

Ethnic Grocers in the Urban Midwest: Archie Green Fellows Project, 2013-2014

Gifty F. Kwakye interview, 2015-06-01: interview conducted by Lucy Long

Interview ID: afc2013016\_02940

Date: June 1, 2015

Duration: 00:27:00

Gifty Kwakye.Ghana.Columbus.6-1-15.

Transcription by Holly Howard; Edited, log, summary by Lucy Long

afc2013016\_02940\_sr01 (WS600754)

Summary: Introduction to Mrs. Gifty Kwakye from Ghana. Followed husband to Columbus. He won a visa lottery and came here to get a degree. Most customers are West African and speak English and Twi. The language brings them together.

Log:

00:00:00 Introduction. Store owned by Gifty and her husband [also Ghanaian]

00:00:45 Came to US in 2004.

00:00:54 Came to Columbus because husband was here. He won the lottery.

00:01:25 Husband attended university in Ghana and in Columbus

00:01:45 Did not work in a store in Ghana. Explanation of Folklife project.

00:02:22 Ethnicity of Customers—West African.

00:02:35 Languages used at store—English and Twi

00:03:00 Customers speak the same language and are like family.

00:03:40 Ghana has 40 spoken languages, only 20 are written. Twi is a main one.

00:04:14 Most products from Ghana, but some from Mexico.

00:04:40 Mexican Americans come in to buy snacks. “Caucasians”

5:13 End of Segment

Gifty Kwakye.Ghana.Columbus.Transcript.6-1-15.

afc2013016\_02940\_sr02 WS600755

Summary:

Log:

00:00:00 Food is a way to preserve Ghanaian heritage, but she doesn't try to teach anyone.

00:00:55 Doesn't give cooking lessons—customers don't need them.

00:01:22 Customers don't ask for help. Only Black Americans do.

00:02:20 Knows some customers through her church

00:02:44 Selecting and acquiring merchandise—buy via New York from Ghana

00:03:17 African bakeries in Columbus supply store

00:03:51 Explains the food if people ask.

00:04:20 Store doesn't have Ghanaian patriotic or cultural décor.

00:05:03 No collaboration with other African stores, although many Africans in Columbus.

afc2013016\_02940\_sr03 WS600756

Summary: African store is more relaxed than American one. No special foods for special occasions. Weekends are busier. Announcement board for community.

Log:

00:00:00 -blank space

00:00:04 Difference between African and American stores—no queues and more relaxed at her store.

00:01:26 Services other than food offered by store: money transfers, pay bills, charge phone.

00:01:53 No special foods for special occasions.

00:02:38 Weekends are busier, but no special cakes offered

00:03:30 Announcement board for community.

00:04:07 End of segment

afc2013016\_02940\_sr04 (WS600757)

Summary:

Log:

00:00:03 –Interview almost finished!

00:00:07 Another store worker who is from Ghana.  
00:00:26 Husband helps out so she can go home to cook and clean.  
00:01:00 Long hours working at the store.  
00:01:40 Positive experiences. Customers know what they want. [West African]  
00:02:04 One bad experience with a Black American. [LL-maybe homeless?]  
00:03:13 No confusion with people thinking she is American.  
00:03:28 She makes all the store decisions, but does not find it difficult.  
00:04:20 Very few fresh vegetables—only tomatoes and canned ones.  
4:52 End of Segment

afc2013016\_02940\_sr05 WS600758 (3:44 minutes)

Kwakye, Gifty. (Mrs.) [Ghana. Columbus, OH] afc2013016\_02940

Summary: Enjoys running the store—customer interaction—but doesn't use her university education. Has 4 children (17 to 4). The oldest helps in the store; the younger ones come in for candy. They consider themselves both Ghanaian and American and speak Twi.

Log:

00:00:00 Running the store is hard work.  
00:00:40 Enjoys the work, especially talking to customers.  
00:01:06 Plans for the future—maybe expand store  
00:01:30 She has a university education (social science in Ghana) that is not used here.  
00:02:00 She has four children  
00:02:46 Children consider themselves both American and Ghanaian. Speak  
00:03:44 End of Interview