

Stephen, Linda. Personal Interview. 13 March 1998

Hello, my name is Scott Kelley and I am interviewing Linda Stephen over at the junior high.

Scott: I have heard you know quite a bit about Folklore.

Mrs. Stephen: Well, I don't know that I know quite a bit but, I have taught a folklore unit in 7th grade literature when I used to teach. So probably I did it at least 15 years maybe 20 and we studied what folklore was and talked about a lot of the local legends around Marshall.

Scott: One of the local legends that we have looked up is the legend of Hatchet Man's Graveyard. Do you know anything about that?

Mrs. Stephen: Well, as I told you before I am not from Marshall originally. So everything I've heard has come from what different students have told me through their folklore projects and of course even if they choose not to do a project on something like Hatchet Man or gravestones they all seem to know about this story and have different versions but, the main one that I heard or that I remember is there was a family that lived in this area wherever it is and I don't know where it is but kids seem to know and for whatever reason the man just kind of lost it one night and went crazy and went after his family with a hatchet and killed them. They're buried in the local graveyard there and if you go out there at night supposedly you can hear strange noises or you see strange things that people say is his spirit coming back to find peace or whatever or if it's guilt coming out. Also, I have heard you can go in the house and similar things happen.

Scott: It would be kind of scary going there wouldn't it?

Mrs. Stephen: Well, I would imagine if you go there late at night when it's dark on a full moon it all adds to the fear a little bit then you are kind of primed to be scared anyways so it all adds together.

Scott: Could you maybe tell a story of someone who has had an experience with Hatchet Man's ghost?

Mrs. Stephen: Well, I don't remember anyone specific but I remember a lot of kids saying either they would be having a Halloween party or some kind of a youth group would part of it was they would go out there if they were on a hayride they would stop and go out and of course like I said are already primed to be scared any little thing would set them off I don't really remember any specific story or experience somebody had out there.

Scott: Do you personally believe in the legend of Hatchet Man?

Mrs. Stephen: Well, It makes good listening and a good story around the campfire or late night slumber party or something, I don't know, I don't believe there is still some spirit or something going on there I suppose if you check back in somewhere where the records

are kept if there really was some kind of death or murder there. It could be verified that part I might believe but the part about if you go out there late at night you'll experience his presence I'm not so sure I believe that.

Scott: How did you first hear about the legend? Did somebody come up and tell you about it?

Mrs. Stephen: Well, I think it was in the classroom that when we did this folklore unit and we did a segment on legends and what they were the kids would always come up with a story of oh, have you heard the story about Hatchet Man that's one of the local legends.

Scott: O.K., Do you know of any other information that maybe helpful to us in our search for folklore or local legends around Marshall?

Mrs. Stephen: Well, you mean as to where you would find some stories, you might go to the Genealogical Society but my advice would be to make contact with some of the older members of the community who have lived in Marshall for a long time and contact them, but my guess is that they can tell you all kinds of stories about Marshall.

Scott: Have you heard anything about the naming of Fox Road?

Mrs. Stephen: No, I haven't heard that one what is it?

Scott: Well, we heard it was named after Sebastian Fox.

Mrs. Stephen: Well, you know a lot of cities or roads are named after people so that doesn't surprise me when you first asked me that the first thought that came to my mind was that it had something to do with fox hunting or fox around there so, but yeah a lot of roads or a lot of cities are named after people so that doesn't surprise me like the Archer House was named after a person.

Scott: Have you ever heard of the gypsy in Marshall?

Mrs. Stephen: Well, I was wondering if you were going to bring that up. That was another local legend that a lot of my students would always bring up. And the story very basically is that in the past when gypsies would travel through people were not very kind to them they didn't trust them. They always felt like they were responsible for anything bad that happened or anything that came up missing. And when this group traveled through the gypsy queen was befriended by somebody here and so she supposedly put a good curse I don't know if you would call it that I don't know what the term is on Marshall that it would never be hit or destroyed by a tornado. That the community would always be safe and according to the kids her grave is out at the Marshall cemetery in fact, some of them when they did their projects would go out and even take a picture of the tombstone and talk to the caretaker out there. I believe this one well I do believe that she is buried there because I have seen pictures of the gravesite.

Scott: Do you know her name?

Mrs. Stephen: Not right off hand but someone who could tell you because I remember her son did a project on it is Beth Macke, Chris Macke her son did a project on it and they had a picture in the report of the tombstone so I know she could tell you for sure. I really believe there was a lady who was probably a gypsy now I do know that there was an old high school apparently part of it got torn down by a tornado but the town has never been destroyed by one and so I don't know maybe if she did put this on Marshall it is working, who knows.

Scott: Do you know why she might have put the spell on Marshall?

Mrs. Stephen: Well just from what kids said she was befriended here you know usually they were treated with disdain and rudeness and distressed and someone or maybe a group of people just the town in general befriended her and it seems like she got sick or something and they cared for her and helped her and this was her way of showing appreciation for what they had done for her. Which is the story that I was told.

Scott: Did you know from where the gypsy might have come?

Mrs. Stephen: I have no idea I heard gypsy's traveled around a lot and never really had one place that they called home. You know they were like a nomadic group that liked to move around a lot so I don't think I've ever heard originally anyway where she was from no.

Scott: Do you have any other interesting stories you can remember offhand?

Mrs. Stephen: No I just I remember one interesting tombstone that I always wondered about the story used on one of the projects kids could do were epitaphs and they would do charcoal edgings and some of them would take pictures and talk to caretakers but one of them and it seems to me the graveyard was out around West Union area somewhere had on it and it was a very long one several kids always included it in their photograph album was of a story the actual epitaph told and here again this is where the tale sometimes gets changed in the telling. It was something about and I'm thinking it was a man or maybe it was a woman and I can't remember which order it happened in that like a wagon no I know there was a fire or something, OK let's back up you know they had the old wagon wheels and somehow it broke and he or she I would think it would be a he was trying to fix it and somehow the wheel came off and hit him in the head and caused him to kind of have spells and that it healed but he was never was quite right but eventually what happened in the house he set the house on fire and died in the fire and that's the long version but somehow this epitaph has the story of that happening and I always thought that was kind of interesting you know it would have been a kind of neat story to track down nobody ever did. The most anybody ever did was have the picture of the tombstone and then kind of over to the side write what it said. I'm not for sure I'm telling that story in quite the right order but it was something like that.

Scott: Well, Thank You very much; See you later

Mrs. Stephen: You're welcome, good bye!