

## Transcript of Interview with Agatha Taylor by Kit Heintzman

**Interviewee:** Agatha Taylor

**Interviewer:** Kit Heintzman

**Date:** 02/22/2022

**Location (Interviewee):** Kingston, Ontario, Canada

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Transcribed By:** Angelica S Ramos

### **Some of the things we discussed include:**

Not feeling like day-to-day living changed that much with the pandemic, but missing things like coffee shops and shopping. COVID-19 and population control. The Bible, tithings, church; taking what the Good Lord dishes out; the world going to hell. Having groceries delivered by family members and getting drives to appointments. Family getting vaccinated. Wearing masks in the home. Having a daughter-in-law working in the ICU. Having lived with dogs for the last 60 years; currently living with a dog named Andy. Ontario COVID policies and Doug Ford. Preferring print media over TV or online news; enjoying reading the newspaper. Consulting healthcare professionals over the phone and in person. Feeling safe. Isolation accompanying aging. Trucker convoy in Ottawa. Putin, Russia, and the threat of war. The taking down of the statue of Sir John A. McDonald in Kingston after protests. The Spanish Flu. Not having been vaccinated as a child, first vaccine was for Polio. Neighbours with polio, hospitalization, media.

**Kit Heintzman 00:04**

Hello.

**Agatha Taylor 00:05**

Hello.

**Kit Heintzman 00:07**

Would you please start by stating your full name, the date, the time and your location?

**Agatha Taylor 00:12**

My name is Agatha Taylor. What do you want next?

**Kit Heintzman 00:18**

The date.

**Agatha Taylor 00:19**

Oh, oh, February the 22nd 2022.

**Kit Heintzman 00:24**

Yeah. And the time?

**Agatha Taylor 00:27**

What time is it Ronald? 8:33

**Kit Heintzman** 00:31

And where are you right now?

**Agatha Taylor** 00:33

Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:37

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**Agatha Taylor** 00:47

Yes.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:49

Would you please start by introducing yourself to anyone who might find themselves listening to this what would you want them to know about you?

**Agatha Taylor** 00:56

I don't know. I'm 92 I live by myself with this a little dog and I guess I was born in Kingston all my life I lived in my house this house for almost 70 years okay.

**Kit Heintzman** 01:24

Oh, sorry. Please go on.

**Agatha Taylor** 01:26

I just said okay.

**Kit Heintzman** 01:29

What does the word pandemic mean to you?

**Agatha Taylor** 01:39

I can't think of the word I'd like to use one is upheaval, chaos that would be about the best word chaos.

**Kit Heintzman** 01:57

What was your day to day looking like before the pandemic?

**Agatha Taylor** 02:05

Pretty much of the same as it is now except I can get a little bit more I can take the car and go out and if I wanted a coffee I could stop at the coffee shop if I if I whenever I wanted to do I could do now I'm very limited to what I can do.

**Kit Heintzman** 02:26

And going for coffee, what are some of the other things you miss doing?

**Agatha Taylor** 02:31

Fabrics.

**Kit Heintzman** 02:34

Tell me about the fabric store.

**Agatha Taylor** 02:36

I love, I sew this is the reason I love the fabric stores. I like feeling the fabrics.

**Kit Heintzman** 02:46

What kinds of things do you sell?

**Agatha Taylor** 02:47

Me mainly making gifts for my friends. Plus, I make [inaudible] all my kids pajamas. I still make I've been making them ever since my daughter is now 70 So when I've been making her pajamas, ever since she was a little girl, I'm still making them. How's that?

**Kit Heintzman** 03:16

Do you remember the first time you heard about the pandemic?

**Agatha Taylor** 03:20

No.

**Kit Heintzman** 03:23

Do you remember any of your early impressions?

**Agatha Taylor** 03:31

I just thought I just thought it was going to probably like what happened is famed when they had the had the term pandemic in there. And I'm sorry, but I firmly think that because we've had no wars, we have to have something like this. Sorry to help eliminate the population. It just seems as if you read your Bible, it tells about all the wars to kill off people. And so we have to have wars too, when the world gets a little bit overpopulated so we have something that comes along that we really and truly do not like and it helps to eliminate the population and pare it down. Remember that same thinking or not but hey, that's the way it is.

**Kit Heintzman** 04:38

What does the Bible mean to you?

**Agatha Taylor** 04:39

The good book, it can teach us and it can take away It depends upon how we want to read it. And if we believe what it says or disbelieve.

