

# Shelbyville Main Street Project

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An Oral History Project of Shelbyville, Kentucky's Main Street

*Interviewer:* Mark Mefford

*Date:* 8-16-95

*Interviewee:* Irene Duvall

*Running Time:* 12 minutes

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## Side One

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Annie Irene Duvall  
Shelbyville Main Street  
Oral History Project  
Interview conducted by  
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Meford: Please state your full name.

Duvall: Annie Irene Duvall

Meford: When were you born?

Duvall: Oh, don't ask that.....1910!

Meford: Have you lived in Shelby County all your life?

Duvall: Yes, in Finchville all my life, as I told you, out on a farm which is still in my family. The 6th generation is living on it now and I live in Finchville.

Meford: What were your parents names?

Duvall: What were their names?

Meford: Yes

Duvall: My mothers name was Annie Doyle Duvall and my fathers name was Eugene Duvall.

Meford: Was he a farmer?

Duvall: Yes.

Meford: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Duvall: I have a brother, Lee Wilson Duvall and a sister Virginia Duvall. The brother died when he was in his early 40's and my sister died about 15 years ago.

Meford: What was your occupation?

Duvall: What was my occupation?

Meford: Yes.

Duvall: My occupation was teaching I guess.

Meford: Where did you go to school?

Duvall: I went to Georgetown a couple of years and then I went to Western. I graduated from Western and then I went one summer to the University of Kentucky.

Meford: When did you start teaching?

Duvall: Oh about 1936 or something like that.

Meford: You started teaching in Shelbyville in the 40's?

Duvall: Yes.

Meford: When growing up in Finchville did you make trips to Shelbyville for any reason?

Duvall: Well, groceries would be the main thing. There used to be a place in Shelbyville called Hollenbacks, years and years ago on Main Street. They had the best chocolate sodas and that was the main reason I wanted to go to Shelbyville. To get a chocolate soda.

Meford: So this is while you were in school?

Duvall: Yes, this is when I was little.

Meford: How did you all get to Shelbyville?

Duvall: By car. Of course we didn't have the roads that we do now.

Meford: What were the roads like?

Duvall: Well no the road around here, as I remember, were just a plain gravel road and after we lived here a few years, they had paved roads. Now, there is a world of traffic on this road. It's people going to work, it makes a big difference, there is a big difference in traffic.

Meford: When you were growing up, how often did you go to Shelbyville? In a week? In a month?

Duvall: Well, probably once a week. I really don't remember.

Meford: Was there any special day you drove your car in?

Duvall: I don't think so. I don't recall that there was.

Meford: Besides getting sodas or chocolate milkshakes, what other things did you do in Shelbyville?

Duvall: There was a milliner shop where you bought hats and there was a store called Lawson's which had most everything, piece goods, cloths, furniture, well it was a nice store. It's where some of the antiques shops are now.

Meford: Did you go up there on Saturdays for the big entertainment on Saturday nights?

Duvall: I don't recall, if you had to go on a Saturday you did but we didn't make a practice of it. I know alot of people did.

Meford: Were there annual events in Shelbyville you all went to?

Duvall: Shelby County Fair. That was really a big event. Of course at first they just had it in the day time, when I was little. There was an amphitheater with a top on it, not over the ring but the other part and it was a pretty old amphitheater. That burned years ago. Of course the horse show. We still have the fair but the horse show has really done well.

Meford: What kind of things went on at the fair beside the things you mentioned?

Duvall: In Shelbyville?

Meford: Yes

Duvall: That was the main thing, as well as I can remember. I thin at one time there was something called a schutalkwa that came around in Shelbyville where they had people who spoke, maybe plays. Those were the main things.

Meford: Did you go to a church in Finchville?

Duvall: Yes

Meford: Which one?

Duvall: The Baptist Church. There were two churches here. A Christian Church and the Baptist Church. The Christian Church did not have to many members and it finally disbanded. But the Baptist Church is still in existence and is a real old church. I believe it will soon celebrate it's 200th anniversary. It was not in the present location when it originally started. At one time my mother went to a private school in Finchville and all the people did. It's down the road a little piece. The Doolands had it. They were an outstanding family, I think there were two lawyers from that family who practiced in Louisville. It is not in that family anymore, it was until 20-30 years ago. It's a beautiful old house.

Meford: Do you remember anything about this area and Shelbyville during the depression?

Duvall: Do I remember anything about the Great Depression?

Mefford: Yes

Duvall: Well there was a little bank over here where the ham business is and it had to close of course and then the bank in Shelbyville took that over. I think it was the Deposit Bank. Most banks are being taken over by larger banks now.

Meford: Well, when you were growing up on the farm, did you take your crops to Shelbyville to market? Tobacco and everything else?

Duvall: Well, tobacco I suppose we did. That was the main crop.....we had tobacco and my father had beef cattle, sheep. We did not have a dairy. Most everybody around here had a dairy. There used to be a railroad, L&N, that went over to Bloomfield. It ran in the morning and came back about 10 O'clock.....no.....well yeah, then down in the afternoon and back at night. Farmers who had dairies brought their milk out here to put on the train. They would take it, I guess, to Louisville. There has been quite a change in every way.

Meford: What kind of changes stand out in your mind?

Duvall: Well most everything. Things like television.....that's certainly a change. When I grew up we didn't have television. Just most everything. Now, there is a little grocery store here but they can't do enough business to keep fresh things. If you go into Shelbyville you go without a thought, where as years ago you just didn't do it. Yesterday I wanted some fruit, so there is a place on 53 where they have very nice fruit so I just went in, and got some fruit, and came back. We think nothing of doing that in 10-15 minutes. Shelbyville is about 10 minutes, depending on the traffic.

Meford: When did this change start to occur? When did people start going to Shelbyville more than once a week?

Duvall: Well I guess when the roads were made better. You accepted it. You just didn't think about it. You had to have things so you just went and got them.

Meford: Do most of the people in Finchville do there shopping in Shelbyville?

Duvall: Oh, they have to. I guess they do, some people out near Simpsonville, who still consider themselves part of Finchville, go to Middletown to do shopping. Of course your going to Louisville or St. Matthews, Oxmore or there's two or three places in Shelbyville in Village Plaza where you can buy cloths but not much.

Meford: When did you start teaching in Shelbyville? Did you say the 1940's?

Duvall: Yes.

Meford: What school did you teach at?

Duvall: Well I started at Northside.

Meford: Where's that at?

Duvall: It's over on Collins Street. You would not see it unless you made a special effort. And then it got crowded and so they moved the 6th grade, which I taught, to the high school which is now West Middle. They build Southside, across the railroad tracks and I taught over there. It's just two sections of each grade now. Of course now it's all changed and the high school is now West Middle, I don't know if you knew that. It's quite a change.

Meford: When did the changes in the schools start to occur?

Duvall: When did what?

Meford: The changes in the schools?

Duvall: Of course after the schools merged there was more change. Shelbyville, at one time, was an independent district, and they were forced to merge by the state. As far as I was concerned, I was for it all the time. It has worked out very well.

Meford: What grade did you teach?

Duvall: Sixth.

Meford: Sixth grade?

Duvall: I liked sixth grade.