

Summary of Interview with Alex Taylor

Interviewee : Alex(ina) Taylor of Flookburgh, born 23 Oct 1921

Interviewer : Denys Vaughan

Date of Interview : 22 October 1992 Duration of Recording : 46 mins 6 secs

Approx time (mins)	Content
0 – 2½	Memories of early childhood, initially living in Haverthwaite whilst father was in the army; then at Kents Bank adjoining the railway, when father would throw a joint of meat from the train en route home, to be ready for dinner when he had walked home from the station; then moved to Rosted[?] in Cark and recalled an accident there, before father built Borridge which is now South Lakeland Garden Centre; all before going to school at age about 12.
2½ – 5	Early education with a governess, partly shared with other families, one being French; rather frightened of village children, and details of their pranks, but good friends with village adults, including Harold Manning with whom she used to go fishing.
5 – 6½	Childhood pleasures, including cycling, mushrooming, blackberrying, and camping by Windermere for father to go fishing in a rowing boat.
6½ – 9¾	Continuation of early education with governess, initially Phoebe Kelly shared with two brothers, and with Dickinson family; very enjoyable, did a lot of reading, particularly history and nature studies, the latter an interest shared with father; governess guided by publications from Charlotte Mason College; also learned French with a French governess shared with cousins in Haverthwaite.
9¾ – 16½	At age 12, went to George Watson's Ladies College in Edinburgh because mother was a Scot, and boarded with an uncle and aunt there; initially found class work difficult after one-to-one teaching by governess; knew more of some subjects than contemporaries there, but found Maths pretty terrifying; school building in George Square now Psychology Dept. of Edinburgh Univ.; made good friends there; comments on conspicuous poverty in Edinburgh in early 1930s; keen on hockey and athletics; further details of school life in Edinburgh until war broke out in 1939 when school was evacuated and so returned home without completing course.
16½ – 17¼	Completed School Certificate exam easily in Barrow, took a shorthand typing course, and then joined the army in 1940.
17¼ – 19½	Digression on father's army career; Territorial officer between wars, had Territorial decoration, called up as a reserve in 1936, involved in preparing defences for Barrow and Chorley, was in France in 1940 but returned pre Dunkirk and went into Military Police, involved in guarding Hess after he landed in England, always poor health after being gassed in WWI and died in 1946 aged about 47; elder brother in Burma in WWII and younger brother in navy with arctic convoys for which he recently received a Russian medal.
19½ – 27½	Various stories of army service in WWII; joined a platoon on Salisbury Plain commanded by Dr Tennant's daughter from Grange; initially an assistant cook peeling onions; then office work for what was probably the beginnings of the S.A.S. who went to Dieppe but few came back so unit disbanded; then posted

- to Hadrian's Camp near Carlisle which was a terrible place; applied for and got a commission to become an officer in the A.T.S., training recruits and classifying them for job suitability; distressed at very low level of literacy; then transferred to Durham to train Warrant Officers & NCO's until 6 months before D Day when focus changed to supervising groups of girls in various locations packing screws or painting boxes with aircraft parts; then a job to navigate road convoys from Newcastle to South Coast when all road signs had been taken down and replaced by coded signs; after D Day, the training centre in Durham reopened; stayed there until recruited by Ministry of Education for one of their Emergency Colleges to train to become a teacher.
- 27½ – 31 Attended Emergency College at Bognor Regis, an army barracks just vacated by Canadian troops, living in barrack rooms, 8 teachers to a room with c.100-150 on the course; memories of being very hungry as army rations had been very good and realisation that civilian rations were very poor, with conspicuous exception for former Japanese prisoners of war; memories of seeing squalor and poverty during teaching practice, and a teacher still using slates.
- 31 – 31½ Reference to current involvement in giving talks about education called "Slates to Computers".
- 31½ – 32¾ Reminiscing, partly repeating earlier comments on family circumstances when recruited into teaching.
- 32¾ – 34½ Further discussion about Emergency College trained teachers, and high proportion subsequently becoming head teachers, like herself.
- 34½ – 37½ Discussion about school discipline, and man management skills for teachers.
- 37½ – 41¾ Back to pre war recollections; family seemed short of money; father's problems starting market gardening during the depression; some produce distributed by hawking Flookburgh fishermen, and how they took their carts to markets by train; enjoyed visiting local station and its signal box; also played tennis with friends.
- 41¾ – 46 Experience of Churches : Uncle was vicar of Flookburgh 1911-1926, except war service as a padre during which he kept a surviving diary; when he left, he was replaced by an Anglo Catholic of whom Presbyterian mother disapproved; father was a sidesman and on local church council; prepared for confirmation in Edinburgh, and contrasts Church of Scotland with Church of England; joined Girl Guides in Edinburgh.
Recording ends abruptly at 46 mins 6 secs when the tape runs out.