**Kit Heintzman** 05:12

Would you tell me something about your relationship to religion or spirituality?

**Agatha Taylor** 05:26

I believe in the good book i i went to church up to a few years ago, but that was relationships in the Church changed and things happened. And so I can be just as good a person sitting at home on Sunday. And sitting in church listening to somebody that sometimes preaches over my head. And then I felt like, all of a sudden in church because he was not. I don't know. But I sat there thinking that playing the employee always sat there for doing was putting my collection on the plate. So now I just don't go, do I send my contribution and my tithing? Yes, I do. I still, I believe the church has to have this. And it's good for income tax. Sorry. Government has his piece. So he was

**Kit Heintzman** 06:43

There's nothing to apologize for in an oral history interview. So long as you're sharing, I'm really grateful to receive it. How have you, how have you been dealing with things during the pandemic?

**Agatha Taylor** 07:04

With me, there's probably not a whole lot to deal with. As far as a shopping for food, let concern my daughter in law does. And then I write her a check for what she's bought for me. And when I need to go to an appointment, they take me. So other than that, except for me driving the car and going out by myself. Very little has changed.

**Kit Heintzman** 07:32

How have you been feeling about your safety?

**Agatha Taylor** 07:34

Fine, fine. And my, my family has all been not hasn't been vaccinated. They insisted that I was and they wear a mask when they come into my house. No, they don't. Do I demand that they wear a mask? No, I don't. The people that come in to help me? yes, they wear a mask. But not me. I don't know where the only time I wear a mask is when I go into a store.

**Kit Heintzman** 08:10

Tell me about your family asking you to get vaccinated.

**Agatha Taylor** 08:15

What do you mean?

**Kit Heintzman** 08:16

You had said that your family had insisted you get vaccinated?

**Agatha Taylor** 08:24

Yeah, well, I think. Yeah, they were worried they were worried that I might get sick. So they made the whole arrangements to get vaccinated. I didn't because really, and truly, I'm not very good computer. So this is a learning experience talking to you on this. He says, I guess that's what it is. But hey. So it was a case of they made all the arrangements and they took me and all I had to do was stick out my arm.

**Kit Heintzman** 09:03

How was it?

**Agatha Taylor** 09:06

I got a sore arm. Other than that, it was nothing to it.

**Kit Heintzman** 09:13

Tell me about the safety, your feeling and the decisions you've been making about not having masks in the home.

**Agatha Taylor** 09:22

About what?

**Kit Heintzman** 09:23

You had said that when you have family come to visit you in the home not having them wear masks. Talk to me about why that's why you made that decision.

**Agatha Taylor** 09:32

It wasn't a decision I made it was just they came and did they asked me if they want them to put a mask on. No, no my granddaughter comes down from Toronto. I haven't seen her since before Christmas now but every time that they came down from Toronto or when they came in, we mainly we would visit outside. But but when they come into my house, don't ask me way, but they always put a mask on them. When they went out of the house, they took them off. I thought it was funny. But I didn't say one way or the other. It was a piece of work. Oh, also my daughter, my daughter, my daughter in law works in the ICU at the hospital. So its a case of, was a more or less. When she says something, I'm more or less say, yes.

**Kit Heintzman** 10:38

What's it been like having a daughter working in emergency rooms at this time?

**Agatha Taylor** 10:42

Scary. Scary. For what's going on? I figure she's in real danger.

**Kit Heintzman** 11:05

Do you talk to her about that?

**Agatha Taylor** 11:08

No. Don't bring up any subjects. Unless she brings them up.

**Kit Heintzman** 11:21

I have a what seemed like a silly question. What's your dog's name?

11:24

Andy.

**Kit Heintzman** 11:26

Andy.

**Agatha Taylor** 11:27

And he's staying on my lap right now. under a blanket. He loves a warm blanket.

**Kit Heintzman** 11:33

What's it been like living with a dog for the last few years?

**Agatha Taylor** 11:38

I've lived with dogs for 60 years. It hasn't changed except that this is a little one. Most of the rest of the dogs have been big. But my daughter, my daughter said to me that when we got, when I got this fella, that he had to be short, less than up to my knees. And I don't think he comes halfway up to my knees. My grandson says he comes to my ankles. Little guy, and the reason why. And he is a rescue he is. Now I've only had three years. But he's now nine years old. I was bound in bed. But this time I would not get a young dog on the count of my age. Because I really don't want to have to say die. And somebody else would have to have my dog. And I didn't want to go back to the pound again. He's he's a good guy. And he makes me have to move. You have to put him out. You have to bring them in. Yeah. Love to do a lot of things with him. But so yes, he's been a blessing.

