

[Mrs. Sarah Hartje]

[?] 5-241-La DUP

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St., Lincoln

DATE Jan. 9, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore stuff

1. Name and address of informant Mrs. Sarah Hartje
2. Date and time of interview Jan. 4, 39 —[Roca?] Nebr. 2 to 4:15 p.m.
3. Place of interview [Home?] of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. Charley [Huyok?], R.F.D., Lincoln Nebr.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompany you. None
6. Description of room, house, surrounding, etc. Native lime stone house, built years ago. Rooms rather English, almost colonial style, lacking however a fireplace, andirons, etc.

Indicates precise and excellent house keeping. The farm surroundings are the usual farm yard buildings, some also of stone, barns, cribs - sheds, etc. Located on the upland, level to rolling, most of salt creek valley near Roca Nebr.

These folks have kept this place up and having lived here for years, it just seems to reflect their personalities, clean, orderly, efficient, not too severe. C.15 Neb.

FORM B Personal History of Informant

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NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St., Lincoln

DATE Jan, 9 - 1939 SUBJECT American Folk Lore stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Sarah Hartje, Roca, Nebr.

1. Ancestry, American - English
2. Place and date of birth St. Francis, Kansas, Mar. 3, 1888.
3. Family No children.
4. Places lived in with dates: St. Francis, Kansas. [northwest?] near [Haigler?], Nebr. [?] to 1900. Weeping Water, Nebr. 1900 to 1904.... Bradford Ark. 1904 to 1909. Weeping Water, Nebr. 1909 to 1911. Roca Nebraska 1911 to date.
5. Education, with dates. School in Rattlesnake Gulch, Kansas 1894 to 1900. Weeping Water, Nebr. 1900 to 1904, Bradford, Arkansas High School 1904 to 1909. Peru Normal 1910 to 1912
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. House work - farm work [?] to 1909. School teacher 1909 to 1910, 1911 to 1913 Farm work, home work, music, writing 1913 to date.
7. Special skills and interests. Educational work, writing, music, home work. Education work is chief interest: secondary, music, piano and voice.
8. Community and religious activities Educational cooperative Methodist church 18 years Sunday School Teacher, [??]. Sunday school. Member church choir.
9. Description of informant attractive, American type, robust, average stature, regular features, and very expressive.

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10. Other points gained in interview magnetic personality, congenial, and keen mentally, with high degree of intelligence, spontaneous, socially inclined and interested in peoples welfare generally. Lends herself to any educational work and is usually in that she is prompt, dependable, and alert, and in case of this interview supplemented it with a written follow up. Excellent Housekeeper also.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE Jan. 9 - 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Sarah Hartje - Roca, Nebr.

As children, we lived a pretty rough life on the prairie. Located as we were, almost between Nebraska and Kansas, the state line meant very little and our social activities included people from each state.

An [itinerant?] minister came to the school house in Rattlesnake Gulch, and thus our religious life was rounded out. There was very little in the way of entertainment and so the literary society was an event of importance.

Sometimes there would [impersonate?] various characters in the community and the folks would guess who was the original of the impersonation. At that time the "Ferris wheel" was new and very popular. The [women?] as part of one entertainment reproduced a Ferris wheel scene This was enacted behind a low curtain. Placing [shoes?] on their hands they would first raise their hands up to [?] feet and then withdraw them and raise their heads into view.

Mother knit our stockings and mittens for winter made our underwear long sleeves and long legs to go down into the stockings.

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Our "Soddie" roof was of wide boards underneath a layer of tar. Paper and sod on top of that and the way it leaked when it rained hard would put a [sieve?] to [shame?]. We would pull our beds around at nite and if possible find a spot when the dropping water would miss us which wasn't always possible. [It?] had a cousin who was a trifle more resourceful than some of the rest of us. [He?] took the kitchen table, hoisted it upon the bed crawled under and sank blissfully into the land of dreams.

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While the steady drip, drip, dripping on the oilcloth covered canopy continued thru the nite. What if it did run down on the floor? it was dirt any way!

I wanted to explain a little more about our literary society I know I didn't make that clear. You ask if the children had a part in it I said no. I didn't mean they never had a part but just that they didn't in that one certain program. For the rest of the time we [all ?] had a part. A mixed program of "pieces" to speak dialogues, songs etc. and the reciter a spelling match or ciphering down in which everyone from least to greatest took part sometimes we had both.

