

THIS

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29.6.48

Interview with Mrs Ida Ford.

Household.

Henry Ford.	Head	ages 34 years.
<u>Ida Ford</u>	Wife	aged 28 years
Deloris Ford	Daughter	8 years.
Daphney Ford	Daughter	4 years
Ernest Ford.	Son	18 months.

N.B. Note on constitution of household.

Ida insisted that they were separate from the household of her mother-in-law, Dorothy Brooks, although they share the same kitchen, and even the same cooking pot, and eat most of their meals in common. She said the Dorothy's kitchen had been blown down in the storms of June 1947, and that until the new kitchen is completed Dorothy is sharing her kitchen. After that they would again cook and eat separately.

Ida was sweeping the yard when I arrived. She had the two children, Daphney and Ernest playing around near her. She at first got out two chairs from her house for me to sit and talk, but we eventually sat together on a log that is a general seat for the family. The little boy clung to her all during the interview, and Daphney sat on the other side of her mother to me. Ernest appears to have a bad cold, as for two days when I have seen him his nose has been running, and no attempt is made to clean him. She was very guarded throughout the conversation I had with her, and at first inclined to be hostile. Whenever any personal matters were touched she completely closed up, and nothing could be much gained in this direction.

Parentage.

Her Father is Michael Powell

Her Mother is Margaret Powell

There are eleven children.

- 1) Doris
- 2) Icy
- Rose
- 4) Ida
- 5) Mirrell
- 6) Ciseline
- 7) Zelep on
- 8) Samuel

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- 9) Eustace
- 10) Lewis
- 11) Luderick

They are all Powells. As far as she knew there ~~were~~ were no outside children. She had never heard that her father had any.

All but one of the 7 girls have married. The exception is Mirrell, who has a "Bell foot," and lives at home with her parents. Of her brothers only one is married. The sister called Zelephon is in America, but otherwise the whole family lives in Bull Savannah.

Her Career.

As a small child and afterwards as a young woman she never had to help around the house very much. The reason was that she was the fourth girl in the family, and her older sisters did most of the work, that girls normally do in the house to help their mothers. She never helped doing any gardening or such like.

She went to Bull Savannah School, and she stayed there until she was fifteen. She never missed a day during that time, unless she was ill. Her father would not ~~allow~~ allow her to stay away. She liked school well enough, but she remarked that "Mi' head not so good" i.e. she was not particularly brilliant at school.

Courtship. She would give practically no information on this subject. Henry was her first boy friend (?) Asked how old she was at the time she married she said 25 years, and that she had been married 8 years. (The age of the oldest child) As she has given her age as 28 years, I asked a bit further. She replied "Mi' no carry a calendar around with me in those days, to mark my age."

She was married from her father's house, but the actual marriage took place in Mandeville. The reason she gave for this somewhat unusual feature was that she "wanted an evening drive." They "just drop in one Sunday" and got married. They had a big party afterwards at her home, when they invited all her friends and relations.

Henry had already built the house they live in, so she was able to just move straightaway into her new home.

Her children. She has only the three children. The first two, Deloris and Daphney were born at Black River Hospital. Ernest was born at home, and Ida had the nana Miss Cella Simpson for the birth.

She went to the hospital because she felt that it was safer there in case there were any difficulties everything was to

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hand. There was no danger of the mother just slipping away through ignorance.

She proceeded to enlarge on the hospital. at Black River.

She personally could only find praise for everything they did there. They were very good when the baby was coming. She stayed there the full nine days in both cases. Some people including her sister-in-law who had gone there had complained that they had been starved while they were there, and had had to come home early in order to get some strengthening food. (See Rebecca Ford) She did not consider this was entirely true. The hospital gave plain ordinary food, and it was always nicely served, and one could be sure at least that it was very clean. The diet there consisted of things like salt fish, fresh fish, various soups, and broths, mutton, but only once a week she added, and the usual vegetables. No hospital could afford to give everybody the fancy little luxuries that one needed at such a time. She of course had a big advantage over other people in this respect. She had always gone there with money. With it she was able to buy all the extra food she fancied, but of course the poorer people were unable to do this.

I discovered that no anasthetics are used in the maternity ward. She was amazed at the question. She then said that she had heard of such things, and that she was sure they were available in Jamaica if one could afford to pay it. It was only the big people that could manage such things. It was a blessing that she could not hope to reach, nor any other ordinary person in Jamaica.

The local 'Nana'

For her third baby she had stayed at home, and had Miss Cella Simpson to look after her. "She real good ma'am. She knows her job, and she has got a recommendation from a first class doctor for her work. Now no doctor is going to do that unless the person is real good. There is a District government nurse at Junction, who is nothing like as good, although she pass all the exams." The method used at the hospital and by Miss Cellax were practically identical. She was rubbed with oil on her stomach and belly, and warm water.

She did not know what Bull Savannah would do without Miss Cella, because having no regular doctor it was very important to have a good midwife. The trouble was that she was getting on in years, and there was nobody coming up to take her place.

She had had all her babies fairly quickly. She has had them within a half an hour, even the first was no longer.

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Weaning and Feeding of Babies.

She weaned all her children at nine months old, and had very little trouble with them. She did not believe in feeding very young babies with solid food in addition to the breast. She had heard that some mother fed babies of three and four months with gruel and tinned milk, but she had been told by the nurse at the hospital that there was nothing as nourishing for a baby as its mother's milk, it had in it everything that the baby could need. She had consequently fed all hers herself, right up to their weaning. She then fed them on milk, and it was not until a good few months later that she started on solids with them. She did not give them any sort of condensed milk. They had a goat, and they fed the babies on goat's milk, sheep's milk, or sometimes cow's milk. She explained that her father has a cow and that when the babies are small he lets her the fresh milk. She walks down to Green Olive for it.

She does not believe in feeding babies at night. Babies are inclined to cry at night time, but if one does not give into them they soon cease to cry. If they are fed they get sick because they have no exercise to help their digestion.

Training and Upbringing

The small children cannot keep themselves clean. Even the child Deloris aged eight, had to be washed by Ida if she wants to be perfectly sure that she is clean for school. They learn to wash their face and hands at about 3 to 4 years.

Deloris is sent to school every day, and has her dinner there.

Playmates. Del plays with one little girl from the home of Charles Sinclair opposite, and nobody much else. She does not play with boy pickneys. They play either in Ida's yard, or in Sinclair's. She does not like them to play anywhere else because they get into trouble. They learn to be rude, to say bad words, and to do things like climbing trees, when they are quite likely to fall and hurt themselves badly.

The little one Daphney plays with her cousin, Melva who lives with Dorothy Brooks. Melva is the grand-daughter of Dorothy. She pointed out where she lived "Down there" (implying a separate household again) Daphney is a very good talker, when she is not with strangers.

Both the girls help around the house. Deloris helps with the sweeping and cleaning, and Daphney is able to wash up. Deeloris can now wash the baby, and give him a bath. She starts them off in little ways, and they get used to helping her in all the little odd jobs.

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Observations.

The two children stayed close beside Ida all the time. Daphney was very shy, but also curious. The little boy did not look too well. During the interview various people came up to me but they did not stay long when they saw that I was interviewing Ida in detail.

Ida was not at all badly dressed, although the children looked pretty raggy.

She added at the end of the interview that boys were much stronger than girls as babies. Boys could be let run around naked until 12 o'clock at night, and they would take no harm, but that this was impossible with girls who would catch cold.