**Kit Heintzman** 12:51

Have you been paying much attention to what the news specific to Kingston has been like about the pandemic?

**Agatha Taylor** 13:01

I actually, up until this last year, we've been pretty we were pretty lucky. The thing, thing was that the fellow that was chief doctor. He he put it in regulations and rules that actually we had nobody sick in our in our in our or in our institutions, which was good. But last year, not what hasn't been. We've had quite a few people sick we've had we've only we've I think we've had less than 10 die though, which which is really good. But I was glad to have some of the things that he did. But then Mr. Ford decided he needed them better than we did. So you went to Toronto, instead of staying here in Kingston.

**Kit Heintzman** 14:01

What happened to the work in Kingston after he left for Toronto?

**Agatha Taylor** 14:07

I don't know, I don't want the other virus came in from what I can gather. And it hit people differently than what the first one did. So it was a case of that. We got more people sick and also trauma and shut people down because their hospital was too full and had come into our hospital,

**Kit Heintzman** 14:37

Please go on.

**Agatha Taylor** 14:38

That's a fact of life.

**Kit Heintzman** 14:43

How have you been feeling about how Doug Ford has been handling the pandemic?

**Agatha Taylor** 14:50

I think he's a piece of work. Did I vote for him? No. Would I vote for him? No. that tells you what I think of Doug, sorry. You asked!

**Kit Heintzman** 15:18

There's been a lot going on in the last two years of not just COVID but also politics and a lot of like a lot of stuff has been happening since 2020. And I'm wondering has like, what have you been paying attention to? What have you been noticing what's been sitting with you?

**Agatha Taylor** 15:45

I don't know. To me life is still just going on just the same as it was. I can rant and rave about whatever the heck I read. I read foreign newspapers. I do not watch I watched very little TV. So and as far as this putting the computer on I might put this on twice a week to clean up the stuff and look at all problem with it is some of our newspapers are not kept printing the grocery ads. So I can't read them if I dont go on the computer I can't read them.

**Kit Heintzman** 16:26

What are the newspapers you're reading?

**Agatha Taylor** 16:29

The Wind Standard which is a local write, the Toronto Star in the mail and the Post.

**Kit Heintzman** 16:41

And what kinds of things have you been reading about in there?

**Agatha Taylor** 16:46

Well, I really liked is. This is a crossword puzzles and the comics and the cartoons. I love them and I look at them first.

**Kit Heintzman** 17:00

What is the word health mean to you? What does the word health mean to you?

**Agatha Taylor** 17:06

Posts?

**Ronald Taylor** 17:07

Health.

**Kit Heintzman** 17:07

Health.

**Ronald Taylor** 17:09

Health.

**Agatha Taylor** 17:09  
Health?

**Ronald Taylor** 17:10  
Health.

**Agatha Taylor** 17:11  
Health, I never think about it it's just something that hey you're either healthy or not so it's a case if you're sick or you're not. It's just a fact. I figure what the good Lord dishes out your take and it's one step at a time you get up in the morning. Do what you have to do and then when it's all finished you go to bed at night. That's where it goes day by day.

**Kit Heintzman** 17:43  
Do you feel healthy? Do you feel healthy?

**Agatha Taylor** 17:48  
Most days I do feel healthy.

**Kit Heintzman** 17:55  
What's your access to medical care been like and when you need it?

**Agatha Taylor** 18:05  
What would you say Ronald?

**Ronald Taylor** 18:06  
I would say pretty good.

**Agatha Taylor** 18:07  
Ronald says she started the doc during the first year the only time you didn't get to see the doctor all you got was a phone call. Now she's back seeing patients again because I saw her two weeks ago.

**Kit Heintzman** 18:29  
What was the, did it feel different, doing the appointments by phone and going in to see her more recently?

**Agatha Taylor** 18:36  
Yes because the thing is on the phone you don't think that's the questions that you do when you're when you see her in person.

**Kit Heintzman** 19:00  
What does the word safety mean to you?

**Agatha Taylor** 19:07



Locking your door at night. I live in, I live on a street this one block long. There's only 10 houses I think 10 houses on my street as seen because I've lived here this long. Is very very quiet. So actually. I don't think I worry too much as far as don't even think about if you want the truth just just Yeah, lock the door at night and you unlock it in the morning and that's the way it goes.

