

Interview Log

Interviewee: Leola and Maude Smack **Tape #:** MAAF/KF/MD/FT7.31.315/419

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

Date: 7/31/98 **# of Sides:** 1

Location: Berlin MD; in Leola's living room

Topic: mid-wives; African American community; home remedies; Whaleysville MD; shirt factories

Corresponding Photography Log #: none

Comments: File name: Mdft315.doc. See Fieldnotes: FN07.31.98. *Italics* indicate emphasis; [brackets indicate additional information not on the tape or asides by fieldworker]; "quotations indicate direct transcription."

Diana and Gabe Purnell recommended Maude Smack because she lived with her aunt who was a mid wife and could tell stories about that time. I had spoken with Leola Smack, Maude's niece, the day before and she confirmed this. However, when I arrived I quickly realized that Maude was not going to tell stories. She is in her mid-90s, and not up to this endeavor. I recorded her anyway, Leola had some good moments on tape.

BEGIN SIDE A

BIRTHING ROOM: was in the house, had up to 3 patients in there; large; could have 4, one in living room; come from all over and sometimes she would visit their house; go out nights too; stay a week or so;

PROCEDURES: first thing she did was ask for her money; [laughter]; stirrups for hands and legs; ones for hands helped bear the pain you could pull on them; no anesthesia; made from muslin; rubbed alcohol on babies;

Maude didn't like the room it was too bloody; helped once and didn't like it; her aunt wanted her to take that job as mid wife but she didn't want it;

Doesn't remember when she started but she birthed Josephine who is 70 now and Josephine wasn't the first baby; started before 1920;

[Leola starts prompting Maude with questions]

TRAINING: go to clinic on certain days and learn things; Aunt Jenny wouldn't train anybody else, you could work for her like Mildred did but she wouldn't train you; Jenny loved that work;

Getting water at that time was diff. Had to go out to a pump and spicket; most patients were black; a few white ladies;

Maude lived right beside Aunt Jenny; [another reference to doctor Sully, see interview with Dorris and Harley Pierce too]

LS: if had diff. Sent them to the hospital;

MS: kept delivering babies until she died; one woman had already paid her to deliver her baby and Aunt Jenny died; \$10 she thinks to deliver the baby

LS: her first daughter was born by Jenny and it was \$60

MS: how men and husbands wouldn't pay it, the women had to pay the fee;

OTHER MID-WIVES: Maude says that Leola's grandmother used to be one too; Annie Armstrong; only one other mid wife in area; Leola's grandmother was Jenny sister; but didn't have the same scale of business like Jenny had;

AFTER-BIRTH: had to bury the after-birth; Maude recalls digging the holes; had to be deep; buried behind the house;

Jenny Dale Tingle was her full name; died in early 1960s; Leola gave birth to her daughter Vela there in 1958; Jenny was the last one; Mildred Purnell practiced after Jenny died but only for a little while;

Diff in birthing today; women stayed in bed longer; Jenny had to feed them; Leola would visit the babies when she was younger;

Feeding the patients; babies breast fed; don't recall fixing bottles; people would nurse other people's babies still too; recalls a woman who did that;

WHALEYSVILLE: town had a shirt factory and saw mill; tomato factory; 3 stores; hat maker lived there; had own school; she worked at a strawberry basket factory; quart baskets for picking strawberries; and the crates for the baskets;

baskets were wooden; women made baskets men made the hoops and handles;

people stopping to buy strawberries; brought in lots of money;

changes that happened gradually over the years

[this part is very slow, Maude is getting tired. She begins to tell me how nice it is to have someone listen to her memories]

END SIDE A

END TAPE

