

looking at more photos with Martha; leading to stories of funny things happening during scrapple making;

family picnics and get togethers; parties they used to have; still have one on Memorial day, Labor day; children now hosting them taking over this tradition;

moved there in 1954; stories of area;

male and female jobs in scrapple making; gendered areas; women do the seasoning and flour; also a family get together; big meals they have those 3 days of the hog killing and scrapple making; have ham or turkey, pot of soup

describing house when they moved in; no electricity; no water; when they got it; improvements to farm life; 1940s early 40s;

they moved into a house with electricity in 1952; changes; watering livestock;

wheat threshers; wheat and rye; crops; recalls only growing hay; story about that;

hand picking vegetables; Martha grew up on farm; father contracted for string beans and other hand vegetables; describes spring and summer crops of beans, use and how to pick;

selling veggies; moving veggies; would take them to a place in Delmar to "old man Elijah Holloway" supposed to be an auction block but he was the only man buying;

shipping on the railway and on boats;

VEG. AUCTIONS: other vegetable auctions: Salisbury, used to be near the college; Fruitland auction; Princess Anne; Delmar and Laurel; Laurel only one left

How auctions worked in Salisbury; pay the buyer to bid on them for you;

[somebody comes in; youngest son, wife and their daughter]

AUCTION: Martha did the auctions; how they worked; rules of Laurel; sneaky buyers; getting your money; Martha commanded 5 trucks of veggies to sell; used to be really crowded but no big buyers anymore;

Closes after labor day; opens in July; used to be open for strawberries and pumpkins;

Martha talks about selling vegetables; and what it was like; dangerous; unloading; vegetables that sell best; when to pick them;

Doing the farmer's market in Salisbury now; how that market works; what people like there; selling to fruit stands who "don't grow one piece of nothing"

Planting trades;

END SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

Planting traditions; watermelons, squash; how everything is late this year;

Some good years they had; getting 35 cents for cantaloupes; growing cantaloupes; taking bad losses once; then getting \$1.35 each; watermelon

Story on auction block; followed by more stories on the difficulties of getting bids on veg. Loads;

Crop rotations; irrigation;

Making christmas wreathes; family used to make them; materials they used got in woods; holly wreathes; still sell a few every year; fruit stand buys about 60 every year; learned when he was 4; mother and father made 2-300 a week; got 10 cents per wreath;

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Getting materials in the woods after dark because working on farm all day; why he quit a few years ago; daughter wanted to learn; he taught her

That was xmas money;

Packing wreaths in car; driving them to Seaford to sell; carried 1100 one time;

Farming story with new hand and old mule;

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What is in scrapple: head, skin, liver, lungs, scrap meats;

Butchering hog for certain cuts of meat; how they cut hogs up;

Women's work on the farm;

Canning meat; daughter-in-law bought a capper and now they cap everything; preserves and jams; citron vines look like a watermelon but hard as a rock; rather have citron than watermelon;

[friends stop by and start to add to interview]

Ladies aids in churches; social gatherings; card games in local stores; men hung out there; visiting between neighbors;

END TAPE