**Kit Heintzman** 19:44

Do you have much of a community there in Kingston people you talk on the phone with people you might see at a dog park?

**Agatha Taylor** 19:53

No. It's got so, a lot of my friends have died on the account of my age. And so therefore it is hard to make new friends. And because the people that are moving in are so much younger that, yeah they talk to you but it's almost as if they haven't got time for you. Because they've got their own friends and they're trying to keep I forget they're trying to keep their friends as is and then my friends move or die. And so it's a fact of life.

**Kit Heintzman** 20:36

And you're still close with a lot of family right?

**Agatha Taylor** 20:40

Yes and no. Right, you can pick your friends but you can't pick your family.

**Kit Heintzman** 20:48

That's right. How are you feeling about the immediate future?

**Agatha Taylor** 20:57

About the what?

**Kit Heintzman** 20:58

Immediate future.

**Agatha Taylor** 21:01

I think this world just gone to hell in a handbasket. I don't like what's happening as far as those truckers going down to Ottawa and that kind of crap. I think that's like, okay, you go make your case. Get out. Don't, don't stay there like they've done it just that was just utterly ridiculous.

**Kit Heintzman** 21:31

Would you tell whoever's listening to this one, would you tell whoever's listening to this later. What's the, what were the truckers in Ottawa for what was happening there?

**Agatha Taylor** 21:45

I really and truly don't know. They they said one thing that they did to me. They did something else. The if you're if you're going you state your case, and then you move on, and they didn't state their case and move on, then the as you call them, the ravel rousers jump in and stir up the pot and everything then is something different than what it started out to be. And therefore I don't know it's just it was it was just chaos, chaos.

**Kit Heintzman** 22:34

Is there anything more you would say about the world going to hell?

**Agatha Taylor** 22:44

I'd like to see Putin stay back in his own bloody country and not worry about the rest of the world and taking us over. And that's exactly what he's going to do.

**Kit Heintzman** 23:02

That sounds really scary.

**Agatha Taylor** 23:06

But he will start a war and we don't need another war I've lived through it and it's just a case of the it's scary to see your family on that walk to war some comeback, some do not.

**Kit Heintzman** 23:27

Is there anything you would share about your experiences of having lived through previous wars?

**Agatha Taylor** 23:33

No.

**Kit Heintzman** 23:39

What are some of the hopes for your longer term future if there are any?

**Agatha Taylor** 23:47

I'd like to see peace. The problem with that is everybody thinks of peace as a different thing. When I might think of peace, what you might think of peace are all to all different things. So it's a case case of this when people say peace is, you hope you pray and that the world's going to be better than it actually is.

**Kit Heintzman** 24:19

When you say you want peace what does that look like for you?

**Agatha Taylor** 24:23

No wars. And like these mobs, none of that that's that's crock. It's just that I can't describe it.

**Kit Heintzman** 24:45

Has there been much protesting in Kingston over the last few years that you know of?

**Agatha Taylor** 24:53

There was one and I really got ticked off because they took down the statue of St. John and John, this is about 20 or 30 people that they got their way. And they removed the statue. Sure, maybe he wasn't the greatest. Maybe he did things wrong, okay, we all do things. And it's just free. And you don't want to start taking down statues and start talking about people living dead in the sins of omission. It was, it was just it was just cry.

**Kit Heintzman** 25:46

How do you take care of yourself like what do you do for self care?

**Agatha Taylor** 25:53

What do you mean by that?

**Kit Heintzman** 25:54

I mean, if you're feeling glum, are there things you do to pick yourself back up?

**Agatha Taylor** 26:01

I read a book. I read a lot.

**Kit Heintzman** 26:09

What have you been reading?

**Agatha Taylor** 26:15

Right now I'm reading a book called The Hunt by Alison Brenneman. I realize it's a murder mystery, sometimes their love stories. Do I pay for my books? How I get them is my friend in New Brunswick. My best friend. Reece. She watches the books on my wrist. My daughter now lives in New Brunswick. So when my daughter comes to visit me, I get boxes of books. When I finished reading, I pass them off. So I have, I don't think I bought a book in 20 years. I just paid for [inaudible], but not my books.

**Kit Heintzman** 27:09

How has your family been doing throughout the pandemic?

