

[F. G. Wagner]

S241-LA

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman ADDRESS 2438 W Street, Lincoln, Nebr.

DATE Dec. 6, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant. F.G. Wagner, 1201 Pawnee St.
2. Date and time of interview. 1 to 3:00
3. Place of interview. 1201 Pawnee
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

None.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None.

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Comfortable.

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman ADDRESS 2438 W Street

DATE Dec, 13, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT F.G. Wagner, 1201 Pawnee.

1. Ancestry. German-French

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2. Place and date of birth. Lincoln Nebr. 1895.
3. Family. 6
4. Place and date of birth.
5. Education, with dates. High School
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. Insurance.
7. Special skills and interests. Cards.
8. Community and religious activities. Prebysterian
9. Description of informant. Short, squat, mustache.
10. Other points gained in interview.

FORM C Test of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman ADDRESS 2438 W Lincoln, Nebr.

DATE Dec. 12, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT F.G. Wagner, 1201 Pawnee St.

Heard my father tell of some things which happened in the west that seem to be of interest.

One thing was the arrival in Nebraska many years ago of a caravan going farther west. There were ten wagons in the caravan and they were headed west. One day they passed through a creek and after they had past the creek they noticed that the last wagon was missing. The group stopped and a few men went back to find out what was wrong. When

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they got back to creek the wagon and occupants were gone. They were never discovered again. No one knows whether they were lost, captured by the indians or what, anyhow they disappeared.

Sometimes the indians in an early day were just "ornery." One time a group of returning home from a hunt stopped off at a place and seeing no one home but some children they made the children turn the grindstones while they sharpened their axes and knives. They then upset everything in the settler's house also the feed which they farmer had for his livestock.

My father told me of a man who was standing in his farm-yard when a bolt of lightning struck tearing off all of his clothes, and throwing his clothes all around his farm yard. The man was insensible for about three days. He regained consciousness but his arm was somewhat paralyzed after that.

2

Some of the early settlers that came to Nebraska did not know how to build a sod house and were frustrated in their first efforts. My father was one of a group who built a sod house with others who had seen them but hadn't built one before.

Dust storms were evident according to him, many years ago. One of the storms he tells about lasted three days and nights. The storm came along as they were working and all of the people had to "hideout" for that long. Some of the people went to the shelter of the timber for protection.

Two big events he remembers were the great Easter storm of 1873 and the grasshopper scourge of 1874. The storm started by a heavy rain accompanied by thunder and lightning and then turned into a snow storm which last 48 hours and was so thick that one could not see in front of him. The snow packed so firmly that one could drive heavy teams over ravines.

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The summer of 1874 everything was destroyed by the grasshoppers.

He used to tell of the early day troubles near Kearney between the cowboys and the farmers. The cowboys disliked the idea of anyone moving in and settling as it ruined their chances for herding grounds. The cattle would trespass on the farms and it made the farmers angry. Finally trouble appeared in more way than one. The cowboys would come to town and get “dead drunk” at the saloons. They would then began to “shoot up the town,” by riding through the streets firing their revolvers through store windows and up in the air. It was their aim to terrorize the people and make them think they were “tough.” The people would always run and hide when the saw a squad of cowboys coming to town because it meant trouble. Some of the cowboys were desperate men and tried to make themselves notorious by their acts.