Then some evenings would find a big debate on. That was a lively group and many an evening was pleasantly and [helpfully?] spent. [Mother brot all her children into the?] world with the help fo a "midwife" except the last child. She had seven children one set of twins.

When we got sick they talked it [?] ([for her and another?]) and then usually gave us a good "psysic"? of Senna tea or castoria. If we had a cold we got a [hot foot?] bath [?] if our [throats?] were sore we would get our dirty stocking, foot part first, wrapped around our necks. Virtue in the perspiration and dirt in the foot part of the stocking! [e?] We would get potions of good [?] tea. ([Alum?] scraped to a powder with [?] we took inwardly. If our [cold?] was stubborn mother would [?] a cough syrup of pure vinegar into which [she had dropped a whole onion?] shell and all....let stand till [?] was all eaten up then she'd lift the [skin?] out and [???] rest adding sugar to make a syrup. We loved it and coughed

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extra hard and often to get it. She'd make candy adding [hore hound?] also for a cough, turpentine, a few drops on a 3 spoonful of sugar was taken inwardly for worms. Soap and sugar poultice also one made of light bread and milk or fat meat. for sores which needed drawing out. For chapped hands we used beef tallow. We had a remedy for each kind of affection which might over take us. I always enjoyed being ill. For then we got special attention. Which one who belongs a large family can't get every day if he is well.

Mother one day discovered to her horror that [she?] had a cancer on her nose! Some one had previously given her a remedy. So nothing daunted she proceeded to concoct a remedy which consisted of sheep [sorrol?] juice mixed with fresh butter boiling it down to a salve. She used this, removed the growth. It had to be done every few years. She kept it up until after about 25 yrs when she was near a doctor she went and had it scientifically removed. Still the old remedy saved her life until she could get medical help.

My sister says the remedy for warts and [moles?] also was "stealing" some ones dish rag - destroying it and moles and warts would vanish!

I don't know if this will be of any additional help to you if not its O.K. You can burn this and maybe if you should have any aforesaid afflictions they might disappear?!

As a remedy for Rheumatism, put a raw potatoe in your pocket, the Rheumatism will leave and the potatoe will absorb it, then throw the potatoe away.

Or if you don't like potatoes in your pocket just wear a copper band on your wrist. That will [?] the [?] ailment. These are remedies of [long?] standing and are still [?]. 4 Oh, Hal and I the other night We went to see our ladies bright The ladies met us at the door Saying "Please excuse the dirty floor. "It's 8 o'clock" the old man said "Children, it is time for bed." Off to bed the children run And left us up to see our fun. I gave my chair a hitch and a slide And I slid right up by Katie's side I put my arms around her waist And then her lips began

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to taste. We talked of birds and then of bees And then I gave her another squeeze We talked of love and marriage too And all that young fools ought to do.

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A lady who comes here to visit now and then told me a new one in way of a superstition. She said she never iron the back of her husband's shirts because it meant bad luck. She said she knew others who followed the same custom.

In order to hide the unironed portion, he always wore a vest. John's father used to wake him up every Easter morning here to watch the sun dance. It only happened on Easter, so he said, and just as it rose above the horizon when they filled in a grave after the cemetery services, the direction they looked as they patted down the last shovel full of earth would be the exact direction from which the next funeral would come. Somebody in the line of their vision would die next.

It is a bad sign or a sign of death for a bird to flutter at the window. A bird fluttered at the window the day before my folks heard that my uncle had been killed in the war.

Signs are not always bad, and often [?] good luck. In the spring when you hear the first dove coo,

Look over your shoulder and make a wish.

It certainly will come true.

or

When you hear the first dove coo

Whirl around three times and look in your shoe.

You will find a hair in there.

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Which is the color of your future husbands hair. I have heard these a number of different ways but we knew them as I have given them here.

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Every bride should wear. . . .

something old,

something new,

something borrowed,

and something blue.

“T. L's” or “Trade Lasts” were always popular and they usually were sincere, genuine compliments from other, exchanged or traded. But the one, whom the compliment is for, is supposed to first give one.

The informant has been very active in social or group [?] and has other material which should be available later. While many in a given community probably did not take some of the superstitions or beliefs very seriously, it is evident that some key people in the group did.

Since people are becoming more individualistic; and broadened by travel, folk practices are discarded and even though secretly believed in to a certain extent, are held in reserve.