**Agatha Taylor** 27:15

Because most of them aren't here. I don't see them. So I don't really know. Because my daughter being in New Brunswick, she was in more lockdown than me. And my granddaughter in Toronto, her husband are both working from home. So the only one I've got here here is my son and my daughter in law and the kids.

**Kit Heintzman** 27:47

How have you been feeling about the lock downs? The lock downs?

**Agatha Taylor** 27:55

To me, to me, it hasn't made much difference. I don't go out to eat. I like the odd bit of theater, but there isn't a whole lot of it. And you have to have somebody to go with you. And so therefore, it really truly has made too much difference in my life on all.

**Kit Heintzman** 28:16

What do you want people in the humanities and social sciences to be doing right now? So that we can understand what's been happening over the last few years?

**Agatha Taylor** 28:27

I don't think they're going to do anything.

**Kit Heintzman** 28:33

What should they do?

**Agatha Taylor** 28:35

You know, something? I don't know. I really and truly that don't know. Because everybody thinks differently. So I don't know. I can't I can't give you an answer.

**Kit Heintzman** 28:51

I'd like you to imagine talking to some historian in the future. So someone 100 years from now is watching this. What would you tell them is important to you about getting remembered about this moment?

**Agatha Taylor** 29:06

That people were crazy. They really are, like fine we went through that Spanish flu and people died because there was no vaccinations to be had. And therefore gran granted. I haven't always, when I was a child, my grandmother did not vaccinate us. One of her kids got sick from it. And therefore when we came along because I live with my grandparents because my mother had died. And so it was a case of when it came time and they sent notes home from school at that stage of the game to be vaccinated. And my grandmother always said no. And actually, I never got vaccinated until polio. And that was really scary. It was really, really scary. And so, yes, I would tell people that they should get vaccinated. I realize there are a lot of people that are saying no. But they don't read history and realize what what has happened. And if [inaudible] should win, really and truly. Because the [inaudible], maybe killing off the population, because they're not getting vaccinated, and they don't realize what they're doing. Or maybe they think I don't know what I'm doing either.

**Kit Heintzman** 31:04

Can you tell me about the polio vaccination?

**Agatha Taylor** 31:17

It was scary. It was really scary. Polio. I don't remember too much about the vaccination. There was a friend, a friend, my neighbor across the street, her sister in law, got polio. And she never came out of the hospital. She lived there rest of her life. And that had to be 40/50 years, which was really terrible, you know what I mean? And also her daughter got it. Her daughter was not infected the way she was, like, she had to wear braces on her legs, and she had to walk with canes. And so the couple of people who already know that had polio, we're not really great. You're not I mean, the rest of us, well, we escaped.

**Kit Heintzman** 32:21

Can you compare sort of like, the way people were talking about polio, when it was happening to the way people are talking about COVID now?

**Agatha Taylor** 32:33

They didn't talk about it.

**Kit Heintzman** 32:35

They didn't talk about it.

**Agatha Taylor** 32:36

They didn't talk about it. It was just something that was there. And if you got it, you got it. And if you didn't get it, you were lucky. And that was about it.

**Kit Heintzman** 32:47

So people weren't writing about it in newspapers?

**Agatha Taylor** 32:50

Not to my knowledge. That's one newspaper that we got here. And it was all local news. Let me tell you very, very little of what went on outside the city.

**Kit Heintzman** 33:08

Did you decide to vaccinate your own children based on your experiences?

**Agatha Taylor** 33:12

No, I vaccinate. It didn't hurt me not to get vaccinated. The only thing I had were measles and chickenpox. So I was very, very fortunate in that place. When it came to my children, I vaccinated them.

**Kit Heintzman** 33:36

How do you feel about vaccines sort of more generally?

**Agatha Taylor** 33:39

I think we all have to have free choice as far as that's concerned. But I really think if it can help you, have it done. If it can't help you, then leave it alone.

**Kit Heintzman** 33:59

I think those are all of the questions that I have. But I would love to open some space. If there's anything you want to share. I'm so happy to listen and hear it.

**Ronald Taylor** 34:10

Anything else you want, anything else you want to say?

**Agatha Taylor** 34:21

No. No. Nothing else. Ronald.

**Kit Heintzman** 34:26

Thank you so very much for your time.

**Agatha Taylor** 34:29

You're more than welcome. And that was very, very nice talking to you.

**Kit Heintzman** 34:32

So nice speaking with you as well.

**Agatha Taylor** 34:34

Okay. You, you have a good day.

**Kit Heintzman** 34:36

You too.