

Pseudonym	Dialect Zone	Provenance	Sex	Age	Educational Level	Religion	Ch.7 Text No.
Anne Bradley (AB)	MUE	Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone	F	65	Left school at 15	C	7.2.13

KPC And what about Christmas times? Were there any particular things that used to go on at Christmas that were...?

AB *[laughs]*. Christmas time was relatively poor. Mummy always tried to get us something.

KPC Uh-huh.

AB One Christmas stands out in my mind again. My sister who is a year older than I...

KPC Mm.

AB ... and, eh, mummy was going out, eh, just... the shop was at the top of the street, so we were put to bed. We believed in Santa.

KPC Of course.

AB I believed in Santa 'til I was about 10.

KPC Oh, my gosh.

AB Uh-huh. And, em, anyhow, we were put to bed, and we were doing some liggig about. Remember, this is the old brass bed that...

KPC Uh-huh, with the...

AB ... had this old steel fr... *[laughs]*... the springs on it.

KPC *[laughs]*

AB And we were horsing about, and that used to fall, you know, the spring used to fall down. That happened very often. I got hit for that too.

KPC *[laughs]*

AB And, em, we were, em, it was just my sister and I in the house.

KPC Mm-mm.

AB don't know where... mummy had gone up to the shop to get few fresh vegetables. This was Christmas Eve. And, eh, I had fell out of bed. We'd been horsing about, so I fell out of bed, and I looked in under the bed, and there was these wooden boxes, two of them.

KPC Mm.

AB You know those tomato boxes?

KPC Mm-mm.

AB Tomatoes used to come in, like a wee wooden crate.

KPC Mm-mm, mm-mm.

AB And we explored this, and it was our toys.

KPC Huh!

AB Now it was very little toys, but it was toys.

KPC But it was toys, nevertheless.

AB I remember one of them was a plastic duck. And you always hung up your stocking then, and there was an orange, or an apple. Fruit was always in the foot of it...

KPC Aye.

AB ... to hold the toe out. So mummy come down...

KPC Huh!

AB ... and we were, of course, as good as gold, back in bed, never let on we had seen anything. And then, my mother was always very loving, you know.

KPC Yeah.

AB And, eh, she nursed us at night before we went to sleep, and she used to sing til us as well.

KPC Did she?

AB Yeah, she was very... oh, she was lovely. And, em, she asked us what we'd like for Christmas, and we described everything that was in this box.

KPC Oh, you madams! You little naughty brats.

AB *[laughs]*. So she knew that we had seen it.

KPC She knew rightly, exactly.

AB But I still believed in Santa.

KPC Even though you'd seen those...?

AB Even though I had seen that, and it was a...

KPC Isn't that funny?

AB ... a stuffed doll with a wee plastic face with the eyes and that painted on, and that was the type of toys you got. I've never got a Delph doll 'til I was about 10.

KPC Oh right, and that was a big special treat, I'm sure.

AB Oh, very much. But mummy used to nurse us before we went to bed, and how she warmed our feet – I used to do this to my children.

KPC Did you?

AB This is how mummy warmed my feet. She'd put her hand to the fire and then rubbed your foot [*rubbing sound*]... uh-huh. I remember having, eh, mumps, and my mother sat up all night with me...

KPC [*tuts*]

AB ... and held her hand to my ear, and, oh, she was very kind.

KPC Because it was... it can be very sore, can't it?

AB Very painful.

KPC Mm.

AB And eating nothing other than custard.

KPC [*laughs*]

AB Mm. I wasn't old at that time.

KPC Because you couldn't swallow anything else really.

AB No, no. She was very kind like that. I used to take sore ears as a child as well.

KPC Did you?

AB Ear infections. Very often. And she would put warm olive oil, and she'd put it into your ear, and, em, then she would sit all night with her hand and rocking you. She sat up all night. I...

KPC What a wonderful mother!

AB She was lovely. [*laughs*]. She re...

KPC What a wonderful...

AB Uh-huh.

KPC I mean, like the quintessential mother...

AB Mm-mm.

KPC ... that you could possibly hope for.

AB Yeah, mm-mm.