

I/19

P.H.

Interview with Ivy Thompson.

3.7.48

Household.

<i>Leslie</i> Lascelles Thompson .	Head.	
Ivy Thompson.	Wife	
Lascelles Thompson	Son	20 years
Ivan Thompson	"	16 years
Iris Thompson	Daughter	13 years
Eudel Thompson	Son	11 years
Marjorie Thompson	Daughter	9 years
Norma Thompson	"	6 years
Alan Thompson	Son	16 months

Living with grandfather.

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I called to see Ivy in her house in Logwood which she and her husband rent from Wintwood Elliott. She took me in to one of the rooms. It was small, largely occupied by a bed, had a rocking chair, and two ordinary chairs, and a small table. Several of her smaller children followed after her, and she made no attempt to turn them away. I got rid of them and when they again came back into the room during the time I was talking to her she told them to go away and not be so rude.

She was very pleasant. I had met her before at the wedding of her sister. I should not say that she is too intelligent. It is extremely difficult to get a straight narrative out of her as to her career. I do not think that this is either obstinacy, or a cuteness hiding under a mask of stupidity, I think she is genuinely rather unintelligent, with some cuteness perhaps thrown in.

Parentage.

Her Father is Charles Thompson, of Top Bull Savannah

Her Mother is Mehela Thompson of Top Bull Savannah

There are twelve children in her family, she is the eldest of the them all.

Upbringing

At the age of six years she was adopted by her aunt, the sister of her mother, called Fanny Rochester. Fanny Rochester died last month. Fanny had no children and to have a child to look after. She was very kind to Ivy, but Ivy did not stay with her for many years. At the age of 12 years she left Manchester where her aunt lived and went to Kingston. Here she lived with a Miss Morrey. Miss Morrey was also very good to her, and she "lived quite happy" with her. Her guardian sent her to an elementary school in St Andrews somewhere

D.H.

She cannot now remember the name. She stayed at school until she was 15 years old. She then left and took up a job as a laundress at the Myrtle Bank Hotel. She met Lascelles Thompson, who was a soldier at the Camp, when she was 16 years old. They became friends and she started to have intercourse with him. He was the first man she had ever been with. They lived together in a house, and they had lived together ever since. They were married last year. All but the last three of the children were born in Kingston.

After she had met Lascelles she continued to work at the Myrtle Bank. When the first baby came she was about 18 years old. She took a fortnight off from work, and then returned. This continued to be her normal procedure when she was having all the subsequent babies. The hotel did not mind at all.

Lascelles left the army when the Battalion was disbanded in 1944. They then came and settled in Bull Savannah.

D.H.

The types of fish

They catch Yellow Tail, Snap and Jack. Every type of fish sells for the same price, a shilling per pound. He does not bother to higggle it. He sells at the Alligator Pond Depot, to Mr Joseph who buys all that they can catch.

They are only waiting for a favourable wind to go down again. In addition to getting a good return for their work, they like doing it.

Her Wedding.

She got married last year. She was married in Manderville at the Registry Office. They chose the registry office because it was easier and less fuss than a church wedding. She had it in Manderville because she rather liked the thought of a drive there and back. They had a party at her father's home, just like her sisters wedding, of last week. (See File 13) They had a real big party. There was dancing at it all the day and night as well. She rather implied that she had a bigger and jollier party than the one I had seen.

Her Children.

Four were born in Kingston, three since coming to Bull Savannah.

Pregnancies and Confinements.

All the children born in Kingston were born at the Institution in North Street. She has never visited a doctor for her confinements, or gone to see one during her pregnancies. "People say I am a very lucky woman, I never have no trouble with babies, and I have never been ill in my life." She was distinctly proud of her facility at child-bearing.

All the children were born quickly. She used to pay £1 to the Institution and that included staying there for the nine days following the birth. Since coming to Bull Savannah she had Miss Cella Simpson who has charged her 8/- for the baby. She stayed with her right through the birth, and came frequently during the nine day following to see how she was getting on.

She was about 20 years old when the first baby was born

Feeding and Weaning.

She weans them at 8 to 9 months. She then feeds them on oats and milk. She finds the quickest way to wean them is to rub aloes on her breasts, and they refuse the breasts the next time. She fed them on fresh goats milk at four months old.

D.H.

Training and upbringing.

She trains her children to help about the house. They all help a little. Iris, her eldest girl, aged 13 years, can cook wash and look after the babies as well as herself. She is a tremendous help to her, because she is able to go down to the Alligator Pond Market to buy things for the family, and feel quite safe about the young ones if Iris is there. She also often goes up to Top Bull Savannah to her mother. Her Mother, Mehela Thompson is an old lady, and she goes to help her over things like washing, and working in her garden, planting cassava, and so on.

She does not like her children to play outside their own yard, and the Holness children who live on the next hill, (Children of Cecil Holness) Certainly the Thompson children are frequently to be seen in the Holness' yard. They are remarkable, because of their extreme fairness, and blue eyes. She gave some reasons for not liking them to mix with all the children around about.

Firstly, when pickneys play together, they ~~are~~ always fight in time. Then the parents are inclined to blame her, Ivy, for what her children do. In any case, they will always lay the blame at the other person's door. More often than not it is not Ivy's children who are at fault at all. This all makes for bad neighbourliness and it is better to keep clear.

Secondly, they are ~~fixtix~~ inclined to play too rough games, such as climbing trees, and they get hurt.

Thirdly they learn all sorts of bad words, curses and rudenesses from some of the badly brought up children around about. She gave as an example the children of Ribbit Town, who she says are quite wild, and untrainable.

She flogs the children when they are ~~u~~ rude, and when they tell lies. and when they take things like sugar and milk.

School

Only Iris and Eudel go at the moment. She gives them the money for their dinner. The price of that used to be 3d but owing to the high price of rice, and other foods it has been raised to 4d.

She sends all but a baby to Sunday school. They go both to the Anglican Church and the Bible Church of God. The children all prefer the Bible Church because the singing is nicer.

She herself goes to church when she can manage it.

D.H.

Menstruation

She started at about 13 years. She had not been told anything about it beforehand. When it began she hid it at first, but it soon got found out. She does not get ill, she just feelsoff colour.

Observations.

She played with the child through most of the interview. She used the child to beg from me, in the following way:- Speaking to the Baby, "As k Miss Hall when goin' to leave us, ask her to leave us something to remember her. A little souvenir. Tell her we would like a souvenir very much, (turn -ing to me, and dropping the pretence) any little thing at all, such as an old dress, you know. I will call along to see you one evening."

Lascelles comes from Newport but he did not want to go back there. They have not got their own home, they are living in a house they rent from Mr Wintwood Elliott for 8/- a month. However they are having a new house built for them not far from the factory, it is going up at the moment.

Their means of living.

Lascelles works as a day labourer whenever he can get work. Ivy does some sewing and dressmaking. She washes clothes for Mr Egbert Saunders who also shares the same site as herself. She also does some higgling from time to time and sells in the Kingston market. She mainly sells fruit, naseberries mangos.

In addition Lascelles and the eldest son, also called Lascelles go in for a ~~1/2~~ little fishing. He goes to Alligator Pond and hires a boat. This Ivy says he can do for 6/- per week, although this seems very cheap and she may not be entirely accurate about her figures. They fish with a Track Line.

Fishing.

Here Ivy went to the bed and pulled out the tackle and showed it to me. It was all arranged in a light basin about 2 feet in diameter. The entire rim of this basin was covered a steel fishing hooks arranged so closely together that they looked like a super-imposed steel ring. Each of these fishing hooks had a length of string attached to it. These lay into the middle of of the basin where five or six strings were attached together and fixed to a double gourd or calabash. These calabashes were very light, and the idea is that the hooks and lines float downwards supported by the calabashes which float on the surface of the sea.